

My Life n Times



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The first day of the rest of my life....



Christmas 2021 with Wendy and her family and her mother. We had a pleasant morning with Shellbee and Sydnee passing out presents and then taking turns opening them. Shellbee made it clear that since the Reeces peanut butter cups were gifts, they were not available for others to steal and eat... ;-) It was a nice time and after I helped out a bit, by blowing leaves off the patio and feeding Wendy's birds. Wendy was expecting most of Harold's family for the afternoon and since I am really on a different eating schedule and trying not to gain too much weight for the holidays, I decided I would head home to Rusk and watch football and try to stay on the limited eating schedule I have been using. For Christmas, the girls had given me two 1000-piece puzzles and I pointed out that those gifts were to be shared and that we would need to schedule a night or two to put them together.

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Well gave Wendy a hug and headed home and am now safely back at my little house that is just perfect for me to enjoy for the rest of my life.....



Where did you go on vacations as a child?



Well not sure what would qualify as a vacation when I was a child. And not sure what time frame you would call when I was a child. Not sure I have grown up yet. When I was very small in the 50's with Dad in the military we did not really do vacations. When we moved from one base to another we usually stopped by some relatives on the way. Not sure I would call that a vacation. Then while in Massachusetts, Dad liked to hunt and we went camping and he went hunting. Not sure I would call that a vacation either. Then in the 60's we moved to England and we did tourist stuff all the time, but it was not really a vacation either. Going around countryside for the day or to London for a musical. When we came back from England in 1963, we flew into NYC I think and we bought a car, a nice 57 Chrysler Imperial. That was a nice car. We went up to our old house in Massachusetts and got it ready to sell, then drove cross country to go to Dad's new assignment at Tomales again. We again when

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thru places with relatives to visit. So still not sure any of this qualifies as a vacation. When in Northern California, dad and I went on hunting trips, for 2-3 days maybe 5 days. But can you call a few days to look for Bambi and to shoot a vacation?

Then one summer there was a family reunion, Mom's side of the family in Oregon and relatives from Arizona came up and we all went up there for the reunion. Again, do you really count any of these as a vacation?

I do remember one trip we did that I would call a vacation, maybe. We pulled our boat to LA and then cruised it across to Catalina Island and spent a few days camping and diving and skiing until we found I was apparently the bait on a string, as we saw some sharks hanging around in the water. But for me I would say, that was the real first vacation, but I was not really a child. I was in high school and I talked the folks into letting my girlfriend go with us.

Again not sure if it counts, but after graduating from High School, I drove aimlessly from Northern California till I ended up in Missouri at Grandpa Warburton's. Then he and I drove back visiting Carlsbad Caverns, Painted Desert, Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, and back to Tomales California.

Though thru the years I guess I had a few actual vacations, joining the military really got me going, and while in Germany,

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took some great vacations to learn to ski, see Spain, the French Riviera, and an international car show in Switzerland. Then I really started to take vacations in the 90's. Went on cruises and to Disney land and other places. Gave up visiting relatives for trips I was making.

Since then I have made vacations an art form. I have traveled to Alaska, Mexican Riviera, the Caribbean, Panama, Columbia, Great Britain, Spain, Italy, Russia, Ukraine, and much more.

So again, not sure what is a vacation, and when I quit being a child, have I? I guess I thought life was a vacation, having traveled in almost all of the states in the US and lived in 10 of them.

Then do you count weekends at the lake, or traveling in a motor home to races a vacation? Of course being retired not, not sure what a vacation for me is now.

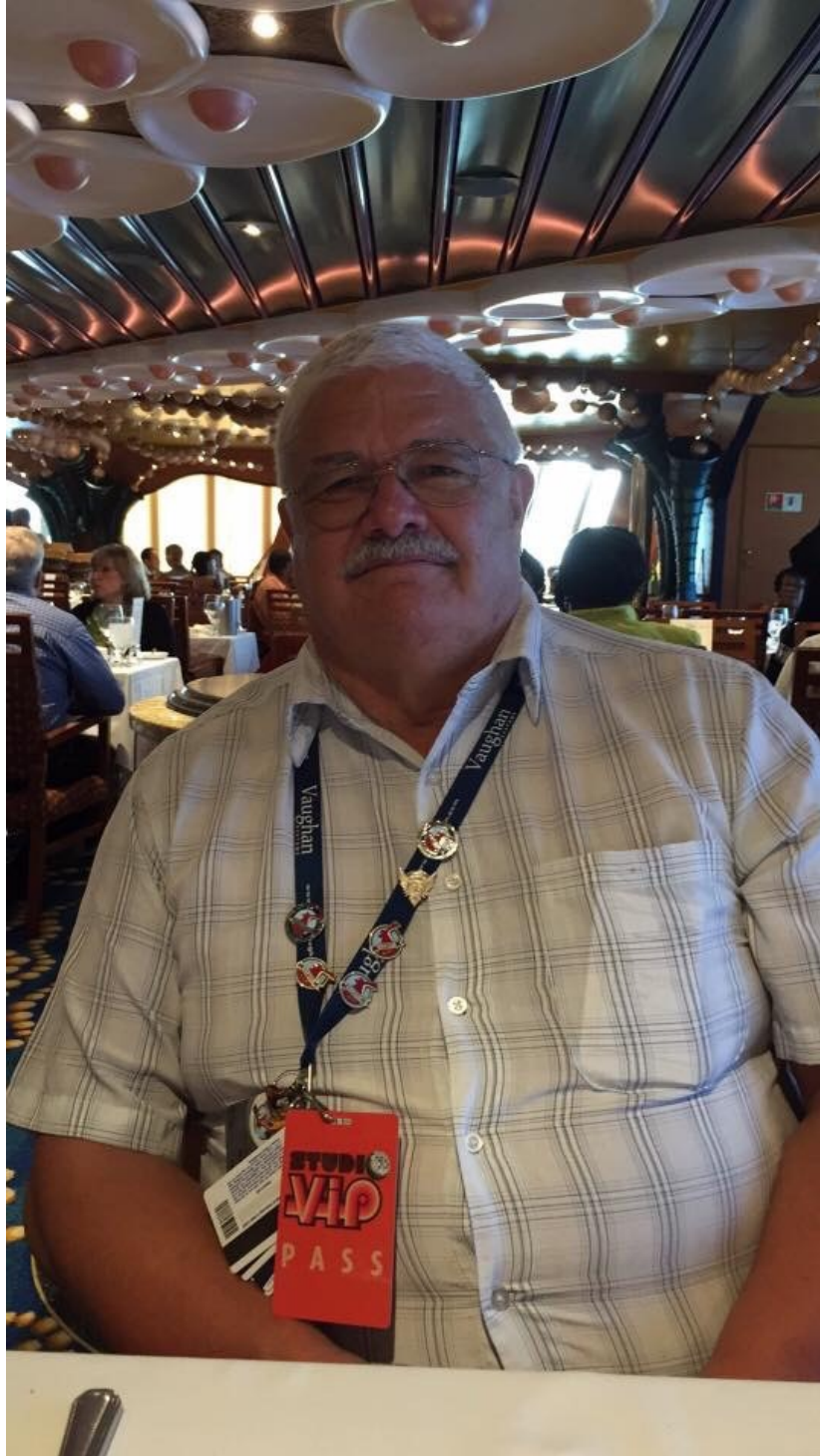
But I have enjoyed it all. Have passport, will travel....



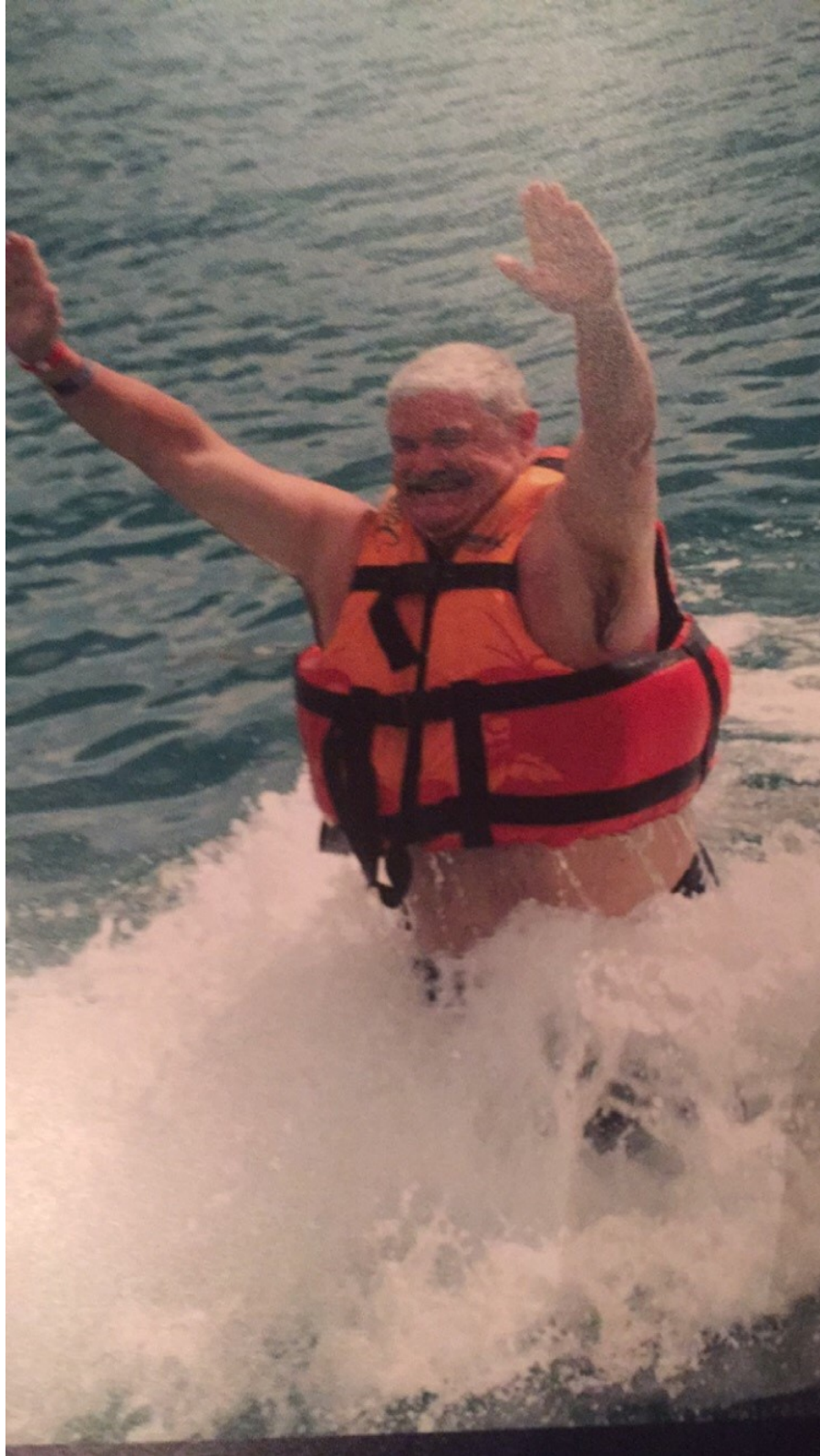
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What was your Mom like when you were a child?



I would guess you had to say Mom was a typical 40's-50's mom that stayed at home and took kids everywhere she went. We went shopping and to visit when there were times she needed to be on the go. She had her rules and they were pretty simple. Eat what was on your plate, and don't be leaving food. There were all those starving children somewhere and if I did not clean my plate it was a sin. Sometimes she would ask what we wanted for breakfast or lunch, but dinner was never a choice. When I asked what was for dinner, sometimes she would say "1000 things" and I knew it was beans again. We had our chores and were expected to keep rooms semi-clean and dirty clothes downstairs. She did the laundry though, not us. We did have to do the dishes every night. As soon as we were up from the table it was to the sink and wash n dry and put away all dishes. We always thought that since she had put every dish from the table on the floor for the Yorkies to clean up it was a good idea. Of course, they looked

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clean by then but we were glad to wash them. In later years when she had a dishwasher, she still did dishes by hand. Mom was not really the disciplinary type, most times it, “was wait till your father gets home”. But she could be upset with you too. Usually, it was by grabbing or pulling your hair a bit. From my understanding when Tommy was young and still at home, she would have a stick to spank him. But one day he broke the stick and said you won’t use that again. So when dad got home he made her a paddle board with a wrist strap so you could not take it away from her. I don’t really remember her using it that much. While in Tomales it hung on the light fixture between Kathy’s and my bedroom. When dad was upset, he would say go get the board. Of course, we were not too fast in retrieving it and usually hoped he would forget. He would have to ask “have you got it yet” before we would actually bring it downstairs to him. But Mom would sometimes not like something you said or did, she would toss something at you. Kathy made her mad one day and Mom threw a small lead weight from the scales she was using and it went thru the screen on the screen door. Then she says now look what you made me do. I guess the worst for me was one day I was not doing what she wanted or something and she went to reach for my head to pull my hair, but I ducked away. She said to come over here but I knew she would pull my hair if I did, so I just stayed out of reach and then went out the gate and down the driveway to a small creek and brush. She yelled down at me, ”

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just wait till your father gets home.” Well I waited and thought Dad would come down and tell me to come up to the house. Well, I heard his car come home and he did not come out. I stayed in the creek a while and then realized it was getting past dinner time. So sheepishly, I go back up to the house because I was getting hungry and it was getting dark. I got up to the house and dinner was over, which meant I was not getting any. You either were there for dinner on time or not. When I came into the house Dad was messing with a deepsea fishing pole. He tells me to sit down. He tells me he understands I was not being very good to mom and not obeying. He said he had bought me a new fishing rod that day in PX and that he was still going to give it to me but I was to remember every time I used it how I mistreated Mom and should not do that again. So it was one of those things sometimes it was a good thing and sometimes it was not. But I did remember being mean to Mom every time I used it. It reminds me too of another time I got in trouble and was kinda rewarded!! When Kathy had her accident and Candy was in the hospital for 3 months afterward, Mom and Dad went to visit her every night. We had a small gas station across the street from the house that we ran and I saw dads car go up the driveway and then leave with Mom to go visit Candy. I got into the habit of going up to the house and getting keys to Mom’s Hillman, going for a little drive down highway 1 to practice driving. I was 15 and of course, had no learner’s permit or anything. Well, when I

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returned to the gas station one evening, there were Mom and Dad sitting in his little Sprite. They had forgotten something they were going to take to Candy. Dad asked where I had been. I told him I took a guy down the road with gas for his car. He looks in the Hillman and sees no gas can and says what did you use to carry gas. I was busted.... So he said to take the car up to the house and park it and bring back the keys which I did. He did not raise his voice or anything. He just got back into the Sprite and headed off. In the morning I made sure I was not up before he headed to work. I went to school and as was my habit came home for lunch. Dad was there at the table, he was never home for lunch. He took me up to the bank and had me take \$200 out of my savings and give it to him. I figured he just charged me \$200 for my driving lesson. I did not say a word or ask why. After school, I was working at the gas station and feeling pretty low having lost 1/3 of my savings. I was dreading dad getting home too, I was sure I had not heard the last of it. Well about the time Dad normally got home, an MGTD drives into the gas station to the pumps and I go out to see if I can help them. Dad gets out of the MGTD and says he went half with me and bought the MGTD for me but I was not to drive it anywhere except up and down the driveway to the gas station till I got my license. So needless to say, I spent a lot of time going back up to the house for something and back down to the station driving the MGTD. So another lesson learned....

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But back to Mom, if it was not for her, I would have missed almost every date I had. We always had work around the house. We put a foundation under 100-year-old house, poured driveways, cut wood, and worked on cars or the yard. I would tell Dad I had a date but then he was always needing help with something and I would not walk off the job, but Mom would finally come out and tell Dad to quit for the night and let me get ready for my date. Mom saved me many times and I was always thankful, but almost always late for anything I was going to do.

She was great and would take me driving once I got my learner's permit driving in my MGTD. It was funny too that she was always cooking or baking. But unfortunately, you never knew if it was something for us, for a friend, or for the dogs!! Mom would not waste anything. One night my buddy Glenn and I came in late from our 4-H meeting and everyone was in bed. But we were hungry and saw a pot of rice in tomato sauce and it even looked like some hamburger in it. So we each got a bowl and had some. Then Glenn went home and I went to bed. In the morning, Mom asked, "Who had been in her rice?". I told her, Glenn and I tried some and it was good. She says well I hope you enjoyed it.... It was the rice that had weevils in it, the hamburger that had spoiled and she only added the tomato sauce so it would be flavor able enough for the dogs to eat it. Glenn never ate anything at our house again.

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One of the funniest things about mom was that she would NEVER lie to you... But if you headed off down the wrong road she might not correct you and let you think what you were thinking, no matter how wrong it was. One night when we were having rabbit for dinner, I raised rabbits as my 4-H project, Tommy and Francis show up unexpectedly for dinner. It is dinner time and we all knew Francis had many times said she was not eating the rabbits. So Mom is frying rabbit and Francis looks on and says "Oh Mom that looks so good, I love chicken." Mom says good you love this... We all sit down to eat and we are about done eating and dad just can not hold back anymore, so he asks Francis to give him one of the wings off the plate of chicken. After a few seconds of looking Francis makes the discovery that there are no wings and it is not chicken. We are all laughing and she is upset... She says "I was eating rabbit, oh no, and it was so good." Like many things, they say it tastes just like chicken!!!

Another time in the morning during the summer, a friend of Dad's that he used to work with shows up and brings his own bottle of Jack Daniel's which is about 1/3 gone already. Mom sits him down and tells him Dad won't be home till dinner time but he says OK he will just sit and visit. So then he asks for a glass and wanted to fill it with his JD. Mom got a glass and took his bottle of JD and poured him a glass, then set the JD bottle over by the sink. So every time he wanted another drink she would fix it.

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But it was about 1/3 JD and 2/3 tea. She had him just about sober by the time he was ready to leave and he never figured it out. She had even been putting the tea in the JD bottle so when he grabbed it to take with him, there was hardly any real JD left.

Later on, in Garland... it was funny too when I was having a BBQ and Mom and Dad came across the street to join us, I was worried because I had both chicken and pork ribs, and Dad usually was not eating pork because of his religion. I was in the kitchen when Mom comes in to get Dad some more meat on his plate and she asks me, isn't that pork? I said yes... She says it is ok he likes it, he does not need to know.

Mom was a friend to everyone. She would help anyone with whatever they needed. Sometimes they might not know she was helping but that was how it was. She believed anything someone would tell her. When we had Casey and Justin living with us, she would get mad at Casey for saying bad words. He would say well Justin says them too. She said she was sure Justin said no such things. So Casey managed to get his tape recorder going and then made Justin mad so he would curse at him. But it was funny when Casey showed it to Mom to prove it, she was mad at Casey for being mean to Justin.... She had her own sense of right and wrong.

She was a great mom and I miss her.

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Mom and Tommy in the 40's.

What was your first big trip?



It is hard to say when my first big trip was. Being an Army brat, we tripped to Okinawa, then across the US from California to Ft Devin's Massachusetts, and then to Great Britain. All big trips but my life is just a series of trips big and small. But when I think about it, the first big trip I guess I did solo after graduating from High School. It was the summer of 1969 and Dad and I were not getting along too well. For most of High School we had run a gas station across the street from the house and then my Senior year we had gotten rid of the station and I started working pumping gas in Petaluma and making what I first thought of as my own money. So anyway, I decided it was time to get out and see the world on my own. So I put a few things in a bag and a sleeping bag in the back of my Sprite and headed out of town. Stopped to see my girlfriend in Antioch and let her know I would be gone a bit. Of course no cell phones or navigation systems back then so I just hit the road. I got on I80 and headed to Reno. I picked up a

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hitchhiker and we made good time over the mountain and down into Reno. I let him out in Reno and found me a motel off East 4th street. I looked around Reno a bit but being too young to gamble, it was not a very interesting town. I was in my motel that night when the hitchhiker knocked and asked to sleep on the floor, so I let him. In the morning after breakfast, he was asking if he could ride again today, but I lied to him and told him I was hanging around town. I had had enough of his company and he smoked. I headed out east and into Utah and Wyoming. I found a dirt road and headed down that thinking my Sprite was ok for off-road driving. Came to a small creek and actually drove Sprite across it as well without much trouble. I continued moving east and just stopping when I felt like it and eating if I was hungry. A lot of nights I just rolled my sleeping bag out on the picnic table at a freeway rest stop. No one cared and back then it was pretty safe, I think!! I had gotten into the habit of buying 1/2 gal of milk and a box of 6 old fashion donuts and that was breakfast and maybe lunch. I don't remember all the stops I made but I was not in a hurry to be anywhere. Every couple of days I would call home, collect!! Mom was worried about me and since I was just headed out of Kansas, she mentioned I should stop and see her father in Missouri for a day or two. Grandpa was from a whole different generation. He lived in a small cabin and had a barn and critters. He would milk the cow in the morning and gather the chicken eggs. Then he sat down and skimmed the

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milk and put some in a glass and cracked a couple of eggs into it for breakfast. I opted to find the general store and my milk and donuts. While I was visiting Mom had talked to Grandpa and me and talked me into loading Grandpa into the Sprite and returning to California for him to visit back there. He was in his 70's and had never seen the Pacific or much of anything out beyond a couple states' radius of his home.

So this became another adventure, traveling with Grandpa was fun and he had a great outlook on life. A few years previous he had a heart attack and his doctor said he needed to quit worrying about things, so his blood pressure would stay low. So he got to be about the most low-key none worrying person I ever knew. One morning as we traveled, we had just stopped for breakfast. As we were driving along I was eating donuts and drinking my milk and he says, "Son you know they say you should not drink and drive!!" Another we were cruising along and I had not been sleeping much. I woke up as we were going down the side of the road plowing up grass and dirt. He just calmly says, "Son maybe we should stop to sleep a bit??" Most of you don't know but British cars were positive ground and US cars are negative ground at that time. So I had to run a wire thru the firewall to the battery to operate the cassette player that I used for music while we traveled. Well, the wire wore thru and started burning and filled the inside of Sprite with smoke. Grandpa says, "Son, I

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think something is burning” not excited or anything, just stating a fact. As I pulled to the side of the road, he just opened his car door and rolled onto the grass.

Mom had suggested we also stop at relatives in Kansas, so we stopped by and when we headed out of Kansas City, my oil light came on and the engine stopped. Oops! Took to a shop and they had to rebuild the little engine. Grandpa and I stayed in a motel and come over each day to check on progress. Obviously, the guy working on it knew nothing. The shop foreman had about 4-5 flunkies doing the work on cars. He would go by each station and talk to one flunky and tell him what to do next. Then he went to the next station and so on until he was back to the first one. Then he would give more instructions and he just kept circling the shop. As Granddad and I were looking around, Grandpa finds a part on the floor behind my Sprite near a drain. He asks, “What is this, you might need it.” We did! Well, they got done and we hit the road. They did a crappy job. As I was getting into California I had to start adding oil at every gas stop.

I am getting ahead of myself, after leaving KC we went down to Carlsbad Caverns, Painted Desert, into Tucson AZ to see relatives and Uncle Bob raised bees and gave me two tins of honey. Each tin can weighed a couple of pounds and had its own built-in opener for flipping the lid off the can. Then we went to the Grand Canyon and stopped on the North Rim to camp the night. I

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reached into the back of Sprite to get our sleeping bags. If you have never seen a Sprite, there is no trunk lid, you reached behind the seat and pulled stuff out. My sleeping bag would not come out right away so I jerked it and out it came with the lid to one can of honey!! So now I have a couple of pounds of honey in the back area and the only thing we had for clean up was paper towels and cold water. After cleaning up, I threw the second can of honey out.

We left Grand Canyon thinking we would go into Vegas and then take a mountain road from there into California and Yosemite. We stopped for gas and filled up and then about 10 miles later we started to turn onto the mountain road and the sign says " No Gas For 200 Miles." The Sprite only holds 8 gallons. So we drove back to the gas station, filled up again and bought a gas can, and filled it. If we had not, we might have ended up the like the people at Donner pass years years ago.

We finished our trip going by Fisherman's Wharf, then across to the Golden Gate and back to Tomales, California. Crossing the Golden gate was just 25 cents back then. Another funny thing about Grandpa was that he would not admit he did not read. We would stop to eat and he would study the menu, then when the waitress came by he just told her what he wanted. He would say I would like some fried chicken or a bowl of beans, or something else. None of which was actually listed like that but most

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restaurants had something like it and the waitress assumed he meant that.

It was an unforgettable trip and a special time to have spent with my grandfather. There were so many things we did, that he had never done or seen in his life. Later in life he came to live with us for the last couple of years of his life at the Trout Farm Dad had in Yelleville Arkansas. I hope I can go like he did, he came in for breakfast one morning and said, he was feeling tired and went back to bed. A couple of hours later we went to get him up but he was no longer with us...

Don't remember how long I was gone but a month or so I guess. I had to rebuild the Sprite engine again, apparently, the flunky putting the engine back together, broke an oil ring on the piston putting it back in. Only took me a few hours to do what he took 3 days to do.



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The letter of the law - 1970



When I started driving, Dad offered to pay my car insurance until I got my first ticket. You would think this would really motivate me and it did to some degree. I started driving actually before I even had a learner's permit, but that is another story.

I was living at home the first year that I attended Santa Rosa Junior College. Commuting from Tomales to Santa Rosa via Rohnert Park and up the freeway to Santa Rosa. All the time I have been driving I have a little problem with driving on remote control, just thinking about anything but driving and going down the road. This has caused many adventures in the effort to go back to the right turn-off I was supposed to take or end up somewhere I was not going.

Well on this lovely afternoon, I was heading down Hwy 101 freeway from Santa Rosa to Rohnert Park where I normally take the exit and then run some back roads to get home to Tomales. On this day, I was driving on remote control, I passed my exit

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and realized it just after passing it. I did not feel like going the few miles to the next exit in Petaluma, and the freeway was not very busy. There was a nice grassy medium so I decided I would make a U-turn. I was headed uphill and there was no traffic behind me and no traffic on the other side of the hill. So I slowed down and whipped the little sprite into the grass medium and got to the freeway headed the other way. Picked up speed and took my exit. As I was turning under the freeway, I see red lights in my rearview mirror!!! So I got a ticket for making a U-turn on the freeway!!!

Well, I was not going to just pay it so I decided to go to court and see what I could do about it. Since then I have made it a standard thing not to go to court right away and to delay court a couple of times and then go. That method has gotten me out of about half the tickets I ever got because the officers tend not to make the court since it might not be their regular court date. If they don't show they dismiss the ticket.

So this day I show up in court and I find 2 of my friends there as well. We all had tickets from the same officer and it was our first time talking with a judge. I started with my story and that the officer could not have seen me actually make the U-turn, only that he saw what might have been my tracks in the grass and knew I had not been in front of him coming up the freeway. My friends and I all indicated we drove red sports cars and that

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officers pick on red cars because we are easier to see. Fortunately, the judge had a sense of humor and bought the story for us, and dismissed all three of our tickets. It might also have been because it was the first offense for each of us and we were young college kids trying to get our lives started. You buy that right??

Well, I was happy my ticket was dismissed and I would not have to start paying for my own car insurance. That was until the first of the month when Dad came to me and requested that I pay my share of the car insurance!! But Dad, the ticket was dismissed, it will not count or affect anything. He said the deal was that he would pay until I GOT A TICKET, with no regard as to disposition. So since then, I have paid my own insurance. Sticking to the letter of the law!!

I want everyone to note that my premise that police officers pick on cars that are red was confirmed with an episode of Big Bang Theory years later. Sheldon's friends had decided he needed to learn to drive and had setup and a very good virtual driving station and were configuring it. They were going to have him driving a red Ford Taurus and he wriggled up his lips and nose and said, "Statistically police give people in red cars more hassles than other color cars. I don't want no trouble with the fuzz!"

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My first car, 1952 MGTD that I got as a punishment.



1961 Bugeye Sprite to add to my garage. I had both of these by my Junior year. I painted them both myself the same color.

How did you get your first job?



Well at the age of 8, I got my first job, shining shoes. We moved to England in 1959 and my sister and I were getting big enough that we wanted things at times and wanted our own money, so Dad started an allowance. But it was not just a handout, we had to do something for it, so shining shoes was my thing. I kept Dad's shoes bright and shiny for him. He was a CWO (Chief Warrant Officer) and ran the operations work on the base and he needed to have nice shoes to be an example for his troops. But shining shoes was not just keeping his shoes nice. If he had a friend come over he would tell them to kick off their shoes and I would make sure they were nice and shiny before they left. Not sure but some of his friends just stopped by to get their shoes shined. My sister and I soon adopted different attitudes toward our allowance. We got 25 cents for each year old we were. My sister was quick to collect her allowance every week. I was not so diligent. I found that if I did not get my allowance I seemed to

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make more.... When we were out with Dad and we wanted him to buy something, he would ask, "Have you gotten your allowance??" If you said yes, then he said to use it to buy whatever.... But if you said no, then he would buy whatever it was you were wanting. He did not take into consideration the cost or if it exceeded the allowance.... So I learned to get more by not being so diligent in collecting the allowance.

But if you don't really consider that a first job, then it was running the gas station that was right across the street from our house. Dad leased the station and during the day Mom looked after it during the school year. Evenings, weekends, and over the summer it was up to Kathy and me to run the station. It was fun and sometimes was a good place to do studies and at other times a good place to have friends with us and have fun. We sometimes dipped into sodas and snacks for us and friends. Dad was not too concerned, but we soon learned to not be so quick to give stuff to our friends. The deal with the gas station was that at the end of the month, Dad made sure all the bills were paid, the vendors for snacks and gas. Then what was left was split 3 ways, Dad, Kathy, and I got equal shares. So that was my first source of income that actually helped my bank account.

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Here I am all “Graduated” and ready to find a job that would be something fun.

But again, may not be what was really my first job. After we closed the station in late 1966 and I had my driver’s license, I started working at a 76 Union gas station in Petaluma, CA. I don’t remember how much I made, but it was a real job, assigned hours and customers and work to do around the station. The station sponsored a race car for the local circle track racing and they needed a new driver and I wanted to drive it. The owner said it was fine, but since I was under 18, I have to get my parents written approval on his release for any responsibility if I got hurt. Mom and Dad both said “No” so I did not get to become a race car driver. Racing was my first choice of career, but it was lost with that. But life goes on. I enjoyed running the gas station we had with Dad and working at the gas station in Petaluma as well. Years later I would lease my own station for a few months in the fall 1981 and had a great time running it. TJ was even

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helping even though he was 4 years old. He would wash headlights, run around with a rag in his back pocket hanging out and reach up to the customer's window to collect payments. He made pretty good tips.



Working as the Rod and Gun Club Manager was one of those very fun jobs.

I will have to admit, that I always wanted to have a job and be able to make money, but having a job was just a means to be able to live life as I saw it. So maintaining and keeping jobs was something I took to heart and did what I enjoyed doing for as long as I enjoyed doing it and it provided the means to an end, enjoying my life.

Note that in 1991, I was turning 40 and could count having had 40 jobs over the years and lived at over 40 different addresses...

What was your Dad like when you were a child?



Dad was pretty business-like as much as I could tell. When I was really young and too small to really be useful, then he was just someone I saw at dinner time and took us to church. Mostly as long as you remembered his golden rule, there was not a lot of interaction. His Golden Rule - If it's a toy you can play with it, if it is not leave it alone. This meant most of the time, my friends were afraid of him because as kids do, we were messing with everything, and then if he was around he came out with the Golden Rule. Which usually meant put that down and go find a toy. As we got bigger and we were responsible for our actions, it became the question we got asked as he was looking at something broken and we were about to get a spanking. Dad believed that you should be responsible for your actions and some real punishment would be coming. Going to your room or time out was not an option. Usually, it was to go get him the paddle. The paddle had a place it was kept. You had to go get it

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and then take it back. If you got detoured and not back in a reasonable time frame then, you could expect questions and a little more discipline. But we knew the cost of our actions and getting paddled and bending over was part of the lesson.

When my older sister and I were 8-10, we started being useful and could do chores and such and there were always some assigned. Dad and Mom liked a nice yard. There were not a lot of weed-killing sprays for one use in the 60's so it was usually Kathy and me on our knees with a small weed cutter that we would stick into the ground and cut weed below the root and remove it. We each had sections of the yard to take care of. When we came back from England in 1963 we were both big enough to have several assignments. Unfortunately being the only son, mine all entailed working with Dad outside. We poured concrete for driveways and retaining walls. We cut, split, and stacked wood for the fireplace. We poured new foundations for the house and we maintained cars. So a lot of my work had no time limit and seemed to never be done. It seemed my sister doing dishes and housekeeping was not really doing that much. Her chores could be completed and she was done. But that was the times. Dad did like to take us places, we toured all over England when we lived there. Kathy and I would get in the Sprite with him and take off for an afternoon. The Sprite's turn signal switch was in the middle of the dash. So we took turns at each stop sign to go

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either left or right. We also toured Northern California and sometimes down to LA to visit relatives while we lived in Tomales.

Dad was always looking for deals on things too. When we were in Tomales, he bought an old Dodge panel truck, a horse, and a saddle all for \$100. Kathy and I had lots of fun riding and taking care of the horse. We did not have a field, we had him on a rope tied to a concrete block that it took both of us to move. We moved him around the drainage ditch in front of the house and other places he could graze but never in the yard. Dad had bought a small 14ft boat as well. Living in Tomales we were 2 miles from the boat ramp at Nick's Cove. Dad was not the kind of guy to go out early in the morning and fish all day though. While Dad and I were working outside on weekends, Mom would listen to the CB radio and when the guys fishing were talking about catching the fish now, we would stop work, hook up the boat to the old panel truck and run down to launch the boat. We would high-tail it to the fishing spots and catch our limits usually and then head back. We put the boat away and went back to working on whatever it was. Dad and I took that old panel truck up into Northern California hunting as well. We went one time into Mendocino county and got so lost walking in the woods, we were crawling under things to try to get out. The truck was always ready to go, we slept in the back and had everything we needed

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in the old panel truck. The truck had a flat head straight six in it and the plugs were rusted into the head, so it did not have any tune-ups from 1963 to 1971 when we sold it. We did however carry a case of oil with us because it got about 1-2 quarts of oil per tank of gas. It was funny when we sold the truck in 1971 as we were all leaving California, we got \$200 for it. Dad liked to hunt and fish. He sometimes went to Arizona to hunt with his brother or to Nevada to hunt with an uncle. He had a rifle he had bought in 1960 and used in England. He had restored it and taken stock off it and had baked the varnish several times to give it a perfect finish. He used that rifle for the rest of the hunting he ever did. I think Billy, my brother-in-law, has it today and would still be using it if he still hunted.



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This is a photo of our setup of the hunting trip to the north rim of the Grand Canyon with Uncle Bob. Dad took me on this hunting trip for my honeymoon. I had only been married about 2 weeks when we left. She stayed home. It was funny, when we finally got to where Uncle Bob was set up, he already had a buck hanging in a tree. He says it walked into camp the night before. I was impressed that Dad was able to drive into the north rim with just a compass and map and found where Uncle Bob had set up camp 2 days prior. This was the only hunting trip where I killed a buck. Mostly Dad used me as a bird dog to go run out into the ravine to move deer up and into view for them. But the last morning I look up from where I was and saw a buck under a tree. When its head moved it looked like the whole tree moved. I took several shots and missed, by then the buck was on the other side of the ravine running parallel to me. I knelt and reloaded 3 rounds and then took aim and hit it finally. Bob and Dad were sure it was not me firing. Whoever was shooting was using a semiautomatic. But nope it was me with my bolt action. We had a challenge getting the buck up the mountain to the truck. We used Bob's winch with 100 yards of cable and some nylon rope. Sometimes the buck got stuck on a rock and when we freed it the nylon rope, that was stretching made it look like he came alive and had jumped 20 ft. We had fun hunting there and in Northern California.

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It was funny Dad would tell a story about giving advice to the young officers he knew. He would tell them that every time they got promoted or a raise to put half of it into savings and it would make them rich, It was my understanding that a few of them listened and ended up very well off. It seemed though for Dad, every time he got a raise, it meant getting a newer boat, a bigger motor for the boat, or another truck. But somehow Dad always had money. Mom always said that it did not matter, if she wrote a check he better have the money in the checking account. One day when Tommy and Francis were visiting she wrote Tommy a \$2000 check and that was a lot of money in 1960's. She said that she felt Tommy had not gotten a lot of the things that us younger kids were getting since Dad had a better job. I am sure

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there was something Tommy needed at the time, he usually had marginal cars and rented homes. But after, that Dad never kept a balance in the checkbook, thinking if she did not see how much was there she would not write that big a check. Tommy was 10 years older than me and for the most part, I had little memory of when he lived with us. My real memories started when we went to England in 1959 and Tommy went to West Point instead of going with us.

It was as I was getting older, I discovered that lies would sometimes get you out of trouble. But as it turned out, you could put things over on Mom because she never thought anything bad of someone or that we would lie. However, Dad was not so easy. My older sister and I became pretty good with stories... We would agree and practice them and my younger sister would know the story too and would help with it right up to the point that she might get some punishment. Then she fess up and our perfect story would be out the window and we were on the way to get the paddle. Most of the time there were two ways this worked. Either Mom got tired of us and said, "Wait till your father gets home.", or while Mom and Dad were out somewhere for the evening something would get broken or someone got hurt. Kathy and I always worked out just how it happened and it was no one's fault. But Candy, would sooner or later rat us out. Sometimes in the morning, she would be up first and on the folk's bed telling

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them everything before we even go to try out our perfect story. It was funny, you could never tell when the folks left the house how things might go. Either the two girls would be doing things and leave me out or we would have issues along that line. Or we two older ones did not want the younger sister to do whatever it was with us so we would abuse her. Always.... Someone got hurt or something got broken. I used to tell people that if I did not get a spanking every week or two, then I must have been sick in bed.....

Dad was never one to sit around much. He had projects all the time, fences, electrical stuff to fix, cars or boats to work on, and of course hunting and fishing to do. I think the most he sat around was Sunday night we all would gather and watch Wonderful World of Disney and then Bonanza. One night a week, we might catch Laugh In or some other variety show. Dad liked The Dean Martin shows. But most evenings it was working outside till dark or later. Getting up early on weekends to get started. Even when he retired he worked too hard. I would visit and all the things he had to do would keep us busy. In his 70-80's I had trouble keeping up with him. One thing I must say though, he never assigned something to do while he went to sit and get a beer. He was there working all the time. I used to think he had an easy job running the chainsaw. All he did was cut the wood. I had to feed it to him to cut, then I had to haul it and neatly stack it. Well years later when I was left with some work

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to do with a chainsaw, I decided I would much rather split, haul, and stack. That chainsaw would kick my butt.

Dad was a very smart man and he could solve almost any problem that he came upon. That is what got him many awards in military and civilian life. Dad's final goal was to make it to 100 years old, but he ended up 11 months short. I was glad the year before, that the family and I had taken him on a cruise. He loved to cruise, after I got divorced the last time, he would cruise with me. Mom never wanted to sail on a ship for anything. Dad and I cruised to Alaska and most of the Caribbean. We made other trips, one to Germany for 2 weeks and others to Canada or cross country from Dallas to Reno and back in his SRX. We could not pass a sign that said car museum. We had a great time.

I miss him a lot, every time I have a project, I think about how would he advise me about it. Each time I take a cruise, I remember how he was such a big hit at the military appreciation events. Being WWII, Korean, and Vietnam vet he usually stole the show.

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One thing I truly believe is that the world was a better place because Dad was in it, doing what he could for anyone and everyone.

What are your favorite movies?



Well, this is going to be hard to find the answer....

In the early 80's it was "Smokey and the Bandit". When I went into the military in 1982 I had the movie on a VHS tape. Do you remember those tape cartridge things you pushed into a device hooked to your TV with red, black, and yellow cords? When they sent me to Germany in late 1984, I took the tape and others with me. At first, I was in a room with one other soldier and then finally had my own room in the barracks till I moved into my own apartment. But EVERY night I put on Smokey and the Bandit and fell asleep watching it. Sometimes my roommate would turn it off if I was already asleep.

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This was my best effort in following in the Bandit's footsteps with my sidekick.

It was funny, I had a 60-minute cassette tape for the car with country music, and for 2 years that is all that played in my car. If someone was riding with me, they might ask if we could change it or use their cassette, I said that they could change cars....

Well as time went on and I was back in the USA and saw many movies, I guess my all-time favorite was "Gone with the Wind"

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and I frequently used Rhett's statement when having an issue with some gal..... "Frankly, My Dear..." Guess that is why I was single for a while.

Then another favorite is "Sound Of Music" I like movie musicals.

But now I have so many "Favorite" movies. Most of John Wayne's 80 and newer films. He was OK in the older westerns, but not something I would watch more than once. I have a collection of movies of over 1000 titles. I really like to watch movies multiple times and see something new almost every time.

My son took my "Man Card" a long time ago. I really like "The Holiday", "Mama Mia, Here We Go Again", "Must Love Dogs", "The Tuscan Sun" and many more such movies.

Of course, I have the whole series of Star Wars except for the last two. I think they should have ended with the "Return of the Jedi" The movies they made as prequels were good too. But the last two, I could not follow and will not own them. But "Rouge 1" was good.

Most of the Avengers are pretty good but they lost me on the last couple of them.

I think that it is funny that with all the effects and stuff the credits take 10-15 minutes to watch. But you have to watch

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because they put in fun scenes left out of the movie...

I have a complete collection of James Bond and most of them are good. Some of the old ones have rather primitive effects, but they never fail to have a great Bond Girl for each one.

Also all of the Jason Bourne series and Tom Clancey's series with Jack Ryan and others.

The first two Taken movies and Transporter series and Die Hard series. Most Bruce Willis movies are really good, but there were a couple he should not have done. Most of the Mission Impossibles were good and Tom Cruise "usually" makes good ones, his best, of course, was "Officer and a Gentleman".

So like I said, it is hard to pin down what might be "My Favorite Movies." I like ones that are entertaining, action, comedy, or romance. And if you don't agree with me then Frankly.....

Starting at the beginning - The 50's



I was working on writing about my life before Wendy gifted me this program for a year, so I thought it was time to get off my butt and get it done. I am going to start with the 50's, I know I did one already but this one has some more things I missed in the first one.

I was born Sept 5, 1951, in a hospital, I wanted to be close to my mother. Hamilton AFB, Northern California, just above the Golden Gate Bridge. was the place and it was funny, I was not admitted to any other hospital until 1971 and that was to the same one. Hamilton AFB does not exist anymore, I think it is a big residential area for those commuting into SF to work.

Of course, I don't actually remember from my own memory any of these events, but with the stories told by my parents and others, this is what happened in that time frame. My own

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memories will start when I write about the 60's.

I have my most embarrassing photo shown around the world with me sitting on the big boy potty with most of the roll of toilet paper all over me and the floor. Mom and Dad were big with having slides and with every slide show, for every relative and friend, that photo was there.

Next, as things went, we were in Okinawa for a little over a year. I was in a high chair and we had a maid, Flamico, that came in every day and helped Mom and during dinner helped me. I had a time that my hands did not work. I would put them behind my back and Flamico would feed me. Almost every meal for almost a year. Flamico always called Dad, Papason, and I was Babyson. She said that there was no denying I was Dad's son.



Of course, when we came back to the USA and there was no maid and I tried the no hands thing, Mom said "Oh that is too bad, I guess you don't eat." Seems my hands got back in business because I was never a skinny baby. When I was older and asked Mom what was for dinner, she would say 1000 things and I knew

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we were having beans again. If you were not happy with what was for dinner then it was just go to bed without dinner. That was until TJ, my son, came along and then Mom would say, “Oh what can I fix you TJ...”

Don't know if any of you even have seen what was a car seat for the 50's. It was a chair that had a frame with two hooks that went over the back of the front seat. Legs went thru the front like today's shopping carts and the chair was hung from the middle of the front seat to be close to the driver to retrieve the pacifier or whatever else might be dropped by the infant. They say that this was when I had my first driving lesson. Mom and I and I guess my two sisters, were in the car and Mom stopped at a neighbor's to just drop something off. So we kids stayed in the car. Back then most cars had the gear shifter on the column as well. Like most kids sitting with feet dangling, I was kicking my feet around when I kicked the car out of gear and then it rolled down the neighbor's driveway and across a two-lane road and then knocked down a fence and ended up against the barn of another neighbor. I am sure it was exciting for Mom to watch and they said that was my first driving lesson.

Kathy, my older sister, felt I was her toy doll and played and dragged me around the house. I guess Mom figured it was Kathy helping to take care of me. But I would tire of it and I found she would leave me alone... if I would bite her. I never got in trouble

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biting her, but then not sure I really had much for teeth. Mom felt it was my way of letting her know I was done with being dragged around like a doll for today. So this was working great right up to the time when one of Mom's friends brought over her kids to play and I bit one of them. That got me a spanking and was no longer tolerated at all. So biting was in the past and I had to try other things for defense from Kathy.

When we moved to Massachusetts in the middle of the 50's, Dad met a guy named Bud. He was the developer in the lake area where we built a house outside of Fort Devens. He was a hunter as well and he and Dad started going hunting in some of the Northern States, I know Maine was one of them. We also started camping and had a large cabin-like tent the family would go and we would camp for a few days at a time.



Tommy, my older brother was pretty good at fishing and we usually were camping on a lake. We always had a fire at night

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and enjoyed all the usual camping fun. One time though as we were done with breakfast and breaking up camp, Dad had put out the fire and then covered it a bit. I was running around barefoot and managed to walk on the place that was the covered fire and burned my foot pretty badly. I had it bandaged up and limped around for a while.

The little house that Dad built in the development was a two-story cracker box we called it. There was one property between us and the lake, but we had a small row boat on the lake and frequently Dad would take us fishing and Tommy would gig frogs from the front of the boat. I guess when Dad thought it was time to teach me to swim, he rowed me out a little from the shore and tossed me in the lake..... I learned to swim in a hurry.

Candy, my younger sister had been born there and Kathy and I felt that we just did not get the attention we should be getting or we would be in trouble for making too much noise or something. Anyway, more than once, we decided to run away... We would take a small bag and put some clothes in it and then head out. Of course, there was only one road from the lake into town. Along the way was a corral with a couple of horses and Kathy always liked horses so we would stop to visit horses and sure enough someone would find us and take us back home. I am not sure if Bud was the local Constable or if that was someone else, but if he found us that far from home he knew we had run away and he

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would arrest us and take us home. Good thing Dad was his friend and I guess we had “Get Outta Jail” cards.

I had a friend in the house behind us, I think his name was Ricky. We would play all the time. In the winter there was enough snow that my brother, Tommy, would make us a sled run between houses and we used an old refrigerator door for our sled. Tommy, being 10 years older than me also had the fun of shoveling the driveway of snow. He would pile it up and then hollow it out for us into an igloo. There was a lot of snow every year.

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One of the rare pictures of all four of us in 1959. Tommy, Kathy, Candy, and I.

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One time, I guess I was tired of playing with Ricky, so I went into the house and left him standing outside. He kept knocking at the door and the door had three glass panels. I yelled at him to go away and then ran at the door and pushed the door/glass with my hands and the glass broke. Mom jumped up and grabbed Ricky to take him to the bathroom to wash his eyes to make sure no glass was in them. I was standing there in the bathroom when we noticed the blood on the floor. My right bicep had a gash from the glass. Mom put a butterfly bandaid on it and I still have the scar today. Funny the only other scar I have, is from putting my left hand thru a door glass years later. See the 60's for details.

When I got almost big enough to learn to ride a bike, I found that riding was not hard but stopping was, so I usually just headed over to the grass and crashed by laying the bike down. I think part of the problem was that I was riding a bike that my feet did not touch the ground. I could get started by stepping on the pedal and swinging my leg over but then no way to stop. But I enjoyed riding and was determined not to let little things like crashing bother me.

The way our house was, the front was at the ground level in front but the back was lower as we had a concrete basement. When digging it out, Dad also had a lot more area dug out so we kinda had a yard in the back out of the basement. We had stairs in the side of it to get up to the actual ground level. The yard had a row

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of rocks from one side to the other. In the winter, Dad would start spraying water on one side up to the rocks and after a couple of days, built up an ice rink for us to skate on. The lake was usually mostly frozen but not safe to skate, but we skated most of the winter in our own skate rink in our yard.



Thanksgiving 1958 in our little house on Hickory Hills Lake.

In the summer, after learning to swim, Kathy and I would play on the lake and I would row the boat out a bit and we had a great time. I have thought I would like to visit that place someday, but have not made it yet. It was called Hickory Hills Lake.

I mentioned Bud before, he was a fun guy. He would stop by and I got my second driving lesson by sitting in his lap as we went

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driving down one of the dirt roads around the lake. He bought a new Lincoln every year. One time he came in and asked Mom to come out to look at his new Lincoln and she said it was nice but she did not like the color. Dad says he took it to the dealer and insisted on trading it for the exact same thing different color and the next time he came by she approved.

My older brother Tommy was in high school and he drove but never had his own car. I don't know how far the High School was but he never rode the bus, regardless of the weather he walked to school. But one time, I guess for a school function, he had the family car in town and after the function, I guess he was stopped by the police for speeding or something. Thinking he could get away, he drove thru a parking lot, only to find a ditch in the middle that he went into damaging the front bumper of the car. Dad was not happy and took it to a shop and the repair guys said well... Mostly it is the one side of the bumper. Most people don't know what bumpers look like anyway on old Chrysler's, so he cut off the bad side and then cut the other to match, and no one ever said anything about it or even noticed. Tommy was not too lucky driving. The lake had a small dump that we took the trash to and we had a small trailer that we would hook to the car to go dump. Tommy took it one day and ended up backing the trailer over the edge. Had to walk back and then get one of the guys with a tractor to go out and pull him back up from the dump.

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Dad being in the military, of course, had uniform requirements and when they first came out with the dress blues required he bought a set. They were not going to be mandatory for a few years but he felt if he got one right away he would get the most use out of it. That is the same uniform he was buried in with only minor alterations Mom made to it for him thru the years. While still at Ft Deven's, there was going to be a formal event and dance at the Officer's Club, so Dad had Mom buy a dress. It is what we always called her "Cinderella Dress" and the photo of her and Dad together is one of the best of their lives. I am not sure when or how down the years that dress disappeared but I think Mom had it up the 70-80's.

Speaking of dresses, while we were still in Okinawa, there was an event at the Officer's Club and Dad bought Mom one of the local dresses and it had a slit up one side. Now Mom was a pretty nice-looking gal in her time and Dad thought she would look great in the Oriental dress. Mom liked it but she took the sewing machine and "Zipped" the slit in the side to below the knee. The commander, one of Dad's friends, mentioned to Mom about the dress. He said the prettiest woman here, in the prettiest dress and you sewed up the side of it!!!

Well in the summer of 1959, Dad got orders for moving to England. My brother Tommy was going to go to West Point so he did not go with us. We took a boat for the crossing and Mom

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spent most of her time sick in the cabin. Much like when she went to Okinawa and back. Mom was not a sailor!! But Kathy and I were big enough to run around the ship on our own. There were planned activities for kids on board and movies and we went to those and then found many of our own activities to enjoy during the crossing.



So with our arrival in Harrogate, England, just outside of Menwith Hill Station where Dad was assigned, we started the 60's. The base was not even completed and we lived first in one and then another hotel to start with. Then Kathy and I went to a British School one year and we had two different houses. in town before they completed housing on base. More on that in the 60's....

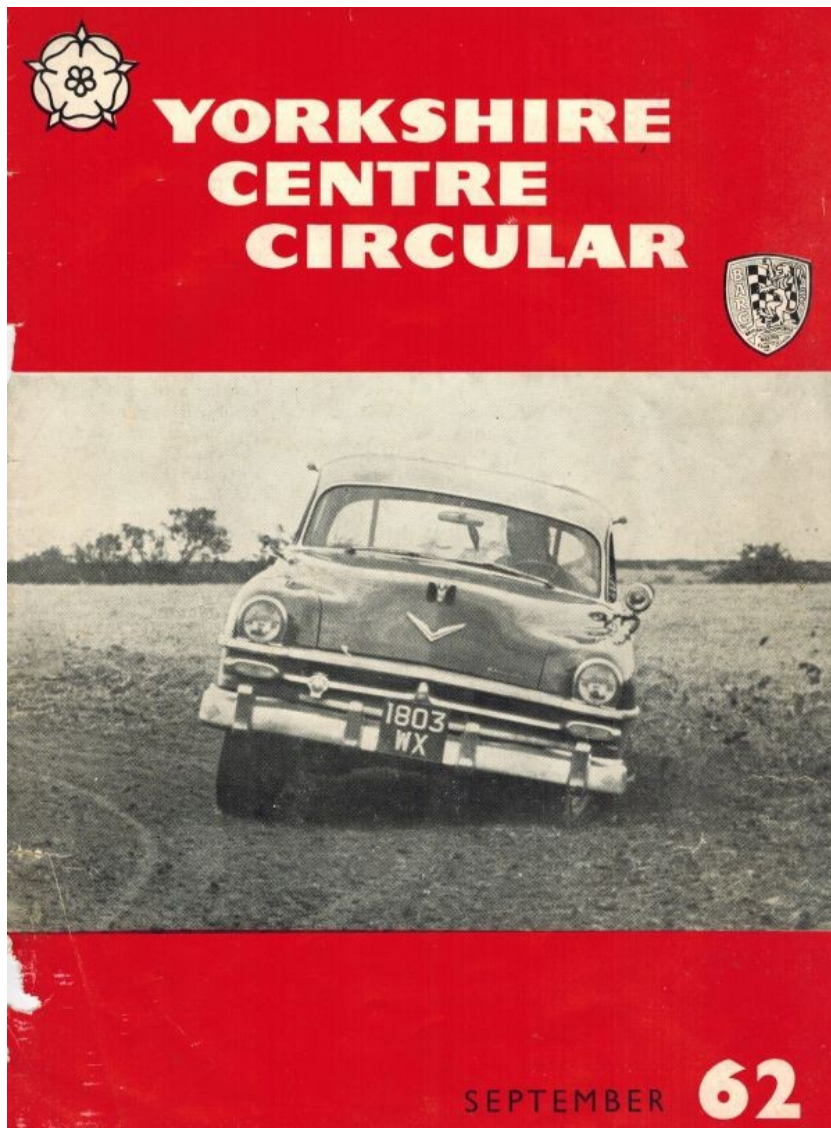
My whole life has been an adventure!!



In the summer 1959 we took the boat to England. Poor Mom spent most of her time in the cabin, seasick. Also for some reason, she was having an issue with her back some days she did not get out of bed. But Kathy and I ran around the ship pretty much as we wanted. There were movies for the kids and activities and just goofing off. We arrived in England and the base Dad was assigned was still being built. Only the operations building and some barracks for the soldiers were completed. So we started off living at the Grand Hotel in downtown Harrogate, in Yorkshire county in the Northern part of England. Candy was too small to run around with us, but Kathy and I had fun. We got to know the elevator operator, back then they had those. We could go outside a bit but not much for kids to do in the downtown area. Mom was having trouble with her back and was rarely out of the room.

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When we packed to move to England we shipped an old Chrysler to England. The deal was if you shipped something over, then you could ship something back, tax-free. The first thing Dad did when we arrived was to go and buy a 1959 Austin Healey Sprite. This was Dad's commute car until the mid 80's when he retired. TJ has the Sprite in Reno, Nevada right now and had it restored. More about the Sprite later.



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We only stayed a couple of weeks and then moved to the Green Park Motel. This place was great, right next to the city park that had a nice concrete pond that you could put model sailboats on and watch them cross the pond and then you would retrieve them. The park had a 9-hole golf course and you could rent two clubs and buy some balls and go play. We were never very good, but at 8 & 11 how good could we be? We ate most of our meals in the Motel Dining room, we had an assigned table and we got to know some of the British people at the tables by us and it was really fun. Mom would manage most days to come to the dining room but still had a lot of trouble with her back. Most of the British we met in the dining room were on vacation from somewhere and only staying a few days, so we got to meet a lot of them. We stayed most of the summer. Our waitress was very proper and she would be dishing something onto your plate and then ask "Sufficient" and I would say yes or ok. She would spoon on another helping and ask "Sufficient"? I was a little slow on the uptake but finally learned to say "Sufficient" sometimes before she actually gave me any. We did not order dinner, it was just served as what was there for each meal. I also learned to eat with a fork in my left hand and a knife in my right hand.

Candy was about 2 1/2 and Dad had a lot of fun teaching her nursery rhymes for her to recite to the British people in the dining room. The main one I remember is: 30 days have

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September, April, June and No Wonder, all the rest have peanut butter, except Grandma and she rides a bicycle. Of course, then the British people would look at her and try to understand, was there an issue with translation or something??? But finally would laugh and it got to be that anywhere we were, and she had a chance, she would recite one. Of course, the funniest part was that she had no idea that it was not right. I don't know how old she was until she realized those were not the right words. I know there were a couple of others but just cannot think what they were. Dad got a big kick out of teaching her these things and then prodding her to perform.

After leaving the Motel, we rented a duplex in Harrogate and it was school time so we were enrolled in a British School. The school required uniforms, the girls with skirts and the boys with cotton shorts, year-round. Not sure how I know this but if you misbehaved the headmaster had a switch and he would switch your bare legs once or twice for punishment. I guess may be a personal experience. Dad bought us a used piano and Kathy and I started taking lessons. We had lessons for 3 years. The piano we brought back to the USA and occasionally Kathy or I would play something if Mom requested. I memorized Mom's favorite, Black Hawk Waltz, and was able for years to just sit down and play it. Then people would ask me to play something else and oops I did not know anything else. When we moved from

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California, my older brother was leaving California to move to Houston, Tommy got the piano because he thought they would teach their girls to play. When I moved to Garland in 2006, they wanted it out of their dining room, so I brought it to my house and I had it until 2104 when I sold my house. I had checked the piano even though old was not really worth anything. They say that back in the 50's every piano maker in Europe would buy a generic inside of a piano and then make a cabinet and the majority of them were just local makers, not anyone famous. So I was happy to get \$200 for it and they had to pick it up to move it. It was a nice upright piano. Also while in the duplex Dad bought us a TV. But it was put away during the school year. Only brought out for the summer.

For some reason, Dad decided we would move to a house. It seems to me it was Blackstone street, but I might be confused with the fact the Blackstones lived across from us. My folks became good friends with them and they had a pretty 20's something daughter named Sandra. They had a black minor bird that talked and when Sandra came into the room the bird would wolf whistle and then say "Pretty Sandra". It was always so funny, never heard the bird ever say anything else. We went to the British school the whole school year 1959-1060 and it was a fun experience. My one English school buddy was Collin Greenwood. His dad ran a betting store. I guess we would call

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him a bookie. But it was legal, everyone bet on everything there. Collin's older brother was Terry as well, or actually Terence, but everyone called him Terry. Collin and I made leather wallets. I had mine for years. I wrote a few letters to Collin after coming back to the states and heard from him a few times but lost track of him even before I graduated from Tomales High School. The neighbors, the Blackstone's had Yorkshire Terriers and talked Mom and Dad into buying one. Nicky was his name and he was not a real small one but fun. Later we bought a female and Mom started breeding and raising them for sale. Mom sold dogs to all her friends and family as they became available. We had Nicky and Tina both up until 1971 as we were leaving California. Tina died of old age and Nicky had gotten out of the yard again and hit on the street.

In the summer of 1960, base housing had one circle completed. The circle had 4 plexes on each side with parking and then a center road for going straight thru. I think there were 4 on each side. We had the end one in the middle of the circle, so another on one side of us and two more to the left of us. A lot of the soldiers in Dad's unit were young lieutenants and wives with young kids or babies. Now Kathy was 11 and I was 9 and we were very sought-after babysitters. We got a quarter an hour. Our good friends, Danny and Marvel, had a new baby, Scotty and we frequently took care of him in their 4 plex while they went to

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Officer's Club for the night. They were in the 4 plex next to us. I think they eventually moved next door to us. I know that Mom and Dad decided to take a tour of Europe one summer in the Sprite with the car club Dad belonged to for racing. They were gone 7-10 days I guess. We kids just stayed in our 4 plex apartment alone and we would go next door to Danny's for meals, but we slept in our own beds and no adults in our apartment. Could you go to jail for that today??

Mom and Dad had a great trip, Dad was on a race track for the Hollands Queen's birthday race and we have pictures of his Sprite on the track. They had friends with them and Dad tells a story about losing their hotel. Dad and Mom had just gotten to the hotel and their friends had too. They had had a long drive to get there and were hungry and wanted to go out to dinner but of course, they were all in little cars. So they got a taxi and asked where was a good place to eat. They had a good dinner and then went out to get a taxi back and they looked at each other to ask where is our hotel?? No one knew and could not remember the name, since they had basically been following their tour guide's car across the country to get there. The wife of the other couple with Dad was French fortunately and after explaining to the taxi driver the issue, they decided to go drive out on the autobahn and then take the exit they thought they remembered and start looking for a hotel with their car in front of it.... Found it!!

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Dad had a lot of fun with the car club, he did races in farmer's fields, in the dirt, doing timed runs, and competing for a couple of weekends a month. He met a British racer, Richey that also had a Sprite. Richey had spare engines for both. On Friday afternoon Richey would come on base with his Sprite and the racing engines and in the base hobby shop, they would switch engines in both cars in one evening and then race the next day and then come back and switch engines back. The nice thing about the Sprites is that the engine and transmission come out together by just removing two bolts on each motor mount and the two bolts holding the transmission in the tunnel. Then it all comes out as one. Very simple for older cars. We would take the Chrysler and go watch and one time they talked Dad into running the Chrysler around the dirt track in the farmer's field. We have a great picture of it on the cover of the British racing magazine.

So as I was getting older and had a little cash from babysitting, I got a bicycle. Then I found a job with the post newspaper, delivering the daily bulletin around the housing circle. By then there were two circles. They also had finished the school, so we went to the school on base in the fall of 1960. Most classes had 3 grades in each room with one teacher. My teacher was Miss Massachusetts, and I was a favorite of hers. I could tell her I put my assignment on her desk, but she must have lost it and she would give me a grade anyway. I was always fine with getting

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C's. I did not have time to study for A's.

Of course, all the kids knew one another and we had some great school parties. At one Halloween party, I got together with one of the twin girls in my housing circle. Everyone kinda knew what costumes everyone was wearing, so she and I traded costumes and played at being quiet when we arrived and no one could figure out who we were. We had a movie theater by the school and there were matinee movies for the kids every Saturday morning for a quarter. I usually had a girlfriend I would take to the movies, big spender I was. I spent a lot of time with my sister Kathy and got to know her girlfriends, so that kept me in a steady supply.

More about Nicky our Yorkshire Terrier. We would play with him and then we thought it was funny to turn him into a lion. We would hold him up and encourage him to bark and try to bite. It got to be that Kathy would hold him and make him protect her, and I would not like it and would be mean and Nicky would go crazy trying to bite me. Of course, this eventually got us in trouble. Kathy had gone to the post office and being an attractive teenage girl on a base of soldiers, one young soldier came up to talk to her and she was holding Nicky. He reached out to pet Nicky's head and Nicky made mince meat out of his fingers. He pulled back and was almost crying while Kathy was apologizing. She made sure to warn people to not touch her or Nicky after that

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if she was holding him. Another time during the Christmas season, Mom and Dad had gone to the Officer's Club for a party. We thought we were helping by refilling Nicky's bowl with milk. Not long after we found him stumbling on stairs trying to go up to bed with Kathy. He could hardly walk!!! We took all the cushions off the couch and made him a padded cell so he would not hurt himself. When Mom and Dad got home they wanted to know what happened to their spiked eggnog?? Guess we know now... For being a small dog Nicky had a big ego. We spent a lot of time trying to un-teach Nicky these behaviors, but it was not easy. When we were back in California years later, he would get out of the yard and run around uptown Tomales. One time we found him and he had attacked a bigger dog. When we found him, he was hanging on to the cheek of a German Sheppard that was trying to eat him and Nicky was trying to eat the big dog too... He was chewed up and bit and Mom bandaged him up and then cut one of her nylons up to use as a tube cover to put over his whole body so he did not pull the bandages off.

I did have some buddies and we played games like throwing the tennis ball over the top of the 4 plex. Not that this always worked out real well, I recall paying for a window or two. We also liked to play Mumbley-peg. But we did not usually put a stick in the ground to throw to. We just kneeled in front of each other and threw between the other person's knees, don't flinch!! We never

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had any serious injuries. Wearing long pants usually prevented any actual bleeding. But of course, as Candy got older she wanted to always play with her older brother. Not what I liked to do when I had buddies to play with. But she insisted on playing Mumbley-peg with us one day. We told her no, that she would flinch and get hurt. No, she said she was a big girl and would not. And of course, she was wearing a dress. So you can see how this might go. I tried to explain to Mom it was not my fault, that she insisted on playing and she flinched and it was just a little blood, the pocket knife bounced off her knee. But Candy ran into the house crying and pointing at the little bit of blood.

Dad was a big fan of hunting and joined the British hunting club. He bought an old Mainlicker Shounaur 30-06 rifle and took it apart and gave it several good coats of varnish that he baked on several times in Mom's oven. He used that rifle for all his hunting his whole life. I think Billy, my brother-in-law has it now. Dad felt that we should learn to shoot as well and he bought a 22-pellet rifle. You would bend open the barrel and place a 22 pellet in it and snap it shut and it was ready to fire. In the backyard, we started using a plastic lemon we would toss in the grass and then try to shoot it. We played this in the backyard a lot. When the base had built a shotgun and skeet range, we used to go out there to shoot as well. They started buying metal pigeons instead of clay pigeons. Then we would go retrieve them

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and they would get reused to save money. Dad had taken one of those and had it hung on the back wire fence behind the house and we would shoot at it and it would ding when we hit it. We never thought much of the fact that beyond the wire fence was the main road coming into the base. Well, it was just a pellet gun, how much could that hurt??

I am not sure why, maybe because Dad got promoted, but we moved to a pretty nice duplex, not in the housing circle. Dad was a CWO, Chief Warrant Officer. This meant he was not a commissioned officer like the others. He had been Enlisted rank and then promoted to CWO. This gave rights to use the NCO Clubs or Officer Clubs. This was good because most events in the Officer's Clubs were for adults. Most events in the NCO clubs were for kids and NCOs. There were always bigger and better and more events at NCO clubs since so many more Enlisted Soldiers than Officers. We took full advantage of this on every base. Anyway, this new duplex was nicer, more sq ft and it was closer to the PX, school, and theater. Kathy and I took advantage of that and got get be around to shop and be more independent.

My job ended delivering the Daily Bulletin, they just put the bulletin out for people to pick up at PX and Commissary as those places were finally finished. But then I found that the Commissary would allow us older kids to bag groceries for tips. This was a great job. Though it was supposed to be

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complimentary, the moms were great tippers and instead of spare change, usually, it was a dollar or so. This was a great source of income until the soldiers found out how much we were making, so they took over the bagging of groceries when not doing their military job. We were not happy to get pushed out.

Mom and Dad met a lot of English families and I remember one family lived in Leeds, not too far from us and some afternoons on weekends, we would visit and it was so fun. They had a small movie theater in their attic. So we would watch movies or home slides that we might bring over to share. Mrs. Hotsgon was our piano teacher and we took lessons all 4 years we were in England. She actually came to California one year on vacation to visit us in the late 60's. We took trips into Scotland to try to find some McPherson plaid for Mom to make the girls dresses and Dad a tie. It is hard to find the right plaid. Most Scottish names have an "A" in them somewhere. Like "MacPherson" or "MacPhearson" or "McPhearson". Not having any "A"s is a rare name. Dad tells the story that when England and Scotland were first sending people to the new world, most were crooks or outcasts. So the Scottish people took all the "A's" out of the names so they would know them if ever they returned. When I did my DNA tests and worked on the Ancestry website, I did not find we had much Scottish in us, mostly European, German, and such. In finding connections and names of ancestors, I found

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names sometimes with and without the “A” in it so it might have been like many, when coming into the USA their names were not written correctly. I traced back to the early 1800’s for my family both Mom and Dad.

In our travels around the countryside, we always took the Sprite. We had a small seat that rested on the tunnel and Candy sat there. Behind the seats, Dad had cut out part of the metal back to just before where the top was attached. This gave Kathy and me a place to sit with our backs against the side of the car and our feet across towards the other. So we toured England with 5 people in a two-seater Sprite. It was funny usually only Mom drove the Chrysler and you have to remember that meant the steering wheel was on the wrong side of the car. Well, it was on the Sprite too because Dad bought it to bring home. But being small it was easier to see oncoming traffic. But in the Chrysler, Mom virtually drove with her side of the car in the ditch and always with one of us riding shotgun and watching for anything coming down the road. If a truck/lorry was coming she would virtually stop and be off the side of the road. It was not very often she would drive off the base. It was funny too, on base I think we drove American style.

I know, I keep getting off the track of living in England. I must say it was a very rewarding and educational time for me. I saw the “Sound Of Music” for the first time as a stage show the

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family went to in London. I don't recall if we toured London or saw the changing of the guard back then. But I have many times since returning to London. One of my favorite stops if I get across the pond. Eating "Fish & Chips" was a big thing for us too. After returning to Northern California, almost anytime we went to San Fransisco, we would pull off at Sausalito, California at the HR Salt Fish and Chips place. They tried to be so authentic that they had wrapping paper designed like newspapers. In England, most fast food was wrapped in day-old newspaper, well at least all the Fish and Chips were.

Before leaving England, Dad had to sell the Chrysler, he had shipped it over so that he could ship the Sprite home free of duty and taxes. So one weekend he goes to the PX and buys a case of spray paint. Then in our carport, he proceeds to sand any rust and then give the Chrysler a spray paint job. He sold it to a GI on base that loved it because he could load up a bunch of friends and get around the base or anywhere. It was reportedly still being sold or handed down from GI to GI even into the mid 70's.

Our return was much faster than getting there. We flew into JFK and Mom did not like flying much better than cruising but it was only a few hours, not days...

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When we got to Tomales, California and our household goods showed up in a moving van, they opened the back doors of the van and the Sprite was there sitting at about a 45-degree angle in the back of the shipping van.

Are you still friends with any of your classmates from grade school?



Well, I have to admit, not really. There are a few on Facebook that have friended me and I see a little of what they are doing. None have ever made any effort to get in touch or stay in touch. The few times I have returned to Tomales, I have found a couple of them, but they seemed to not really care one way or another. My best friend in school knew I worked for a casino in Reno and he and his wife visited Reno almost every year and never once reached out to say hello....

And likewise, my buddies in the military, I have only kept in touch with a couple of them and mostly it is I come to visit, text or call them. I have one buddy from the military, Dave that does stay in touch and texts me and we have met places when he was close by. I did get on a Facebook page for the old unit but not

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many there that I know.

I actually go on Facebook a couple of times a year and unfriend people I do not really know. I don't accept random friend requests, just because they are friends with someone I know. Keeps me under 200 friends and even then 1/3 of them are just acquaintances, and I really don't know much about them. I have a lot of the cast and crew from Carnival that I keep up with on Facebook.

Mostly my interactions are with my kids and their families and I am good with that....

Life is what you make it and this is what I make mine...

Are you a regular at any of your local restaurants or cafes? What is that relationship like?



Most recently I am a semi-regular at Aspen Creek in Tyler, Texas. They have a rewards program of their own plus I use the American Airlines Advantage Dining program. When traveling, if the place has a rewards program or participates in the American Airlines Rewards, then I will stop in. I like McDonald's for breakfast and anywhere convenient or that has a special for lunch. I have several on a list of never going again. But to me, food is not a big issue. I want something they can fix fast and cheap. Don't like standing in line, so the ones with apps so I can order and walk up to get it works for me.

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Not being a foodie type, I am not a fan of places that try to impress you by cooking in front of you or finishing mixing, chopping, or whatever at the table. When on cruises, I pass up the steak house and other specialty restaurants in favor of the dining room or buffet.

I like almost any of the Pizza places when in the mood and they have a special and easy-to-pre-order. I enjoy pizza on thin crusts and lots of meats. If they have a rewards program, then I will use them as well unless I have gotten a nice frozen pizza from Walmart.

I like buffets but I eat too much, so try to avoid them unless it is free! Although I do find Golden Corral to be a nice buffet and has decent prices, but I usually wait until Veterans Day and get in free for being a Veteran.

Anything, quick, cheap and I am passing by is fine...

What is one of your favorite drinks?



Favorite drinks are really hard to nail down. I have had a very strange history with alcohol. When I was young, I did not really drink and my first wife and I thought having Mogan David grape wine was drinking... Then I got divorced at 30 and started going out to clubs and pretty much drank whatever I could. I found I did not want to drink beer, and I never had since. I found mixed drinks good. But it was funny in the time that I was doing background investigations I once asked someone what did they like, gin and tonic or rum and coke? They said there was no point in mixing good alcohol with stuff. So I learned that some drank stuff straight. I never really cared for that. In fact for the most part I asked for tall glasses so I got more of the other stuff than alcohol. Occasionally did some shots but not much. Then in the military, I learned to drink more since that is all we really had to do on base. In Kansas, I found that rum went with a lot of things so I kept a bottle handy. When I went to Germany, I started

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working for the military clubs and found that slowed down my drinking most of the time, since I did not drink working... But then there were some fantastic “After parties”, one of which I almost froze to death. I was mixing drinks for everyone playing bartender, but when someone did not like what I made, I could not be wasting it. Later I managed to walk away from the house in some town in Germany and got lost. I ended up sitting at a bus stop bench and went to sleep. My friends spent a lot of time looking for me but did not find me. Finally, I woke up because it was cold. Mid-winter in Germany, snow a foot deep. When I managed to find the house and go in they asked where I had been and I told them, “Taking a nap.” Then I realized I was cold. So cold they put me under blankets and had a space heater blowing on me. I was still cold at noon when I had to go back to work....

But really running the club limited the drinking. Got out of the service and ended up having my kids with me so that curbed most drinking too. Then back to Germany and running the Rod n Gun Club, so not much drinking but I found I like Bailey’s shots....

So years later now, when I am somewhere to drink I don’t much think about it. Whatever looks good. On a cruise one of the cast members asked me what kind of martini I liked and I told them I had never had one. She got me started on the Spicy Chipolata. But unless I am on a cruise and happen to be sitting at the

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martini bar, I don't think about it.



So I can not say that I have a favorite drink, but I know I DO NOT want anything to drink with food. One Cruise Dad and I were on I got hooked on White Russians, but that was only because there was a cute waitress in the dining room that was Russian and it was kind of a joke every night after dinner I would order a White Russian and she would bring it and let me know, she was my white Russian and we had a good time chatting a few after dinner.



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Since the wine coolers came out and the Smirnoff has so many great flavors, I keep them around the house. I keep some brand of Irish Cream, just not Bailey's, they are too pricey. I also found Angry Orchard is good and it is usually available in bars.

If I am doing shots, I like a Copper Camel, basically Bailey's and Butterscotch Snapps. Pretty sweet and fun to see if they pour it right.



So maybe that is the combination of my favorite things to drink. I am glad I discovered years ago, I don't need to drink to have fun. Drinking is not something that is a problem for me or my liver. I also don't need to get a drink before I start dancing. I am happy to just head to the dance floor and find a partner on the way.

What were your friends like in high school?



Well being military brats, my older sister and I were mostly best friends. But in 1963 when we returned to the USA and moved to Tomales, she started High School and I was in 7th grade. So I did look a bit for friends but just not used to having someone other than family. Also, I was very awkward having grown up on base and did not play softball or football. So I was a bit of an outsider and I did not mind that.

But I did have one friend, Glenn Parks, but mostly because we were the only two that actually lived in Tomales. The school had to go 20 miles north and 20 miles south to get kids for the school. The high school had 200 kids, and only 32 were in my grade. Glenn played football and so it was not easy to keep him as a friend. Gary was in the Band so that was easier. We all liked to push the envelope though. In 8th grade, we used Glenn's father's keys for the school and snuck in one night to get the

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answers to a math test to hand out to classmates. After the test one girl felt bad and said she cheated and then got us all in trouble and an F for the test.

In high school, Glenn and I continued our little jokes. We had a couple of other guys help us and we moved a teacher's VW bug over a bit between two rocks. She was backing and jockeying for a while to get it out. Our math teacher lived out at the beach and Glenn was pretty good at math and I was not, but we decided to have some fun with the math teacher. We would go to the teacher's house in the evening and Glenn would go in and talk about math issues and I would open the hood of the teacher's car and take a spark plug wire off or some other minor thing to see if the teacher made it to school the next day. He was never late and he never said a word. After doing it a couple of times and having no fun results, we stopped.

There were a couple of guys close to town. Gary had the newspaper route and was in the band. I was in the band too. He would stop by and he let me drive his Honda S90 once or twice. I then wanted a motorcycle but was not allowed to have one. Gary was also in the band so we had events together. It turned out, I was the Drum Major for the marching band for my Jr/Sr year.

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David was a nice guy on the other side of town but kind of quiet and seemed to pretty much follow Gary around, so we got to be friends too. When Gary's brother graduated and went into the

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service, Gary inherited the Mustang and we all enjoyed that.

Most of my friends in high school were just kids that hung out at the heater radiator in the morning before class. I never had any girlfriends in school. I had a couple of them I was sweet on and hung out trying to get a little attention but it never worked. I was just another one of the gang that hung out at the radiator.

Glenn was the only one that lasted clear thru High School, he would stop by as he went to take care of the lower ranch animals they had, so he would pick me up to have help. He also was driving more than I was and had a 57 Chevy that was nice. We went to the 4H club down at Civic Center about 30-40 miles away. I was not usually allowed to go that far.

After high school I did not hear much from him, he also was big in FFA and I never got into that either. He went to a big college in southern California as well. My only real involvement in school was in the band. We were a marching band and did the half times for football and sometimes went to basketball games too. Then in the spring, we went to parades all around Northern California and once to a college football bowl game in Southern California. They had invited a lot of marching bands to do the halftime show. It was great fun.

What is the best job you've ever had?



I have had four jobs that were the best and it is a toss-up which one was the BEST of them.

Blue Springs Trout Farm - I took the opportunity to move to Northern Arkansas and run the Trout Farm for Dad. The 100 acres was a great place to be in the country. With a house on the hill overlooking the valley and ponds. Crisp mornings and taking care of the trout were not a lot of work. There was no chasing them around a field, herding them into corrals, lifting heavy bales of hay, and watering in the winter when it was cold. In the morning you just got a few scoops of trout food and watch the trout boil the top of the water and see how pretty the colors of a Rainbow trout was. It was a fish-out operation and we got to meet a lot of interesting people who came by the trout farm to fish and catch some trout.



I got really good at cleaning the trout. So good I started selecting and cleaning 8-10 oz trout to sell to some store in town. The trout did not take a lot of care during the day, mostly sat in the shade and watched a few big trout in the upper pond of the runways where the spring came out. There was one 2-3 lb female trout that would come up to the surface and liked to have her stomach rubbed. Also, we got to have the fun of a little target shooting, or actually bird shooting. A couple of types of birds like to fish and eat our stock and I worked on keeping their numbers down. It was fun and a great place to live.

US Army - I had recently gotten divorced and had been looking for the recruiting station for the French Foreign Legion but I guess they don't recruit in the USA. I found the Army recruiter and then was having second thoughts. I am not big on crawling

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thru mud, marching 20 miles and being on the ground in a zone with nothing but maybe body armor. But then they told me there was also the Armor Division. I would get \$6000 for graduating from basic armor training. I could go in as an E3, which gave me a leg up on most of the other recruits. Of course, being 31 instead of 18-21 got me ahead of things as well. They also said that I did not have to go to the regular "Basic Training", and that there was one-stop training at Ft Knox where we had our basic for armor and started training on tanks pretty much the first day. He promised the furthest I would have to march or walk, was from the Armory to the motor pool. The only bad thing we had at armor basic was going to the gas chamber, but that only lasted about 30 minutes. I graduated 2nd Trainee in the Company and 2nd highest score in our PT training. Mostly we did 60 pushups, 60 sit-ups, and a 2-mile run. I actually liked the running and with my long legs, I got in a pace and could go on much more than 2 miles. My bonus got me a Chev pickup and off to Ft Riley, Kansas for my first assignment. Promoted to E4 right away and got Corporal stripes. Kansas was fun. Then assigned to Germany and to a small town Ansbach, near Nuremberg, Germany. I was having a lot of fun in Germany, learning to ski, and traveling to Austria, Switzerland, France, and Spain. I did do a little work on my tank in the motor pool.

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I started working for the Enlisted club at night as a manager. Got promoted to E5 Sgt and was tank commander basically. I was on the Platoon Sgt tank and he was only there when we actually rolled out of the motor pool to go have fun. I was doing so well that I was moved to the NCO Club for my fun night job. It was fun to meet everyone and have extra cash. I was working for the Non-Appropriated Funds that ran the clubs. They wanted me full-time, so when re-enlistment came around I said no and they released me from my unit to manage the Officer's Club for over 6 months before I got out of the Army. Unfortunately, I did not get another assignment right away so I had to come home.

Wiesbaden Rod & Gun Club - About 1 year after leaving the Army, I got a call and asked did I want to work in Germany again. Of course, I did, so got to go back to Germany and had complete control of running and operating the Rod & Gun Club with a small bar and pistol range. We also had a stream leased from the Germans for US soldiers to fish and we controlled that too. I got

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to meet a lot of locals because since the club was off base we could allow the Germans in and they taught us the hunting and fishing regulations for Germany.



The kids got to come over as well. Wendy spent two years with me and TJ spent one year. He did not care for being there much. I met my second wife, Gaby and life was very good. We went skiing a lot and she got a job in the Public Relations Office at the base across the river. She was the PR person for auto racing that was using the airfields and it was a lot of fun to have unlimited access to the races that weekend.

Jack Henry & Assoc - I had gotten divorced for the 3rd time while living in Reno, Nevada, and was feeling I needed a new start in life. Also, Dad had another knee operation and Mom was needing help caring for him. TJ and I took turns spending 7-10 days in Hornbeck, LA to help. While I was there I was on my laptop looking for a new job. I was not moving to LA but I had been in Texas years before and always wanted to live in Dallas, so I

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started job searching. I was lucky and found JHA and they had me take a test online and talked to me twice and hired me. They paid for the move from Reno to Dallas as well. Paid me a lot more than what I was paid in Reno, with great insurance, and 19 days of vacation the first year. The work was easy for me and I was soon the team lead. I used all my vacation every year and made enough money to travel to Europe almost every year. I took a couple of cruises each year. Had a nice house with a pool and hot tub. Had a nice Goldwing and Jaguar to drive. Life was good....

Those were great jobs but then depending on other life circumstances I ended up leaving them.

Did you ever move as a child? What was that experience like?



I moved 6 times before I was 12 years old.

I was born at Hamilton AFB and at that time we lived in Tomales. Then Dad was transferred to Okinawa for a little over a year I think and we were over there. I have heard stories of things I did but don't really remember any of them.

Then we left and came back to Tomales for a couple of years. Again, there are only stories I heard from my family about that.

Then Dad was assigned to Ft Devens, MA near Lunenburg, MA from late 1956 until the summer of 1959. I know I enjoyed being on Hickory Hills where Dad had bought a lot and we built a small house just a couple of lots off the lake. It was not a big lake but it was fun. Swimming and fishing in the summer and ice skating in

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the winter. Winters were pretty severe, my brother would shovel enough snow to build us igloos. Dad would spray water on part of the backyard to freeze and make us a skating ring close to the house. I had one friend there a couple of houses away. I was never really concerned about moving though, it was just going to be another adventure. Dad was transferred to Menwith Hill Station in Harrogate, Yorkshire UK. I remember the crossing on the ship and the fun we had. Mom, not so much fun, she was sick most of the time, and she is not a boat person.

Arriving in Harrogate we stayed first in a couple of hotels and that was really fun. No chores and all we could eat. Lots of fun new people to meet. Then we were in a duplex for a while and then a house. I went to an English school the first year because they had not really finished any housing or schools on base yet. Once we moved on base, it was great. You could do almost anything and plenty of room to ride my bike. Not a lot of kids on base and my sister Kathy and I were the older ones on the base.

In the summer of 1963, Dad got transferred back to Tomales. It was nice we had a house there already he had bought when we lived there in the 50's and we had a horse and boat and a lot to do on the house. That move was a great adventure too. We flew from London to NYC where Dad bought a 57 Chrysler Imperial and we first took a trip up to Hickory Hills to renovate and prepare that little house to be sold. Then we traveled across the

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country to visit relatives in Missouri and Kansas and Arizona. We stopped at most of the big attractions on the way. Back then cars did not have AC but they had a metal tube-shaped device that we put water in and then we put it in the window or the front passenger door and rolled up the window to hold it in place. Then as you drove it kinda worked like a swamp cooler. The Chrysler had a big motor and really cruised. One time Mom mentioned something about not appearing to be going that fast across the desert in New Mexico or Arizona and Dad said well can't go much faster, we are doing 110 mph already.

I guess our arrival in Tomales was the biggest issue for me from all the moves. I was going into 7th grade and knew no one. All the kids at school were kids of farmers or something like that. Not really impressed with Army Brats, so I had a little trouble getting worked into the school. Of course, having been overseas for the last 4 years, I knew nothing about football or baseball, so I started out as a nerd. In schools, before I had always had my big sister in the school with me and that helped but here, she was starting high school. So I felt a little isolated to start with. But that was when I started to develop and still have satisfaction with being on my own and making my own fun. I did not need friends to make my life happy, I made my life happy.

So I can say moving was not much of an issue, I took it in stride and it became a way of life. When I turned 40 and moved to

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Reno, Nevada I could count almost 40 places I had lived and almost 40 jobs I had... I slowed down a bit after that but not much...

Now at 70 I have added 15 more jobs and 16 more addresses where I have lived. But now that I am retired, I guess it is done. I hope to live here in Rusk, TX till the end and I am pretty used to sleeping till 9-10 in the morning if I want and going to bed anytime from 10 pm to 2 am. Pretty much do as I want and not sure a job with hours and times to be somewhere would work for me anymore.

Who inspires you?



I have not always thought this person was inspiring and one to look up to.... But I have to say that my father, Jack McPherson, was the most inspiring person I have known. I found that the older I got the smarter he got. He had an amazing life and the things he did for this country and the services he worked for were legendary. His drive to get things done and take on any project was very inspiring.

In his personal life again there was nothing Dad could not do. He repaired anything on the house, including electrical, plumbing, and outdoor projects. Dad was always wanting to learn something new. He had some issues with trimming trees in Louisiana and his solution, in his 80's, was to learn tree climbing.

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Sometimes, I get in trouble thinking that any project can be done and it seems that I can get it done, but it is not up to the standard at times when finished. But I strive to do the best I can and try to remember what Dad would have thought or done to complete a project. Even in his retirement and living in the Senior Centers, he had ideas for me and helped me finish many jobs with suggestions of what it needs to get done.

He was trying very hard to make it to 100 but only got to 99 and a month.

What are some of your childhood accomplishments?



I can't think of anything that I would call an accomplishment except that I managed not to be put up for adoption....

At a young age, 1 or 2 I started playing no hands and insisted on our Okinawan maid feeding me. Then about 2 while sitting in my car seat, I kicked the car out of gear and it rolled down a driveway and then across the road and into a neighbor's barn.

I was a biter, it had been Ok for me to bite my older sister to make her leave me alone, but when I bit a neighbor girl... well that was a different story.

At about 8, my friend was on the other side of the front door that had glass panels and I kept telling him to go home and running at the door hitting the glass. Of course, the glass broke and Mom

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was busy trying to see that there was no glass in his eyes and finally saw I had a gash on my upper right arm.

Then at 10-11, I was throwing a baseball over our two-story row house and ended up breaking a window. I managed to put an ice pick in my little sister's knee playing Mumblety-peg. One New Year I ended up giving our little Yorkshire terrier Dad's leftover eggnog that was heavily spiked. The poor dog could hardly walk. We built him a cage from our couch cushions for the night so he would not hurt himself.

At 14 I refused to let Mom get close enough to punish me for something, I forget what I had done and she said fine, wait till your father gets home. I stayed hiding out down in the creek till almost dark. Finally came up to the house, I was hungry. Dad was sitting at the table with a new deep-sea fishing rod. He says, "Your mother told me how mean you were to her today" Is that any way to treat your mother?? Well, I bought this new fishing rod for you, so I am going to give it to you but I want you to remember how mean you were to your mother every time you use it and you never treat her like that again.

My little sister was usually bothersome to my older sister and me. We would be playing darts and my little sister wanted to play but she was too small and could never hit the dart board. It was just hanging on my wall, with no backing. Well since we would

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not let her play she would try to steal the darts from the board. We told her not to and every time she tried, of course, I threw another dart. More than once, I ended up putting a dart in the back of her hand.

One night while shining Dad's shoes, I found a little 32-cal pistol in the closet. I was just looking and playing with it and then pointed it at the couch and pulled the trigger!!! I had no idea it was loaded. I was really quiet for a minute, maybe no one heard that. But then Mom and Dad from the living room asked, "Terry, everything alright?" Sure I said, but of course, they came in and looked. The laundry was on the couch and I had shot a hole in my slacks. Dad says, why did you do that? I said I did not, it just went off!!!

My older sister and I seemed always seemed to get mad at each other for something when the folks were out for the evening. One night chasing her for doing something to me I pushed off the washroom door and as I turned the corner chasing her and ended up putting my hand threw the glass panel in the door.

Dad had rented the gas station across the street from our house so my older sister and I would have something to do and make money in the little town we lived in. I don't know if you remember that the old oil cans were actually paper like cans with metal tops and bottoms. I found it interesting to take the top off

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an empty one and then half-fill it with gas and light it. Watch it slowly burning the sides of the can as the gas level went down.

At 15, after my older sister had the accident and my younger sister was in hospital from the car wreck, Dad caught me one night driving one of the cars. He and Mom had headed off to see my younger sister in the hospital and as soon as they were gone. I was running our gas station and I would lock up and go up to the house and get one of our other cars and take a drive, teaching myself to drive. No learner's permit or anything.

One night when I returned to the gas station there was Dad in the driveway. They had forgotten something. He asked where I had been and why was I driving. I tried to push the story that a guy came in and needed gas to take down to his car down the road. But when Dad asked to see the gas can, that fell apart. He had me take the keys up to the house and bring them back to him. The next day we were at the house when I came home for lunch. He took me to the bank and took half my savings out of the bank, about \$200. He did not say what for. That night while working at the gas station a red MGTD pulled up to the pumps and Dad got out and said not to be driving in his car again. The MGTD was mine, but I could only drive it across the street from the house driveway to the gas station driveway. I put a lot of miles on that car doing that.

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When I did finally have a car and a license, I was not allowed to just drive anywhere. My buddy and I used to go to 4H and it was about 45 miles. Mostly we took my buddy's car and he drove. But as time went on, I had a girl I liked and wanted to pick her up on the way. Well, my buddy would not agree to me taking the family Travel all for the trip. So I asked the folks if I take it and my buddy and I could give my buddy a ride for a change and they agreed. But when I got home they were up and asked how my buddy liked riding with me and I said oh great..... Well that is strange, shortly after you left another friend of yours called asking for a ride and we called up to your buddies to catch you and his parents said that I had not come up there, that their son had taken his own car. I did not get to take the car again.

I am not sure it was an accomplishment, but for my Junior and Senior year, I was the Drum Major for the marching band. I think it was mostly that Miss Gibson when I was a freshman tried to teach me the trumpet, then Sophomore year I carried the bass

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drum. I think sending me to Drum Major Camp in the summer before Junior year was just so she could give up trying to teach me to play anything.

Well, these are just the easy things that I can remember. I know if I did not get one or two spankings a week, then most likely I was sick in bed. For me, it had always been any good lie rather than the truth about anything that happened. Nothing was ever my fault!!

So like I said, I think my main accomplishment was not being put up for adoption.

How did you decide when to change jobs?



Well, changing jobs was usually because of some circumstances not actually deciding to change jobs. Dad was fortunate in that after getting out of the Army after the war, he saw not a lot of opportunities with everyone out of service and back home. So he shortly went back in and found a home and something he liked doing that he was good at.

Not all of us are so lucky.... Of course, I started off pumping gas because I needed a job. But when I started college and studied police science, I decided to get into security work since I was too young to be a police officer. Then as Dad was leaving California and I was still too young to be a police officer, we decided to move to Tucson, AZ but found we did not like it there that much so we ended up in San Antonio, TX. There I just looked for anything to do to make money. Then a friend helped me get into George C Vaughan Building supplies as the stock clerk. I liked

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that but it was not police work. So I got first accepted by Texas Highway Patrol but they did not have any training classes starting and since I had only been in the state a few months they wanted me more stable. San Antonio PD was not so picky. They put me to work in the Property Room until time for training. Then after training, it became evident that actual police work was not for me, but they kept me as a civilian investigator for applicants into the PD. While doing that I had an offer to run a security office in Houston and it appeared to be a good move. Well in less than a year, it turned out not to be such a good deal. The business was not big enough to really be able to staff and the owner was looking for me to invest in it and I had no resources for that.

So back in San Antonio I found an investigative job with Equifax (Retail Credit) and enjoyed that and was good at it. We did cases for insurance companies when they were selling health or life insurance. They needed someone besides an insurance agent to vet the clients.

So life was going along and I was helping Dad with the farm in Devine. But then he bought the Trout Farm in Arkansas and needed someone reliable to run it until he retired. So my wife and I decided to make a move. Of course, things did not work out with my wife and not really making any money at Trout Farm. Just a free place to stay and food and cars. So I went into Sheriff's

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office a bit and then got my own gas station. But things not working out, was when I moved to Springfield and found O'Reilly Automotive warehouse where I really enjoyed the work. But with finances and feeling out of sorts, 30, single, and broke, the Army offered cash and prospects so I decided then to make the move.

I had many more jobs than mentioned here but hard to get them all included.

While I was in Germany where the Army was letting me get to see all of Europe and learn to ski and many other fun things, a friend that ran the NCO club wanted me to work as the night manager when not playing Army. So life changed again and I decided to bust out of Army and start managing clubs. That was a lot of fun. In Jan 1988 I got to start running the Rod and Gun Club in Wiesbaden, Germany, and life was good again. I met my second wife and we got married. But then after 3 years and the USA starting to go to war in the desert, my wife and I decided to get back inside the USA.

As we moved to Reno, I was turning 40 and I could count over 40 jobs I had in the past. I had over 40 addresses as well. But I still found there were things I had yet to do in life.

We moved to Reno and I found work as I could, sometimes security and several other temp things until I saw that the Casinos all needed computer operators to run the AS400. I took a

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class at the local JC and got employed at Fitzgerald's. After several years, I saw that hardware was moving too fast and I was better on the software side. So Eldorado Casino offered an apprentice position that in 90 days turned into a full programmer slot. I was doing well but when it came time for them to give me that kind of raise to get me into the wages of real programmers, we had 9/11 and resources were not there and I got little or no raise. However, I found the Peppermill had a programmer opening and it paid what I wanted, so I decided to make that move.

Again I had several other jobs for short times as needed but again too hard to try to include here.

After a few years and the third divorce, I was feeling like the town was not really for me. Circumstances turned out that Mom and Dad needed some help in Hornbeck, LA but I was not moving to Louisiana but found a job in Dallas. They paid to move me, gave me a big raise and great benefits. So again, I made the move.

So I guess it was not so much that "I Decided To Change Jobs" but that life circumstances either offered opportunities or closed doors in life and I found I was not happy in life and I decided to make a change for that. Of course, that meant changing jobs.

Did you have a job while you were in high school?



While I was in school had a couple of jobs. The first one was taking care of a section of the yard. Keeping weeds out and making it look nice. Then Dad rented the gas station on the corner across from the house and Kathy and I ran it on nights and weekends. Mom took care of it during the day. It was fun to be in the station for the afternoon and evening. We would study in the evenings in between customers and friends hanging out. Made us feel a little independent not being in the house being watched after.

When Kathy passed, then Grandpa Mac moved up to be with us for a while. He and Hope, his wife, lived in the house that was part of the gas station. Having Grandpa there gave us more experiences and a chance to learn more about our family and things. I think they stayed till the end of summer and then back to Arizona for them.

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Then after we closed that station, I worked at two different 76 Gas Stations in Petaluma. Pumping gas was fun and I enjoyed it. I had a girlfriend by then and she and her family would come up from Antioch where they lived and stop by the station to say Hi! I started having more independence as well since I now had a reason to be in Petaluma on a regular basis. So having a job was a good thing.

Has your relationship with your siblings changed over the years?



Well, things have not changed much. My brother was 10 years older than me and we pretty much just see or talk to each other on occasions over the years. For a while, he lived about 50 miles away and sometimes he would come to visit over the weekend with his family.

Of course, my older sister died in a car wreck in 1966, and unless I happen to be in Tomales, CA, and come by the graveyard, not much there. Of course, actually, I have a picture of her in my living room and I think about her often, as I do others on the table in the corner. I have a lot of free time and spend some of it living in past and remembering some fun times the family has had over the years.

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As for my little sister, there have been many changes. It started out when we lived in the same house as kids and it has varied as time passed. I am sure she will say I was so nice and took her places, movies, and such. But of course, I did that because I was required to take her with me if I was going out with my first wife while we were dating. My ex used to be mad because she was a small woman and when we went to the movies, the ticket agent would ask me two kids and one adult?? She was so mad when I let them do that. After I got married, I only saw my sister when helping Dad do something around the house or yard. Then when we all moved from California, I moved to Texas and she went to Virginia with my parents.

So little contact and even after she and my parents came to Texas, she was in high school and I was working and living in San Antonio and she was in Devine, TX. Then she was in college and not around much. When she was around, it was usually for some event and maybe we all went to a dance club with folks and her girlfriends. Since my first wife always said I could not dance, she did not want to dance. But Candy's girlfriends were happy to dance.

Then we were in different states and even now since she is in South Texas and I am in East Texas we rarely see each other. So I would say our relationship is much like any family members that occasionally chat or call each other. So life goes on....

What were your favorite toys as a child?



I do not really remember any toys as a child. I know I had a Teddy Bear to sleep with but I did not drag him around the house. We did have different games we played as a family or just us three kids but I don't recall toys that much. Back in my childhood, we spent a lot of time outside and I usually was doing chores, taking care of the yard or vehicles, or working in the shop. When living on the coast there in Northern California, we did a lot of fishing. It was not a toy, but I had a hat while in England that I wore everywhere and got many pins to put on the hat and I still have it.

I guess if you consider a table tennis table a toy, then that would have been the most used one. I spent hours playing table tennis with my buddy there in Tomales. It was fun when Dad would bring a buddy from the base home for dinner, they would ask who plays and then they would want to "Show Me" how it was

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done. I never had ANYONE that Dad brought home ever beat me. Even into my adult life, there were few that could beat me until my son grew up and now I have passed the Table Tennis Pro title to him for the family.....

Have you ever given or been the recipient of a random act of kindness?



I have had kindness and I have given kindness...

Back in the early 70's when I ended up in San Antonio and broke, Dad had sent money for us to get a place to stay and then when I got a job at George C Vaughan & Son working in the warehouse I could not really afford the gas for my car. I had a 65 Impala and one day one of my co-workers asked where I lived and it was close to him and his wife. He offered to buy gas for the car if I would pick him up and drop him off for work each day so his wife could have the car. So every Monday he filled my tank and every Friday before I dropped him off he filled it again. It was the only way that I was able to have enough gas for work and life.

In 1969 when I got crossways of Dad, I decided to leave the house and go east. I took my little Sprite and headed out. Not sure if you

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call giving a hitchhiker a ride a random act of kindness, but I also bought him dinner and let him sleep in the room I rented for the night in Reno.

In Garland, I had many times that I handed out power bars or some such to the homeless on the corner, and a couple of times I had bought a fast-food gift card that I gave them that had \$25 on the card.

I have stopped a few times to help those on the side of the road traveling.

My current thing is to try to help people cool off and I have folding fans that I give away that say Fan it Forward. Check it out on my website TXOutlw. I carry these around and when I see someone fanning themselves with a napkin or something I give them one.

What was the neighborhood you grew up in like?



I had many neighborhoods as I grew up.

The first one I remember is at Hickory Hills Lake and it was nice, houses spaced ok and a nice lake for playing. Heavy snow in winter and ice skating.

Then we moved to England and at first, we lived in Harrogate in two different hotels. City living, but the second motel was by a city park that was a lot of fun. Then we had a duplex in a nice residential area, then a house in a nicer area. Then we moved on base after the first year and the 4 plexus were in a circle with a street down the center. It was fun being so close to everyone. We did later move to a duplex and it was up at the front of the street that went to the 4 plexuses. It was nice being closer to school and the movie theater.

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When we returned to the USA, we moved to a little town, Tomales, with a population of 200. We lived on the south side of town near the high school. It was like 100 yards for me to walk to high school up until I got a driver's license, then drove every day. I would drive uptown and around and then into the High School. Sometimes I would run out into the countryside and try to beat the school bus to one of the girls I liked outside of town, so I could give her a ride to school. But I guess that just kept me in the friend zone. It was an old house, over 100 years and we had a large lot. Kept a horse sometimes, a barn we converted into a workshop and lean to for a boat, and the rabbits that I kept for a 4H Project. We had a very nice yard that we kids kept the weeds out of and helped mow. I have driven past the old house since then and it is a shame how poorly the house and property are being maintained. Some trees were cut and the yard a mess. Oh well....

Did you ever have a fair or carnival come to town when you were a child?



I have been to several carnivals that were traveling carnivals, but none that actually came to Tomales where I grew up. They did come to Petaluma which was about 20 miles away. Most of them seem to have been associated with county fairs or rodeos that were active at the time with the carnival adding to the fun to be there.

I remember one time during the rodeo, they used an arena they had to put plywood around for the events. One time during the bull riding, one bull got pretty rough with the fence and finally ended up jumping over the mess he made, and then he was loose in the parking lot!! It was funny to watch from the grandstands, as the cowboys on horses started out of the arena and you could see them riding around in the parking lot. We were all hoping

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that our car was not near where they were trying to corner the bull. Took them 15-20 minutes to finally get him back in a pen. And then the show went on!!

When I was living in Germany, there were frequent times that a carnival would come into the area and since I had TJ and Wendy living with me we would attend them.

One time, we found the bumper cars so much fun, we got a handful of coins for it and must have been riding in the bumper cars for over 30 minutes. The next morning, my back was killing me. I went to the doctor and he asked if I had been in a car accident. I said no, but I also did not tell him I played bumper cars for over 30 minutes. I have avoided bumper cars since then.

In Dallas, I have gone to the State Fair a few times and it was really good the first few years. I would go in the afternoon and then eat there and stay the night for the light shows. But the last couple of times the light shows were not very impressive. Mostly I go to see the car show that they have and watch the parade.

Went to the fair in Tyler once and it was fun, but mostly ate and listened to music.

What is one of the most expensive things that you've ever bought?



Well depends on what we are talking about. Houses are the most expensive things and not sure they mean that here. Then there are cars and again not sure that is what they want. Maybe they mean impulse purchases that we make throughout life. As for those, there were my nutcracker bar stools that I gave over \$150 each for two. I also have a musical rotating face clock I have had since 2005 and it was over \$200 when I purchased it in Virginia City one afternoon. Recently I bought three conch shells while on a cruise they were a bit of an investment but one for me and one for TJ and Wendy so I thought it was worth it.

I guess the biggest purchase, not including houses, was when I bought a 34 ft Hunter sailboat. It turned out to be a great boat but I had overextended buying it and having to keep it in a slip in

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Kemah. So I only had it for about 6 months. Stinson Sue cost \$84,000!!



So this was the most expensive thing I bought. Most of my cars I have bought for under \$10,000 and motorcycles not more than \$5,000. The most expensive motorcycle I had I won in a drawing!! It retailed for \$13,500 but when I sold it with only 200 miles on it, I only got \$9300 for it.

How do you like to spend a lazy day?



To me, a Lazy Day is a day I get to putter around the yard and take care of my ponds and yard.



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With my issues with my hip and back, I can't do what I would like to do. I would like to get a project car to mess with, even if I never get it running or use it. But without a garage to work and keep it in, I doubt that will happen.

So being lazy is just sitting for a while or laying in bed and watching TV. I also like to listen to my Audio Books. I have several book series and I like to listen while I play my games on my iPad and my iPhones to keep up with my daily play for the bonuses I get each day.

So I start my days with the gym or pool and then back home to take care of things. I have a pitch back to throw a softball at and with a 1/3 acre, some mowing to do in sections. With the electric mower, it is a toss-up which one of us gets tired first.

Retirement is mostly Lazy Days...

Did you get along with your siblings as a child?



It is funny the relationship I had with all of my siblings.

My older brother, Tommy, was not really living with us that I remember. He went to college as we went to England when I was 8 years old. Later in my teen years and he was living in San Francisco and visited us on occasions in Tomales. It seemed we were very competitive with each other. It usually ended up with Tommy having something happening to him. Fell overboard in the bay, had his leg scrapped up while we were sledding in Lassen Park. One time, Tommy almost diving to make the shot in tennis and skinned up his knees and elbows. Like I said, it always competitive.

My relationship with my sisters was always depending on circumstances. Sometimes my older sister, Kathy, and I were aggravating my younger sister, Candy. Sometimes the two girls

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would bond together and I was the enemy. Candy was 7 years younger than me, and Kathy was 2 years older, so frequently, the older of us were against the younger. Candy was extremely HONEST and it would bite my older sister and me many times. It seems we were always getting into some kind of trouble when my parents were gone somewhere for the evening or day. We would do something or break something. Kathy and I would put together a great story so it was no one's fault. But Candy would not hold to that or take a spanking for not talking. Other times Candy would just start off by going to the folks in the morning and then any stories we had were out of the question.

The relationship changed with Candy after the car accident that Kathy died in and Candy was hospitalized for 3 months. From then on it was more of helping and doing what I could for her, she was in a cast for a long time too. Even after the cast was off usually, it was just helping her or doing what I could. Not that I felt sorry as such, but that we only had each other at that point. The accident had again changed our relationship as siblings. Life went on.....

What is one of the most beautiful places you've ever been?



I have found the Caribbean to be my favorite place to be. I have made a few trips to the BVI and it is so much fun to charter a 50 ft sailboat and circle the islands. All of the islands that are down in that part of the Caribbean are great, Grand Turk, Cayman Islands. Also, fun to be down in Curacao and Aruba. I would love to have my own 50 ft sailboat and be able to cruise all along that part of the Caribbean. If I had the money I would buy a house in Antigua that had a dock for my boat. Then sail all the islands as I had the time...

I have been to many places on many cruises...

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If you could thank anyone, who would you thank and why?



I would definitely thank my parents.

My father taught me a great work ethic and a positive, can-do attitude for any project that comes along. There was never a project that could not be handled, and I think I have carried that into the jobs I had and even now retired. Dad was an amazing example of a person that could and would do anything that needed to be done.

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My mother had a great heart and she never met a stranger. She would do whatever needed to be done for someone, regardless of who they were. Everyone was a friend and her compassion for everyone was always there. I try to help those I can when I can.

Did you ever get in trouble at school as a child?



This depends on what you call trouble and your definition of child....;-)

When we went to England in 1959, Attended a British school where we wore uniforms and boys were shorts year-round. I remember once or twice being in trouble and getting my legs switched as was the custom back them, but don't know what I did. I am sure I deserved it.

When we came back to the US in 1963 I was in 7th grade and knew nothing about American football. I was not too social as it was a small school and classes were small and everyone already had clicks. Being a small school we all went for recess at the same time. Some boys gave me a hard time for not playing football. One guy, in particular, was always giving me trouble. One day he called my name and as I turned around a football hit me in the face. He and I were rolling around on the ground

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fighting when we were broke up and sent to the principal's office. In the end, we ended up kinda friends.

In high school I got my driver's license at 16 and at the time had two cars. I lived 200 yards out my back gate to high school but drove every day. I would go up around town or out to try to pick up a gal I liked before the bus got there. I was driving my Sprite and most school Chev's or Fords and harassed me for having the Sprite. The gang of guys usually hung out in the middle of town before school but I was not one of them. As I was driving by one morning, one of them came down by the road and kicked my passenger's door. He and I had a bit of fist to cuffs until others sent us on our way. During the first period in school, we were both called to the vice principal's office. It was funny the vice principal was a family friend that had just started at the school. Of course, he was not happy with either of us. Again, as it turned out we became semi-friends from it.

Have you ever sleep walked or sleep talked?



This is hard to say, you know if I was asleep, how would I know I was doing it??

My last wife said that at times I talked in my sleep.

As for sleepwalking, when we were living in Tomales in the 60's, we lived in a very old house and there was an upstairs that had two bedrooms, one off each side of the hallway. My older sister and I had these bedrooms, hers on the front side of the house and mine on the backside. The old house only had one bathroom and that was downstairs by my parent's bedroom. Well on more than one occasion, my older sister complained that her top drawer of the dresser was wet and smelled like pee.....;-)) I was accused of sleepwalking and using the top drawer for a bathroom, but I don't remember doing any such thing...

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How did you celebrate your 30th birthday?



Hahaaaa.... This is a funny one maybe to some people!!! I got divorced 2 weeks prior and I went to Little Rock, AR, riding my 550 Honda motorcycle and used it for a down payment for a 79 Trans Am!! So I drove my new ride home making sure not to pay any attention to any speed limits or center lines on the curves.... It was a great ride.

Then on my birthday I went out to Mountain Home and found a hotel that had a nightclub attached and for a \$5 membership I could join and they served alcohol!! I had not been a big drinker before then, but I started learning to drink as a pastime. I danced with several ladies and met one lady that was pretty special and we started seeing each other for a few months.

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I spent a lot of the next year country dancing and then teaching dancing in Springfield, MO and Branson, MO. That was when Branson was 3-4 music halls and a great carnival park.

I worked really hard on my Burt Reynolds look-alike style and some people in the dance clubs only knew me as “Burt!”! That continued for most of my 30’s. Of course, I was younger and better-looking than he was.

So my life on the wild side started and lasted for a few years....

What is your best advice when it comes to raising children?



Well, this might not be popular with people but here is my advice. Teach them young responsibility. Give them chores or things to do and give them some rewards. Teach them to see things that need done and do them. They should be responsible for their rooms and clothes. They should learn the meaning of “No” and never be allowed to throw tantrums. All actions should have consequences, at first mild, then a little more as time progresses. A child/person with a sense of responsibility and willing to help out is always appreciated. They need to learn a work ethic early on. They are not entitled to anything but love, care, and protection. Everything else needs to be learned or earned.

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Spending time with them is important as well. Kids spend too much time on phones and need to have real interaction.



Unfortunately, I can not take much credit for how my kids turned out. I was gone most of the time, between military service and moving jobs, their mother and grandparents were a bigger influence I think. I did give them the chance to live in Germany for a year or so. So I don't really take credit for how well they turned out, but I hope I did help them learn the basics.

What is one of the stupidest things you've ever done?



Well, this might be a tough question..... Some might look and say stupid things, well married and divorced 3 times?? I feel each had a purpose and I enjoyed most of the time. Also without them, I would not be where I am. Next, some might say getting out of the Army, but it is hard to say. But again, it led to the rest of my life, which I have enjoyed. Every now and again, I think selling my house and retiring before I was ready was not one of my best decisions either. Then there was tearing the transmission out of my Trans-Am twice in 6 months trying to play Smokey and the Bandit. But when I really look back and see the things I have done in my life, one stands out. I was working for O'Reilly Automotive Warehouse as a truck driver for deliveries at night to stores in west Missouri. I liked the job, I could go out each night for dance lessons and then dance some more, until about 11 pm.

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Then I would go to the warehouse and pick up my truck and drive most of the way to Joplin MO and back. The back roads were quiet and if a good song came on the radio, I would stop the truck and get out and dance in the street. No that is not the stupid thing I did. I would arrive at each store and have keys to the back doors and I would unload their order and pick up the returns. I had a bobtail truck with a lift on the back of it. I would usually put the returns back in the area where the order had been, but trying to leave a small path to get the next load off and on. Well, one night on my last stop, I found that there was an engine block at the very front of the truck and I had to get it out to the store, I would have to unload most of the truck. Not wanting to do that, I had a side door so I slid the engine over there. Then I went outside and got up to the door. I reached in and grabbed the engine and then pulled it off the truck and set it on the ground without dropping it. I knew once it was done, it was a big mistake. I spent 2-3 weeks getting therapy and seeing the chiropractor. As it turned out, it started a problem with my back that was going to be an issue for the rest of my life. Now 40 years later, I am getting my nerves burnt and trying to make the pain in my back go away. So one stupid decision has badly affected the rest of my life.

Do you believe that people can change? Why or why not?



As with most questions, there are yes and no answers depending on what you are really asking. A person can change a lot of things, they can start attending church and be really religious. They can decide to lose weight and change their body. They can make an attempt to be more courteous or kind and patient. They can change their outlook on life a bit if they work at it. But there are things that will never change. If you are a loner, then you will be always. You can change temporarily for a few days or a short time but you will always be a loner. If you are a basically kind person then you will always be so. If you are a soft-hearted person then you always will be. If you are an ambitious person then you will be all your life. If you are lazy and not caring then that is going to be you. You might be able to improve or change it for a while but your basic self will

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eventually come thru. So my advice is to learn to live with yourself as you are. Accept your shortcomings and your assets. Change the things that might be changeable if you feel it needs to be done, but you will always be who you are. You can make some improvements, but you will always be you!!

How is life different today compared to when you were a child?



There is no comparison between today vs when I was a child. Our parent's generation and my generation created and discovered hundreds of times the things that were there before us.

When I was a child, you could go out and play and your parents had no idea where you were. Either be home by dark or in time for dinner. Your friends were all within a few blocks of you and you had no phones or video games to play. We played table tennis for hours. We knew what was happening in our neighborhood and towns but not much more. TV was just starting and was a family activity when there was time, usually Sunday night and one night a week.

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You could drive somewhere and not be afraid to pick up a hitchhiker along the road. You knew every phone number of your friends and your family.

I actually feel sorry for the kids today. There are so many things to try to watch out for. Just being in school is dangerous. I am glad I am not a child in these times.

I am not sure that all the changes were improvements and that they are worth the risks and danger they provide.

Who are your favorite artists?



This question could pertain to music or paintings. I don't really have a favorite music artist, I liked a lot of the older country singers. But when we talk about paintings, then it is Thomas Kinkade is my favorite for sure. I have several of his pieces and enjoy them. I really like the one that is a limited edition and very different from of what he usually paints. He does not usually paint ones of an Indian campsite with teepees and a small river.

There is a funny story as to how I got it. I was on a cruise and at the art auction. I liked the picture but did not buy it during the auction and nobody else bid on it so it was set aside. After the auctions, we were told that any item that had not sold could still be bought. Just needed to get the number of the piece and talk to them and buy for the starting price. The really great thing about the picture was that it was the last one and in a frame. So we

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would actually have it delivered to our cabin and we would have to carry it off the ship. It did not have glass in the frame, just plastic. For other pictures I had bought I had to buy a frame after I bought a picture and usually frames were much more than the cost of a picture. You can see at bottom of this picture....



So I got the number off of it and went to them to buy it. While I was doing that, two ladies had picked it up and sat there looking at it and talking about how great it was. Then they went up finally to try to buy it. They told her it was sold already and she said no, she had it right there in her hands. I was just finishing paying for it and the guy told the lady, that I had just bought it and he pointed me out!!! So as soon as I got the purchase completed I got out of there. Right now I have the unusual

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picture sitting in front of the fake fireplace at my new house.

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What were your favorite subjects in high school?



There was only one class that was my favorite and that was band!!

Most guys were all trying hard to make it on the football team. But I was thinking, either do football and get banged around a lot with a bunch of smelly guys, or join the band and march and have fun with a bunch of girls and guys. So it was the band for me.



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My teacher Miss Gibson was such a patient teacher. The first year she tried to teach me the trumpet. I got to where I could play it but was never better than a third chair thing. So the second year, one of the seniors that graduated had been the base drum player and Miss Gibson thought maybe I could carry that and do a better job than on the trumpet. Our band was a very active band. We played for halftime during football games and were there for basketball games. Then in the spring, we went to a lot of festivals around Northern California that had parades. We got many awards for small bands under 50 pieces. I enjoyed the bass drum and thought I did a decent job with it. But then again, one of the seniors that were graduating was the Drum Major and Miss Gibson thought maybe that was the best for me and the band. So she sent me to Drum Major school during the summer. So I got to go to Squaw Valley and spent a week, hardly going to any classed!!! I went horseback riding and hiking a lot with a

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couple of the other trainees. I did get permission to purchase a new baton and it was lighter and chrome with red braids on it. I had a great time for the week.

So my junior year I was Drum Major and we got to march up and around Tomales to practice and it was fun. Basically, my job was to follow the cute girls in short skirts, Majorettes!! So I just followed them and if they turned then I got the band to turn too. I never missed a turn.

So after much practice in town and on the football field, we get to the first football home game. It actually was the first time that we all had put on uniforms and everything for marching. I don't know how familiar you are with a high hat the Drum Major wears, but it has a place for the plume to be put on the either left or right side. I was not really thinking much about it and stuck the plume on the right side. Then we are all lined up under the goalposts on the football field waiting for the last whistle and for players to clear the field. I was standing straight backed and it was time, so I blew my whistle and started to twirl the baton in my right hand to tell the band to start marching forward and play our music. The baton hits the plume that I have put on the right side and knocked my helmet down to the bridge of my nose. I had to cock my head way back and try to see under the helmet, down my nose. I was like that till we stopped and if I had to do anything with the baton, I tilted my head to the left.

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Finally, as we stopped in one spot, I was able to snap to attention and toss my head back to get my helmet back onto my head. How to put your plume in your helmet might have been something they would have taught me if I had gone to any of the classes in Squaw valley. I am a fast learner though, and that was why I made sure the plume was on the left side for the rest of the time.

Summer between my Junior and Senior years, I got to go to Santa Cruz for the Drum Major summer camp. I guess at times I don't learn so fast. A couple of others and I spent most days walking down to the boardwalk and being obnoxious marching along. There was a fun house on the way that had a room that made you think everything was rolling uphill. Of course floors and walls and ceiling all tilted out. While we were messing around at the boardwalk, we found a small level, and the funhouse was not amused when we pulled it out and could show it was rolling downhill. We got thrown out.

My Senior year went much better and I really enjoyed being the Drum Major. We did games and parades all over. We also were invited with lots of other bands to go and participate in the halftime of a football bowl game. We had a great time.

Did you consider any other careers? How did you choose?



Hahaaaa, other careers?? Could I have had more careers? Well yes, I did plan on being a police officer but after getting on the San Antonio PD that become clear it was not going to be. I did enjoy being an investigator for a few years but when Dad bought the trout farm, moving to the country and running it looked pretty good. Then after the divorce and issues the Army looked pretty good. But then I started running the NCO and Officer's clubs and that looked a lot better.

But then I was back in the USA and found Auto Shack and being a manager was fun until they offered me a club in Germany to run. It just went on from there and I ended up in Reno and no real career till I saw ads for AS400 Operators and that is what finally got me going. While being an operator I got into programming

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and found that it was easy for me and I enjoyed it.

I was an apprentice programmer for Eldorado Hotel Casino. Then after 9/11 and not getting the money I thought I was worth, I went to the Peppermill Hotel Casino. I have never been one to complain about what I was making. If I was not happy at a job and pay scale, then I would not have any issue making a move.

Then as life changed and I decided it was time to leave Reno, my move to Dallas and working for JHA was the best move I had ever made. Good pay, insurance, and lots of vacation. So life was good and I stayed with it till time to retire.

Now my only career plans are to play Santa in the winter and enjoy retirement.

What was your best boss like?



My best boss was actually three of them. When I was working as the Rod & Gun Club Manager in Wiesbaden, Germany, and running the food and beverage warehouse afterwards. The community manager was great, he called me when I was still in Franklin, Tennessee, and asked if I still wanted to run a club in Germany. Of course, I told him yes and asked if it was ok for me to keep my beard. He was ok with that. At the same time as I got into Germany my direct boss had just arrived as well and they put us both up in the American Hotel on the base and gave me a vehicle to drive and asked that I drive my boss to the office before going to the club. That was fine with me. I still have my driver's license for Armed Forces in Germany from when I had been there the year before still in Army.

They had contracted to have the Rod and Gun Club renovated and updated before I arrived. When I looked at the plans I saw several

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things that would be issues and some things that would improve the design. The big boss said fine, meet with German contractors to discuss and make changes.

The members and previous managers had been trying to get a new vehicle for the Rod and Gun club but had not succeeded. After meeting with Nissan Dealer for purchases for Armed Forces, I had them write up a PO for a Nissan Path Finder and took the PO to the Big Boss and he scanned it and signed it on the spot. I had the new vehicle in about 2 weeks.

The club members also had a very old worn-out travel trailer, so I took it down to a German dealer, got what I could for trade-in and a PO for a newer trailer, and took the PO to the Big Boss and he just signed it. I went back down to the dealer and picked up the trailer.

I really enjoyed the Rod & Gun Club and the boss was great. He trusted me and said anything I needed, I could have. It was great.

Then the community needed someone to clean up and make the food and beverage warehouse become functional again. The previous manager was terrible and I found that he had been falsifying inventory. The drivers were stealing products and the warehouse was a mess and they bothered the clubs several times a day with small deliveries. So I started out by making all the drivers go and pick up our products from suppliers and return to

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the warehouse and unload. Then load all products for one club on each truck so only one delivery a day to clubs. On the first day, I required that, so I told the drivers either do that or go pick up their last check. They went up and complained to my boss and she said that was fine and gave them their last check. Of course, I ended up driving trucks for a week or so till new drivers were found.

It was impossible to inventory stuff because items were mixed with unrelated items all over the warehouse. So I ordered enough new warehouse shelving racks for the whole building and after it was delivered, 3 of my employees and I emptied everything out of the warehouse and put in new shelves, and put items in sections with related items together. It took us all weekend.

When I took over the warehouse and did an inventory of the cigarettes and liquor, restricted items, the previous manager did an inventory with himself and one other employee. He gave me all the inventory sheets and I said great, now let's you and me go back and do it again. The MP's came and took him and the helper off to the brig and they were charged and convicted. I did stakeouts watching the one German National employee we had. Then confronted him about giving meats and more to his daughter at her German restaurant. Unfortunately, we could not fire him, but after a serious talk and such, he quit doing that.

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In any case, my bosses there were the best, they supported anything that I asked for and I was trusted to do anything needed for the facilities. It was nice to have such bosses. Nowhere else in my life, and 40 plus jobs had I found bosses that did not micro-manage or make you jump through hoops to maybe get things you needed.



Picture of me and Rod and Gun Club Members with an award for the club.

Who have been your closest friends throughout the years?



I can't really say that I have had close friends throughout the years. I have had a few close friends, but due to my being so mobile and living in so many places, those friends tend to slowly melt away. Tom and Kay in Reno are still friends and have been since the middle 90's. One of my Army buddies is still in touch. Another I have not heard from in years.

I have had a couple of close friends in Dallas, but Marc died of cancer, and Brandon and I used to go to a lot of car shows but having moved from town and he is married now, not so much. Harold was one of the guys I used to hang out with at the clubs dancing, but he has a lady now and they have their life.

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So over the years, my only close friends have been my daughter and son and their families and my parents.

I have had some really great times with the kids thru the years. We traveled in Europe and the French Riviera, cruised together, and worked on many projects together. They are a great family.

I really miss living across the street from Mom and Dad.

Who did you date while in high school?



I did not date much in high school. There were times I had someone I liked a bit but being in a small town and not much to do, mostly just tried to enjoy their company at school. Being in the band was fun, there were a couple of girls I liked but never dated. Also when I started going to 4-H and driving, there were a couple of times I picked someone up to give a ride to a meeting, but usually, there were several of us carpooling so not a date.

I did get a date for my Junior prom by having Dad set me up with one of the daughters of a guy he worked with. Once I drove down to Mare Island Naval base to see the Colonel's daughter that I had met at a party our families had and liked her.

My first real date was when my buddy Donny and his girlfriend Jen, were tired of me running around with them as the 3rd wheel, so they set me up with her older sister, Dorothy. Jen and

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her family had a trailer at the Dillion Beach, near Tomales where I lived, and the hangout for all of us troublemakers. When I showed up for the date she refused to go out with me.

A short time later, she contacted me about going to her Junior Prom in Antioch, California. So I took a bus from Petaluma, CA thru San Fransisco to Antioch for the date. Her father was the station master at a small train station that was 3 ft from the tracks. The first night sleeping on the couch, the rumbling started and then got worse and I about fell off the couch, and then the train hit the horn for the crossing. No one else in the house noticed.

So we went to her Junior Prom and then when she came with her mother and sister to the beach we would go out. Eventually, were engaged and later married for 11 years.....

Did you have a car in high school?



Actually, I had two cars in high school. The first one I had before I even had a driver's license. Our family ran a small gas station and one night when Mom and Dad had left to go visit my sister, I had gone up to the house and taken the Hillman for a ride down Hwy 1 and got back to find Dad in the gas station driveway. They had forgotten something and came back to get it. I told him I had taken a guy some gas down the highway and he asked where was the gas can. I had no gas can. So he had me park the Hillman and bring him the keys.

The next day for lunch Dad was home from work, not normal, and he said let's go to the bank. He took me to the bank and had me withdraw \$200 out of my account and did not say why and I did not ask. I was sick all afternoon, it was almost half my savings. I was at the gas station that evening when a little red car pulled up to the pumps. I went out to help them and Dad got out

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of the car. A 1952 MGTD and he said that it was my car but I could only drive it from the station across the road and up the driveway until I got a learner's permit and license.



I put a lot of miles on it from the station and up the driveway. That spring I got my learner's permit and had Mom come ride with me a lot. It was a great little car. I got my license and then in my junior year I was looking for something else, not sure why, but I started shopping. Dad and I went on base and there were two cars that some GI's were selling. One a 61 AH Sprite and the other a 65 Impala. Both were about the same price. My dad's friend that was with us told Dad it should not be a hard decision, as he was sure that I was only judging by how big of back seat the Impala had!!! I ended up with the Sprite. I did a lot of work on

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both cars and then painted them both the same color.



They were both great and I had a lot of fun in both of them. I pretty much kept the MG in the garage and only occasionally used it. After graduation, Dad and I were not getting along well and I took the Sprite and left headed I don't know where. I went over threw Reno and past Utah and was in Wyoming going down dirt roads. I ended up in Missouri at Granddad's and then brought him back to the west coast where he had never seen the Pacific Ocean or any of the things we visited on the way. We stopped at Carlsbad Caverns, Painted Desert, Grand Canyon,

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Yosemite, and more. It was a great trip.



I have always told people that I was a rich man until I discovered cars.... And Girls!! I have been broke ever since.

What were the 60's like?



Life in the 60's –

I guess I should say in some ways I was blessed since Dad was in the military and I was able to live in many different places. In 1959 Dad was transferred to Menwith Hill Station in Yorkshire, England. When we arrived, it was a new base and no housing or schools were completed. So we lived in Harrogate and I went to British schools for one year.

When we arrived, we first lived in a hotel downtown for a couple of weeks, but then moved to the Green Park Motel and it was fun. We had our rooms and there was a nice dining room and a very nice park across the street. It had a concrete pond that people would use to sail small sailboats. I had one about 18” long and I would set its sails and rudder and then use a stick to push it into the pond and watch how it sailed. You would have to move around the pond eventually to recover the sailboat. The park also had a golf course and I could rent a couple of clubs and play 9

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holes. Kathy and I were old enough to enjoy the park for most of the day. Candy was just over 2 and stayed with Mom. Mom was having a lot of back trouble and was in bed most of the time. The dining room taught me the meaning of sufficient and that the British were fairly precise in their interactions. We had an assigned table and the waitress was usually the same one. We would have our plates and then the waitress would come around with a dish of vegetables or whatever and give you a spoonful or some portion. Then she would say "Sufficient" and I would respond, yes or sure. So put more on my plate and asked again "Sufficient". Ended up getting more than I wanted in the beginning but finally, I learned that it was "Sufficient". In the evenings we always waited until Dad got home from work for dinner. We got to know some of the Brits on tables around us. Candy was of the age she was talking and Dad was teaching her little rhymes but he had a sense of humor and changed them slightly. So then after dinner and visiting with someone at a nearby table, he would get Candy to recite one. It was funny to watch as the Brits listened and then towards the end have a strange look on their face...

The only one I remember is, 30 days have September. Only Dad's version was.... 30 days have September, April, Jun, and No wonder, all the rest have peanut butter except Grandma and she rides a bicycle. They would look at her strange and then most of

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the time the Brits finally got the joke and laughed... There were several he had taught her but I cannot remember the others.

When we moved from the hotel, we were in a duplex for a few months, and since it was still summertime Dad RENTED us a TV to watch. When school started the TV went away. Kathy and I started in a British school and we had to wear a uniform. The boys wore shorts year around. The girls wore skirts. So when I was in trouble they had no problems with sending me to the principal's office and the punishment was to switch on the back of the legs below the shorts. I have always been a slow learner so I made more than one trip to his office. For some reason, we moved from a duplex to a house after a few months and ended up living across the street from some very nice people, the Blackstones. We visited and Kathy frequently went over there after school to visit. They had a Minor bird that talked and was fun. They had a very attractive teenage older daughter living there and every time she came in the room, the bird would wolf whistle and say Sandra!

We were friends with them forever, seems they came to visit us once when we were still living in Tomales years later.

Finally, in the Summer of 60 the base had housing finished and had built a school so we moved on to the post and a new life started. The 2 housing areas were a circle of 4 plexes with

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half-moon parking for each side and a road thru the middle. It seemed that most of the others living in these were young officers. Kathy and I being 9 and 11 were the oldest ones there so we became very sought-after babysitters. We took care of newborns and others because young officers felt they had to go to the Officer's club to keep up with others and social events. We made 25 cents an hour and were getting rich!! Of course, today you would go to jail if you allowed that, in fact, an 8 or 11-year-old needs a babysitter. I liked to make money, so I had Dad get me a bicycle and I got a job delivering the Daily Bulletin in both housing areas. Don't remember what I was paid for that, but it was something. Then we had our allowance as well. We got 25 cents for each year old we were. But there were things we had to do to earn this. For me, it was shining shoes. Dad would kick off his shoes each evening and place them by the door of the closet under the stairs. That closet was my shoe-shining office. I was pretty good at it. The only issue I had was that when buddies of Dad's would come home for dinner with him or evening, they were told to put their shoes by the closet too, so I was kept busy.

Life on base was fun, I had friends, they built a movie theater and it cost 10 cents on Saturday morning to go watch cartoons. We bowled and learned to play tennis.

Mom and Dad were in the British Motors car club because Dad had bought his Sprite when we first arrived in 1959. So, one time

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there was a trip to Europe for them with the club. So, they took off for two weeks and we were still just living in our 4 plex while they were gone. We had friends next door that we went over to have breakfast and dinner with but other than that we were pretty much on our own. Hahaaa again you could go to jail for that today!!

Dad made a point of getting us around all of England and taking in all we could. Kathy and I would get in the Sprite with him and the turn signal was a flip switch in the middle of the dashboard and we would take drives and each time we came to a stop sign we took turns flipping the switch for us to decide which way to go.

While we were there Mom bought Yorkshire Terrier dogs, male and female and they were great pets. Unfortunately, we were not great owners. We took some fun making Nicki, the male Yorkie, act like a lion and we would grab him around the neck and make him growl and flash his teeth. We decided that was not really the right thing, but Nickie now had that attitude. Kathy and I would get into arguments and fight and she would pick up Nickie and point him at me and I would slap at them both, and he would start growling and flashing teeth to protect her. So it got to be a thing to never reach for him if Kathy was holding him. One day as she was coming out of the post office carrying Nickie, a GI saw her and came over to was going to pet Nickie's head and Nickie

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made mince meat of his fingers. We had to be very careful after that to be sure no one else got chewed on. Once during Christmas vacation, Mom and Dad had some friends over and then went out to the Officer's club. We were at the house and decided to give Nickie some milk and we put him down a bowl. Then we found that he could hardly stand up, and fell trying to go upstairs, so we used couch cushions to make him a padded cell. Mom and Dad got home and asked what happened. We told them we had given him some milk from the fridge!! It was spiked eggnog!!

When we were back in California, Nickie would get out of the yard and then pick on bigger dogs until he was hurt. One time I found him, he was hanging on the cheek of this German Sheperd who was trying very hard to get him back inside his mouth. We saved him but then Nickie was bandaged and living slid into one of Mom's nylons to keep them all on. Enough about our pet abuse.

The whole family went to London and my first live musical was the "Sound Of Music" on stage. It was great. We went to Scotland to see or not see the Loch Ness "Monster". We found McPherson Plaid and Mom made dresses for the girls and shirts for the guys with it.

I had a "Felt" hat and I got pins from everywhere we went and I still have it plastic wrapped on display in the kitchen. It was a great experience and I think we kids benefited from being there

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and seeing how other countries live.

In the summer of 1963, we came back stateside. We landed in NYC and Dad went down and bought a 1957 Chrysler Imperial. It was a great car, but funny, he got a good deal because it had a big dent in the back passenger door. No one hardly ever noticed, it was dark blue and really did not show. We went up to Massachusetts to the little house Dad owned there and had been renting out while we were gone. We spent a few days getting it ready to sell. Then we started driving cross country. Stopped in Missouri to see Mom's dad and see his horses and ranch. Then Kansas for some other relatives and on to Tuscan where most of Dad's family lived. Then up and into California to go back to Tomales where Dad had the house he had bought when stationed there in the early 50's. We had one of the swamp cooler-type things hanging on the passenger's window that hung outside and brought air in but cooled it first. It was funny, something was mentioned about the wind noise inside the car as we were going across Arizona and Dad said it might be because we were doing 125mph. He had us kids watching out the back most of the time to be sure some trooper not sneaking up on us. So, I can say my driving habits were learned from years of riding with him.

Dad bought us a horse and saddle and himself an old Dodge panel truck for \$100 and we started our lives in Tomales.

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I started 7th grade in Tomales and was there just in time for them to tell us one day in class that President Kennedy had been killed in Dallas, TX. One of the few events in my life that I can tell you exactly where I was. I guess I was not like other boys my age, did not know about football, barely baseball. I was made fun of a bit and caused one of the few fights I ever had. But my trips to the principal's office were about the same. One time my buddy Glenn and I used his father's keys to school to sneak in a night and steal math test answers. Of course, if he and I had just used the answers ourselves, we would have been fine, but we decided to share with the whole class. As the test was ending one girl could not stand that she cheated, so she tells the teacher the whole class cheated and that we had provided the answers.....

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As we were graduating from 8th grade, our math teacher was not well-liked and during one of the last days as school ended that year, Glenn and I came up with the idea to water balloon him. The math teacher took exception to this and proceeded to pick up a garden hose and spray us so we took the hose away from him and finished the job. So we got to see the Principal one last time. Note - The math teacher had come to our school after just getting his teaching certification. He taught at our school, 7/8th grade math, and after those two years he left teaching.

The only musical group I ever really paid attention to during my youth was the Beatles. I happen to be sick and laying in bed or the couch for a week. The Beatles had just hit the USA and there were all sorts of games and stuff on radio. How many words could you spell with "Beatles" and quizzes and more. I spent the whole week entertaining my self with the crazy things that were inspired by the Beatles at that time.

In high school I found again I did not fit well but I did get into the school band and it served me well for all 4 years. The band teacher, Miss Gibson, liked me I guess. She tried to teach me the trumpet the first year. The second year she put me on the bass drum. Then she decided to make me the Drum Major to lead the band. This suited me well. When I was in class I could hang out in the trumpet section or drum section. When marching I was told that I was leading the band and that all I had to do was

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follow those girls in the short skirts, the majorettes. They were always in front of us all... I could do that!! She sent me to Drum Major school one summer for a week in Squaw Valley. It was great to spend most of my time riding horses and walking on the mountain. Yes, there were some classes to attend, so I tried to make at least one a day if time allowed. The second year for the summer she sent me to Santa Cruz for a week and I really don't remember any classes there. Mostly 4-5 of us would walk into town to the boardwalk and have fun around the beach.

Now one of the things I might have missed in classes was how to use the tall hat, plume, and baton. On the very first event I was leading the band for our first football game I learned the hard way. The hat was designed for both left and right-handed people. So, when you put the plume in the hat, it slides into a holder on either side. I put it on the right side. So here I am standing under the goalposts as half-time comes and I blew my whistle and twirled my baton and knocked my tall hat down over my eyes as the baton hit the plume on the right side. I am right-handed. But I tilted my head back and moved out, barely able to see where I was going.

For my purpose here, I will just say I got my first car before I got a driver's license and then as a junior got a second car, so I had two cars in high school. I lived about 300 yards from the high school. I drove every day, down the driveway, up past school,

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around town, and then back to school. Sometimes if early, I would try to beat the bus to a girl I liked and pick her up so she did not have to ride the bus. See the story about my cars in high school.

High school was good though except for the year I lost my sister. On Dec 18, 1964, as she was driving into town, she lost control and slammed into a tree. She was killed and my little sister had her legs broken badly. She was in a body cast and others until she finally got out of the hospital for her birthday in March. I did not do much in school and so I ended up failing all of my semester finals. Most teachers gave me the grade I had before Kathy passed. But the English teacher was a family friend and I guess did not want to show favoritism, so she failed me in English. This did not sit well with Dad and he made that very clear. I ate a lot of meals standing up for a while. But I never failed another class.

I had a buddy, Danny, who had dropped out of school and was kind of the area bad boy. He had sources for obtaining liquor and hosted parties on the beach with bonfires which were not allowed on the beach. My cousin Evon was visiting from Arizona one summer and she took a liking to him of course. I tried to keep them apart when I could. We were hanging out at the gas station and they went out to get in his car, so I came running out of the station, used my hand to grab the door jamb to help turn

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the corner and it ripped my class ring off my finger, leaving a gash and blood everywhere. Well, they did not leave at least. After she left he met a girl that summer that was a weekend visitor to the beach 5 miles away. This of course led to more trouble but also with hanging out with him and his girlfriend, they decided to set me up with her sister. When I showed up for the date, she would not go out with me. We ended up married two years later.

Dad liked to go fishing and hunting, so we made good use of the Dodge panel truck. We would take the boat down to the ramp and go outside the bay and dive for abalone and then dig horse neck clams on the way back until the sand bar covered over. Then back home and clean them all. No one seemed concerned I missed a morning of school. Dad and I went hunting once in Mendocino County with the boat. We would nose up to a spot and tie up the boat and go looking for deer. Once when we returned we were on a hill looking down over the area where the boat was and we saw two fish at the surface, gulping air or just eating flies maybe. Dad said you take the one on left and he took the right one. We shot the fish with our 30-06's and hit them both. When we picked them up later with the boat, one was almost perfectly gutted and cleaned and Dad says that was the one he shot. We did not get any deer on that trip. Another time we went t Modoc County and had driven up overnight on Wednesday before Thanksgiving. As

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we got there, we saw does coming over the mountain but we could not get set up to take a shot. But by lunchtime we had had two loaded and headed back home. Just a little late for turkey dinner. A hunt in less than 24 hours with 2 does harvested. Then once we went to a friend's cabin in Lasson County and it was the night before the season opened and here on the road, we see a nice buck. Then he steps off the side and starts down the mountain, we were standing out there watching threw our rifle scopes and trying to decide if we should or should not. We did not, but we also did not see another deer that whole weekend. We thought it would have been funny when my friend Neal would show up in the morning to show him a buck keeping warm in his bed!!

Dad and I also went to the North Rim of the Grand Canyon. It was a week after my honeymoon and no we did not take her with us. We got into the camp that Uncle Bob had set up and he showed us the buck he had in a tree already. It just walked into his camp the first night he was there. We did not see anything else for the week until the last morning, we were only going out for a short hunt. In that area, Bob and Dad would stand on top of the mountain and send me into the draw to flush out whatever was there. Turned out I took the wrong turn in the draw was two mountains away when I saw a buck under a tree. When his head moved it was like the whole tree moved. I emptied my rifle and

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had not yet hit him but now he was down on the other side of the draw running crossways to me so I reloaded two rounds and knelt and hit him. Dad and Bob were sure it was not me, since whoever fired had a semi-auto and I just had a bolt action. Well, they finally found out it was me and they got Bob's Jeep at the top of the mountain where I had buck down in the draw. We used all of the winch cable and a couple of nylon ropes to get tied to the buck to pull him up. I was helping hold his head up as Bob winched him up but he got stuck on a rock and when I freed him it was like he came alive jumping up another 20-30 ft. We finally got back to camp after lunch to start packing up.

On one trip to Northern California to hunt we had a Sgt from Dad's unit with us. I was driving age and it was a special treat to be able to drive the International Travalall because it was almost brand new. Dad and his friend were sleeping when on the road I saw a 2x4 and did not want to swerve on the highway so I hit it. Then at the next gas station, I saw a dent behind the wheel so I showed Dad and fessed up. A month or so later, Mom forced Dad to tell me he had done that dent running over a rock in Nevada Hunting with Uncle Bernard.

Dad and I always liked going to the San Fransico Boat show each year and I had seen these new, small watercraft, for one person. It was a Hydro cycle and 9ft long and 35 hp outboard to push it. The beginning of what are wave runners today. I had to have one.

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I got the dealer's used one, with 35 hp Mercury on the back of it. I had a great time with it. Mostly I used it in Tomales Bay and on occasions, I would follow Dad, who was in the 16ft Glasspar bowrider fishing boat, headed out of the mouth of the bay to fish for salmon a few miles off the coast. People already thought we were crazy because I used to water ski out over the rollers at the mouth of the bay and into the ocean. I learned to ski in the bay and to me, a foot chop was a smooth day. The first time I saw a lake to ski on, I could not believe it was like glass. I took off without a life jacket or anything and showing off fell into the water. I almost drown before they got back around to me. I was so used to skiing in a wet suit and in salt water, that I did not know I could not really swim.



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Anyway, once we were out in the ocean and trolling for salmon, I would just put the hydro cycle on a rope and tow it. Then ride it back into the bay. It was great surfing it on the rollers coming back in. It was a lot of fun on the lake too. I had a buddy there that had a ski boat, flat bottom and v-8 engine. I would challenge him to drag races. I would win for the first 60 or so yards!!! It took a while for his prop to catch the water and get his ski boat going...

I made a great trip cross country with my Sprite (see Cars in High School.) I brought Grandpa Warburton from Missouri to Northern California. Grandpa had had a heart attack a couple of years prior and he was told not to get worked up or excited, so he did not. As we were driving a small wire caught fire inside the car and he just says "Son I think something is burning" with no

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excitement or urgency in his voice. I pulled over and he just opened his door and rolled out. Another time I had been driving too long and fell asleep and weeds from the side of the road were coming over the hood. Calmly he says, "Son, I think you need to rest a bit." One morning we stopped for our breakfast of milk, and doughnuts, and I was drinking some of the milk as I was driving down the road and he says, "Son, they say you should not drink and drive." He was fun and he was not really able to read but he would not admit it. We would go into a diner and he would look over the menu and then when asked what he wanted he would just say, "You have some fried chicken and some milk?" And that's how he handled it, just asked for what he wanted and diners would find something like that to give him.



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When we stopped in Tucson to see relatives, Uncle Bob gave me a couple of cans of honey he had harvested. When I was pulling our sleeping bags out of the back of Sprite in the North Rim of the Grand Canyon campgrounds, one bag caught on the flip top of the can and opened a whole 2lb can of honey in the back of Sprite. We only had cold water and paper towels to clean that up.

We came to a sign as we left Las Vegas that said no gas for 200 miles. A Sprite will not go 200 miles on one tank, so I went back to the last gas station and bought a 2-gallon can then filled with gas to get us over the mountain.

Well with the summer of 1969 finished, it was time to get back to life and I started Santa Rosa Junior College for my Police Science Degree. The 60's were a great time and I think of them often.

How did your parents pick your name?



Well, this is an easy one. My father decided to name me after the General of the 104th Infantry Division, the Timber Wolf Division.



General Terry Allen, “One of the finest American combat leaders of World War II, flamboyant Gen. Terry Allen was relieved of the command of a veteran division in the midst of a campaign, producing a controversy that lingers to this day; he had come, some suggested, to love his men too much.” - Thomas Dixon

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Dad served in the Timber Wolf Division from when he went to France in WWII until the end of the war. He said all the men in the division really liked General Terry Allen.



Major General Terry de la Mesa Allen Sr. was a senior United States Army officer who fought in both World War I and World War II.

Thus my name Terry Allen McPherson

What do you like most about your siblings?



This is hard to really decide.

My older brother, Tommy, I did not get to know until after we were adults since he was 10 years older and I have little memory of him living with family. We always as adults seemed to have a competition about everything in life. We both wanted to win or be right and sometimes it led to disaster for one or both of us.

My older sister and I got along most of the time and were pretty good friends and tried to make sure we stayed out of trouble. I liked that she also believed that a good lie worked as well as the truth. I like being able to get around and be more independent once she got her driver's license. Also until her high school years, she was fine with me hanging out with her and her girlfriends.

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My younger sister and I had different attitudes, she always just wanted to tell the truth and avoid the spanking and such. But I admired her dedication to her recovery from the accident and ever since in her life really taking things seriously and getting them done.



What are some of your favorite ways to spend a Saturday?



Saturday is the no gym or pool day. I don't get up very early but like to find something that needs to be done around the house.



I have a 1/3 acre and I purposely bought a mower to push. not a riding mower. It takes me usually 2-3 days to mow the front,

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back, and side. It is usually a test to see if the electric mower tires before I do.

However, if there is someplace that has a car show or if there is a pond tour, I would be there. But mostly I try to accomplish something around the house and yard.

But if none of that, then it is sit in the lounge chair and enjoy...



How many funerals have I attended?



The first funeral was one when a very nice lady we called Aunt Polly passed away from cancer in the early 60's. The family went, I guess we were all sort of obligated even though she was not really our aunt. She and her husband were long-time friends of the family.

The second one was when my sister had the car accident on Dec 18, 1966. She was a senior in high school and of course, the whole family went. I told myself after that, that it was the last one I would attend.

But when I was in San Antonio and at the church I was running the Royal Ambassadors Boys and we had a boy with leukemia. It was so sad to watch. He enjoyed our meetings and the few events he could go to. When he passed he had asked his parents to have me be a pallbearer and of course, I could not decline. It was the

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saddest event I had ever attended.

Then when I moved to Dallas in 2006 and started going out dancing at different clubs around town and met a really great guy, Marc. We would hang out together in the club and chase women. We were the best wingman for each other. He was Viper and I was Iceman. We went to car shows together and other events. We were two peas in a pod. He would stop and have lunch with me if he was in that part of town at lunchtime. He had cancer and had been in treatment and it was in remission he thought. But it came back again. He still did all he could and he was one of the volunteers for Meals On Wheels for several years. He had a great Mustang and he would admire my Goldwing when we were coming out of the club. I usually was parked up front near the door with the motorcycle. One night he said he had something for me. He had known and saw that I had a stuffed Armadillo on the front fairing of the Goldwing. Army had been with me for years and always rode on my motorcycle or the dashboard of my truck. Anyway, Marc had a little Monkey on his dash. The type that could be around your neck and Velcro feet together. He went to his car and took it off his dash and said he wanted me to put it on the other side of the fairing so that Army would not be lonely and the monkey could continue to see the world. He got much sicker shortly after that and then in Sept of 2010, he passed away at home. He had asked everyone to come in

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jeans to his funeral, as he was just a cowboy at heart. I attended his funeral and to this day, Army and Monkey ride on my dash and see the world with me every day. I remember my friend every time I see the cute little monkey. After Marc passed I went down and volunteered for Meals on Wheels as a remembrance of him and the good he always tried to do.



I have placed a remembrance on my website for Marc, Viper, my wingman and friend.

<https://www.txoutlw.com/marc.html> I would like to think that in my life, I could be as brave, caring, and giving as he was in his life.

Of course, I have attended two other funerals, we buried Mom in 2014 and Dad in 2020.

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They were married for over 65 years...

He wanted to make it to 100 but was short 11 months. I miss them both a lot too.

Becoming Independent in the 70's



Well, I started off in the first summer of the 70's and got married for the first time. Moved out of the house and into Petaluma to a friend's house they rented us. I guess my brother was trying to punish me, he gave us a 59 Nash Metropolitan car. It was a little 4-cylinder for my wife to drive. I just owned my Sprite which I drove for commuting and my MGTD was stored at Dad's house in Tomales. The little Metro was a cantankerous little car with a column manual shift. It would frequently stick between 2nd and 3rd gears. It required you to stop, open the hood and use a tire iron to snap the shifting linkage to unstick it. I never knew why, but this only seemed to happen if Dad or I were driving the little car. If my wife was driving the Metro she did not have the issue with it shifting!

When I got married, I was still working at various gas stations in Petaluma. My first job that was not gas station related was

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becoming a security guard for the new K-Mart in Santa Rosa. At the time, K-Mart had security at a desk at the door. I mostly worked the door and sometimes did some theft prevention. Since I was making a little more money then, I found a nice 65 Impala that I bought for my wife. Since I was at school and working in Santa Rosa we moved into a motel on a weekly rate to finish my last semester.

I started my second year at Santa Rosa JC working on getting my AA degree in Police Science. In the second year of studies, we were put on the Santa Rosa JC Campus Police Department. So, I started patrolling and working for the Campus. During this time frame, one-night while was at home, we had an earthquake in Northern California. Santa Rosa, CA was hit pretty badly and the Campus Police were asked to help out the city police. I was assigned to a shopping center in town and the JC Penny store was damaged badly, you could look from the second floor to the first floor thru the floor of the building.

I graduated in June of 1971 and I was not yet even 20, so I could not apply to the Highway Patrol or other police departments. Dad was working for the NSA still and got assigned to Virginia and was going to move from Tomales, Ca. I decided I would leave California as well and using a small trailer that my friend Glenn and I had built, we put everything I owned in it and my hydro cycle on top of it and a tarp covering it all. I also had a Honda

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S-90 I had bought as well. I had always wanted to have a motorcycle but Dad would not let me buy one while I lived at home. So, when I moved out of his house, I found one and started riding.



I had sold my MGTD and my Sprite. We only had the Impala towing the trailer with the S-90 across the tongue of the trailer. My wife was driving one of Dad's vehicles and towing a trailer. She was going to drive it to Virginia for Dad. I drove the Impala and went to Tucson, AZ and got us an apartment. Most of Dad's family lived there in Tucson. I started working for K-Mart in the building supplies department. We only lived there for a few months and did not like it very well. I had called a K-mart in Casper Wyoming and we planned to leave Tucson and head up there, only it was late November and snow started north of us and it was bad. We were not able to drive a northern route to get to Casper so since we were already packed and ready to leave, we started out on I10 East. We were thinking we would go to Austin, where was a K-mart. I got tired driving as we went past El Paso,

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so I let my wife drive. I woke up in a shopping center parking lot and we found the KOA to stay in. I went to find a K-Mart and there was not one in San Antonio. Oops, wrong town, but we did not think we could afford to go further. We went down on Sunday to the First Baptist Church downtown and we found people there that were willing to help us out.

First, I tried to find work and all I found was a “Door to Door” salesman for vacuum cleaners. Never sold one or made any money. While we were living in the KOA it started to rain and rained so hard, we ended up staying in the bathroom all night to stay semi-dry. Dad was nice enough to send us \$200 to try to find someplace to rent. We found a small two-room cabin in Castle Hills on the north side of San Antonio. Someone at the church helped me find a job at George C Vaughan & Son building supplies. I started off on the dock and we were shipping molding and cabinets and other house-building products. Then they moved me into the office to keep the stock register. The stock register is a cabinet with 3-5 cards for every item in the warehouse. I found a friend that worked there and lived near me. He was being brought to work by his wife, they only had one car. So, he offered to buy me gas if I would pick him up and drop him off each day. He was nice enough to fill up the gas tank on Monday and again on Friday.

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Since I had no furniture, we were sleeping on the floor. You could feel the cockroaches crawling around. Then someone at the church donated us a mattress. Still had cockroaches running around but a month or so later, we had a bed frame donated.

The First Baptist Church was our life for several years. Sundays, we went morning and evening. Monday was the Married Young Adults get-together. Wednesday nights they had dinner and services. I had started being one of the leaders for the church's Royal Ambassadors Boys. That was the church's program much like scouts. Then Thursday nights we would go around some of the middle-class neighborhoods and give kids candy and chat. We talked some of them into letting us pick them up on Sunday mornings, as the church had a bus ministry, with several buses and routes. Then on Saturday, I coached the Midget Girls' softball team. So, we had a busy week, every week. I ended up being the bus driver and host for the kids. We would take the bus around and pick up kids, then get them to Sunday School and then have them sit with us in church. Then back on the bus and to their homes. Not sure how in today's world, parents would be happy seeing someone driving around talking to all the kids and handing out candy. Of course, after meeting the kids, we did go and meet the folks and if they were not regular church-going people, then we could pick up their kids to let them attend.

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Royal Ambassadors – We took boys camping, had pinewood derbies, and had the boys meet and learn outdoor skills during the Wednesday night activities at the church. One summer I took them to a camp in West Texas and we had a great time. I did take the opportunity to have a teaching moment in the cafeteria. The boys all went thru the line and got what they wanted and then sat at the table where we could all be together. After a little bit, the first one got up and started to pick up his tray to take to dump and give to the kitchen, but I told him to sit down. He had taken the food, he would eat it... I expressed this to all the boys at that time and it was not well received but I made them sit there and eat it all. The next time they were a little better but I did find that this one kid was always the last one done. It turned out everyone was dumping what they did not want to eat on his plate and he ate it all. He must have had a hollow leg.

I did have one not-as-fun circumstance while being the leader. We had one boy that was at most but not all of our meetings. He had Leukemia and was struggling with it. Most of the time he wore a wig since he had no hair. He was a really sweet kid and excited when he took second place in the pinewood derby. When he passed away, I guess he had asked his father to be sure to have me be a pallbearer at his funeral. It was not the first funeral I had gone to but was the worst one. I did not attend another one for 35 years.

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In the Married Young Adults group at the church, we had some very good friends. We not only met Monday nights but we did things around town together and really enjoyed it. Two of these friends were such good buddies that they helped me put a roof on Dad's pole barn one day, on the hottest day of the year. Dad had been re-assigned to San Antonio after a few years in Virginia and had bought 20 acres in Devine, TX, and bought a herd of Black Angus. More later on that.

When I was 20 1/2, I decided to apply to the Texas Highway Patrol. They were happy to have me apply and said that they would be happy to have me but because I had not been in Texas long, they would hold my application for 6 months and when I was more established, they would offer me a job. I applied to the San Antonio Police Department and they did not have those rules about how or where one lived. They offered me a job right away to work in the Property room until the next Academy started after the first of the year. I thought I had hit the jackpot. I was paid cadet wages for working in the property room. I was making \$650 a month. I started the academy and was doing very well then we got to the end of training classes and started riding with officers on the graveyard shift. One night when we went to a scene of a fight and a man had been cut and was going into the ambulance. Being in the house and the blood everywhere was not something I seemed to be able to handle. I was feeling faint and

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my partner told me to go outside and get some air. I passed out!! When I was in college, I found I was having trouble with first aid classes and being around bad situations with blood around. So, I started volunteering at the local hospital in the ER area. I felt I had gotten to where the blood and such were not bothering me anymore. But apparently not. The next day I had a talk with the training supervisor and they expressed that though I could not continue and graduate, the PD did not want to lose me. They offered me a job in the Internal Affairs office to do background investigations on police applicants.

It was a fun job and I did that for a few years. When I first started, I was completing 8-9 investigations a month. This upset the other investigators as they only did 3-4 a month. We were required to do an in-home interview. I don't know how the one lady investigator, Faye, completed any because she NEVER left the office. Even my Sgt had said something about the fact there were fewer and fewer applicants and we did not want to get them all done. So I slowed down to 4-5 a month.

Since I had been riding the bus from the north side of town to downtown, so my wife could have the car and get a job, I found another motorcycle, Honda 350. Every time I bought another bike it was bigger than the bike before. I also shopped for suits, polyester walking suits I think there were called, I had several, green, orange, tan, navy blue with pinstripes, and more. They

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were really cheap.

In doing these background investigations I found answers to some of the questions I had about things and the officers when I had done the Graveyard shift as a trainee. One night we pulled up to a store burglary and the officer grabbed a couple of things from the store and put them in the trunk of the patrol car. Another time we were driving by another patrol car that was apparently handing out drugs to a drug dealer. One time we were heading out to our district and a call came across the radio for an armed holdup in a district close to ours. I started to take the microphone and check us in to help but was told not to. After others were assigned that had to come from downtown since it was a shift change and many had not gotten out yet, the officer I was with finally checked in and then we checked out for a break at the donut shop. I did have one good officer I rode with. He was showing me that you did not have to be a butt to keep up with the rule of "2 tickets a day, to keep the Sgt away". We just stopped on side of the road, not hiding, and in just a few minutes saw someone run a red light. So, we stopped them and gave ticket. Then we did not even move. In a few minutes, someone goes speeding by and we gave them a ticket. He told me if you just write the tickets you see, when you see them, there would be no issues with the Sgt. Another night 4-5 patrol cars all got together behind a warehouse to eat some "Menuda", the main component

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beef tripe!! I told them I would pass. Another time two patrol cars met in the back of a strip club and we went in for a bit for the officers to chat with girls they knew!!

Anyway back to running background checks, I found applicants with records, with drug use, and ones that were in fights. One day I was talking to an ex-girlfriend of an applicant and she showed me the bullet holes in the wall above her headboard he had done when he caught her with another man. Of course, you have to think about the times, it was the 70's with Affirmative Action programs that made it almost impossible to get Hispanic, Black, or female applicants rejected. One black female had lots of bad stuff I had in the report. I had to do an in-home interview and I had a police officer from that district sit down the street to be sure I got out ok. The first screening board approved her. But when the Chief sent her back down to be re-screened and she did not pass. The screening board knew if they were sent one to rescreen, it meant the Chief did not approve.

In my work around town, I met a guy that ran several security offices. He offered me a job managing one. He wanted me to train in San Antonio and then move to Houston to run the office there. I took the job and did finally move to Houston. The security company was a small alarm and patrol office. The office was in a duplex with an office in front of one side with alarm monitoring in the back of that side of the duplex. We lived in the

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other side of the duplex. Running the company was fun but a lot of work. Most of the time, we did not have anyone to monitor the alarm monitoring at night so I kept the door open and could hear if one went off. Then if needed, I jumped in the car and went to the place where the alarm was and helped the police get into the building and check to see if there was anything stolen. When I left the office, then wife had to listen for the alarms. It got to be a lot of work.

It was fun though and the boss had a small plane and flew equipment around the state between the 5 cities with offices. It was funny, Dallas did not care for private security companies. They did not like having armed guards in security patrol cars running around town. They felt they should only carry while on the property they were hired to protect. So the Dallas police would pull over the security cars and confiscate the guard's weapon. The security guards would have 2-3 weapons in the trunk where it was legal to carry them. They would get stopped more than once a night by Dallas Police. Then every couple of days, they would have to go to the Police Department property room to pick up the weapons.

The boss had a ranch in Mexico and once we were scheduled to have a manager's meeting there. Of course, he flew his plane and the managers were having to drive. When we got to the ranch, he asked how many of us had taken all the weapons out of our

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vehicles. Hahahaaaa, we all had weapons in the car. He said we might have issues getting back across the border. But he advised us that when we got close to the border to open the trunk and put everything in the suitcase and then leave a \$20 bill on the suitcase. So, we drive up to the border and the border guard was checking our ID and wanted to look in the trunk. We would just say OK and pop open the trunk as we stayed in the car. The border guard looked in the trunk and then slammed it closed. We were on our way....

I found that since we did not have enough alarms to really support the company, I asked the boss if we could buy an alarm company that was selling out and it would have doubled our count of alarms. But he said no. I got tired of never having any time off. Even when the wife was having our first child, all I could do was take her to the hospital and drop her off, and go back to work. Wendy Lynn was born that day. It became harder and harder to run the office and monitor alarms both. I told the boss I was giving my 2 weeks' notice, and that in the past he had said that when someone gave notice, to just turn them loose. So I told him I could be out of the duplex by the weekend. He said no, no, that rule was not for management. So, we agreed I would actually work another 3 weeks to the end of the college semester for his son. Then he would send his son down to take over.

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Leaving Houston we went to Devine, Texas, and moved in with Mom and Dad on the farm there. I tried to help out around with Dad's ranch work for the Black Angus herd he was trying to manage. I also got a job for the graveyard shifts as the City Night Watchman. It was fun, just drove around town all night watching for fires or something going on. They gave me a big clock-like device that had a key slot in it. I had to hit various locations where a key was hung on a telephone pole or some other type of spot they could place a key. I had 15 minutes to reach another key location. It was fun. The Country Inn's cook would show up at the Inn's kitchen door each morning at 6 am, but she did not like going in alone, so I would be there and go in with her. Then I would make my rounds and at about 7:30 I would stop by and she had fresh biscuits and more for my breakfast for free. I started noticing on most mornings, this one kid would be rinsing off his car, front and back. I also remembered seeing him running around all hours of the night. Could not figure out what he was doing but then I found him taking a deer out of the trunk one morning. He was out most nights road hunting with his car. It was not legal to road hunt with a gun to shoot deer, but nothing was illegal about hitting them with the car. So this kid road hunted year around and nothing we could do about it.

The farm in Devine had an above-ground swimming pool we enjoyed and Dad frequently invited friends out to BBQ and swim.

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He was a bit of a joker... We had an electric fence around the fields but between the garage and street, we had the wire but it was not connected because we did not run it over the gate. So when friends were there one time, one little kid was always getting into something and asking questions, so Dad took him out to the spot where the fence was not hot and told the kid it only shocked animals not people. Dad would grab the fence and then got the kid to grab it too... Then later we are back over by the pool and Dad tells kid to show his folks how the fence does not bother people. The kid reached and grabbed the live fence!!!

Mom had a white Nova for years and being there on the farm a lot of the time, Dad or I would take it instead of a truck to go into town. The paint was pretty bad and Dad and I decided to paint it for her birthday. We asked her what color she would like. She said Pink!! So we painted it pink and we hardly ever drove it again. Mom having been raised on a farm and milking cows and goats decided to start milking one of the Black Angus cows. She goes to the feed store and asks for some milk supplements for her cow. The clerk trying to help asks what kind of cow because some of the supplements are better for different breeds. Mom tells him a Black Angus! He looks at her and says, "Mrs. McPherson, you can't milk one of those. You need to just turn her out so she does not kick your head or something worse." Mom of course just tells him to give he some feed for it.

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Mom would have the milk on the table and Dad and I were not fond of it. We told Mom we wanted real milk from the store. So we would buy a gallon of milk for the table. But it seemed to last a long time, we would finally notice the expiration date on gallon of milk was a month ago and that we had been snookered, again. Then we would go and buy some more milk.

I enjoyed my nightwatchman job but it was not paying well and I needed to make enough to get out on my own again. I found a job in San Antonio for Equifax. They did insurance investigations. It was a fun job and we moved back into town to some apartments on South Zarzamora. When I was interviewing, they asked how much I was wanting to make. I had being paid \$750 a month as manager of the security company, so I told them, \$750 a month. They said that would be fine. I was happy. Then on my first day as the group of investigators was splitting up the cases, I discovered why they were fine with paying me what I wanted. It was explained to me that each case was worth various amounts, anywhere from \$1.50 to \$18-\$25. Then they took the amount that I was being paid for the month and divided it by 30 days. Also, I was allowed mileage as I had to run around town in my own vehicle. So I had to take enough cases to cover what my salary and mileage would be each day.

I did not mind using my car, I had traded my 65 Impala for a 75 Vega Station Wagon. It was funny, I was mad because it was

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costing more than \$10 to fill up my Impala with a 20-gallon fuel tank. So I sold the Impala and for the first time, financed a car and bought the Vega. I thought the \$ 75-a-month payment was going to kill me. When I first had gotten to San Antonio in '72 I would go down and fill up the Impala on Saturday mornings when Stop & Go would lower gas to 25 cents a gallon till noon. Gas was cheap in Texas. But of course, by mid 70's the prices were higher.



I was enjoying the investigations work. I would go into the office and dictate reports for all the ones I did yesterday. Then we would split up all the reports to work for that day and I would hit the streets. I never went back to the office. I would go home when I finished and went out to the tennis court. If no one was around, I would practice against the wall till someone showed up to play. Then when I was tired, I would go change into a swimsuit and swim. When wife got home and dinner was ready she would find me and I would come in for dinner.

By this time Wendy was 2 I think. I saw an ad for a Shetland pony in the paper and I bought him for her to have to ride. Yes, I was

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living in an apartment!! But the property next to the apartments was a field with tall grass in it. We would stake pony out in the grass so no one could see him and water and feed him daily. Then we had a little saddle and we would bring him out and saddle and let Wendy ride. Even some of the kids in the apartments would come ride. Then when done, we would go hide him in the field again. No one ever bothered him and he was such a nice pony.

He was a nice pony and we had him for years for the kids to enjoy. This is him at the trout farm and the kids both riding.



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As we were getting ready for our second child, I decided to buy my first house. I was working on the southwest side of town and living southeast was not helping. I found a nice little house off Medina Base Road on Apple Valley in the southwest part of San Antonio. Three bedrooms with a carport and a nice fenced backyard. We enjoyed the house and had sent the pony to Dad's ranch in Devine. But we did have a nice New Zealand White rabbit we kept in the backyard. Wendy was having fun with it. She would sit next to it and pet it on the grass. The rabbit would move along and she could not reach it so she would get up, still a challenge being in diapers, and then sit by the rabbit again to pet it. But of course, the rabbit would move again...

One thing about the Vega cars was that their engine was an aluminum block, and it would start to smoke and burn oil thru the rings after about 70,000 to 80,000 miles. It was funny, I carried a case of oil in the back and I laughed, it may get good gas mileage but terrible oil mileage. I rebuilt the engine the first time and found it was easy to do. I started a side business, rebuilding Vegas. I printed up business cards and started overhauling them for \$200 a pop. I would have \$25 in head rebuild and \$10 in gaskets and a few hours of work. I actually went to the junkyard and bought 2 extra heads and had them rebuilt. Then I could pull a Vega into the carport Sat afternoon, and tear it down, then Sunday morning put it back together. I

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was doing a brisk business. It was funny some people just sold me the car for \$100- \$150 instead of paying to rebuild it. Then I would rebuild and sell for \$600-\$800. Had one fastback Vega, which I sold seats and other stuff out of, and then sold the frame to a guy for a race car he wanted to build. I had gone to the junkyard and pulled all the grey interior out of a Vega to replace my black interior. I had a lot of fun with mine and the others. Sometimes I did 2 rebuilds in one weekend in my single carport.

As my birthday came around, it became apparent that TJ was very likely going to be born on my birthday. Perfect, we were going to call him Terry Jr anyway. So on my birthday in the late afternoon, she starts having labor pains and we hurry into the hospital. But then the labor pains stopped. Since she had our first child by c-section, they decided they would do a c-section again. But it was going to be a while. So I went home. I came by in the morning on the way to work, to see how things turned out and found out they had not gotten an operating room until 2 am. Thus we do not share the same birthday!!

Then Dad buys a Trout Farm in northern Arkansas to retire to when he decides to retire. He was going to sell the place in Devine. So wife and I decided it was time for us to retire to the Trout Farm and run it for Dad. He had sent my aunt up there to run it to start with, but she was pretty flakey.

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So I sold Dad my house, so he could move out of the farm and sell it. We moved to Yellville, AR, and started running the farm. Aunt Ardy was still living in the trailer by the fishing raceways and I lived in the house on the hill as they were finishing remodeling. Ardy started talking about this guy going to come and GIVE her a Toyota Camper!! Well, she had been talking about this for weeks, and then out in our garden I find some strange "Tomato Plants" not like the others. I pulled them all up and stuck them in a gunny sack and hid in a stack of tires. Ardy was livid and called Mom and complained I was ruining her life. Anyway, for the best, she moved into town and I didn't have to put up with her games.

Running the trout farm was fun. We had to keep a life jacket on TJ anytime he was down around the water. The trout raceways were about 4-5 feet deep and he was just 2. Wendy would get frustrated with Grandpa, he would be visiting and he would give swimming lessons by "Accidentally" knocking her into the raceway.

The trout farm might have made some money but Mom moved all her horses and geese and chickens to the farm and it took lots more feed to take care of them than for the trout. We started off buying trout ready to catch. We would put them in the raceways and then people would come and fish and pay by the pound for what they caught. We gave them a receipt and they did not need

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a license and no limit. It was funny, one guy would come fish in the morning and did not want to have us clean them for him, he just put them in an ice chest and pretended he had caught them on the river. The river was a well-known trout fishing river, the White River. Then we decided to raise our own trout so Dad and I built more, smaller raceways for fries and a fish house to hold the eggs in troughs as they hatched and got big enough to set outside. It was fun, we had a spring coming out of the mountain that was millions of gallons of 50-degree water year-round. We were not very successful with growing our own.

I also started trying to supply local restaurants with trout. I would size the trout and then clean and box them and deliver them to local places. Had a few grocery stores with bags of trout too. But it was hardly worth the time it took to size and box or bag them.

I became interested in politics while there as well. When we first got there, we had a fight with neighbors and the county judge about road use up through my yard/driveway to allow access to the property behind us. One day I had the gate locked and the neighbor came up my driveway with a noisy pickup and I would not unlock the gate. He threatened me and I was there with a 410 shotgun telling him to get gone. He came back later with the county grader trying to grade my driveway and wanting me to unlock the gate. I ran them off too. So soon I was in the

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courthouse and the county judge was not happy with me. I tried to tell them they had access from the river, but the river was actually washed out and the county did not want to fix it. They were trying to use old state access law that indicated if a road had been being used for over 7 years for access, it was then free access. Finally, we agreed to give them alter access if they would not come up my driveway by the house. So we put a dirt road in from down by the orchard and around the edge of our field.

I also had trouble with guys running their hunting dogs thru our 100 acres as well. The dogs would end up in our field running Mom's Barbados Black Belly sheep around. I shot at one of the dogs once with the 410 shotgun and when the hunter came around I told him I shot a wolf bothering my sheep and said it was down in the ravine. He was not happy. After that, I would catch the dogs, and then use a rope and tie them to a tree by the road where the hunter would find them and really be mad that they had to drive all over looking for their dog. Told them, then keep them off our property??

After I had been there a little over a year, Mom decided to get out of the city and come to live on the farm and help out. It was fun having her there and made it easier to run the day-to-day operation. During that time her father, who lived in Missouri had another heart attack and could not live alone, so we went up there and got him and had him there living with her in the

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mobile home that was the house for the fishing part of the place. It was fun having him there. He was cheerful and made little lace key chains he gave to kids that came to the farm with their parents to fish. He never got excited about anything. Just sat and watched things and might look over showing some interest in what was being done. Then one morning he got up and had breakfast and then said he was a little tired and went back to bed. He passed peacefully in his sleep. Mom called up to Missouri to ask about transporting him or having the funeral home come and get him. They told her the price and that they had to get permits and such. She said OK and would let them know if she needed anything. I helped her and we placed grandpa into the back of the Travellall truck she drove. Covered him up and we took him to his home in Missouri. Placed him in bed and then called the county to let them know Grandpa had died then they took care of everything, no questions asked and we had his funeral.

Since Mom was living there at the farm, Dad would get in his Sprite and come up most weekends. One weekend was his birthday weekend and we were trying to get him to come and rest and let's celebrate. But no, he had work to do on the tractor cleaning around the edge of the ponds. He was on the pond bank and when the bucket got stuck, he backed a bit too much to get the bucket loose and ended up upside down in the creek with the

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long tractor on top of him. He was stuck under the rear fender of the tractor so I ran to the shed to get the backhoe to lift the tractor. My friend grabbed a hydraulic jack and some wood and used it to lift the tractor a bit to keep it from sinking further into the creek and crushing Dad. It took a while to start the backhoe. Oh, it started right away, but you had to build up hydraulic pressure. There was a leak in the system so the bucket, the tail, and both supports were all on the ground and had to be lifted one at a time. So finally, I am down on the pond bank with the backhoe, and with a chain connected to the long tractor we lifted it off of Dad and turned it right side up. Dad refused to go to the hospital but did decide to take a break for his birthday and fish a bit. Our neighbor was Doc Eran though and he came down to look at Dad and just said he had bruised ribs and needed to keep them wrapped a bit, which Mom had already done.

One day as Dad was leaving, he had been gone for about 5 minutes when Mom noticed he had left his pillow. She got in the Travelall and headed out to catch up with him. He was going slow on the small dirt and rocky road out the back of the farm. She caught up and gave him the pillow. Later I was going out that way and saw a tree with a big bite taken out of the side of the tree. Not sure it would actually even live, or not fall over. When I got back to the farm, I noticed Mom's Travelall had the right rear bumper turned back and a dent in the side of the fender. Of

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course, I decided to just ask Mom to call Doc Eran because there was a tree down the road that needed immediate help. She never would admit she hit the tree.

I was trying to run for District JP as a Republican and had the support of the party, but they filed my paperwork too late and I was not on the ballot. Then I decided to try to run the City Counsel and so I was elected Chairman of City Counsel.

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Misadventures of Tommy, (my brother) and I....



I did not know my brother really when he lived in the house. But he was 10 years older than me and he stayed busy. In Massachusetts, I mostly remember that in winter, when he had so much snow to shovel from the driveway, he would make us an igloo in the pile of snow 5-6 feet. He also helped make a nice run for our toboggan, actually, it was an old refrigerator door. So then when Dad was transferred to England in 1959, Tommy went to college. He did not stay, he went into Army and married his girlfriend that was the daughter of Grandpa Mac's maid.

Then they went to Germany and then when Tommy got out of service he was in the San Fransisco area working and driving an old Fiat. He usually came up to visit us in Tomales every couple of weekends to have Dad help him work on his Fiat.

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So as an adult was how I really got to know Tommy. I was in Elementary and High School during those times. Tommy had the attitude he was right or knew what needed to be done.

Dad got our first boat when we first moved to Tomales in 1963. He bought a 51 Dodge panel truck, our horse with saddle, and a 14 ft boat with an 18ph motor. All for \$100....

So I am telling you all this to set the stage for the first misadventure that we had. For some reason, Tommy and his family were visiting and the weather was nice so we wanted to go out on the bay and fish and let his daughters see how much fun the boat could be. For some reason, Dad was not able to go with us so I was the skipper and we took the boat down and launched it at Nick's Cove just 3 miles away. We launched the boat and I was driving it and we were having a good time running around. However, when we were running near Hog Island, I got into shallow and got a bunch of weeds on the prop. So Tommy said he would clear the weeds. I turned off the motor. Tommy lifted the motor and was leaning over pulling weeds off the prop and lower end of the outboard motor. Since I had been driving, I was sitting in the driver's seat and as I turned around to see if he was done yet, I had my hand on the steering wheel, and turning around caused me to turn the wheel as well. The outboard that had been leaning over on one side and pulled up with Tommy leaning over pulling weeds, wound up with the outboard flipping him out of

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the boat and into the bay. It was a good thing were in shallow water and he stood up and pulled his wallet out of his pocket and tossed it in the boat. Like he was fast enough to keep it from getting wet! The girls were yelling Uncle Terry had thrown Daddy out of the boat. It was pretty funny and when the story was told back home the girls insisted I threw their daddy out of the boat.

A couple of years later, Dad upgraded and bought a nice 16 ft GlasPar bow rider and we really enjoyed it. One weekend when Tommy was visiting again, my buddy Glenn and I talk Tommy into coming with us with the GlassPar and going camping by taking the boat across the bay to the Point Reyes National Seashore and pitching a tent, and spending the night. We had pitched the tent and it was not dark yet so we went boating up the Lawson's Landing and chatted with some girls up there. Then back to camp and cooked our dinner. Tommy had insisted that we take the boat out and anchor it in about 8-10ft of water so that the tide would not leave us high and dry. Well, later that evening Glenn and I were going to run back up to Lawson's Landing but... We could walk to the boat. It was not even in 1 ft of water. If you know anything about tides, there is a high tide and a low tide twice a day. One of them will be higher or lower than the other for the day. So when we got up in the morning, the boat was 10-15 ft from the water. We used CB radio to call Dad and he

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and our friend Mac brought his boat out and they helped us tow the boat back into the water. For some reason, Dad said it was the last time I could take the boat out on my own.

As I got older and was either Jr or Sr in high school I found that Tommy maybe was not always the smartest or always right. I thought I was smarter and right!!

We had some friends that had a cabin up at Lassen Park in Northern California near ski resorts. Of course, we did not ski, but I had a toboggan for 1-2 people. So the family goes up and Tommy and his family joined us. Tommy and I took the toboggan over at the side of the parking lot and found it went downhill and we started making a toboggan run. We rode it down a couple of times and then went done on foot and scooped snow up to make some banking to help steer the toboggan around trees and make a nice run. We were having fun and then another kid shows up with a bigger 3-4 man toboggan and he was trying to go down the run, but with such a big toboggan and just him, it did not go very fast and was not much fun. So Tommy says maybe we could all three get on it and take it down the run and it should be better and fast. Then as we loaded, Tommy insisted on being in front to steer, not that you could steer a toboggan very well. Then the kids were next and I was on the tail of the toboggan. We started down the run and yes it was faster, but as it turned out, our customizing to get our toboggan to turn and miss

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trees, did not work as well on the big toboggan. We made the first two turns but we were picking up speed and on the third corner, the toboggan did not turn. We were headed for a tree, I bailed off the back and the toboggan hit the tree square. It cracked the toboggan right down the middle and when Tommy hit the tree, one leg went down into the snow beside the trunk of the tree. I tried to help him up but with his leg down the trunk of the tree it was not easy and it hurt him. Finally, we get him out and he has scratches down his leg even thru his pant legs. The kid was mad and took his toboggan and left and we decided that was enough for us....

When he was living in the San Fransisco area, I went to visit and he had a Dodge Signet that he had said was a pretty hot car. So we decide to take and ride and it ends up with us playing like a Steve McQueen movie jumping streets going up and down the hilly streets around Lumbar St. I don't think we hurt the car, but he convinced me it was a runner.

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Tommy and I were both pretty competitive and when he was living in Houston and I was in San Antonio, we went to visit him in Houston. In looking at things to do, we decided to go and play tennis at a court nearby. I had been playing every day at the apartments I lived in. I had kinda said, how about we go to the tennis court and beat you a couple of games?? Oh, he said he was pretty good, and off we went. I don't remember who won, but he was so competitive that a couple of times he dove across the court to try to hit the ball. He ended up knees and legs bleeding.

So anyway, Tommy and I had fun but it usually ended up with him hurt or something messed up.

The 80's opened up my horizons...



The 80's found me at the Trout Farm in Yellville, AR. I was trying to run the Trout Farm in the daytime and had started working at the sheriff's office at night as the jailer/dispatcher for the county. It was fun and I did it for almost a year. It was fun to get to know all the deputies and Highway Patrolmen. One of the Highway Patrolmen was GB and he got to be a good friend, we had a bass boat together for a while. Would go fishing and he was really busy casting and reeling it in. Me, I kind of put my feet up on the outboard and cast but did not really care about reeling it in. I just liked being on the water. But there were some very strange things going on in the jail and I was tired of it and started looking for other things to do.

I got elected to be the Chamber Of Commerce President for Yellville, AR and the first thing I did was find us office space in town. Then the only real thing that the Chamber did was put on

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an annual festival called “Turkey Trot”. It was in the fall and for the past 36 years one of the main attractions of the festival was the dropping of turkeys from an airplane flying low over the city square. No, these are not butterball turkeys. These were game birds and dropping them from the air was how the Fish and Game Department stocked the birds into the areas for hunting. Of course, dropping them in town, the birds did not really understand flying with telephone pole wires and buildings. But it had been done for years and most of the birds ended up in trees around the square and the kids had a great time trying to catch them. However, the year before the FAA had an issue with planes flying that low and the only thing allowed to be dropped from airplanes was water and feathers. Well, we were close to that. The previous year the FAA had chased the plane and found it at the airport where it landed and the pilot was fined and his license suspended. Oops...

Well as summer was coming along and we were planning the event, I started getting questions about how we were going to get turkeys over the square for the “Turkey Trot” festival. I made no full commitment on how, but guaranteed that we would have turkeys on the square. Well, it became an issue and I had more than one reporter ask me to comment and a couple of radio interviews I told them all I would have turkeys on the square but would not comment on how. The FAA made it known that a chase

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plane would be in Harrison, the nearest airport and it would chase any plane trying to fly low over Yellville.

Well as October approached and at Chamber Meetings, I had chamber members concerned that we had to have turkeys on the square, I kept telling them I would handle it. I guess some of them got together and decided I was not going to be dropping turkeys from the sky and that was a tradition they did not want to see broken.

Turkey Trot Festival started on Friday and there was a good showing of booths and vendors. On Saturday we had our parade and there was a Miss Turkey Trot competition and a Miss Drumsticks competition. We were all having a great time. Then in the afternoon, we heard a plane approaching and sure enough, it dropped in low and had 5-6 turkeys dropped over the square. This was going on about the time that I had someone tossing turkeys off the tallest building to have them on the square. Well, later we heard that the FAA chased down and fined, and suspended the pilot's license again. The citizen's committee I guess would not allow the tradition to not be honored.

However, about an hour after that, a plane came up out of the creek area and dropped more birds, and then headed into the creek and went south. This plane was never found. We had a great festival but I did have some t-shirts that did not sell, so I

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had the back of the shirts stenciled with, "The Year Of The Phantom". I sold every one of the shirts. The "Phantom" is another very funny story.

My wife and I had separated and were getting divorced. I had the kids staying with me at the Trout Farm since she was living with a girlfriend at the time. I would take the kids roller skating on Friday or Saturday nights. During this time, I met a cute blond and started dating her. She had two girls about the same ages as Wendy and TJ, so it was fun to spend time with them. On other nights, I would go and meet her and one night as I pulled into her driveway another car pulled up and blocked me in. Turns out it was her ex-husband. I wanted to get out of there but could not and I was encouraged to come in and have a drink and meet him. So not much I could do about it.

Turns out he used to be a pilot and ran a flying school until he got in trouble running drugs as well. I guess they had divorced to keep her and the kids out of all the problems. So, in September the cute blonde suggests that maybe her ex could find a plane and drop some birds for me. He had a friend in the sheriff's office in Missouri, north of us that had a plane. I provided some birds. Turns out he asked his friend to borrow the plane and was told no, no, no. But the plane was usually at the airport with the key in it. So, the plane was appropriated and flown south of town, then into the area above the creek, then dropped birds and

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went back into the creek and headed south.

Later it turned north and back to Missouri and the feathers were cleaned out and never heard from again.

So the Phantom had completed his mission and we had turkeys on the square for Turkey Trot.

I have a scrapbook with lots of newspaper articles about it, asking me what I was doing, and one even from Great Britain, with a funny picture of someone in a helicopter tossing birds out. Asking why and what was going on. I really enjoyed the whole thing. Note – After the first of the year, the Phantom finally was tried and went to jail for his drug running.

As I got divorced, my birthday was coming up and she had gotten the car in settlement and I had a motorcycle. Of course, Dad had cars on the Trout Farm I could drive, but I needed my own. So for my birthday, I rode my motorcycle to Little Rock to a dealer that had a repoed 1979 Trans Am. I ended up trading my motorcycle for the down payment and drove home in the Trans Am. It was a great car and I really liked driving it. I made the mistake of allowing TJ, who was only about 4, to ride with me a bit and I had a habit of not being patient with cars going to slow and would say, “Get that piece of shit outa my way”. Much like a parrot, TJ picked this up. So, he made the mistake one day, while riding with Grandma in her truck of quoting that and he was in

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big trouble. She was not amused!!

Since Mom was living on the Trout Farm and mostly running the day-to-day stuff, I looked for other ways to make money. I took over a gas station in Flippin about 15 miles from Yellville and ran it with a buddy to help out. Since TJ was not in school yet, he would come with me most days and help out. People would get a kick out of him reaching up to the door window to collect payment for gas. He was too small to wash windshields but had a rag in his back pocket to wipe off headlights. I taught him real quick to not run out when someone was driving into the pumps. He was to stand at the door till they turned off the engine. If I did not happen to bring him some days, people would want to know where the boss was??

Of course with a nice Trans Am and just divorced I was doing a bit of running around and at times a little faster than the law would allow. Once I was headed to my station in Flippin and going a little fast when a state trooper came over the top of the hill and saw me. I saw him turn around and turn on the lights. I thought that maybe if I was fast I could get over the hill and pull into the highway department work yard and park and he would not see me. Well, it was working fine I thought until I actually turned into the parking lot. It was gravel and I was traveling way too fast to make the car turn. So I ended up hitting the curb, tearing off the lower front dam of the car, and blowing out the

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left front tire. Then as I jumped the curb, I came into the parking lot and stopped in a parking space. When I looked up in my mirror, there was the trooper, it was GB. I got sheepishly out of the car and GB was laughing and said that it looked like I had enough issues for one day. That I should slow down in the future.

Another time I was headed to my gas station and there was another car and we both were going pretty fast. Then I saw a state trooper come over the hilltop. I saw him turn around and turn on the lights. The other car started slowing down to stop and I just went on to my gas station. In a few minutes, the trooper pulled into the gas station. It was GB again and he said that he had turned the other guy loose because I had not stopped and we both had been speeding. He let me know, this was the last time he was going to overlook such a thing. I tried to clean up my driving a bit.

My gas station was not making a lot of money but when the gas war started in Mountain Home a few miles away, my business pretty much died. I went up to Springfield, Missouri and got a job driving a truck for O'Reilly Automotive out of their warehouse there. Closed the station and moved to an apartment in Springfield. It was the perfect job. I went to work around 10-10:30 weeknights and got back into the warehouse around 7am. I would drive from Springfield out to a lot of little towns almost to Joplin and drop off parts at our stores and pick up

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returns. Bring the truck back to the warehouse and parked it. This left me with evenings to do what I wanted. I started taking Country dance lessons and was pretty good at it. I was dancing almost every night till about 10 pm and then off to work. I met a lot of ladies.

Some weekends I would have my kids up to my apartment to spend some time with them, but I would find a babysitter so I could go dancing. Met a couple of gals that had kids and living out of town, so they brought their kids into town and we would have maybe 5-6 kids for the babysitters to look after for us. One of the gals had a nice Corvette and I would drive it sometimes as we went out dancing. It had an issue with the starter so I volunteered to fix it for her. One Saturday she brings it over and I thought it would be quick and easy, as Chevy starters are normally. But with a Corvette, I ended up taking off the wheel, and inner wheel liner, then losing the engine mounts and jacking up just the engine to be able to get in and replace the starter. Took me 4-5 hours!!!

I was spending a lot of time at the dance club and when the guy teaching quit, I took over teaching. It was a racket, I got \$40 a night to teach for an hour and free drinks the rest of the night. I taught 4 nights a week. My blonde girlfriend from Arkansas was a cocktail waitress there as well. I found other clubs that wanted a teacher as well, so I was teaching in 2 clubs in Springfield and

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on Sunday night a club in Branson. I recruited a cute blonde to help me and we had leather belts made. Mine said Outlaw and hers said Lady. I wrote a small book with the steps of the line dances and it was titled "Lady and the Outlaw." I had 200 books printed and sold them all. It was fun.

With teaching and girls, some nights I would get to the warehouse a little late for picking up the truck but no one was there, so not an issue but it meant I had to hurry. One night as I was going, I miscalculated a small bridge and ended up hitting the bridge with the back wheel of the truck and blowing out the outside dual tire. I limped into the next town and found a parking lot and a curb drove the inside dual off the rear wheels up on the curb and managed to get the outside dual off. Put it in the truck and then finished the route and back to the warehouse. Boss was not amused. Not only a flat tire but knocked the rear axle out of alignment. So the next day they made me an inside warehouse guy. This actually turned out to be a better job. I went to work at 10 am and pulled parts for loading on pallets to be put on trucks. I would finish at about 6 pm when we had all the pallets on the trucks. I would hurry home, shower, and be out at the club by 7 pm to teach lessons. Even when we would go to breakfast at 1 am I still got home in time to get some sleep before going to work at 10 am. It was always fun that my apartment was just a couple of exits south of the exit for the warehouse.

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However, there was a train track between the exit and the warehouse. The train came thru just a bit before 10 am and was a very long train. So it was a race to be sure I crossed the tracks before the train came each day.

Going to breakfast at 1 am with a group of us there were not a lot of options for where to go. The Howard Johnson was open 24/7. We would show up and 6-10 of us sit down and order. Since of course we had all been drinking and dancing all night, we felt we should continue dancing until our food came. The only song we could sing was "Going to Hire a Wino" and dancing up and down the aisle. It seemed that this would speed up the arrival of our food.

I had several, what I called friends, and we would meet at clubs to dance and I would get tickets to concerts to get everyone to go. I found this less than satisfactory. One time, one couple was mad at each other and did not go, and another the guy left in the middle of the concert. I was enjoying Springfield but I found that nobody there really cared if I was there or not. No one ever called me to arrange activities. If I did not call and organize things, then no one called me. I stayed home for one week and no one even called to ask where was I. I decided it was time to get away and start over, no one would miss me. I decided to check out the Army Recruiter and did a delayed enlistment. So signed up in July but not going to report until late November. I did not tell anyone

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I was leaving except my family in Arkansas. What was really funny was when I came back to Springfield on my way to my first duty assignment in April of the following year, no one really had even noticed I had been gone.

I reported to Ft. Knox, Kentucky on Nov 29, 1982. See the page on being in the military.

While working in Germany in the military, I started running the NCO Club and Officer's Club and was hoping to get a chance to stay in Germany and run the Officer's Club full time. But did not happen. So, in November of 1986 I returned to Ft, Riley and was mustered out of the military. I was told I was due 13 weeks of unemployment, so I went down and signed up. But they wanted me to look for work and turn in forms each week showing my efforts and the companies that I contacted. It was kind of tedious. Also, I had to do that each week and there was a 4 week waiting period before I would get my first check!

I was staying with an Army buddy and he was married. Being single and not doing anything during the day, I would be out to the clubs and breakfast and get in early in the mornings. I always tried to be quiet, but one morning while having breakfast with my buddy and his wife, she indicated, that unless I could get in at a decent hour then don't bother coming back... I got the message and went down to the unemployment office and picked up a

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dozen forms and found a phone book with yellow pages. Filled out all of them with info as though I had gone to companies looking for employment. I asked my buddy to send in one each week for me. Then got in my Malibu and headed east.

My acquisition of the Malibu is a funny story. When I first got out of the military, I had gone to visit family and was in Houston looking for a car. I found Malibu at a shop that did repairs and sold cars. However they had an issue with the Malibu, it was not accelerating like it should. Dad and I looked at it and then offered the guy a couple hundred less than he wanted. He made the deal. I took the Malibu to a parts store. Bought a carburetor rebuild kit. Loosened the top of the carb and only enough to slide the little steel ball that was supposed to be in the accelerator bowl in and put the top back on and the car ran fine for years.



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Anyway, I took off to visit another buddy in Fort Campbell, Kentucky. He and his wife were really happy to have me visit. We went out most nights and they were pretty big drinkers, so I would make sure they got home safely. The only time I was in a bar fight was when I was with them. I did have a couple of times my buddy had been drinking a little too much while we were in Germany and we ended up backing out of a couple of bars to stay out of trouble. But this time she was with us and got mad at another gal in the bar and started fighting and rolling around on the floor. My buddy and I got into things and tried to get her up and away from the other gal. I was backing out of the bar with my buddy's wife in my arms and then he was following us out. We managed to get out without any serious injuries.

My friends wanted me to stay, I had been a few weeks already and had finally started getting my unemployment checks deposited into my Kansas bank account. I was happy not working but I did go down and applied with Auto Shack to be a manager trainee. After a couple of interviews and then they said I was hired. But, I was going to be trained in Nashville and would be assigned a store in Tennessee. I put off starting until the middle of February so I could go visit the kids again and then get moved to Nashville.

My training was fun and the company was having a contest for a new name. They were being sued by Radio Shack for using the

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“Shack” in their name. It is now known as Auto Zone. I was assigned a store in Franklin, Tennessee. I got an apartment and the kids came to live with me.

The kids and I had fun since we had not been together for over 4 years. A few years prior I had bought TJ a corvette-shaped go-cart and we had it sitting in the dining room by the patio door at the apartment. When we had time we would take it across the street to the school property where there was room to run and have fun. Except for the fact the use of school property was not very legal. We had someone turn us into law enforcement a couple of times. So we would go over and play for a while and then run it back to the apartment and have it back inside before the cops managed to come check out the complaint of us being there.

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I enjoyed running the Auto Shack but did not have an assistant manager so it was a lot of hours. But one time when there was an event downtown, I was walking to the event when I heard someone talking. There was no one there. I found a nice two-way radio on the ground. Not sure who it belonged to and no one was around, so I took it home. I put it in my bedroom closet till I decided what to do with it.

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One evening while I was at the store, two policemen came in and wanted to know if TJ was my son. Then they produced the radio and said that TJ apparently thought it was a CB radio and was chatting on it and disturbing the police band. He was pretty surprised when the patrol car showed up and found him using it and took it away from him. Turns out his sister had been snooping around my bedroom and found it.

I was assigned the store in Franklin in April of 1987 and in Dec of 1987, I got a phone call from Germany. I was asked if I was still interested in running a club in Germany. I said absolutely. I checked to make sure they would not have an issue with me having a beard. When I got out of the military, I decided not to shave anymore. They did not care. By Jan 1988, I was in Wiesbaden Germany, and running the Rod and Gun Club for the military community. They were in the process of remodeling the clubhouse and I had them make some changes to make it more usable.

When I came to the country, they put me in the American Hotel. At the same time, my boss was also put in the hotel. Since I still had a driver's license for the military in Germany, I was issued a VW bus and told I was to make sure my boss got to work and pick him up at night. My boss Jerry was a lot of fun. He joked about being a one-legged Marine. He had lost his leg in Vietnam. We had rooms that shared a bathroom between the rooms. Also, I

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met and became good friends with a younger guy, named Jerry as well, that ran the computer retail store in the community. We all had a great time in the evenings and on weekends. There was also another lady Claudia running a kitchen in the community. She would hang out with us. We enjoyed Sunday Brunches and drinking at times in my room where we would all get together. My boss, Jerry, liked to sing, songs like Danny Boy and others. Claudia considered herself a vocalist as well. One night we are sitting around in my hotel room drinking and Claudia started singing something that was going to have some really high notes. I picked up a plastic glass and as she hit the high note, I broke the glass. Everyone laughed and thought it was really funny, but Claudia was not amused... She quit hanging out with us as much. No big loss. We were in the hotel for several months.

Finally, Jerry's wife comes to Germany. So, Jerry and Marilyn found a house and moved out of the hotel. The kids were to be coming for the summer, so by April I found a nice rowhouse in Walluf about 3 exits down from where the Rod n Gun Club was. One of the nice things about the Rod n Gun club was that it was off base so Germans could come and teach our members to hunt in Germany. A very different hunting experience than in the USA. The club also had a trout stream about 30 miles north of Wiesbaden and I had to go up and get it stocked with trout if a good weekend was coming for the members/GIs to go fishing.

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We had an old trailer we would tow up there and a volunteer would spend the weekend selling licenses and bait. The old VW bus was not really good for towing. The club president was complaining that we did not have a decent vehicle. I was told they had asked for a new one but were always denied. I had met a cute gal that was the Nissan Salesperson for the base. I decided to take advantage of a reason to chat and spend some time with her. Finally, I got a purchase order for Nissan Pathfinder. Everyone said there was no way it would be approved. So I just took the PO done to the community boss that had hired me and asked him to approve. He signed it and I went a couple of weeks later and picked up our new Pathfinder. Also, we did not have to return it to the motor pool each night, since we had a gate for our parking lot. All the other club managers were jealous, they had to go to the motor pool to get vehicles and not telling what they might end up with. Our trailer that we used was really in bad shape, so I took it to a dealer for trailers and found one I wanted, got a PO for the newer, but not new trailer. I went again to the big boss and he just signed the PO. Everyone wanted to know how I got him to sign everything. I just told them I did all the legwork and made it easy since he just had to sign.

One of the first things they wanted me to do as Rod n Gun Club Manager was to go and take a course on hunting in Germany. It was a week-long course and one other from the club went with

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me. On the first day of the class, I found there were 20+ guys and 2 ladies in the class. One lady was very attractive and seemed pretty fancy dressing. The first night there I had her studying with me. She was from the Berlin Public Affairs office that controlled hunting there. My roommate said there was no way I could make any progress with her. Hahaaa, after the class she agreed to come to visit me at the hotel. Then I visited her in Berlin. When the kids came for the summer we went over to Berlin and visited some more. She became my second wife. She really liked skiing and wanted to be on the Ski Patrol for the ski resorts. I would go with her to Austria or Switzerland to ski resorts for her training. While she trained, I got a free lift ticket for the mountain. In Switzerland, your lift ticket was for the region, and also your bus ticket to get back to where you started. One time I got off the lift and found I was at the ski lodge used for the movie Clint Eastwood did, "The Eiger Sanction." I always liked to see places where movies were made.

When her brother decided to buy their mom a new car, they were going to junk a nice 700 BMW that was low mileage. So we talked him into giving us the BMW. It was a great car. Would run 250-260+ km all day on the Autobahn. One time as we were going down to Switzerland for the evening and snow storm. Not much traffic but the road was getting snow accumulation. I am not sure why but maybe the wind, but the BMW started to drift

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and then I ended up doing a 360 in the middle of the Autobahn and then continuing down the road.

Since I had a nice BMW, I decided to sell the Malibu. I had paid \$700 for it and sold it in Germany for \$1600 2 years later!!

One weekend the kids and I decided to go to a carnival near us. TJ and I had so much fun on the bumper cars that we played on them for 30-40 minutes. Come Monday, my back was killing me so I went to the doctor. He asked if I had been in an accident, my back was so bruised. I would not admit that I had spent an afternoon in bumper cars.

The kids were having fun in Germany and they both stayed there to go to school for the 1988-1989 school year in the American School on base. Wendy was doing well but TJ was not crazy about it. Since we lived off-post, he did not have many friends. Well, one of his buddies from the school was getting sent back to the USA even though his father was still assigned there. The kid had been getting in trouble at school and being sent home. His parents were not happy, mom and family had to leave and his dad stayed. So TJ thinks if he gets in trouble he could go home. I straightened him out pretty quickly after the first parent-teacher conference. I pressed upon him that he had made a commitment to spend the school year with me and he was staying.

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Come summer, I sent both kids home to see their mother. Wendy had said she wanted to come back for school again but TJ said he was staying with his mother. In August, my girlfriend and I went to Reno, NV, and got married and then over to Arkansas to see the folks and kids. I picked up Wendy and she was going to travel with us back to Germany. TJ was sad to see us go, but I reminded him he had made his choice and he had not really enjoyed being in Germany.

We got back to Walluf, Germany, and enjoyed our row house and work. My wife had gotten a job in Mainz Public Affairs, transferring from Berlin, so she could move to Walluf and be with us as a family.

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I entered the Army at 31 !!



Finding myself divorced for the first time and discovering most of the people I hung out with were not really what you could call friends and had no ties to anything at the time, I talked to an Army recruiter. He told me what a great deal it was and that if I went into Armor (tanks) I did not have to go thru basic as you saw on TV and that I would not have to walk any further than from the armory to the motor pool. Well, I would have to run 2 miles for the physical training but that was about it. Also, I would \$6000 as I graduated from basic. This all sounded good and I did a delayed enlistment, so I would not report until after Thanksgiving. This gave me all summer for more fun around town, a chance to visit my folks and the kids in Arkansas and off I would go. It seemed like a good plan at the time.

It was funny though, I had a recruiter in Arkansas trying to get me signed up. He wanted me to ride a bus to Little Rock and spend the night. Then go into the recruitment center the next

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day. I was 30 and not wanting to ride a bus with a bunch of 18 years going into the Military. I told them that I would drive my Trans Am to the hotel. So I drove down and with nothing to do for the evening, I went out dancing. Found a great club and was dancing with a cute gal. When the club closed, we decided to go to breakfast. After I had taken her home, at about 3-4 am I headed back to the hotel. I woke up at about 8 am and went out to ask about the bus to the recruitment center, but it had gone at 7 am. They said they had knocked on my door, but I did not answer. I figured great, I did not really want to sign up anyway. So I went home to Yellville. In the afternoon, the recruiter called all worried, he thought someone had kidnapped me in Little Rock. He tried to reschedule me, but I declined.

This time they were having me go to Kansas City to the recruiting center there. I took Trans Am and got a speeding ticket on the way. I checked into the hotel and decided to eat dinner and go to bed this time. At about 11 pm some of the idiot kids that were to be recruited the next day had been running around. I opened the door and told them to get to bed. I laid back down and then I found they were firing a fire extinguisher under my door. I went out looking to kill someone. I found they had also broken some glass in the ice machine and no telling what else. In the morning we all checked out by 7 am and took the bus to Recruiting Center. I had passed all my tests and was getting

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ready to sign a contract when I was asked if I had any outstanding warrants or issues. I said I had a speeding ticket!! They said they could not sign me up. I had to get a money order and put it and the ticket into the registered mail with the price of the ticket and then come back. I tried to decide if I was going to or not, but then I figured might as well. So I was signed up for a delayed enlistment. I heard too that it was a good thing everyone had checked out of the hotel. They were mad and said there was over \$2000 in damages and the military had to pay that and they would never allow recruits in the hotel again.

Arriving at Ft. Knox for training on Nov 29th, 1982, I was not sure why the hell I did this. I had a cold, it was raining and cold outside and I was put in a large open barracks with a bunch of 18-20-year-olds that were crazy. They had me shave and get a pretty close haircut. They had us going thru various supply units to get uniforms and more to fill our duffle bags. Then finally about a week later, we were formed up in the parking lot and split into 5 platoons to form our training company of about 120 recruits. Marched over to another barracks and started getting room assignments. Fortunately, they put 4 of us older recruits together in a 4 man room that had two bunk beds. The others were in 8 man rooms, with two rooms for each platoon. Since I was one of the oldest recruits, I was given platoon leader status of 2nd Platoon. We were designated a package platoon to go the

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Ft. Riley, KS. I was disappointed for a couple of reasons about being in a package platoon. First, since going to Ft. Riley, I should not have listened to the recruiter as he told me to sell Trans Am as I would most likely go to Germany or Korea for my first assignment. Second, I had thought I would try to take the Officer Candidate School test after basic to try to get a commission. I had to take the test before my 32nd birthday to qualify. Recruits that were trying to do that usually stayed at Ft. Knox and studied and help with next cycle of trainees. I was not allowed to do that. And at Ft. Riley, my First Sgt had put me on the Lt's tank and there was no time to study.

But back to basic training. Sgt Garvey was our Drill Sargent and he was my age. Since we were in temporary barracks waiting for training to actually start on Jan 3rd, each day we would be taken over to another barracks that needed painting inside and cleaned up for us to move into before Jan. Being older than most the older recruits, I was usually put in charge to keep the "kids" focused and get the work done. The only thing for "Basic Training" being done was to have us do sit-ups, pushups, and run 2 miles. Having just come from the farm and doing a lot of physical work, this was not much of an issue for me. I actually found that once I got started running and had long legs, I could do 2 miles and more. So, I was not being abused. If you could not do those things then you had trouble with your Drill Sgt. We only

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had one recruit in my platoon that was an issue since he was overweight, a bunch. As it got closer to Christmas, the recruits, if they wanted could take Christmas Leave and go home for two weeks. I do not understand why if you just came into the Army beginning in December that you wanted to go home again in just a couple weeks. But about half of the company took Christmas leave.

The Drill Sgt's felt that since half were gone for Christmas leave, those remaining should not have to work all day. So, the company was split into two shifts. Morning from 8-12 and afternoon from 12-4 pm. Our physical training was done at 6 am before breakfast. Of course, we had duty assignments, we had to have CQ, Charge Of Quarters, on both barracks 24/7. One man on the front desk of the barracks. The First Sgt decided it would be good if one person knew all that was getting done where we were working, so he made me the lead and I worked both shifts and reported to him progress each shift and evening. Then after 4 pm, the recruits were allowed to go to the shopping center that had a movie house, fast food, recreation center with bowling, and more. But each platoon had to be marched there by the Platoon Guides. That is what they called us recruit platoon leaders. We had an E7 Sgts pin on our uniform to ID us so other soldiers and Drill Sgts could ID us. I would call cadence for the marching but the guys never liked my songs, so sometimes I let

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one of them call it from the ranks. We were all identified as Phase One recruits by the helmet liner we wore and the combat belt with the shoulder harness.

As Christmas got close the ones of us remaining got to be assigned to volunteer families in Louisville, KY to visit them for three days including Christmas. The family I was assigned to had asked for 2 recruits so Chip and I went to stay with them. Chip was what we called David Spencer, he had little chubby cheeks, like a chipmunk. The Drill Sgts gave him a hard time about his chubby tummy too. They would poke him in the tummy and he had to say "Hehehe" like the Pillsbury Dough Boy. Are you old enough to remember that commercial?? But us recruits just called him Chip. He is still a friend and I seem to call him Chip most of the time still. Well, the family was really nice and had twin teenage daughters, which was perfect for Chip, he was 19. Their Grandmother lived next door and had a piano and I went over there sometimes to play piano a bit. Their older daughter had to use a wheelchair to get around but that did not stop her from driving a specially modified Nissan sports car. We were leaning against it as we came out of church on Christmas Eve when the car started up and no one was in the car. In the 80's that was not something you saw much. Surprised us, but there she was rolling her wheelchair down the sidewalk and expertly managed to get into the car and then reach out and swing the

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folded-up wheelchair behind her seat.

Chip and I had a great time with the family and they invited us back for New Year's.

I was the only one the Drill Sgt approved for an off-post pass for the New Year. It was really fun. I had found a nice country-western club for dancing and went there for Christmas and enjoyed New Year's Eve there as well.

All of our recruits had returned and we moved into the new barracks on Jan 2, 1983, and we started training on the 3rd.

I was assigned a 2 man room and shared it with the Platoon Guide for 3rd Platoon. I had two 2 rooms for 2 men each with bunk beds for my squad leaders and then the others were in two open rooms of 8 each. We were on the second floor of the barracks. The 3rd Platoon was on this floor as well. And there was an office for the two Drill Sgts. I quickly found it easy to keep my side of the room good for inspection, but the other Platoon Guide was a mess. I complained to Sgt Garvey and he agreed the other one was not up to our standards and we booted him to one of the rooms he had his squad leaders in for the rest of the time. So, I had my own room and never got another gig on inspection.

We each had wall lockers that we had combination locks on to secure. Each morning the rooms all had to be ready for inspection and we all had to be in the parking lot in formation

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for a 7 am inspection. Most the Drill Sgts were much like you see on tv in the rooms of their platoons and barking orders and such. After the first couple weeks, Sgt Garvey quit coming in until time for formation. He was stand by us in formation and asked everything good "Mac" and I would give him an affirmative. I was harder on the platoon than he was. They were all kids and a mess as far as I was concerned.

One morning though, after the First Sgt had been thru the barracks for inspection, he came down and asked me to go get my mud boots for his inspection. I was halfway up the stairs when I realized I did not have my keys and I stopped and just when down got back in formation and said sorry First Sgt I had not secured my locker. He handed me my keys and the Drill Sgt Garvey said, "That will be 1000 pushups Mac" The First Squad Leader, Godbold, would be in charge of collecting them. Any time Sgt Garvey was unhappy with you, he would tell you that you owed him "Pushups" and most of the time, you paid on the spot, but he rarely wanted more than 50-100 at a time. So, my Squad leader for the 1st platoon and I started. His name was Godbold and we were really good friends. We started each evening by doing pushups. As I recall after the first day or two, as he counted, he would count 1 as I went down and 2 when I came up. Then he started 2-4-6-8. I had my 1000 done in about a week. He reported daily to the Drill Sgt on progress.

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Our basic training was to be from Jan 3rd to early April. After the first 4 weeks, we were out of phase one and did not wear all the belts and stuff. Also for being in phase one, when we went to the mess hall we had to use the buffet line, not the hamburger and order line. When we came in the mess hall it was a buffet to the right and hamburgers to the left. I did not actually stand in line but being the Platoon Guide, I was expected to stand to the side and see all my platoon was fed, then I just cut in at that point and got mine.

Most of our training was on tank driving, weapons, and tactics. I found when they came to ask for someone to get licensed for a jeep or truck or anything else most guys did not volunteer. You know the saying, "Never Volunteer". But I did, so I was licensed for almost everything in the motor pool. When it was time to load the company on trucks to go the range or other training, myself and a couple of others went to get duce n half trucks. Then all the company was loaded in the back. It was winter in Kentucky. I was driving and had a heater. They we stuck in the back freezing. "Volunteering" paid off for me.

The only real bad thing we had for our "Basic" was going to the gas chamber. When we were supposed to do the confidence course it was freezing and we did not go. And the only 20-mile march we were to do with rucksacks, it started snowing really bad and we had not even gone 5 miles when the Drill Sgts

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decided to let us go back.

The gas chamber was no fun. We went in with gas masks so they could prove to us they worked and that we would have confidence in them. But then while standing in formation inside the gas chamber, we were ordered to remove masks and then stand there. We had to stand a minute or so, no one could hold their breath that long. Then we were dismissed and we all ran outside. It was horrible, eyes burning but you could not rub them, your hands were contaminated. Your nose running like a faucet and you were coughing and trying to throw up. Your throat was raw and you could hardly speak. They had one garden hose and we all took turns flushing our eyes and cleaning snot off us. It was still burning and a bit later even back at the barracks. Most of us did not really recover until after very long n hot showers.

In January, I had a court appearance in Arkansas for a hearing on child support. We had all our civilian clothes taken away from us when we came into Ft. Knox and had not been allowed to have them back yet. I flew home in my greens and then got into civilian clothes for the few days I was there. When I returned to Ft Knox, I stopped by a used car lot and made a deal with the manager. I bought a Chevrolet pickup and gave him \$1000 down and on graduation, I would pay the other \$3000. I would insure it but it would remain on the car lot. I could pick it up anytime I

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wanted to use it around town. I stowed all my civies in it and then in my greens returned to the barracks.

The Army had what they thought were the only height and weight charts to be used and I did not match them. They said for 6' 2" I was only supposed to be 195 lbs. However, I was 210 lbs. They were going to put me on the fat boy's program. I told them I did not think so. I had the second-highest physical training score in the company of 120 kids and I was over 30. When more than a dozen of them could get higher scores than me, then we could talk about it. There never was.

We spent most our days learning about weapons and such. I never saw an M16, the 45 pistol was our personal weapon in a shoulder holster. We went to various ranges for training as well and one time when we were training with the 50 cal, I managed to liberate a short belt of live rounds. Smuggled them back to the barracks. But as inspection was coming up the following week, I decided to dump them in the trash. Our Drill Sgt was the main instructor on tank weapons including the 50 cal. One day we were in a class with 1st Platoon with Sgt Garvey teaching us, our Platoon Sgt was a good friend of 1st Platoon Sgt and as class was ending 1st Platoon challenged us to a knowledge test on the 50 cal. Sgt Garvey said sure, our platoon could handle that. Well, unfortunately, we did not win the challenge. Sgt Garvey was gracious and paid off his bet and dismissed us to get our lunch.

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The platoon was out in the parking lot and I was about to march them to lunch, but I was livid. How could they let our Drill Sgt down like that? They were all so stupid and for that, I was going to restrict them to the buffet side of the mess hall. No burgers. They cried I could not do that. When I dismissed them at the mess hall, I reminded them that they were not allowed to have hamburgers and then again they complained. So, as we went into the mess hall several went to the left to the burger line. I walked over to the burger line and stood there looking at them. All but 3 returned to the buffet side of the line. I took down the names of the three that did not.

That evening as Sgt Garvey was getting ready to leave the barracks, he asks how are things, Mac? told him that three of the Platoon disobeyed me at the mess hall. He said ok, go round them up and have them knock on the office door. They knocked on the door and walked to stand in front of Sgt Garvey's desk and he was doing some writing. Then he looked up and pushed his desk towards them pinning them to the wall. He said, "You disobeyed my Platoon Guide. When he gives you an order, it is me giving you an order." He asked me what punishment I thought they should have, so I said I wanted them back in the Phase One gear, therefore restricting their mess mall options and showing the rest of the company they were in trouble. The three recruits said for how long. Sgt Garvey told them until Mac

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decides you don't have to. They marched out. He never even asked me what they had done to disobey me!!

Since we were all mostly out of Phase One, and we were all off on weekends if no CQ duty or something else, we could get passes. There was a Brigade Pass which meant we stayed in the area and only a small convenience store and gym were available. There was a Post Pass that allowed you to go to the shopping center, movies, and bowling. Then there was Off Post Pass. The CQ desk, Charge of Quarters, had the pass list at desk and let you know what you had. It got to where Sgt Garvey would tell me to fill out the pass list. So, I gave appropriate passes to everyone. I had my name on the bottom of the pass list and gave myself an Off Post Pass for the weekend. Then I folded the paper over so most would not see I was doing it. Then I would take a taxi into Louisville and get my truck and change clothes. I would head out dancing and have a great time. I usually found someone that would put me up for the weekend and then on Sunday I would go back to post after returning my truck. One Sunday morning my host and I made chocolate chip cookies for me to take to the Platoon. I got back to the barracks and the two squad rooms were a mess. I got mad and went thru telling each how bad their area was and I flipped over a couple of bunks and then stormed back to my own room and ate all the cookies myself. The whole Platoon was telling me I could not do that. They would tell Sgt

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Garvey and I told them to go ahead. But they never did. But I did find that I had to go to my room after inspecting the squad rooms and everyone out of the building, to find my bunk flipped and I had to quickly fix it all again for inspection.

Another time, the Drill Sgt had said we could all go to the shopping center but since it was the middle of the week, I had to march them there. As we marched back I was calling cadence and they were making fun of me and not marching right. I got mad and stopped the formation. Turned them all to face me and told them all to drop for 40 pushups. They all said hah, no way, only a Drill Sgt can order us to do pushups. I told them get down and do them or when we got back to barracks, I would have Sgt Garvey have them do it. Grudgingly they all got down and did pushups. As you might think, I was not popular with any of the platoon but the squad leaders and I all got on great.

One evening as we were coming back from the mess hall, at night we did not march. Godbold and I were walking past some dumpsters and we saw "Chip" coming down the street. We always liked to mess with him, so as he got to us, we jumped out and started turning him upside down and shaking things out of his pockets. Unfortunately, about this time a Drill Sgt we did not know saw us. Called us all to attention and asked what was going on. Then he saw my pin showing I was a Platoon Guide and Godbold's pin showing he was a Squad Leader and he was livid.

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Wanted our names and who our Drill Sgt was. We told him and he said he would speak to him and that we could expect repercussions in the morning. We never heard anything about it. I am sure Sgt Garvey just laughed when he heard it.



Godbold, Chip and I - we were visiting Chip's family in KC as we went to Ft. Riley.



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During the last few days of training, we were mostly turning in stuff and taking life easy. We had been told we could go to the shopping center and get some beer if we wanted. Well, I did not drink beer but all the Platoon did, so we decided to go get beer. I told them to hang on for a minute. I went into the recreation room where the Drill Sgts were all playing pool. I came to attention by Sgt Garvey and waited for him to address me. What do you need Mac? Well, Drill Sgt, we were going to get beer but it is a long way to the shopping center and beer was heavy, could I borrow his car? My truck by then was actually on the post but I could not let anyone know. He looked at me and laughed. He asked if I was crazy. I said no Drill Sgt. He completed another shot on the table and then he put his car keys on the edge of the pool table and I scooped them up and left.

Graduation was fun... I was Second Trainee of the cycle and on the stage, but did not have to give a speech. First Trainee had to give a speech. I was also Second place in the PT scores. During our last PT session somehow, I sprained my ankle but would not tell anyone because I did not want to be held over at Fort Knox. The family I had met at Christmas had a flower shop. I stopped by to tell them I was on the way out. They asked if I wanted any flowers for some friend at home. I said well, how about a few bunches of 6 yellow roses. I headed out of Ft. Knox in my truck and headed to Ft. Riley, Kansas for my first duty post.

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On the way, I stopped in Springfield. I went into one of the clubs I spent the most time in and everyone just oh HI.... Like they did not even notice I was gone for 4 months. They did laugh at me though, I was limping pretty badly because of my ankle. But I still asked gals to dance. I would hit the floor and dance like crazy and then as I walked off, limped my way to the bar. I came up behind the blonde girlfriend I used to have at the bar, kissed her on the back of the neck and she turned around about to slap the heck out of me. But when she saw me and she gave me a hug. I gave her some yellow roses!! My kids and family in Arkansas were glad to see me and I promised to bring the kids to Ft. Riley during the summer. I gave Mom some yellow roses too. Then I stopped in Kansas City to dance on Thursday night in Kansas City, I saw a gal I knew from Springfield who was visiting there. It was fun and I danced with her a bit and gave her some roses. Then later in the evening, I met a nice lady I liked better and gave her some yellow roses when she and the other gal noticed they had the same bunch of yellow roses they were not so impressed. But anyway the second gal still danced with me and we had fun. I told her I would be back to see her soon. However, I did not want to drive over to Ft. Riley that late, so I was going down by the river and slept in the back of the truck. I had put a camper shell on the pickup and built a bed in the back of the truck. It was pretty comfortable and about 30 minutes after I got there, I had a knocking on the back window. She had found me...

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I reported for duty on Friday at Ft. Riley and was told I was off till Monday. I headed back to Kansas City for the weekend. Ft. Riley was a fun duty station. Our motor pool was concrete and we had a gate to let us go to the open areas for training. We had some great times. I was on the Lt's tank and unfortunately, our gunner was the 1st Sgt office boy, so Shaw and I were responsible for taking care of our tank.

I had spent some time while in basic helping other recruits with map reading. So when the Lt started to teach us a map reading class and he incorrectly identified mountains and ridges I pointed it out. The problem with that was, he started having me teach the class.

We had two incidents worth mentioning. During the winter we were in the north area and when returning to the motor pool there was a steep hill and with snow and ice all over it and it was a challenge to get a 50-ton tank from top to bottom. Of course, we also have the whole company going down the same hill. We got into a pattern where one tank would start off down the hill, it was a road but iced over. After getting pointed downhill the tank became a 50-ton bobsled. When they got to the bottom, they would radio the next tank and it would slide down. I happened to be driving that time and when the tank in front of me said he was down, I edged over the hill. The problem was that it was

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steep and you could not see the bottom until you were actually going down the hill. As my "50-ton Bobsled" got going down I noticed the tank at the bottom had not started moving on. So, I got on the radio and told him he was about to have a gun tube up his rear grill doors if he did not get moving... He barely got away as I got to the bottom of the hill.

The other time we were out there in the north training area, I was driving and we were going cross country at full speed. It was like being in a boat cruising across a lake. My Lt was in the cupola and said, Mac when we get to the road let's head back. So, I was just cruising along when all of a sudden, the tank drops down. We did not know the road was not field level. It was about 6-10 feet below. As we hit the bottom, the cupola hatch hit the Lt in the back and as we hit the other side of the road and back up into the field it tossed the Lt forward which put the 50 cal handles in his stomach. He was not happy. As we got back to the motor pool, we also noticed that we had apparently broken a torsion bar and a wheel not riding right. And as I said, for the most part, it was just Shaw and I doing the maintenance, so we learned how to change a torsion bar. Took us a day and a half. I might have had others helping in the platoon, but since most of them had either 3-4 crew working to keep a tank, I had many times declined to help them since only two of us were taking care of our tank. Crews were very independent and very protective of

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their tanks. A lot of the time I had given other crews a hard time. My tank was best maintained and I had spare parts. I had everything working on my tank and spare parts for things like our heater and more. So when we were in the field and it was cold and the other tank's heaters went out, it was not my problem. I had taken care of things while in the motor pool, I did not wait until I was in the field and for something to break.

My tank at both Ft. Riley and in Germany had the distinction of being only one of 2-3 tanks in the battalion that had rolled out and rolled back on every exercise we embarked on. Never towed home, came home late, or any such thing. I even had carpets in my tank. Every day we were in the motor pool to work on tanks and that is what I did. I was not smoking and telling stories and BS-ing around while having a nice concrete place to work on my tank.

When I first got to Ft. Riley, I was living in the barracks with all those kids!! I did not like it. I told 1st Sgt I had my kids coming for the summer so he let me move off post. I rented a room with one of the guys I had met out dancing all the time. It took me about 2 months to get the 1st Sgt to let me actually clear the barracks. When I moved out, he did not clear me from the barracks, so I had to be there to clean and take care of things and be on CQ some days. Pain in the butt, but once he let me clear barracks, then no more.

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The kids came to visit for the summer and Larry had another room, so we all stayed in the mobile home. The mobile home park had a pool so the kids really enjoyed that and when my girlfriend came over she brought her dog Rouchess and the kids really liked him.

We went on two deployments while at Ft. Riley. The first one we went to was Minnesota, the land of 10,000 lakes and 50 billion mosquitoes!! They put us on buses and we had to carry our personal weapons with us. For me that was not bad, I had a 45 pistol in a shoulder holster. But others had M16s and other rifles. When we stopped for lunch, we went into a buffet-type restaurant and we could not leave our weapons on the bus, so here we were walking from a parking lot a block away, down the street, and into the buffet carrying all these weapons. We got some strange stares. When we got to the base, they issued us M48 tanks. We were training with a National Guard unit and that is what they had. Not a lot different than our M60A1s we had at Ft. Riley. The first thing we were told was that we were not to damage any birch trees!! The training area was heavily wooded with them. We were training with an Infantry Battalion and our company of tanks had pretty much decided we were just going to drive down the roads. The Infantry Battalion Commander did not like that. He came up and ordered our Lt to get off the road, so we headed over towards the trees about 100 yards away. Note -

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Because birch trees are shallow-rooted, they prefer a location where the soil remains cool and MOIST. Our five tanks headed off-road. I was on the Lt's tank and we were leading the platoon over to the tree line. We got to about 10 yards of the trees when I noticed our back track looked like a small river. About then the tank sunk to its belly in the MOIST ground. The other 4 tanks stopped and also sunk into the ground. Now we could go nowhere. We called for an M88 maintenance tank to come to pull us out. About an hour later the M88 shows up and had two crew man on it. They looked at the situation and said Ok, they would turn sideways on road but were not getting off the road. Then they said that we had to drag the heavy cable to a tank and they would winch it back to the road. So the whole platoon grabs this heavy cable and pulls to the closest tank. Attached and got it pulled back to the road. About then the Commander called on the radio and wanted my Lt to bring whatever tanks he had up to a location. The Lt got on that first tank and they left. So now we only had the crews for 4 tanks. We drug the cable again to the next tank and as soon as it was on the road it was ordered to follow the Lt. You can see where this is going. By the time we had my tank to get recovered, there was only our crew of three guys to pull the cable the furthest and the field was just a mud hole by then. When I finally got on the road, I did not check-in. We just sat there and the M88 left and when we heard the exercise was over, we rolled back to base. Another day, they took us out to the

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firing range and instead of having all the tanks there, they took my tank and put it on the firing line. My gunner and I got to fire it. It is so much fun pulling the trigger on the 105 main gun. Then they told us to get out and brought in another crew. Since it was our tank, we decided we were not leaving, we would just hang out on the back deck. Unfortunately, when the main gun fired again, must have been a million mosquitos that came up out of brush and trees and swarmed over us. We decided we would wait back in the motor pool.

The second deployment was to Ft Erwin in the California desert. Then took the company to the airport and put us on a 747 for the trip. That was the best transportation the military ever gave us. We got to Ft Erwin and they issued us M60A1 tanks like ours at Ft Riley. We started running around the desert playing war games. The tanks all had straps with sensors that we had attached to the front, side, and back of the tanks. Each tank had a laser and when we fired, if we hit a sensor on the tank we fired at, there was a yellow light mounted and it flashed to show it had been hit. If it was not a good hit, then it flashed and went off. We had the control panel inside between the cupola seat and the loader's seat. I was a loader at that time. Since we used the same devices for war games at Ft Riley, I had a key for the panel I had appropriated. So, when we got a hit, I would turn the key off and on and they would think it was only a near hit. Then later in the

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week, one of the straps of the sensors quit working. We used it for the front of the tank. When opposition tanks started complaining that my tank did not have good straps and they could not kill us. One of the observers that were scoring events would come by our tank and accuse us of not having our straps working. I would point him to the side strap and tell him to fire his test gun at it. He did and the light lit up and showed we were dead. He never tested one across the front of the tank. He inspected our control box and my key was in my pocket. I told him we were just good at hiding and off he went. My Lt did send me a couple of times to maintenance to get a new strap, but they did not have any. But when he had to go in his jeep to meet with command, he would tell me to go check again. So I would go sit on the hill just outside of maintenance and we all got a nice nap. The desert heat never bothered us. The huge fan that was used to exhaust the fumes from the rounds we fired was big and would pull air thru the whole tank, giving a nice breeze. Sitting in the shade inside the tank and the fan running was comfortable.

Andy was with us and he was the Company Commander's jeep driver. But mostly the CO was on his tank so Andy just hung out in a ravine or somewhere out of the way. Some afternoons when not playing war games, we had desert cleanup. An M116 would come by and pick up a couple of us and we would drive it around and look for trash. One afternoon, I saw Andy in his jeep, so we

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pulled up next to him and figured he would turn around and chat with us. He did not! He was asleep and did not even hear or notice we drove right next to the jeep in the M116. I reached down and picked up his M16 and we left. They had told us that if we lost any weapon issued, the company would have to stay looking for it till found. It was a big deal. So of course, Andy comes up to my tank and he is panicking, he had "Lost" his M16. We laughed and let him worry a bit and then pulled M16 out of the tank and told him what we did. As tank crews, we only had 45s and when they came around for resupply, they had no blanks for a 45. The M16s got lots of blanks to play with. We decided that was not fair. We would get a few M16 rounds and take duct tape and wrap it around the shell casing until it was fat enough to go into our 45. Of course, it did not fit the clips but we could open up and load one shell. With the tape around the shell, it fits and the firing pin of the 45 would work on it. When we had a chance, we would, "shoot" someone and they would jump and think they were shot. Everyone knew there were no blank rounds for a 45 so it must be a live round. We had a great time. The most fun was when we had our final exercise. We lined up in what was called "The Valley of Death". We had live target rounds and the whole Battalion of tanks and vehicles in pretty much a straight line across the valley. Then we started and were firing down range at targets and having a great time. Right up to when the choppers showed up and were right above us firing as well. All

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their brass was raining down on us and they were hot if they hit you or got in your collar or something. It was a good thing we could not elevate the gun tube high enough to shoot them down. Well, our two weeks were up and we had to turn in our tanks. But they would not accept them if there was anything wrong with them!!



They wanted us to fix things that really had been wrong when we got them. So anyway, they gave me a hard time, they did not like a couple of the wheels on my tank. I went up to the maintenance area to get two wheels and they said they were out but would have some more in the morning. I wanted to get done this evening, cooler working at dusk or dark. When most of the crews had given up for the day, I took my crew up to a tank that was in another company. That tank had all the wheels off and stacked on one side of the tank. We liberated two wheels and took them to my tank and mounted them and finished work ready to turn in the tank first thing in the morning. The next morning, before I

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turned my tank in, I went up to supply and got two wheels and took them to the tank we had liberated wheels from. The Lt of the Platoon was livid. Accused me of stealing and wanted me to be court-martialed. My Lt got into it and pointed out I had got them replacements that were better than what we had liberated. The wheels were not delaying anything with his tank, as it was not going to be finished before we went home. He would go back to his duty station without having turned it in. They would accept it, as it was, with wheels stacked in the desert. The Lt cooled down. I could not believe he was such a jerk. It was all Army green. How could it be stealing?? A day later we got back on the 747 and flew back to Ft. Riley. A great trip and fun in the desert.

The next summer I got orders for Germany and had a direct assignment to our sister unit. My buddy Andy had the same orders. It was amazing that he was doing so well. While on TDY one time he was in a car wreck that broke his pelvis. He blamed me for that. I had loaned him a belt with a big buckle and in the accident, it pushed into his pelvis. Right after the accident, he felt he should have been medically retired but they did not do that. He finally got back in shape and was able to complete all the pushups and sit-ups but was a little slow on the 2-mile run. But 1st Sgt had encouraged him and he decided to stay in the Army. We made plans since we were going at the same time. He would

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ship his truck and I would sell my truck. Then we would share.

This sharing had started pretty much as soon as we got to Ft. Riley. We both had Chev trucks but he had a 4-wheel drive. But when he had gotten home to pick up his truck it was not running. But he had a second truck but had no license of registration for it. But both Chev's about the same year. He brought the blue one with no registration but had the plates on it from his other truck.

One weekend, my truck not working right and I decided to take his to Kansas City for the weekend. So I am zipping along and of course, I get pulled over by the Highway Patrol. They look at the registration and after a few minutes come back and ask me if this was my truck. I told them I had borrowed it. They were not happy, they said it was not registered, and that the registration belonged to another truck. After a chat and concern about registration, he forgot to give me a speeding ticket and said to make sure the owner gets it straightened out. The solution we had was we took the front plate off my truck on put it on the back of his truck. We made sure not to have them in the same parking lot at any one time. We got away with that for a couple of months until he finally got it registered. He decided to pull his engine and rebuild it and used my truck a lot. He had the engine in the barracks and when inspection time came around, he had it cleaned nicely, covered and the pistons and parts neatly stacked in a wall locker. Godbold, the Squad leader I had at Ft. Knox, used

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my truck a lot too. It was not too big an issue but sometimes I would go to the parking lot and have no truck. But I had a motorcycle too. One time, Godbold had been out near one of the firing ranges and he found the remains of a large device he had in the back of the truck!! I told him to get rid of it fast.

We did have a habit of bringing in stuff from training on the range we were not supposed to have. Someone had an artillery simulator that they brought back and tossed it down a stairwell in the barracks and it blew the window into the parking lot. However, I found one time that we had not gotten all the 105 main gun rounds off the tank. In the motor pool, we were really worried about getting caught with it. I clamped the projectile in the breach of the main tube inside the tank and pushed the casing back and forth to get it out of the shell. Then poured all the powder into a bucket. We distributed the powder around the back fence and put the projectile in the trash can. It was ok to have an empty shell casing in the tank. I had a duffle full of stuff from the ranges. I left it with Dad at the farm when I went to Germany. I got back from Germany and Dad had disposed of it all!!

Anyway, we were both going thru out processing, turning in gear, and clearing medical. We went together to clear medical and when Andy handed the Dr his medical records and x-rays of his hip and pelvis, the doctor asked where is this guy. Obviously,

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he could not walk. Andy just told him no one had said he could not walk, so he did. The doctor was not happy and pulled Andy's orders and he ended up discharged at 19 with 100% disability and full retirement pay and benefits. It was really funny, the Army puts him out but he has no real issues. Rebuilds truck engines, works as an AC tech around houses and in attics and then goes dancing.

So, I arrive in Germany and go to 21st Replacement in Frankfurt, the processing center for Germany. I handed them my direct orders and he just tore them up and trashed them. Now he says let's see where you are needed. I ended up assigned to 1/37 Armor in Katterbach near Nuremberg and I was so happy. Our motor pool was concrete and barracks were right by it. If I had gone to the sister unit 3/37 I would have had a dirt/mud motor pool and barracks down the street. However, I had shipped all my stuff to the sister unit and it took 2 months for it to get to me.

I arrived in mid-August and was doing the orientation to learn a little German and things we needed to know such as rules and regulations for being there and getting a driver's license for soldiers in Europe. I was told when I got there that our Company had a trip planned for Sept to Spain, Llorete De'mar. I thought that would be great so I signed up. So my 1st Sgt gave me a hard time, just in the country and already going on vacation.

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It was a great trip, I could not believe the buses and drivers. I thought we were going to hit everything. Streets are so narrow and buses are so big with those rabbit ear mirrors. I enjoyed the beach and did some shopping. I had changed dollars to Spanish Peseta and the exchange rate was crazy, like 150 or more to the dollar. I thought things would be expensive, but they were not. Coke was 6 pesetas and a rum n coke 10. So I had about 15,000 pesetas??

Down at the end of the beach was an old castle with a fence that said Keep Out. I love castles and so one afternoon, I got over the fence and was touring the castle when I ran into a cute little gal doing the same thing. We laughed about it and continued to look around. After our tour, we got out over the fence, we went to dinner. I could not believe how cheap everything was. I was trying to buy souvenirs to spend it all. I went out to clubs each night. When I was walking around town, they had stands for things on a stick to eat. I would buy a couple at one stand for 8-10 pesetas and then eat them before I got to the next stand. Then I would buy more. We were there for a week and on the last day, the bus was not picking us up until 1 pm but we had to check out of our rooms by 10 am. So I was looking around and found the hotel had a sun deck on the roof. Don't know how I missed that earlier in the week. So, I went up to read my book and relax. I was pretty surprised when I got up there, it was a nude sun

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deck. I did not get much reading done!!

So finally, back to the barracks and started to work on tanks. I was assigned to my platoon Sgts tank. So again, my crew was just 3 of us since Platoon Sgt never came to the motor pool unless we were having an inspection or rolling out for training. By then I was an E4. I had been fortunate because having 2 years of college, which let me start in basic as an E3, and the summer in Ft. Riley I was promoted to E4, Specialist. But since I was in charge of a tank, I was changed to hard stripe, Corporal E4 to be in command of others. It was a half-step above Specialist.

I started by getting my tank in the best shape of the company. A tank was supposed to have aluminum wheels with steel inserts to rub on the track. But they wore out and had to be replaced every few months of operation. You had to take the wheel off to replace the steel inserts. Too much trouble. The recovery vehicles, and tanks as well, but for maintenance, all had steel wheels. I watched and every time I saw steel wheels in the area for incoming supplies, I had my crew stay late and we liberated the steel wheels and put our aluminum wheels back in the supplies area. After a couple of months of watching, I managed to get all of our wheels upgraded to steel. I also watched for everything that was supposed to be in our toolboxes. Each toolbox had a diagram and we had stenciled the names of each item where it belonged. It did not take me long to have all tools

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and markings for both of my toolboxes. One of the maintenance guys was my buddy. Bill Ball was my best friend there even though he was in the Maintenance Company and I was in the tank company. We would go touring Germany together and have a great time. We discovered that if we told the 1st Sgt we wanted to go across a border to another country to visit, we had to have an official pass. My 1st Sgt had a policy that if you just came back from Pass, you were on top of the duty roster!! So one trip to Munich and Bill and I went to the US Embassy and got our American Passports. Then we did not need a pass and I did not get extra duty. But if anything happened or we got in trouble outside of the country, I was also in trouble for not having a pass.

When I first got to Katterbach, there was an Enlisted Club across the street. The Katterbach installation was straddling the road, so we would go out our gate, cross the street and go in the gate there. Anyway, after going to the Enlisted Club a couple of times, the manager, Skip, came up to me and we started chatting and became friends. Shortly he asked me if I would apply and be the Night Manager. I did and I started coming over every evening after getting off duty across the street. Running the club was so much fun and Skip was great to work for. He was a bit of a drunk though. He would hang out at the club since he was not working then he could drink. His wife, Eddy, was in the states and had not come with him on assignment. He was in the military as a club

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manager and it was his only job. But the military was going away from having soldiers running clubs to civilians running them. The manager of the club system in Ansbach and Katterbach got to know me too. The only problem I ever had in that club was a guy looking for a necklace he had lost. I was trying to help him, but he was drunk and wanted to turn on the lights in the club to see better and have the band stop playing. I said no and he pushed me into the bar. I went to get him away from the bandstand and grabbed him, it was a problem and I ended up dragging him into the office as my assistant, Bobby opened the door for me. I sat him in a chair and then he came up swinging again so I put him in a choke hold but then noticed the office had a window to the club and his friends were not amused and they were banging on the window. We pushed him into the back office. Bobby being a large, 6ft 4" and 250lbs, pushed the guy up the wall holding him with one hand under his chin, and told him to settle down. Bobby knew the guy and he finally settled down. Bobby convinced me not to call the MPs but to call his Company and ask for a couple of soldiers to come down and take him to the barracks. They came and as we were walking him out to the street, he started up again, knocks the 2 guys from Company down and it turned out MPs happened to be driving by so they took him anyway.

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Running the club was fun and usually as we closed up at about 1 am. On weekends, someone would suggest a place off-post to go for some more fun. I started keeping stuff in my trunk of BMW for setting up a bar. I had ordered two cases of Coors glasses from the beer distributor and I had glasses in their boxes and booze we had left over from parties, I took all the leftovers to keep for the next one. Each time people brought bottles of alcohol and gave them to me to be the bartender. One night at a house off post, we had a party and I was making drinks but someone had brought some blue colored something that was terrible. I would make a drink with it and no one would drink it. I could not waste booze so I drank it. Of course, then I became "Over Served". As the party wound down, I stepped outside to throw up and then walked off the porch and down the street for some reason. It was winter and 6-8 inches of snow. I did not have a coat either. I ended up sitting at a bus stop and falling asleep. When I woke up, I managed to find my way back to the house and when I went inside everyone wanted to know where was I. They had gone out looking and driving around and could not find me. Then it hit me, I was cold, so cold.... A couple I knew, took me home with them and put me under blankets and a space heater blowing on me. I finally was getting warm again at about noon and realized I was supposed to be at work at the club. They took me to my car and I finally got to work. Fortunately, Bobby had been there and opened the club. I was warm, but still drunk a

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bit.

Skip liked to go out drinking after closing as well and we would take his car and I would drive. He had found many biker bars to go to since he was a biker. I never did drink when he and I went out. At times his mouth would get him in trouble because he was drunk and we would end up backing of the bar. When Skip got orders to go back to the states, he sold Bill his Toyota. Bill and I one weekend, decided we were going to a car show in Geneva, Switzerland. It was strange, it was not far to cross the border but then we found it took all day to get to Geneva. Of course, some of the delay was that we got off for gas Zurick and we could not find the entrance to get back on the Autobahn. We did find a store that was an American Western store. I still have the Texas Ranger badge that I bought there. We finally got into Geneva and it was hard to find a hotel room, we had not booked anything and with the car show everything was full. We finally found a hotel that had one room with just a single, double bed. We took it. It cost almost all the cash we had. We did have enough left to get into the car show the next day but could not stay all day as we had to get back to Katterbach to be at work the next day. The little Toyota would run all day at 240-260 km. Fun fun....

Neither Bill nor I knew how to ski, but we found the ski club was mostly women, so we joined and signed up for a ski trip to Austria for a weekend. We got on the bus and let them know we

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did not know how to ski but they said they would teach us. We got there in the evening and they had us on our skies and just learning around the parking lot to stand up and balance. Then in the morning, they said we should come up the lift and they would help us. However, it was very cold the night before and everything was frozen. We got off the lift and they helped me get started going downhill and learning to turn. I got turning kind of figured out but not stopping. I ended up going side to side and crashing into the snow banks and then getting turned around and go again. Bill was not getting it, so he had to put his skis between the skis of a gal in front of him and held on to her all the way down. It was pretty funny but we survived.

Next, we found the company was having a trip to Garmisch for a week to ski. We had ski lessons included in the cost of the trip. On the first day, Bill and I were in our class of about 10 learning to ski. Most of them were not getting it but Bill and I finally were getting it. We could start, turn and stop. The others were spending most of their time falling down and complaining. On day two we skipped class and took the lift to the top. The nice thing about skiing is that no hill is any steeper than you want to make it. You just ski side to side at the rate that was comfortable for you. Bill and I getting pretty good and had a great time all week. The only bad spot was we ended up on a top of a ridge and the trail was only 4-5 wide so there was no back and forth, it was

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mostly just straight down, but not so steep we got killed. I had a flask I filled with rum each morning and maybe that helped us make it thru the day.

Running the club was fun but then Skip went back stateside and the new manager did not like me. He accused me of being inappropriate with one of the bartenders. He terminated me and I was not happy. When I showed up at my friend's house, they could tell I was upset, I was drinking tequila from the bottle and it was half gone. They took my bottle, fed me some dinner, and then took me home.

I had a BMW 325i and I had to rebuild it once and was having trouble all the time with it. One of the soldiers in our company was going back to the states and had not sold his Mazda 626, so he asked me to keep it and sell it for him and send him the money. I had the Mazda until I left Germany a year later and sent him the \$200 then. I had one 90-minute country western tape that was all I played for over a year. Guys riding with me would ask to change it and told them they could walk!! Then I started having trouble with the passenger seat back. It would not stay up. I filled a duffle bag and put it behind the seat to hold it up. Then it was pretty much a two-passenger car. But it always ran fine.

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The next summer the kids were coming to visit so I got permission to move out of the barracks and found a nice apartment in a German farmhouse. It was funny, there was parking beside the farmhouse. I actually only had a bathroom, bedroom, and living room on the second floor. However, the bathroom was only a bathtub, sink, and oil water heater. No toilet, I had to go down the hall to the toilet in something like a closet. In the hallway that my door was off, was a second door to a bedroom. The owner's, 17-year-old daughter slept in that room. In the year I had the place I think I saw her a couple of times. My heater in the living room and bathroom was oil and I had an oil tank in the basement that I had to take a bucket to and fill the oil heaters. To take a bath I had to fill the oil water heater, lite it, and then come back in an hour to take a bath. I rarely used the living room heater unless I was home for the day or evening. With working at the club and Army I was hardly there. I would be in for PT at Katterbach at 6 am, then go to breakfast, then work formation, and then after work, to the club. Close up the club at about 1 am and do books and get home at about 2:30, so I just went to bed and pulled up the covers. In the morning jumped up, brushed my teeth, and got into PT by 6 am. Lucky to get 3 hours of sleep a night. I started to get the reputation during training, that if they let me sit down I fell asleep. Sometimes after PT and breakfast, I would try to catch a nap before 8 am work formation. But if I over-napped, I would go down behind the barracks and

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get into the motor pool. When they came down and asked why I missed formation, I just said I had things to do on the tank.

In the spring, I got a call from the manager for the Ansbach and Katterbach club system. He asked if I would take a night manager position at the NCO club in Ansbach. I said yes and started working again each night. The manager of the club system knew the EM club manager was just trying to get rid of me and that I had not been inappropriate with anyone. In fact, my bartenders and waitresses all knew that and preferred to work for me instead of others. When they fired me at the EM Club two of them quit because they were soldiers' wives and were not allowed to work for some of the managers who were drunks and inappropriate all the time. So shortly after starting at the NCO Club, we had a job fair for all the clubs. Each club had a table in the large room at the club. People would come in and go to the table where they wanted to apply. I started out by going out and walking down the line and picking out those I wanted in the NCO Club and had them come straight to my table and not others. I had many of them tell me that they could only work for me according to their husbands.

I remember one afternoon as we were running the bar, we were watching TV for the space shuttle launch when it blew up!! Another time I was letting the bartender run to the bathroom, someone ordered a rum and coke and as I was putting the rum

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bottle back, it slipped from my hand. I caught it on the toe of my boot and I was thinking what a great catch. Then as it slipped off toe to the floor, it cracked the bottom out of it. I had guys at the bar wanting a straw so they could suck up the rum off the floor!! Drunks are so much fun.

Well, sometimes drunks are not that much fun. We were having disco night and the dance hall was full. I had my assistant manager really watching and taking care of things since he was black and most of the crowd was. One table had two ladies that started fighting and falling into tables and breaking glasses and such. I looked around for the assistant manager to step in and did not see him. I waded in and was getting the two gals separated and to do this I held one around the waist and the other pushed back with my hand on her chest. I heard this voice behind me, "Heh that is my girlfriend". I looked over my shoulder and could only see the chest of a big guy, so I looked up into his face and said "Back off buddy or you are going out too". He backed off. I drug and pushed on the girls till I got them out the front door of the club. If they wanted to kill each other they could do that in the parking lot. About then the MPs showed up and took the girls into custody, my assistant manager showed up on my elbow saying "I called the MPs." Thanks, that was a lot of help!!

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That summer the kids came to visit me and I organized a Company trip to Spain, and I got to have two free tickets for that so I had the kids going with me. They got their own room and I had one of the other club managers, Gary going with us in my room. The morning we were getting ready to get on the bus, we all needed to change money from dollars to pesetas. I talked to the bank and they asked that I have everyone put money in an envelope and then one person come to the bank and make the exchange. I was about 1/3 the way exchanging dollars when the bank had a phone call and it was for me. On the phone, the tour operator said we could not go to Spain today!! Spain was closed!! The Spanish Minister of Tourism had overbooked the coast of Lloret De Mar by several thousand and people were sleeping on beaches and in buses. However, he could offer us to go to Nice, France and we could still leave today. I said that would be great. I started exchanging money back and then to Francs. But... Dollars to Pesetas was like 150 pesetas to a dollar. Francs were only 8 to the dollar. Fortunately, my 1 Sgt got into the negotiations, and knowing the French Riviera was expensive, made the tour operator include dinner. We already had breakfast included so with dinner, you did not have to worry too much about eating. That's what I thought.

When were got to Nice, they said that the hotel that we had rooms in and would give us dinner did not have enough rooms

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for everyone, so three rooms would be at another hotel. So, I had them give me and the kids and someone else the rooms at another hotel. It was on the beachfront, about 6-8 blocks from another hotel on a back street. It was great from our balcony we could watch the traffic and the beach was across the street. Well, they called it a beach, it was actually mostly small rounded rocks. The kids and I were amazed at French customs. Someone would walk down to the "Beach" and spread out their blanket. Then they would strip down naked and put on their swimsuit. And some ladies did not bother with the tops. TJ was small enough and I carried him on my shoulders because the rocks hurt his feet. He kept pointing out the topless ladies and kept telling him don't do that. I finally started holding his hands down. He then would grab the side of my head and be turning it to look!! We were having a great time. It was a good thing our 1st Sgt had taken care of us for meals, most of us had only changed \$100 to Francs. A coke was 6 Francs and a rum and coke were 12 francs. I did not drink much. During the day we would go to a grocery store and buy a bottle of water and some bread and something to make sandwiches with for lunches. The first day we were walking to the other hotel for our dinner, the kids found an ice cream cart and a pretty French gal running it. The kids had run ahead and by the time I got there they each had ice cream and I owed the pretty lady 8 Francs. Then we got up to the hotel for dinner and they had tables set up in a conference room with

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tables for 8. The waitress came in and laid down the first bottles of water and everyone jumped on them and they were empty before she got back with more. Most of the guys I guess had not drunk anything all day. Then they came around and took orders for drinks and the guys had beer and more. We had a nice dinner and then the waitress came around and started handing out tickets for alcohol each had requested and drank. When they saw they were being charged for drinks, some of the guys bugged out before the waitress got to them. The next night the manager told me that all drinks would be cash first. They had a bill for over 300 Francs not paid the night before. Not much they could do but I they charged the tour company that had set up everything. The routine got to be the waitress would collect cash before they got beer and they had a hard time keeping the water bottle full and the bread baskets full. I also had to make sure I had my 8 Francs before heading to dinner because every time the cute gal on the ice cream cart saw the kids, she gave them ice cream!!

We had a great time and being on the main boulevard we saw some great cars. One thing I could not figure out was that at one club, a couple blocks down from our hotel, people would pull up and just get out of the car and go into the club. There seemed to be a fleet of tow trucks loading these cars and taking them away. I don't know if that is just how valet worked there or what, but they towed almost everything, Ferraris, Mercedes, and big

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BMW's every night.

At my 2 year anniversary of being in the Army, I was promoted to E5 Sgt. This required me to go to the NCO academy. It was in a barracks just across the street, but we were required to move in and stay there confined for 2 weeks of training. We also were required to bring an M16. I had never had one but the armory for my company checked one out to me and I carried it across the street. Turned it into the armory there. I was put in a 4-man room, with 2 sets of bunk beds, and I got a bottom. We also had a wall locker each. We were required to have an inspection every morning and all of our socks and shirts and everything had to be just right for the wall locker. I had been told we could have one duffle bag under our bed that would not be inspected. I had brought almost two of everything. My wall locker was never touched, so it stayed inspection ready. All my cloths and equipment I was using I kept in the duffle bag under the bed. The first day our room got some gigs and we got in trouble. The other guys in my room were Airborne guys from Italy and I told them that they were all to be out of the room and stay out once they went to breakfast. Then I cleaned the whole room and went to breakfast. In return for this, I would go to bed and the Airborne fairy would shine my boots to a high shine. They were good at that. Another one of them would help me with M16 and clean it and turn it back in for me each time we had them out to fire

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blanks at some games we played each day. I hated being locked in for the weekends, nothing to do but read and eat. I would look across at my motor pool and wish I was there. My room never got a gig after that first day. I also had heard before I came, that they were really picky about how our rank was pinned on our uniform, but if we had sewed on rank and they did not like it, they only giggered us the first day and then it was excepted. So I had all my rank and stuff sewed on my uniform before going to the NCO Academy. Finally, my two weeks were up and I carried the M16 back across the street.

That afternoon, I go to the motor pool and walk up to where my tank was supposed to sit but it was not there. Well, the bumper number was right but it was not my tank. The new company commander had decided he liked my tank and he took it and changed the bumper numbers. The one he gave me was a piece of junk. I also had a message that they were planning a big "Change of Command" to welcome General Saint to our Division. They were to have one of each type of vehicle in the Division on the parade field. My tank had been requested by bumper number!! This was on Friday and the change of command was going to be on Monday. I told my crew to stay when everyone else left Friday night. We spent the weekend cleaning and painting, a kind of "POD", paint over dirt. The tank looked pretty and since we were on side of the parade field 100 ft from anyone, it looked great. My

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tank was always so nice and I had carpet inside. It was requested to be the one tank used for "Family Days" to give rides to the kids.

Then the first time we went thru vehicle inspection, they coded out my trackpads. Trackpads are rubber pads that are bolted on each track block. Each track block had two trackpads. The only way to get trackpads off was to use a socket and breaker bar with a 3 ft unauthorized cheater on it. You just had to tighten the nut till it snapped the 1-inch diameter bolt. It was something I was NOT going to do for the whole tank. I got notified that my trackpads had come in and were sitting in the supply area and I was to pick them up for doing the job. I went over to take a look and there setting in the supply area was a full set of complete tracks, with new pads, ready to be assembled and put on a tank. They came in sections with several on each pallet. I told my guys to go eat dinner and return to the motor pool. That night and the next day we drug the pallets of track over to the center of the area in front of our company of tanks. We assembled them all and then lined up our tank to the row of tracks. Disconnected the tank's tracks and then connected to new sections and rolled up and onto them. When we rolled all the new tracks onto our tank, we disconnected the old track. Then we broke the old track into sections to fit on the pallets and used the tank to drag them back over to supply. I did get a call about why I did not pick up my

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track pads and I told them I don't need them. Never heard anything else. Of course, then I started playing the game of getting all steel wheels again. It could not be stealing, it was all Army green and never left the motor pool.

While I was at Ft. Riley, I had a Texas flag I would put on the tank radio antenna sometimes. The first time we went out for exercises Grafenwohr, I had it on my tank. We were 3rd Platoon but seemed our Lt always volunteered us to lead the company. The CO came by one afternoon and told me to take it down. It was not subdued. So, I wrote Mom and letter and asked her to sew me a Texas flag that was subdued, browns, and greens. I got it and the next time we were out for exercises I again had it on our radio mast. The CO came by and said he had told me to take it down. My Lt told him that he had said it was not subdued, but now it was subdued and he felt it should remain, and it did. Even during one battle, the CO had told the company to follow the tank with the pennant!!

Some of the times when we went to field exercises, we were allowed to drive tanks on the highways and Autobahns. Other times we were loaded on rail cars. Depending on where we loaded sometimes, we drove on from the last rail car and had to drive up and across one to the another until we got to the one we were to be tied to. The tanks barely fit the rail cars. When we drove on them, we had half of each track off the edge, so we had to keep

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just one pad on it. It was not easy to do but it was easier than when we had to side-load. We would drive up a ramp that would put us at the same height as the rail car. Then drive on and pivot to straighten out. The German train master had a gauge he used to measure how much of the track was sticking out. If it was too much, then you had to see-saw to get it right. It was amazing that in two years we only dropped one tank off the rail car loading sideways. German trains in the 80's were not too exciting. In the bathroom, you had a seat like an outhouse and you flushed and it dropped onto the tracks.

Every time we were going out for a field exercise, we would be prepping to go for a couple of days. We were told that we were NOT to take any "Poggy Bait". That is what they called snacks and stuff we would buy. We were only supposed to be eating what the Army gave us. To help them discover if anyone had "Poggy Bait" they used clear trash bags and if they found soda cans or candy wrappers or anything not issued to us, we were in trouble. We would crush the soda cans and put them inside the little milk cartons they gave us. For other stuff, we would put the trash in the empty MRE bags. The MREs were usually what we were issued for lunch each day. They would come by in the morning with a hot meal for breakfast and give us a bagged MRE and they would bring a hot dinner for supper. When everyone was fed and the cooks were cleaning up and putting everything

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back into the trucks to take back and most likely throw away, I would keep an eye out and lift the tarp on side of the truck and liberate the remaining cakes or other sweet things to eat. Take them back to my tank and our platoon always enjoyed leftovers. Also, I always had peanut butter and jelly but hard to keep bread so I would try to liberate a loaf or so when I found some. It was funny, we had always been told not to take any "Poggy Bait", but in Germany, every couple of days when out on field exercises, the 1st Sgt would come by my tank and toss me a loaf of bread and tell me to make him PBJ. I would hand him down one or two and then keep the loaf of bread. Another time my tank commander saw I was making PBJs for the crew and handing them out around the tank. He asked for one so I started to make him one but he said no, he did not want me to make it, he would do it himself. Did not want me touching his food. We also shared our Oreos with him. So not sure why they made such a big deal about us supplying ourselves with things we liked. We did have an issue with having enough sodas so it was pretty much required to share. So, I would open a soda, drink some and pass it around. Everyone would drink and bit. But not the tank commander, he wanted his own. I did not have enough for anyone to just have their own. So, we just poured some into his tin cup before anyone drank from the can.

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As Jan of 1986 came around, our unit was to transition to M1 tanks. I did not like M1s, they were smaller inside and had less headroom. I could easily stand up in an M60A1 but could not in an M1. Also, I had been telling my 1st Sgt I was not re-enlisting to extend past my November end-of-service date.

The 1st Sgt really liked me and had been good to me, he wanted to send me to the E6 board and he promised to promote me as soon as I hit the required time of service for E6 which was just over 4 years. So basically, promising to promote me in 1987 and I would become a Tank Commander as an E6. But I was convinced I was going to run a club. So instead of having me go thru the M1 transition training, he released me from my military duties and I ran the Officer's Club until I shipped out in November. I had been working for the NCO clubs and the manager of the club system had me apply to be a manager for the Officer's club.

Running the Officers club was great, I was in civilian clothes and working hours I wanted to work. I put on a "Dining In" for General Saint that had 100 officers and a lot of protocols to be observed. It was a great event. As November came along the different companies on base were reserving dates for their Christmas parties. I was told that it was first come first serve. One day an officer's wife came in to make a reservation for a Friday night, but it was already taken. She was not happy and tried to coerce me with the fact she was Colonel someone's wife

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and I was to give her that date. I declined. It was funny, in the military, the wives all think they were the Colonel or General or Captain.... Being late November I started clearing and turning in my military things. To do this I had to be in uniform. I was never in uniform in the club before. But on this day, I was in uniform and sitting at my desk, minding my own business. A colonel walked in and came up to my desk, he saw I was a lowly E5. He started off with Sgt get on your feet. Like I was in his command. I went ahead and stood up, but did not salute. He said that he was mad because his wife told him I would not let her have the date she wanted for the company Christmas party. I confirmed he was right, that date was taken. He asked who it was that had that date. I told him it was an Accounting Company and a reservation made by Captain, someone. He asked to use the phone. He called the Captain and said, "He was Colonel ... and wanted to know what alternate date the Captain wanted for his company Christmas party." The poor Captain did not have a choice, so he changed his party to another date so the Colonel got to have the date he wanted.

My manager kept sending back lists for the O'Club Manager, hoping the next one would have my name on it. But never got a selection list with my name on it for the manager of the club.

In Late Nov 1986 I was shipped out to Ft. Riley and was out processed from my military service. It was a learning experience

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and I actually enjoyed most of it and should have stayed in, but that is water under the bridge.

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The 90's brought me back to the USA..



In early 1990, I was assigned to manage the food and beverage warehouse that was having a lot of inventory issues. In Germany, alcohol and cigarettes were highly monitored in inventory. The warehouse was also having a lot of issues with deliveries. I started by having the person that was managing, do an inventory of the alcohol and cigarettes. Then when he finished, I went back and did the inventory again and found that he was missing a lot of alcohol and cigarettes that he had just inventoried and said he had. The MPs came and he was charged with several charges. The next issue was the clubs receiving orders were complaining about the trucks making several deliveries a day, one for dairy, one for bakery, one for meats, and one for dry goods. I put an immediate stop to all deliveries and told drivers they were to pick up all items and return to the warehouse where they would sort and put all items, dairy, bakery, meats, and dry goods together on one truck and make one delivery to each club each

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day. One driver said he was not doing that. It was too much work to load and then bring to the warehouse unload and then load for club and unload. I told him he would do that or he could go up and see my boss and collect his final check. He headed up to see my boss and I never saw him again. This helped change the attitude of the other drivers. But this put us two employees down at the start of taking over the warehouse. We also did not have a very good inventory program so I wrote a program in Lotus to handle inventory, par stocks, and reorders. That helped a lot. Next problem was that the inventory in the warehouse was so mixed up that it took a long time to get everything for each club's order. I put in a request for new shelving and it was approved. When it came in, I closed the warehouse for Friday and only 2 of my workers would stay to work the weekend as well. We took everything on one half of the warehouse and set it outside in the parking lot. Then built new shelves and started putting things back on shelves in order as to the group of foods for items they were. Then took the other half of the products and shelves out to the parking lot and built the rest of the shelves. Then got everything put back in the warehouse in an order that it would be easy to pull items. We completed this from Friday afternoon to Sunday night. I got a service award for the work done and not impacting the club's required items from the warehouse. The warehouse had one German employee and 5 Americans hired to work there. The German always insisted on him going to the

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butcher for all the meat products. But when he returned he would show on his inventory that some items had not been received. I did not believe this so I started following it turned out he was picking up everything but then he would stop by his daughter's restaurant and give her some of the meats. When I confronted him it turned out the German Union would not let us fire him, but we made it clear this would not continue. After that, he got to be one of my best driver warehousemen. I got promoted a rank for being there and cleaning it all up. It was fun.

In the summer of 1990, my wife and I decided to go to Reno again for vacation and see about buying a house. My contract was up in Jan 1991 and I had decided not to renew it. The US was getting ready to go do things in the desert and I did not want to be overseas when the fighting started. So that meant we would be going back to Reno with no jobs and starting a new life. While on vacation wife started looking at houses up on Lake Tahoe!! I told her that was no way we could afford that. I finally got her to look down in the valley between Reno and Carson City but told her those were pretty pricey too. She said no problem her mother was giving her the down payment. So, we bought a nice house in the Virginia City Foothills. We also went to a garden and home show and bought a hot tub to be delivered next year but at their sale price. Then we found a casino selling an old Cadillac Limo and we bought that. We made sure the limo fit in the garage of

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the house. We were not able to stay for the closing on the house, so the realtor was going to look after the limo and then put it in the garage after closing. However, it ended up being towed because he did not watch out for it when he parked on the street in front of his house. Anyway, the house closed and we made plans to finish up our jobs in Germany and come to Reno to live.

Moving to Reno in 1991, I was turning 40 and could count 40 jobs I had prior and 40 places I had lived.

I had gotten a side business going supplying computer accessories for the retail store there in Wiesbaden and was hoping that would grow and give me business but had issues after getting back to the USA. They were so slow paying invoices that caused me to be slow in future shipments. My buddy was not still working there at that time, so they quit ordering from me and canceled the second half of a shipment I had not done yet.

I had made arrangements with a company that supplies the clubs in Germany to be a salesman for them in Nevada and Northern California. Never made much money there. I then was a purchasing manager for Atlantis Hotel and they were becoming a big casino/hotel from a little motel. I had several other jobs during the first 2-3 years in Reno. For a while working multiple jobs. For me, a day off was that I only worked one shift that day. I

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had two full-time jobs and a part-time job. It was rough making money and keeping up payments on the house for the first 2-3 years. Then in late 1993, I found a job with Fitzgerald's as a computer operator for the AS400. Then things improved. In a couple of years, I was learning to program it and went to the Eldorado Casino as an Apprentice programmer.

In the meantime, I had gotten divorced again. I had been working my butt off and she was trying to sell real estate but only made 1-2 sales in 2 years. Also, because her idea was there was her money and our money. I was expected to take care of the house and everything out of our money which was actually just money I made working 100 hrs a week to get. Her mother sent her money all the time too but that was HER money. Well of course it was not an issue while we lived in Germany, I made lots of money. But it became a real issue in Reno.

Then less than a year later found a great gal and started living with her. When I got ready to buy another house using my VA Loan benefit, she could not be on the loan application unless we were married. We were living together for a while anyway so we got married in Sept of that year. We started our life with it all being OUR money, one joint account.

Also, I started trying to get into racing. There was a small paved track in Carson City. My first race car in the PC Class which

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meant basically you rolled down the side glass or removed it, removed headlights, wore your seat belt, and had a helmet. It was fun, I got a 76 Monte Carlo for \$300 with no title. I did not have a trailer, so I would drive it to and from the valley on the south side of Carson City to get to the race track. I had TJ follow me in the truck going down, so no one would notice no license plate and then I would follow him home because I had no headlights. Then I got a sponsor that had room in his back parking lot for me to leave the car on the south side of Carson City so I did not have to drive it far to get to the Race track. I had fun but never won anything. Then I stopped for while. I ended up donating the Monte Carlo to the high school shop class and took a \$1000 tax credit. In the late 90's, after I had my house in Horizon Hills I started again. This time you had to get a car, take everything out of the interior and lights and side glass. I had a lot of help from friends. I had a friend that was a welder and he helped me install a cage in the car. In this class I was running, there was no engine size limit, so I went to the junkyard and got a Pontiac 403 and was trying to use it for my car. All I did was take the intake off and clean up there and then bolted it all back together and fired it up. It ran fine but was hard to keep it from overheating during the race. I don't think I ever did any better than finishing heat races. Then during the main event, it usually blew the radiator. One night when coming around turns 3-4 I was in second place and the guy behind locked into my bumper

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somehow, then as we straightened out our bumpers and unlocked but while doing so, it had me facing the flag stand wall. I hit hard and they had to stop the race, all the race cars were on the backstretch while they waited for a tow truck for me. It was funny, Mom and Dad in the stands. Mom says she did not see me on the backstretch with the others. Dad pointed out I was plastered to the front wall. I had the tow truck put the car on my trailer. Then when I got home, I put it up on jack stands while still on the trailer. Pulled engine and transmission out of the car and cut out the cage. Then went up to the junkyard and they forklifted it off the trailer for me. I traded the engine and transmission to a guy that had a Pontiac Ventura that his brother had left on his property. No title, just gave me the keys and I gave him the engine. I welded the cage from the first car into this one. It had been crash-tested I figured. I made this a much nicer-looking car and during the winter built a 350 to put in it. Everyone told me I needed a rev limiter on the engine but I did not want to spend that much. I tested the car a couple of times but then on the first race, as I was rounding turns 1-2, I was leading the race and pulling away when the engine exploded. I was a little distraught and disgusted with things so I never rebuilt it. I just sold the car as a roller to someone else to start over.

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TJ and I after we got the car built. Did not paint, just painted on “Area 51” It was out of this world.



This was a good night of racing during a main event. Was ahead for a while, till the radiator blew.

Results of the last race for “Area 51”.

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It was time to get it beamed up. It was a great car right up to when it hit the front wall!!



The new "Area 51" was built over the winter with lots of time spent on it and a buddy painting it.

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The car looked great and ran really well. I was pretty proud of the result because I did not have as much help building this one as I did the first one. I also started a website for “Nevada Racing”

By December of 1999 with all the worries about the year 2000, I was a junior programmer for the Eldorado Hotel Casino and we were having fun getting all our programs ready for Midnight. Turns out that either everyone around the world working on programs had either done a great job fixing everything, or it was just a to-do over nothing...

Turn of the century and turns in my life.



The turn of the century turned out to be kind of a snooze. Computers did not crash, the stock market did not crash and elevators did not crash. No real change from Dec 31st, 1999 to Jan 1, 2000, and life continued as we knew it.

I was working for the Eldorado Hotel & Casino, as a Junior Programmer and enjoying the work and enjoying married life and a nice little house on the north side of Reno, Nevada.

Then on Sept 11, 2001, life did change. I remember as I got to work that morning we were told to turn on the TV. We were just in time to watch as the second plane hit the other tower. I don't think we got any work done that day, we just watched as it all developed and then were amazed when the towers crashed to the ground.

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Not wanting to diminish the suffering and the terrible outcome of that day, I found that since that happened the casino and traveling, and gambling business was strongly affected. My bosses had been promising a substantial raise for Oct 2001 and now that things were so bad in the business that was not going to happen. I was not happy. Then in early 2002, I started not feeling so well and was hardly able to walk down the hallway. I went to a clinic to see if they could help me and they immediately put me in an Ambulance to the ER for a heart condition. Turned out to be a 3rd-degree heart block. Not that serious. Just popped a pacemaker in me and sent me home 2 days later and told me to go back to work. But I was not happy with my work now. I started looking around town. I found the Peppermill Hotel & Casino was looking for a Programmer and offering an amount much more than I had even been promised but not get at the Eldorado Hotel & Casino. So I made the move to the Peppermill and really enjoyed that. They also had a casino on the border of Nevada and Utah and I frequently got to travel over there to work with them in developing / modifying programs they wanted. It was fun.

Even though I liked being a programmer, I was still interested in cars, but not racing. I decided I wanted to open a small car dealership to run in my spare time. I started researching and finding what I needed and the cost. In the meantime, I had been occasionally going to a local public auction and buying cars and

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selling them. I had found myself a nice Eldorado 2 door that had a fabric roof, making it look like a convertible. But I was interested in finding a nice convertible. For my job at the Peppermill, I was sent to Atlanta for an IBM course. As it happened, while looking at cars on the internet there was a nice Camaro Convertible for sale near Atlanta. It was purple and very rare. So while in Atlanta, I took a look at it and bought it. Then decided to drive it to Louisiana to visit Mom and Dad and then I would have it shipped to Reno from there and I would fly back home. However, I learned the hard way, if you do not make the first leg of a reservation, then they cancel the rest of the reservation. Fortunately, I was able to get the airline to find me a seat on the plane and I managed to get home. Notice I have a cover over the back seats making it like a roadster, similar to the old T-Birds. It was a great car.



Then in January of 2005, I found myself getting divorced for the third time!!

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Well, life goes on and I did open a car dealership with a small warehouse to keep cars in and on weekends would work on selling them. I was doing ok to start with, buying cars for \$700-\$1500 at dealer auctions and selling for \$3000-\$5000 and then repeating. I could only have about 5-6 cars at a time though since I was only working with about \$15,000 to run the business. Then being cocky I made my first mistake. I bought a very nice Audi Convertible very cheap but still more than I should have paid \$8000. Retail I should have been able to sell for \$12,000 or more. But - the reason no one else at the dealer auction was bidding was that Audi did not have a dealer in Reno and they did not sell well. Well, this slowed down my business, and no income much since too tied up in one car. I ended up selling it on the internet and had to drive to Sacramento to meet a buyer and I barely broke even. Then I ended up with a couple of cars that were not selling so I decided to take them to the Sacramento Auction and had TJ and his buddy Adam and my friend Tom help by driving cars to Sacramento. On the way home I offered to buy dinner at a Steakhouse that was on the way home but the boys wanted "In an Out Burger"!!! I could not believe it. My best purchase at the dealer auction was my 1998 Pontiac Grand Prix GTP. There were 2 for sale that day, the same years. But one was cleaned up and looked very nice. It sold for \$2500. Then the other one came on the auction block. It was dirty, and the driver's window did not go up or down and was open. So the

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interior was dirty. The opening bid was \$600 and I got it for \$1100 and was happy. I took it home, cleaned it, took it to Pontiac and paid \$150 to get the window regulator replaced, and gave it a tune-up. It had 90,000 miles on it when I bought it and it had 230,000 miles on it when I sold it. A great car. Well then the final blow for my dealership was after taking advice from TJ that a Dodge diesel could sell for mid \$ 20,000s, so I bought it at the dealer auction for \$11,000. That tied up all my cash and I could not sell it. I ended up titling it to myself and I closed the dealership.

From the divorce, I had sold our house and moved into a rental near TJ's house. It had a 3-car garage and I got interested in building a kit car. A 1936 Ford that I got a deal on kit from the Hot August Nights Events that summer. I was doing pretty good with it, but then when I decided to leave Reno, I knew I would not have space or time to continue, so I sold it.

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In the spring of 2006, Dad had an infection in his knee, they took it out and put in a disinfectant block, and sent him home for 30-45 days. Nothing holding his leg together but skin. We put a bed by the hallway bathroom and he could barely drag it in there and back. Dad was in southern Louisiana and TJ n I took turns taking off work and going to help him and Mom. One of us would drive Dad's car to the airport, put the key on top of the tire and then the other would fly in the same day and get the car and go back to help them out. While I was there I started thinking about a new job and moving. I had always wanted to live in Dallas. Years ago I have lived in San Antonio and Houston but never Dallas. I applied for a programming job with JHA in Dallas and

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they had me take an RPG test on the internet. I only got 60% so I figured that was not going to happen. But they offered me a job and agreed to pay to move me out there and a salary MUCH higher than I had in Reno. So by April, I had moved to Dallas, well actually Garland, part of the metro area. I rented a house that had a pool and loved it. That summer I had Mom and Dad come up and help me house shop. Dad and I had actually thought about them moving too but Mom would not hear it. While looking at houses made the mistake of saying we thought it would be nice for Mom and Dad and she found everything wrong with it. Then we looked at a couple more houses for me and I found the one I wanted. Realtor said there was another nice one across the street so with Mom thinking we were still looking for me a house, she pointed out how nice everything was. We said great, it could be their house!! So we bought houses across the street from each other and I really enjoyed living so close for the next ten years.

JHA paid me too much and gave me 19 days of vacation the first year. I was enjoying life and made trips to Europe and many cruises. When I went to Europe, I would fly direct from Dallas to Madrid. There was a program called Vaughan Town that would give me 5 days of free room and board just for helping with conversational English for their students learning English. I did that 3-4 different times as I made more trips to Europe. I met

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these two that lived in Madrid and every time I was there we went to dinner.



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This is all that was required to sit and chat so they could improve their conversational English. It was a great time and usually at a resort outside of Madrid.

My Grand Prix was getting old and had over 250,000 miles on it so I decided to car shop for my birthday as I usually did. I noticed an ad in the paper for a 2005 Jaguar S-Type and decided to look at it. Dad had always wanted an E-Type Jag but never had. I liked the Jaguar look. In fact, I had pointed out to people on several occasions that my Grand Prix grill and body looked a lot like a Jaguar. I found the dealer and it was one like I had years ago but much bigger. All the cars were in a warehouse and you looked around. I loved the car from the first site and they were only

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asking \$7500 for it. The book price should have been over \$10,000. The owner/salesman explained to me he had a business plan and it had worked for years and brought him back customers. When he bought at the auction, he had a good formula to use for determining price to meet his needs. He never looked at book prices. So I bought my first Jaguar and loved it. I thought it was funny with guys at work making remarks like, “Somebody is getting paid too much”. They would point out I was driving a Jaguar!! Hahaaa I told them I was less invested than they did in their Toyota or Ford. When I totaled it a few years later, I got \$10,000 from insurance to replace it and I found the exact model and color online in Denver and bought it sight unseen, and had it shipped. So I went from a Jaguar with 150,000 miles to one with 33,000 miles and it did not cost me anything.



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When I moved to the Dallas area I started doing a lot of dancing again and was really enjoying life. I also started cruising. I would go on 1-2 or even 3 cruises a year. I was having a great time taking friends from the meetup on cruises.

I even was taking Dad on cruises and I would get the family to come and go at times.



I had some friends going on their honeymoon cruise and I got some other friends to come and go with us. They are the couple on the left. John and Mary also did a lot of sailing with me.

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Hard to believe that 10 years had passed since the turn of the century!! Looking forward to more to come. Life was good...

Life after making the move to North Texas.



My move to Texas in 2006 was a great idea. I had the opportunity to get Mom and Dad to move to the Dallas area as I did and we bought houses across the street from each other. Being able to spend the late years of their lives across the street brought many pleasures. Mom was always baking bread and Dad always had a project in the garage. He built hope chests for some of the granddaughters and his Chiropractor. It was funny Dad had mentioned his work to his Chiropractor, who then asked if he could stop by and see the one he was working on. After seeing the hope chest he contracted with Dad to have one built and free services from the chiropractor for the rest of his life. Dad and I had met a guy, Richard that was into restoring cars and he helped Dad and I get the Sprite running again. It had not really been driveable for years. Once it was driveable I wrote up the story of the little car and put it on a display board and we went to car shows with it. It was always a popular display.

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One thing we did almost every afternoon when I got home from work was to take a walk around the block. Our street had the high school on the other end and was a divided street with 2 lanes

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each way. One of the things I had been doing since moving there to Garland was adopting the park across the street and once or twice a week I was over there cleaning. But in the afternoon, Mom and Dad and I would walk up Colonel Dr and I would pick up trash as we went and we all chatted. Mom was so funny though, if I happened to miss some trash, she would stop and stand there by it pointing it out to me till I got it picked up. It was amazing that I could pick up a bucket of trash every day off on the same 3-4 blocks. It was nice to walk and talk with both Mom and Dad.

Mom was never one to go and do much, but Dad and I went to car shows, boat shows, and cruises all the time. I got to spend some fun times with them and enjoy their senior years.

I also found a couple of country western clubs where I started going dancing 3-4 nights a week. Dallas was different than the rest of the world of course. Instead of the normal two-step, or three-step depending on who you talked to, they had the Progressive Two-Step. I took lessons and quickly became very good at it. Lots of fun turns and routines. I got to know a lot of gals to dance with. I was never much of a drinker, so instead of going to the bar for a drink when I got to the club, I headed for the dance floor and found a dance partner on the way.

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I had also become friends with a few guys, Marc my wing-man, Brandon the kid, and Harold the cowboy. We all would chat and let each other know which gals could dance or not. Unfortunately, Marc passed from cancer a few years later. I have a little stuffed monkey he had given me so it could ride with Army, the Armadillo, that I kept on the faring of the Gold Wing and then later on the dash of my car. Army, I got in 1983 at Ft. Riley in a western store.



It was funny, my buddy Andy and I were in a western store in Manhattan, Kansas looking for Andy a new hat. I saw the little stuffed critter and picked it up and started talking to it. Some previous alcohol may have been involved. Anyway, after carrying

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it around the store and shopping as we were checking out, I put the stuffed critter down and was headed out with the cashier says "Heh, you are not going to leave that little fellow here. He has already bonded with you." So I was made to buy the little critter. Well, when Andy and I headed into a dance club that evening he says, "What, you going to make Army stay in the truck?" So I took him in and placed him on the table. By the end of the night, he had an empty beer bottle laying next to him. He got to be part of our friends and bartenders life's as well. Everyone wanted to see Army every night we were out dancing. Yes, there was a little drinking going on as well. I even would take him into Denny's and sit him on the counter and order two apple pies. He always ended up with an empty plate before we left. Sometimes at the dance club, the waitress would put Army on her tray so he could help serve drinks. That's how we kept him from getting too drunk.

Anyway back to Dallas, Army and the little monkey go everywhere I go and I remember Marc all the time. Marc the last few years of his life volunteered at Meals On Wheels, so when he passed I volunteered for a couple of years in memory of him. Also pinned to the monkey's arm is an angel pin we had on Mom for a long time.

The reason we had a pin on Mom was it had a card with it with her name and address. One time as Mom's Alzheimer's was

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progressing she walked away from the house without us knowing. A couple of hours a nice policeman brought Mom to the door and asked if we knew her.

Also, the monkey had a fun pin from one of my cruises where I watched the bartender pour 8 martinis at once.

Ah, Cruises... Yes, I always had another cruise lined up. Sometimes Dad and I went and other times I went with friends from the meetups that I knew. We would get 10-12 people together to go cruising. We kept trying to get more guys to go, but it was mostly ladies and my buddy and me. We always had a good time. My buddy and I went and did a Mediterranean cruise as well. That is where I met Chantelle, she was in the show cast and they all were at the martini bar one night and she said I was going to be her "Ship Boy Friend" that week. That was the first time I did the Studio VIP show with the cast. I was on stage as one of the group for doing the YMCA. Another time doing the show on another cruise I danced the hustle with one of the female dancers. For that first cruise when Chantelle was giving some VIPs a tour of dressing rooms and backstage, I got to go as well. All of the cast was so much fun. Since then I have met many of the casts from different ships and keep in touch with many on FB. When COVID hit, Chantelle went back to Australia and got married, and has such a cute little baby boy. I have spent a lot of my cruises meeting and getting to know the

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cast and cruise directors and musicians as well.

Dad and I have cruised Alaska and the Caribbean. I have also down Mexican Riviera, Western, Eastern, and Southern Caribbean, Mediterranean, and Baltic cruises. Mostly on Carnival, but when Carnival did not have a ship going that way then I tried others. Total of 40 cruises so far.

Also while enjoying cruises, I made several trips to Europe. I would build points on American Air and then fly Dallas to Madrid, nonstop for \$15 and my points. Then while in Europe book their airlines to move around. I loved going to London, eating fish and chips 3 times a day, and going to a show every night. I saw Chitty Chitty, Bang Bang there one night, and the Mousetrap and more. I went three times to Venice, I love the city and the buses are actually boats. So instead of my usual hop on and off the bus, it was hop on and off the boat. When in Madrid I did the Vaughan Town experience 4 times. That is a week for free at a resort outside of Madrid to just chat with Spaniards to help with their conversational English. Got my own room for Sun-Fri, three meals a day, and people to chat with and do things with. It was always so much fun. I have two friends in Madrid I met doing that and I still have dinner every time I go there with them.

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When I moved to Texas I was driving my Grand Prix GTP and I had about 230,000 miles on it when I decided it was time for something else. I bought my first Jaguar S-Type 2005, Seabreeze, which they called the color. I have really enjoyed owning one ever since then. The first one had 87,000 on it when I bought it and that was why it only cost \$7000. Then a few years later with about 150,000 miles on it, a lady pulled out in front of me and I totaled it. The insurance gave me \$10,000 to get another. I found one online in Denver, CO with only 33,000 miles. It was the same make and model and color?? I had them ship it and the only thing when it showed up was it had mismatched tires. So new tires and a great car with low mileage. Most people did not even know I had a different car.

Working at JHA was easy and they paid me so well and gave me too much vacation, so I was able to do all I wanted pretty much. Cruise and Travel around the world and Sail in town, in Kemah, and in BVI. Life was good.....

On the Road to Kentucky with TJ



Well like most stories, it starts with... “It seemed like a good idea at the time”. Regardless of how it turns out.

I had moved from Reno to the Dallas area and the next year TJ decided that he had an event in Kentucky he wanted to attend. We decided that I would fly to Reno and we would rent a car to drive from Reno, NV to Kentucky. I made a reservation with Thrifty for a car for 2 weeks. I arrived in Reno and it was early May and nice weather. I had left Texas and it was nice weather there as well. So I figured that my usual clothes would work and packed accordingly. I was going to Walmart to get some things for the beginning of the road trip and asked TJ to go pick up the car from Thrifty and meet me so we could get on the road. He showed up to get me in this...

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Now I am sure he and I could drive this and never get noticed by Highway Patrol or others. I told him, NO! Never!! He took it back and got us a Toyota SUV and that sort of came in handy.

So we hit the road and decided the first stop would be Yellowstone and had reservations for river rafting while there. We noticed as we were getting close to Yellowstone, the weather went from a nice 80-90 degrees to 30 degrees!! Upon arriving we also found there were no real options for places to stay. So we thought we would sleep in the back of the SUV. Of course, we had no jackets or anything to keep warm with. We had to stop and buy jackets. Then as night fell, we found it was way below 30 and we had no blankets, just jackets. Also, we found we had our shaving kits and a hand towel each but nothing else. Since we had been reduced to “camping” that made it difficult to take a shower as well.

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We survived the night by exchanging places from time to time from the passenger seat to the back of the SUV and the engine on and off to warm up the car. In the morning it was snowing pretty hard. We headed to where we were supposed to be river rafting and when we arrived it had slowed down snowing. We asked if the river rafting was still a go or not. They said if people show up they go. The other group that was supposed to go with us did not show up. So TJ and I get a private river rafting trip. They start by giving us several layers of pants and jackets both cloth for warmth and waterproof sort of, for over it. So bundled up we take off and start a very fun rafting trip.



It was a pretty fun and exciting run down the river. We were a little over halfway when the guide indicates there was a rapid coming up that was fun to body surf. I said no thanks, but TJ

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rolled into the river... After surfing the rapids there was a spot they had us put in for a few minutes and pointed TJ to a spot on side of the river. There was a hot spring running from the bank into the river. TJ warmed up a bit and then we were back in the raft and some more exciting rapids till we got to the takeout point.

After we were done there, we started looking to see where we might find some bears. I guess they are not easy to find, but we found a bear park south of Yellowstone where they had a lot of Brown bears that they fed and were fun to view.



However, this was not very satisfying for seeing a “Real Shit in the Woods Bear.” So we headed back up to the park and while I was sitting in the parking lot and TJ went in shopping for food supplies, I had a great time watching someone else’s food being carried off from the bed of their pickup. The birds were taking apart the bread bags, chips, and lunch meat packaging and having a great time. But it was funny when a bird would have a piece of ham or something in their beak and then take off from

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the side of the pickup, finding they were not very aerodynamic and could barely fly. Some almost hit the ground before they finally got enough air under their wings.

TJ and I had a good time for the afternoon visiting “Old Faithful” and other sites in the park. We decided we were not staying another night in the park, so as it was getting dark we headed out of the park, working our way to Mount Rushmore. As we were on the edge of the park, and almost dark, a large bear stepped out into the road and started slowly crossing the street. This was exciting and we pulled over and got out some flashlights and started looking for the bear around the edge of the road. But no joy... But at least we saw a “Real Shit in the Woods Bear.”

As we drove along thru Wyoming and South Dakota, we started seeing signs for Wall Drug. I mean every couple of miles was a sign, some hand-made, some professional highway signs. Everything telling you to visit Wall Drug. So the following day in the afternoon we finally see a sign, Wall Drug next exit. So of course we had to get off and look. It was an old western town that had all the shops and such connected by doors, so you just kept walking thru seeing everything. There was hardly anything you could not find there. There were a lot of Jack Elopes and other mounted critters that would be hard to find elsewhere. I had a hard time not buying several of them. But I resisted and we

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finally hit the road.

We headed thru the Badlands and then on and across the US till we got to Kentucky. We stopped when we saw something interesting and found some cheap motels to stay in so we actually would get some sleep.

Once in Kentucky, I decided to take a flight back to Dallas and TJ attended the Monster Truck event as he had wanted. He found many of his friends in the Monster Truck groups. One of them decided to ride back to Reno with TJ. He made the trip in 24 hours.

On the Road to Reno with Dad.



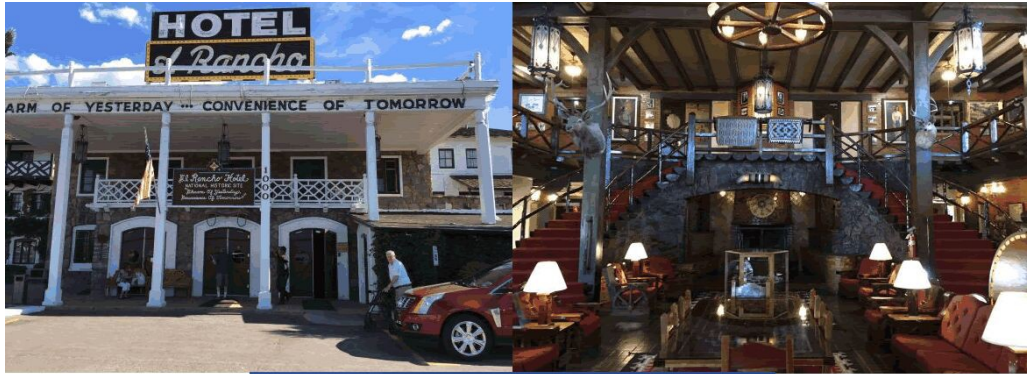
Dad and I decided it was time to take in the 2015 Hot August Nights event in Reno, NV, the first week of August. We thought we would drive from Dallas across the country and even have time for Dad's birthday.

We started out the trip visiting an Army buddy of Dad's since he was nearby the road going to Amarillo. As we traveled along we watched for signs for car museums and other things to do since we did not really care how long it would take us.

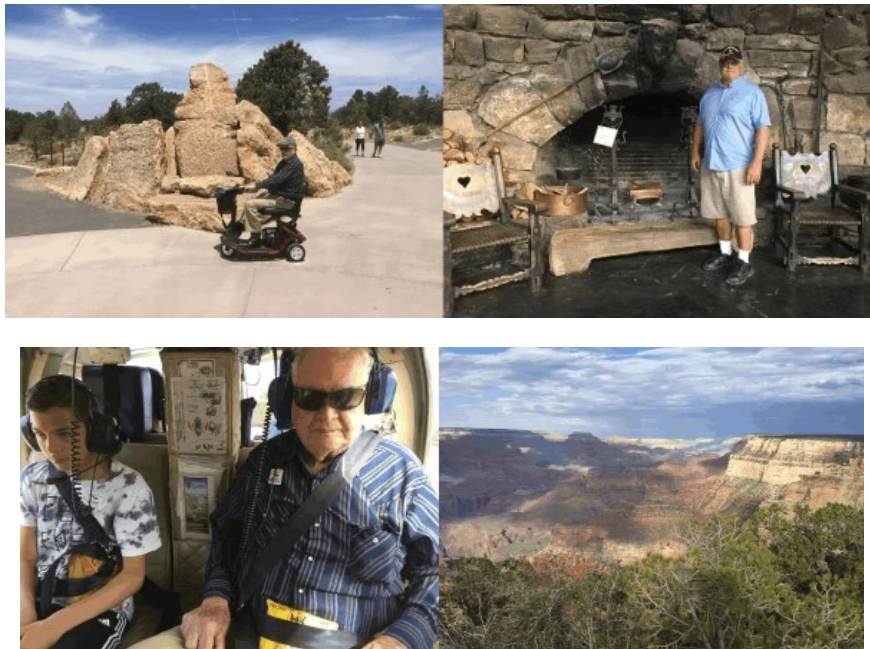
One place we found was this nice Inn with very interesting decorations as we went thru New Mexico. You can see Dad as he is walking away from the Cadillac SRX we were driving.

We made other stops at a car museum as we were headed into the Painted Desert.

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We also enjoyed seeing the Grand Canyon from a helicopter as well as on foot as we traveled thru.



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Dad was fun to be on the road with. He was ready to look at anything and everything as we went along. We picked motels as we went with no real plan for things. We got into California and headed up to visit Marvel for a day. We went to the Black Bear for lunch. The Black Bear is one of my favorite places to eat, but it is hard to find them. Sort of like looking for bears in the woods. They are not just everywhere you look.



The next day we headed on up to San Fransisco to Fisherman's Wharf. That is one of my favorite places. I go every chance I get. Then we went on up to Tomales to see the old place and Dillon Beach. Our friends the Lawsons only own the Landing now, the rest of the beach resort they have sold off.

We went further up the coast to find a place to go fishing one more time. Dad and I fished for salmon and halibut and more when we lived on Tomales Bay so we wanted one more chance at

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a big salmon. Unfortunately, that time of year, the salmon not running, swimming may be, so we ended up bottom fishing for the day.



Everyone ended up catching something and the guides cleaned all the fish and then made sure everyone had a bag full to take home. While we were visiting Margaret in Santa Rosa, her daughter fried up the fish and we had them for dinner.

Leaving Northern California it was time to get over to Reno for Hot August Nights and to see TJ and his girlfriend Robin. We spent several days looking at cars and taking in events around town.

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We found a truck we thought we needed but none of us could even get in it. Visiting with TJ and friends there in Reno was fun but then it was time to start back home. I was sure Mom would be missing us by now. We made a stop in Tucson to see family and they all met us at a Cracker Barrel for lunch.



Then finally we made a trip down to Elfrida, AZ to see the old hotel Grandpa used to own and find the grave of Grandpa and Grandma Mac.

My Life n Times



We made it back home and thankfully no issues on the trip. The Cadillac SRX ran great and Dad and I enjoyed spending the time together and with those we met along the way.

On the Road to Cologne (Koln) with Dad



When Mom and Dad moved to Garland and lived across the street from me, Dad had more time on his hands without 5 acres to take care of, so he watched a lot of History Channel TV. He also started working on a book about his life. He wrote about everything from birth, to WWII and on thru his life. He called it the Long, Long Journey. It was his life from a sheep wagon to a Cadillac.

He had finished his book and watching the History Channel learned a lot about cathedrals that he found very interesting. It turns out that the largest cathedral was depending on what you were talking about. Largest footprint, largest interior, largest height, and many other things that you might measure. But he found one in Koln, Germany that he really wanted to see. Also having finished his book he thought more about the war and wanted to the Rhine River which he crossed as they were closing

My Life n Times

in on Hitler at the end of the war.

I got home from work one day and went over to see how Mom and Dad were doing and the first thing he said was he wanted to get to see the Cologne Cathedral in Germany. When could we leave??

Well, I was surprised at how helpful the airline was with handicapped passengers. At DFW, when I unloaded the scooter that Dad used to get around out of the car, he rode it into the airport and they immediately scooped us up and took us to an area for checking in large items. They checked in his scooter and then put him and me in a golf cart and whisked us thru check-in, security, and on to the gate for our flight. We boarded first and got seated and comfy. On arrival in Frankfurt, again they scooped us up at the gate, took us thru customs, and then to get Dad's scooter. The scooter had taken the flight for FREE!!!

So Dad and I got our rental car and loaded the scooter and headed out of Frankfurt north. Our first destination was the Cathedral and we were amazed at the size of it. Also, because Germany and Europe in general had been using coal for generating electricity for years the outside of the cathedral was black. But they were cleaning and so part of it was black and part of it was a pretty white, cleaned stone look.

My Life n Times



You can see the difference in the front on the right photo, over the side view on the left. We found a monk with some very strange powers sitting in the square. We spent almost a complete day looking at it all.



It took years to build, starting in 1248–1560 and then more in 1842–1880 and 1950s–present (restoration). I will never figure out how they could build such things with such detail back in those days. With the tools and what they had. So much taking some people their lifetime working on it to complete it.

Dad and I both must have read everything that was written to tell us about it all. We really enjoyed it and were just amazed at how

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they could have done all that in the times they built it.

After that, I saw a sign for a castle and that is what I traveled around the world to see. So we headed off following signs to this beautiful castle. It also had a great story. The Broich Castle was built in the 9th Century and has had many times changed hands, it finally rests with the People of Mulheim. The oldest late Carolingian castle complex in the German-speaking area. The last owner had decided that he never wanted it to be destroyed. So he deeded the castle to the people of Mulheim, not the city, not the county but to the people.

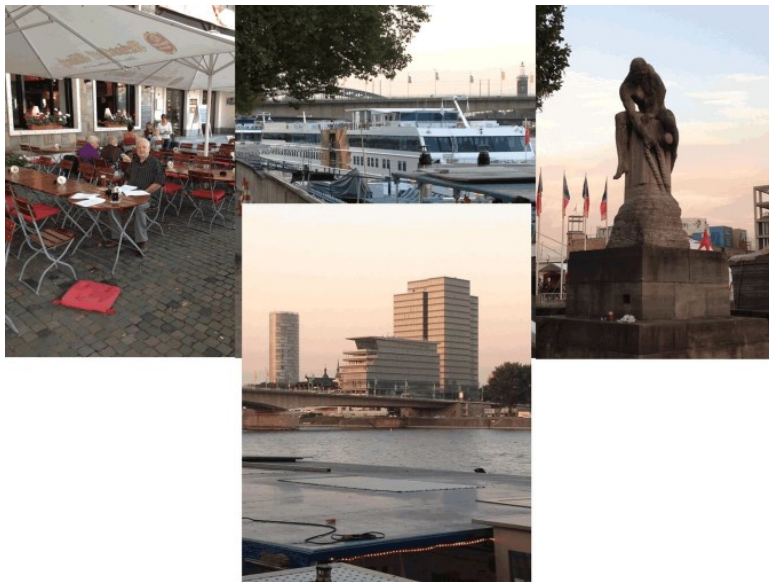


Now it has events and weddings and more going on there. They have a small restaurant and they have a groundskeeper that looks after it. It is a very nice castle and I am sure people will love visiting it for a few more centuries.



My Life n Times

When we left the castle we headed for the Rhine River. This was where Dad's division crossed over to head into Berlin in March 1945. I am sure it looks much different now. It has riverboats that run most of the length of it. It starts in the Swiss Alps and goes to Luxembourg. Dad and I enjoyed a nice cafe on the river and watched one of the riverboats go by.



We enjoyed every day, just taking in what was there to see and enjoying watching people and the many wonders of the world. Our last stop was for me to see where I had lived in Walluf in the 80's when I ran the Rod and Gun Club in Wiesbaden, Germany.



My Life n Times



Our row house is on the left and the other two pictures are of the little town as you walked to the river. A very traditional German town. I was never a beer drinker, but the little town of Walluf had a lot of wine festivals and it was fun to try all the wines. A lot of them had their own little glasses, a little bigger than shot glasses and I have several of those in my collection of shot glasses and such.

Again, Dad and I enjoyed our time together and sharing things. We always found things to talk about as we drove from one place to another. Dad could chat for hours about something, I guess I come by it naturally. We made it safely back to Garland and found Mom had hardly noticed we had left....

On the Road, Sea and World with Rickey



Rickey and I met when we were both learning to sail at the Yacht Club on Lake Ray Hubbard. After taking a class we got our first ASA101 sailing certification. We were told that if we would show up at the club on Sundays, we might get invited to go out sailing with whoever was sailing that day. Well, we found after 2-3 attempts that no one was sailing or at least no one was looking for extra crew. So it turned out that when I bought my first boat and called Rickey to come to go sailing with me he said he had just bought a boat too. So he had his 23' and I had a 25' sailboat and being as we were members of the same Meetup groups we offered sailing to people in our groups and had no trouble filling both boats for sailing and the fun of chasing each other around Lake Ray Hubbard.

My Life n Times



Not only did we sail on Lake Ray Hubbard, but Rickey had gone down to Kemah to take the next few classes for ASA certifications because they completed a class in one weekend, not a series of weekends or nights. In doing this he also became a member of the sailing club and he could charter at member prices to sail on Galveston Bay. This led to me actually buying a boat down there as well. But only kept it for a short time, too expensive, and could not use it enough.



As part of the Meetup groups I started putting together cruises out of Galveston on Carnival and Rickey and many of our

My Life n Times

members would join us. We found that mostly only women signed up because guys did not want to share cabins with guys. Rickey and I did not have that issue. If we could save money then it was a go...

We always had a great time. Rickey and I also started planning trips to Spain and beyond. We would fly from DFW to Madrid direct on an overnight flight. Then do whatever we wanted. We discovered a great program called Vaughan Town. They needed English-speaking volunteers to help with conversational English for their students learning English. We got free room and board for 5 days and nights at a resort outside of Madrid. We got to meet 12- 15 other English speakers from around the world and 12-15 Spaniards working on their conversational English. It was great fun.



My Life n Times

While we were in Spain, we decided to take a Mediterranean cruise on the Carnival Vista the 3rd week it sailed being the newest ship Carnival had. We had so much fun. We raced on their Skybikes and I tried the high-wire course.



We also traveled to Rome, Venice, and more as we had time. In Rome, it was really fun. We were standing in line to get tickets for the Coliseum and then would have had to wait to get in. While standing in line, a lady came over and said she could help us out. So we got out of line. There was another ticket office across the courtyard for entry into another section of ruins and the ticket was good for the Coliseum as well. There was no line there to get tickets. Then she took us over the entry for groups and we had what she called our tour guide with us and we just got in line with a big tour that was walking right in. Then after getting in, we separated from large group and the guy that was our tour

My Life n Times

guide took us around. As we finished our tour he told us about an evening tour he did that included dinner. So we met him later and he took to places to show how there had been a conspiracy of how Micheal Angelo actually was buried and stolen to be taken to his home town.



So Rickey and I cruised and enjoyed Europe many times. Then he decides we need to check out the Dominican Republic, so we fly there and go to an all-inclusive resort. Fun Fun...

Then we decide that we need to go to Panama as well. So off we go again. You know, “Have Passport, Will Travel!!”

My Life n Times



When Dad and I had been in Panama the year before we had met a great guy, Kevin, that drove us all around and took great care of us. So when Rickey and I went I had arranged for my friend Kevin to pick us up and do tours for us, as he had for Dad and me.

One of our final trips together was to Columbia. Rickey had been a couple of times on his own and was doing great with learning the language. So I went once with him and it was hard to believe how much different people can live. Some nice areas and then some places they should give you a gun as you enter. We went to visit an American that Rickey had met previously and had a few drinks at his apartment. His patio looks out over the compound that drug lord Ortega had built and used for years. It was funny I noticed in a movie called “American Made” the compound had been used for several scenes in the movie. We rode up the

My Life n Times

gondola to the top of a mountain and had lunch. We were very careful, it was definitely where pale white guys like us could get in trouble and never be heard from again. I was glad to get back down the mountain.



Now Rickey I guess just lives down there. Since he does systems maintenance on the computer he can work from anywhere. He speaks the language like a local and enjoys a life that is very inexpensive. So now if I don't have Dad or TJ to travel with I mostly travel on my own.

My Life n Times

Traveling into Retirement & East Texas.



I was enjoying things and traveling, sailing, and cruising. But as time progressed, Mom and Dad were needing more help. It was amazing that Dad was basically Mom's sole caregiver. They did have home health come in once a week but mostly to check vitals. They had a lady that came in once or twice a week to help a bit too as Mom became pretty much wheelchair-bound. Dad was doing ok but I could not get him to quit driving.

The Caddy he had was totaled the day he came to sign papers for the house. I helped him and we got a very nice used one to replace it. Then a couple of years later, he totals that one at the same intersection. This time the dealer talks him into leasing a new one. Then a couple of years later they talk him into trading to lease another. Then they talked him into getting a Cadillac SRX SUV and then that got some bad parking lot dings on it and he traded for another. Then he was turning right and did not

My Life n Times

yield and a truck ended up running over his left front fender and hood. So this time I worked out with them that they would take him off leases and he would finance the new one so we would be able to be finally, someday out of \$800 a month payments. Then one day I get home and Dad wants me to go to Cadillac to pick up his new one. They had talked him into getting the newest model, almost exactly like the one he had half-paid off. But they would not let him drive it home since he could not find his driver's license. Even after giving him a ride to the house to look for it. Dad's memory was getting pretty bad and I had to watch him a lot.

So I decided what they should do was sell their house and move in with me. But Dad would not have it. He did not pay anything for his house! It was on a reverse mortgage. He did not understand that not having a payment did not mean it was free. But it turned out I sold my house and moved in with him and then semi-retired. By the time they required me to put a roof on my house and with agent fees, I did not make anything on my house. Of the things I have done, that was most likely the biggest mistake I made.

It turned out that the following spring Mom passed and we had to put Dad in a senior center. So there I was then living in his house that needed to be sold, only working part-time and not able to go back full-time. So I ended up tired of the BS for

My Life n Times

part-time and retired.

It started out that I was going to buy a truck and camp a bit and travel. But on my first campout with the truck and bed I had made in the back, I found a fun volunteer job as Camp Host in the National Park.



I had a nice tent that could attach to the truck to give me a nice enclosed space and camping was fun.

My Life n Times



But they said I needed to have a trailer, as a tent and a truck were not enough. So when I got back to Dallas, I found a nice 24ft trailer and headed up to the Chickasaw National Park to be a Camp Host for the summer.

My Life n Times



It was a great time and the weather was so nice. It was quiet and just had to clean sites up when campers left. Help them get checked in and know the rules.

In the winter I went back to Dad's house and got it ready to sell. Sold it before the next spring and headed back up to the park for a second summer. Then in September, I went to Tyler where Wendy lives, and found an RV park for the winter. It became evident real quick that this trailer was not one for staying the winter in so I traded it for a larger and nicer trailer.

My Life n Times



This one had good insulation and was designed for residential living. So after spending the winter in Tyler, I again went to the Park for the summer. It was fun working around the campgrounds and using an electric golf cart to go around and clean and take care of things.

My Life n Times



I would cruise thru campgrounds and help people and then over to the group campground I monitored as well.



There was a nice swimming hole in the group campground I took care of as well.

My Life n Times



It was a quiet life for the summer except on Fri and Sat. I pretty much did what I wanted when I wanted. I enjoyed this for the 4 years that I did it.

Over 45 years of being on 2 wheels.



My earliest memory of 2 wheels is one of me while we were still living at Hickory Hills Lake in Massachusetts. I would have been 6-7 years old and I remember getting my first bicycle it was a boy's bike, with a high bar. The problem was I guess it was planned I would grow into it. I had to push it and then step on the pedal and swing my leg over to get started. That did not leave me a lot of options for stopping. I recall there was a grassy spot beside the driveway and my choice was usually just to lay it over in the grass and fall off. My next memory is having a bicycle at Menwith Hill in Yorkshire, England and I used it to deliver the Daily Bulletins as my first job. Well second job actually, I had been babysitting for 25 cents an hour. So for this second job, I rode over to the commissary and bagged groceries for tips. That was until the GIs discovered how much we made and they took over bagging.

My Life n Times

I did not have a bicycle in Tomales as I finished grammar school and high school. I had a buddy that had a Honda S90 motorcycle and I rode on it with him a couple of times, he even let me drive it once in a while. I wanted to get one, but Dad would not allow it. Not sure why he was against it. When he was a younger man he had several motorcycles. In fact, he was racing them in his 20's and his first wife was not happy about it. One race he and another guy headed for a jump and neither gave way causing them both to crash. His wife was mad and told him either the bikes go or I am going. So he got rid of his bikes, but said it was a mistake, she left a bit after that anyway.

It was funny, he would not let me get a motorcycle but he had no problem with me getting the Hydro Cycle for the water. It was the first personal watercraft they made. It was 9 ft long and had a 35 hp Mercury on it. I had my Bugeye Sprite and had found a trailer hitch for it that Dad had brought back from England. So I mounted it on the Sprite and towed the Hydro Cycle with it. I wish I still had a photo of me towing it...



My Life n Times



So anyway as soon as I got married and moved out of the house, I bought a Honda S90 for myself and it was fun. When I was finished going to college, getting a wife, and left California we had my Honda S90 on the tongue of the trailer and the Hydro Cycle on top of the trailer.



We moved to Tucson, AZ, and I used it to commute to work. But it was hard to do. When it rained there, it would pour for an hour

My Life n Times

or two and then dry up. But the roads were curved to act as gutters to run off the water. So I would be driving home from work and find a street that was like a river and I was not able to get across it on the bike. I had some detours to make to get home. Then one day I was off and was riding it out in the desert and it started sounding funny. I found it was low on oil and though I made it home, it was not salvageable. So I sold it for parts.

Next, when we were living in San Antonio, TX I found that Harley was a distributor of an Italian motorcycle that was 125cc. It was funny it was made with two different frames, one normal and one short mini bike-like. Turns out the wife was interested in riding so we bought two of them and rode them together often. But when she got pregnant, she was not so interested in riding. I traded the two of them for a Honda 350 to use to commute to work. I liked commuting but I did not like riding in the rain. Some days it would rain while I was at work. But not when I headed home. One day after it had rained I headed home and sat at a stop light. When the light turned green I started out and the rear wheel spun and slid and I laid the bike over a bit. But got it back under control and thought all was well. When I got home I found I had managed to let the bike layover enough to burn my leg on the exhaust pipe pretty good. Don't remember when I got rid of that bike, but I know I did not have it a couple of years

My Life n Times

later.

When we moved to Yellville, AR to help run the Trout Farm, I found a Honda 650 and put a fairing on it so I had some protection from the cold and from other cars throwing up dirt. The Trout Farm was down a dirt road 7 miles. When I got divorced the first time, I got the bike and she got the car. So my birthday was coming up and I started my habit of buying myself a car around my birthday. I rode the Honda 650 to Little Rock, AR, and used it for my down payment for my 79 Trans Am.

When I was stationed at Ft. Riley, KS I bought a Honda 950 with no windshield and high handlebars. Never really enjoyed riding that one and when I left Ft. Riley I sold it. I was going to Germany anyway and I was not going to have one over there. With mostly cold and wet weather it was not going to be a time for me to ride.

When I came back from Germany in 1991 to Reno, NV it was a great place for a bike. I was not happy with the Nevada DMV. I had my Texas license that had a motorcycle and commercial included. Nevada would not give me either of those. Just a regular license. Also, they had a motorcycle driving test that you had to bring your own bike to take the test. Of course, since I did not have a motorcycle license, the dealers would not let me take a bike for a test drive. So I bought a bike I had not been able to

My Life n Times

ride. It did have a nice faring that extended down in front of the bike. I rode it for about a month and then finally took it to the DMV and took a test and got my license.

While we were living out in Virginia Foothills, I occasionally would take the bike out and ride some of the dirt roads and up around in the hills. Yes, I knew it was a street bike but TJ had gotten a little mini bike and I would go with him. One time I had gone down this hill and I could not believe that it would not come back up the hill. I made several attempts before I finally got it out of the little valley I had gone down. Apparently in trying to get it out and since not much air going over the engine and it was air-cooled, I started having problems. I had overheated it.

I had been looking to trade it in any way and had looked a couple of times at the Honda Dealers' used 1000cc and 1100cc Goldwings. But I found they did not handle well in the city. More made for highway bikes. So when I took my bike in to have Honda try to fix and or rebuild it, the salesman I was friends with suggested I try riding a used 1200cc Goldwing he had for sale. He put a dealer tag on it and I headed out with it. It rode great. I took it over to show my wife and give her a short ride. So I was gone on my "Test Ride" for a couple of hours. Of course in the early 90's people did not have cell phones so much so the salesman could not find me. I finally was riding back into the

My Life n Times

dealership and the salesman came out all worried I had wrecked or something. I told him I would take the Goldwing, for him to decide how much trade-in I could get for the one I had in the shop and get the Goldwing financed for me. I turned around and left. The next day he calls me at work and says I have to get that bike back to the dealership and get the dealer plate off it. I drove in and we did the deal, I got a new plate and I rode that bike for 15 years. It was a great bike. I even won some events at one of the bike rallies I went to. It was an 84 1200cc Goldwing.



Honda would not support bikes that were over 10 years old, so I found a retired Honda mechanic that was supplementing his retirement by working on bikes.

When I moved to the Dallas area in 2006, I joined the Goldwing club and started riding with them. They on occasion gave me a hard time about it being too old and hard to maintain and that I should upgrade. So finally I decided to put an ad on Craig's List

My Life n Times

just to see if anyone might be interested. The next day and guy called from the Waco area and wanted to come up to look. He showed up and took it for a test ride and came back and pulled out the cash for the asking price and bought it. I guess I had it priced too low!! I went back on Craig's List and found a newer Goldwing 1500cc and it was the same color as well. Bought it and rode it for a couple of years.

Then as my birthday was coming up in 2010 or 2011, I was having trouble riding in the full sitting-up position that was required for the Goldwing. I decided to get another bike that had the controls out front of the engine and was easier for me to ride. So I sold the Goldwing and bought a very nice Honda VTX1800 and liked how much easier it was for me to ride it.



I also found out how much heat all the faring on the Goldwing had been keeping off of me when riding. With this new bike I found sitting at lights and in-town driving, it was incredibly hot. Also, I found that I just was not enjoying riding like I used to and

My Life n Times

was rarely actually taking it out. So I sold it and ended my life on 2 wheels. I was sad a bit and looked around for something else to do for my hobby. I noticed the sailboats on Lake Ray Hubbard and thus started my Life on the Water!!

My Life n Times

Cruising for the last 25 years.



I had my first cruise in Jan of 1997 and it was an adventure just getting to Miami to board the ship for the cruise. I was living in Reno, NV and the weather had turned unseasonably warm, with rain and melting snow from the Sierras. This became an issue for Reno, it flooded the river downtown and several of the casinos' basements. But more importantly, was that all the low areas of Reno were flooded. This happened to include the airport. Also because of all the rain many of the highways had mudslides blocking them. I was friends with a radio DJ and I called him the day before we were supposed to fly out and asked if any of the roads were open for driving to San Fransisco. He reported that the only way to go from Reno to California was to go up to Lake Tahoe and then take a road from there to Truckee and then across I80 to San Fransisco. Unfortunately, there were mudslides on Mount Rose Hwy so you could not get to Lake Tahoe from there. The only road open was from Carson City to Lake Tahoe.

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But the road from Reno to Carson City was flooded in the valley.

Well, this all forced me to take Friday off and the wife and I got ourselves into my Chevy 2-wheel drive pickup. We had all our bags in the cab with us as well since I did not have a shell on the truck and it was still raining. Also, it was a manual transmission so that made it difficult with bags packed in between us. This was before I knew that you should pack less, not more, for cruising. So we started from the north side of Reno, down towards the valley and Carson City. But before we got there we turned east and went up on the mountain to Virginia City, then down the other side to the east side of Carson City. As we drove thru Carson City, we found streets flooded enough that you could not even see the curbs on the streets. But we muddled thru and to the highway to take us up to Lake Tahoe. Once up to the lake, we had to take the road around the lake to Kings Beach. So far though it had taken us a while we had not had any issues getting this far. We figured we were home free. It was less than 20 miles from Kings Beach to Truckee. However, as soon as we turned the corner the traffic came to a stop. It was the only road out of Nevada to Northern California. Traffic stood still sometimes so long, I got out of the truck and walked around a bit. Of course a curvy road, so you had no idea why traffic not moving. There was little or no traffic coming into Nevada. But we kept at it and after 2 1/5 hours we made it 20 miles. Then we got on I80 and without

My Life n Times

much more trouble got into San Fransisco and found a hotel not too far from the airport. It had only taken us about 7 hours to make a 3-hour drive.

In the morning we loaded up and got over to the airport, I dropped off my wife and said I was taking the truck to long-term parking and would be “right back”!! Turns out that long-term parking was actually across the freeway from where we spent the night and that traffic was bad. I got parked and then waited a long time for a bus. When I got back to the airport she was wondering if she was going to have to go on the cruise by herself. We got checked in and then as the flight was winging its way over Nevada, I used the inflight phone in my seat to call my DJ buddy and let him know we had managed to get out of town.

We had a great cruise out of Miami on the Carnival Fascination and decided that January cruises to somewhere warm were the best vacation from the cold winter in Reno.

We took another cruise a couple of years later and then when TJ was getting married, he was doing the ceremony on board and then Honeymoon Cruise, we went with them for a Mexican Riviera cruise. Then in January of 2003, that was the last cruise before we got divorced. She told me in the middle of the cruise that she was leaving when we got home. Of course, then this made this the “Cruise From Hell” with a bar bill over \$600 for

My Life n Times

me.

The next cruise I did was in Sept 2004 for my birthday and Dad came out to join me for an Alaskan Cruise.



The Sun Princess was a nice ship but we found there was a group that was having a card playing competition for the cruise and every time you would walk around the ship where they played everyone was Shushing us... Of course, cruising in Alaska there were not many pool and deck activities. The first night when Dad and I were trying to entertain ourselves, we left the Disco to go up front to the Lounge hoping to find some people there. As we left the Disco we found two ladies asking us if the Disco was busy. We told them we were half the crowd and we were headed to the lounge to see what was happening there. The ladies informed us they had just closed the lounge since they were the only two there. For the whole cruise, it was these two ladies and Dad and I up after 10 pm.

But Alaska was great!! They did cancel my Harley Ride to the top of the mountain for lunch because it was raining the night before we arrived in Ketchikan and the tour company canceled the

My Life n Times

excursion. But when we got to the port the rain had gone and it was sunny. But the tour was a no-go. Dad and I took a tour to the top of a road to look out over Alaska.



When we were in Juneau, we took a float plane out to a ranch for a Salmon lunch. They had indicated that the group before us had seen a bear on the edge of the field. Well of course then after eating I walked out that way to see if I could see a bear. All I found was a couple of ferocious squirrels that did not like me being anywhere near their tree! It was interesting how many cars were in Juneau as it was only 15 miles north to south. You could not drive to Juneau from anywhere else. Everything required a boat.

When we got off the ship, we were bussed into Anchorage, Alaska for our flights home. We looked around town and found there was a Starbucks on every other corner. Also, we found at the airport, that they had no reservations for Dad's flight. After spending about an hour on our phones with management and such, they decided that they would be able to accommodate Dad without him paying again.

My Life n Times

My next cruise was in January 2007 after I had moved to Garland, Texas. I had friends from Reno come out and join me. I owed Tom and Kay a cruise anyway since they had been with us on the “Cruise From Hell” and I felt we spoiled their cruise. I had new friends from the Dallas area with us as well. It was a great cruise.

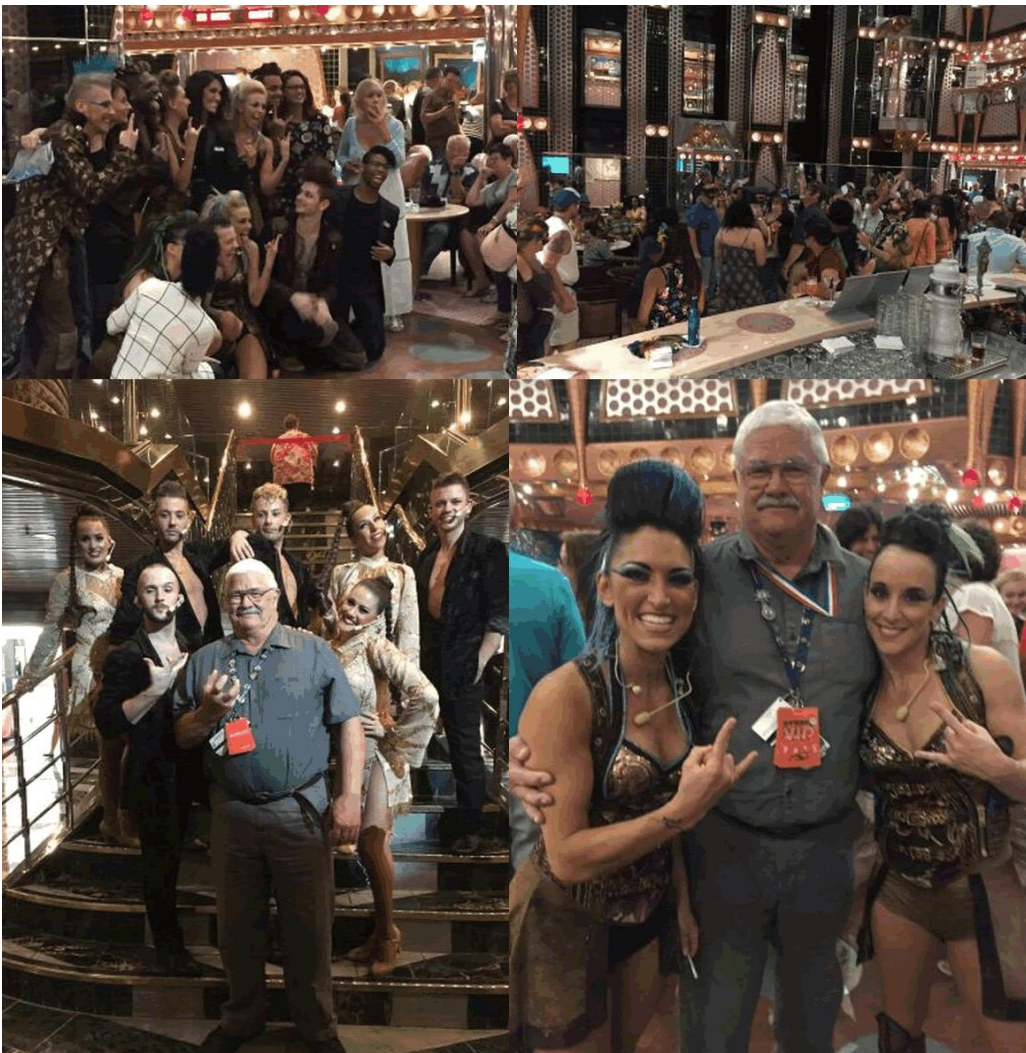
About this time, I had met Rickey with our sailing together and so we did not pay double for cabins, we started cruising and sharing a cabin. We started going on 1-2 cruises a year. Mostly we would get friends from the Meetup Groups we were in to go with us and at times, have 10-12 of us traveling together. I did make it a point to get to know the Cruise Directors and Fun Squads and frequently we were on the same ship often enough to have the same ones again.



One of my favorite things on a cruise is the stage shows each night. I would be sure to go both early and late seating. It was not

My Life n Times

until Rickey and went to Europe to be on the Carnival Vista the 3rd week it sailed in the Mediterranean that I learned about being friends with the cast. We met the cast in the Martini Bar the first or second night and got on super with them. Met Chantelle and she said I was going to be her “Ship Husband” for the week.



My Life n Times

They also told me about the Studio VIP shows. You could show up at the starboard entrance to the show early and they would pick people to place in locations for them to interact with during the show. I was given a spot near the front and when the cast was getting ready for the Hustle on stage, they came down into the crowd and grabbed all the ones that had volunteered, and took us on stage to dance with them. It was great. Also, the Cruise VIP couple selected each cruise to have a backstage tour one afternoon and since Chantelle did that, she included me in that as well. So from that cruise on, the first thing I did when I met some of the cast onboard was to find out if the Studio VIP was one of their shows. If so I got into it. I was the Policeman one time for the YMCA song and it was great. They also gave you a special orange tag for a lanyard. At the end of the cruises, I would have the cast sign my orange tag. I also had the Cruise Director and Captain sign my Sail n Sign cards.

I found the same ones in the cast at different times as I cruised. I saw Chantelle on several cruises and we had a great time. I had NEVER had a martini before that first cruise with Chantelle. She said I had to try one, so she got me a Spicy Chipolata and it was great. So now every cruise I buy one and raise it to thank her for the fun and for teaching me to drink more.!!

My Life n Times

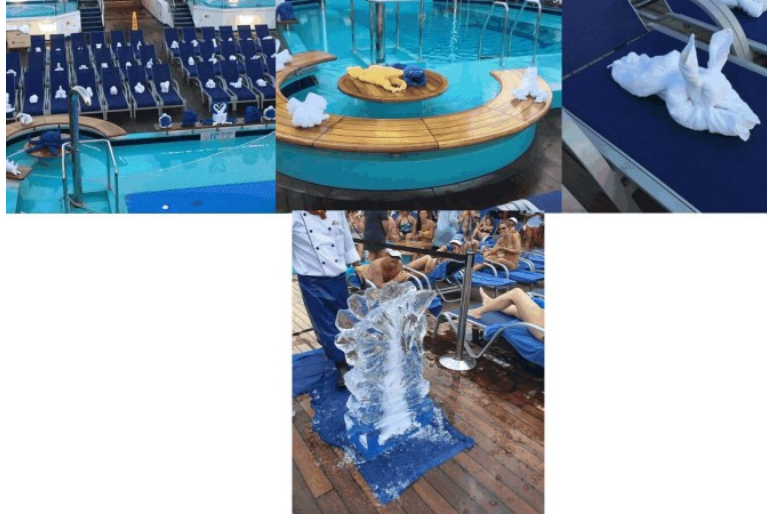


I would see the cast frequently around the ship when they were not working and share some great times with them. They seemed to like to hang out at the Sushi Restaurants as well. I would visit with them, but would not eat raw fish. Not even Chantelle could talk me into that.

One of the fun things on each cruise was usually the second Sea Day, we would wake up and find that the Towel Critters had

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taken over the Lido Deck. Also one afternoon they would have an ice carving demo to show us how they made them so fast and easy for having around the dining rooms.



Of course, the big thing on each cruise are the ports and excursions you could take. I did the dolphin swim a couple of times and it was great.



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The dolphins were teaching me to fly! It was great fun. Of course, you get to take tours around the islands and learn about the island and its history. All rich with the history of pirates and old sailing ships. I liked Grand Cayman because of the chance to swim with the stingrays out on Stingray Sand Bar. Also, they have a turtle farm there that has turtles of all sizes as they rescue little ones and breed and release others as they are big enough.

We also did adventure excursions to ride quads, snorkel, zip line, ride horses, drive jet skis, ride in powerful cigar boats, take submarine dives to see wildlife, and more.



Also one time in Cozumel, they had the Cozumel Amazing Race!! We were split into groups and given instructions to get to various locations in and around town. It was great fun and the team I

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was on came in 4th out of 8 teams.

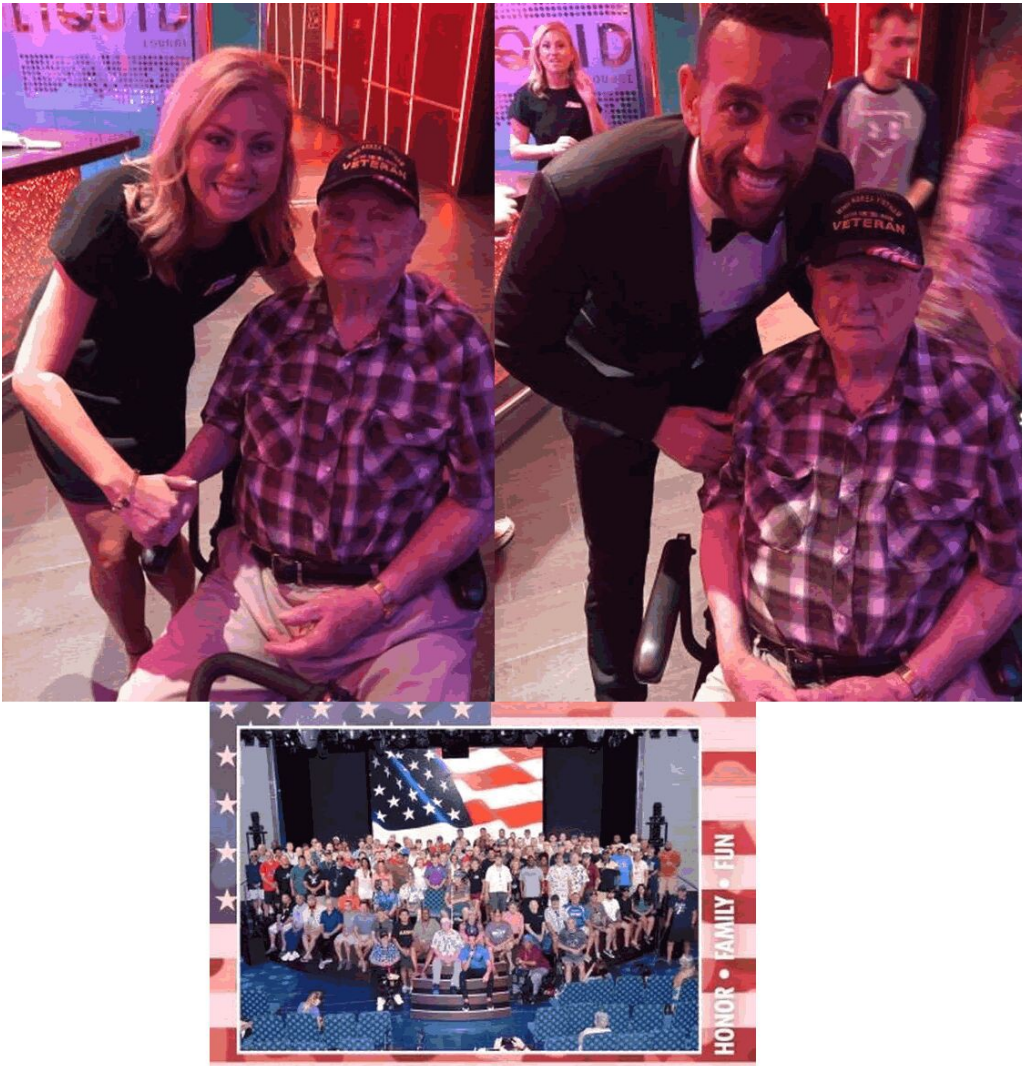


It was a lot harder than you might think. But of course, they had to stop doing that one, The Amazing Race was a copyrighted event and name. Even the games we played on board ship had to have names that did not include what the game was called because of copyrights. It is crazy, even today, they cannot pre-advertise shows in the movie theater and such. They can only tell you the ones they use for the big screen on the Lido deck for Swim/Dine/Movie.

When I did not have others to go with me, Dad went a lot and he had a great time. Being a WWII Veteran and in his 90's he was a

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big hit on board.



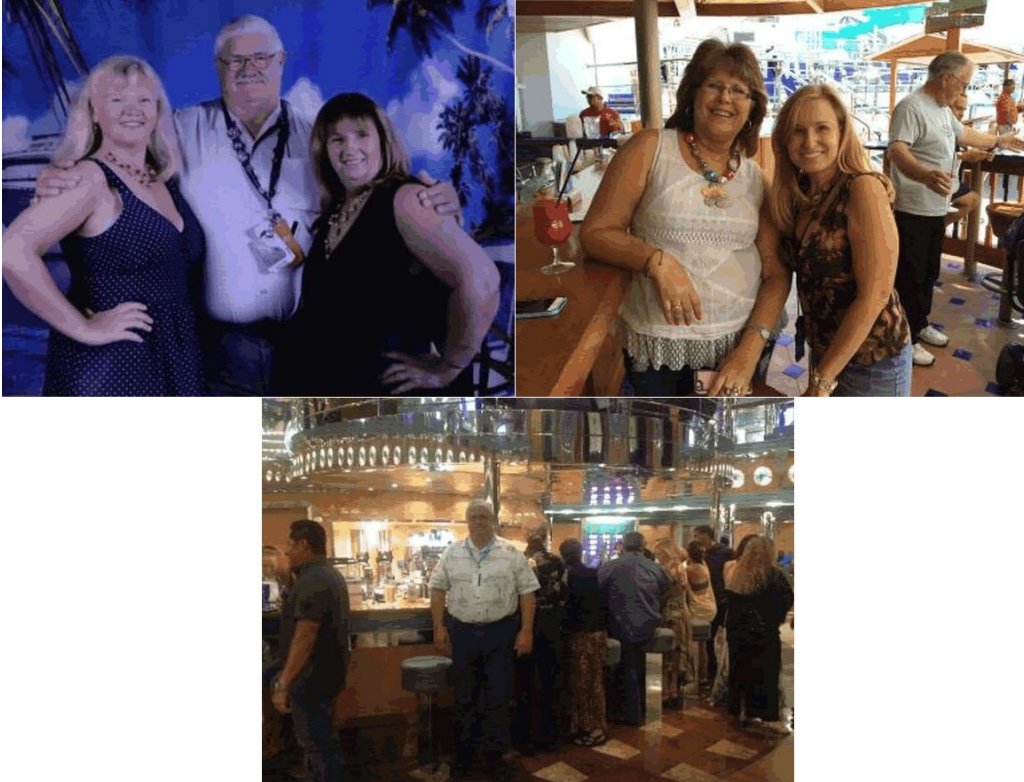
I managed at times to get other family members to go with me when Dad went so they could spend time with him and have fun too. My son-in-law, Harold frequently went with me if it was in September, we called it our birthday cruise.

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Of course, I can't remember all the friends that traveled with me. As part of the Meetup Groups in Dallas, there were always people who wanted to cruise. It was funny though, the gals were all ready to share a cabin with another gal so they saved money. But guys are not so quick to share a cabin with another guy.

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I also found that sometimes I could not find another guy to be my cabin mate and I did not want to cruise and pay double, so on 4 different cruises I had a gal for my cabin mate. One of which I did not meet until she came on board. All but one of these worked out well. but the first time on the Baltic cruise, the lady was very strange. It started that since we were in Copenhagen a couple of days before the cruise we shared a hotel room too. I noticed she had 2-3 key cards on the dresser. She never could remember to take it with her, so she kept getting new ones. I was there a couple of days before her and had figured out how to get around in town so when she showed up I offered to help her get used to getting around. We went down out and caught the bus

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and then took a boat tour of the city. After that, I mentioned there was a nice place to eat close by and she informed me she could manage on her own!! So I left her with it. When we got on board, I noticed too that she was accumulating key cards again. Then one day the front desk calls me and says I need to come put more money on my cash account for my Sail n Sign card??? I had my Sail n Sign card on a credit card. Turns out when my cabin mate lost her card again, they made her a new one and ended up with her on my account and somehow changed to a cash account. Well, I told them to look, we are sharing a cabin, but she is NOT on my accounts. So we got those straight. Then one morning the cabin steward asks me if my “Wife” was getting up today!! I said she was not my “Wife” and I had no idea. I had as we started to cruise asked if she wanted me to wake her in the mornings as I got up. She said that she would let me know if she did the night before. She rarely did. One day on an excursion we happened to both be on she had not asked me to wake her so I did not. Our bus was taking off for the tour when I saw her coming down the gangway. Fortunately for her, it was a popular tour with multiple buses.

The Baltic cruise was really interesting. We stopped in St. Petersburg, Russia for a day and other ports between there and Copenhagen. On my Stockholm tour, I got to see the ABBA museum. It was really fun to read all about them. I am a big fan.

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Also, I got to the VASA, a 17th Century 1628, a 64-gun warship that sank on its maiden voyage leaving the dock for the first time. It was not salvaged and raised until 1961 at which time it was in a temporary location as they tried to find ways for restoration and preservation. It is now indoors in a permanent museum for it. You can look inside from various locations on walkways around the outside of the ship.

Another fun evening activity is the piano bar. One time we were having so much fun it became such an event that Craig, the Piano Man had lost control of the place. There was a lady laying across the piano and we were having a great time.



On this night I met Roy, he was a great Sinatra singer. He was a guest on the cruise ship as I was. We were sitting on the side by the wall and had not spoken, I had some other friends with me and he had friends too. But this night we saw that there was a very drunk lady going around the bar looking for someone to dance with. She was working her way around the bar and she was

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getting close to us, Roy, who was actually in a chair by me, leaned over and put his arm around me and she came by he said no thanks, he only dances with his boyfriend. We laughed and became friends pretty quickly. When he was up singing New York, New York, I managed to encourage a lot of the ladies to get up and we made a kick line, like the Rockets, for the big finale of the song.



Besides getting to know the cast, Cruise Director, and Fun Squads, I also got to know some of the musicians as well. They almost always had a duo or trio of violinists. I met these three ladies on one cruise and they were still on the ship a couple more

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times as I cruised mostly out of Galveston. A couple of nights after they finished their shows for the night we had drinks in the martini bar and chatted.

The last time I saw them, it was their last week of the contract and one of them wanted to see Houston a bit since her flight home was not till evening. So I had her and another one of her girlfriends from the ship meet me after we disembarked and I took them downtown Houston and we walked around and had lunch and toured. They had a great time and I dropped them at the airport as I was leaving town and they were headed back to Ukraine.

Well, you must understand by now that going on a cruise is a lot of fun and has lots of things to do. I have enjoyed cruising the world and it was fun to take Dad when he could go. It would be a time when you could spend time and interact with him each day. On his last cruise, he was 98 and we went out on the Carnival Vista with my sister and other family and friends.



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There is a lot more I could tell you about cruising, the sail away parties, the friendships, the places you can see, and the food and shows. There is no better vacation. For the price, you get food, drink, entertainment, and things to do and see around the world. I have been on over 35 cruises, mostly on Carnival but also on Princess and Royal Caribbean when Carnival was not going where I wanted to go. If I am going on vacation, I am going on a cruise.

My 15 years with wind in my sails.



When I quit riding my motorcycle, I had been looking for something else fun to do. I saw sailboats sailing on Lake Ray Hubbard. I went down to the Yacht Club on the south side of the lake to take lessons. My first couple of lessons in September, worked out nicely, I passed the beginners' sailing test and we went out sailing. Small 22ft sailboats. We would usually have 4 students and an instructor on each boat. We had to get sails out of the cabin and put them out so we could sail. I took one or two lessons but then got busy at work and I did not get back until February of the next year. One of my classes was on a pretty windy day and our group had 5 boats out sailing for the morning for class. I was on the rudder when a big wind hit us, the boat was keeled over and it was so far, that our shirt tails were getting wet from the lake. One of the other boats was not so lucky, they capsized and got to practice getting it upright and going. It was a fun day...

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Meanwhile looking thru things going on in my groups I enjoyed on Meetup.com I found a sailing trip to St Maarten for a week. I decided to sign on for that trip. The trip was fun but frustrating too. The lady that was hosting and one of the captains was using older Catamarans. The boat I was on obviously had not had the sails up recently. Dave and I had to do some work on the lines for hosting the main sail so that we could actually put the sail up. Another day there were issues with the fuse panel but Dave and I worked that out too. There were 5 Catamarans in the group and one of them had issues with the engine and had to have a rescue boat come out and fix that. I guess to start with the trip was planned for 4 boats, but with me and a few others wanting to go she added a 5th boat and she was going to be the captain. As it turned out Dave and I sailed the boat. The other two guys on my boat seem to go thru 2-3 cases of beer a day. Most of the trip was really fun, but some of the others on other boats in our group started doing the Payton Place BS and one night some guy from another ship came over to spend the night with our captain, but then it was hard to get rid of him and he was not invited back. The lady that was our boat captain was a pain and most of us did not like her. One evening as we were anchored close to shore and most of us were back on the boat from fun ashore, but she had stayed later. We heard her shouting from the dock trying to get one of us to come to pick her up with the dingy. We ignored her.

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Finally, someone brought her out to the boat. But the trip had me pretty much hooked on sailing.

I got back and made sure I got to the Yacht Club to finish my first sailing course. The Yacht club was teaching the ASA, American Sailing Association, courses. We were told that if we came out on the weekend, we might find someone to sail with. But after trying that twice I quit going. No one was sailing or offered a chance to sail. I finished the ASA101, and AS102 and was taking the map reading AS105 during that class learned they were doing the ASA104 class in the BVI for a week on a monohull. We had 7 students and our instructor.



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After a great time around the BVI, we came back to Garland and I immediately started looking for a boat. I found a 25ft Catalina that was already on Lake Ray Hubbard. I called a friend of mine I had met in sailing class and told him we needed to go sailing, that I had bought a boat. He says he bought one too.... We started inviting people from Meetup.com to come sail with us. That way we had enough crew for both boats. It was fun chasing each other around the lake. Then we would drop sails in the middle of the lake and eat and drink and swim. It was fun. Then we put the sails back up and started chasing each other around again. During this time, we were having a bit of a drought and the lake was getting lower and lower. I had Wendy, Harold and the girls come sail one day and we ended up aground trying to come back

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into the marina. We were in a marina on the south side of the lake but it got to where there was not enough water in the marina hardly, to get out to the lake to sail. That marina was owned by the marina on the north side, so I sailed up there and insisted on getting a slip there for the boat.

One of the things my buddy and I found fun was to get a good wind and then let the boat keel over as far as possible. On the 25 ft Catalina, we were able to get it so far over water would be coming onto the side deck. It made some sailors a little worried, but I loved to push it so far. I did find as well, that no matter how far over I pushed it, I was not able to capsize it.



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I had a lot of fun... Everyone at the marina said that I used my boat more than anyone. I was sailing 3-4 times a week. Sometimes both Sat/Sun too. We found that sailing on July 4th was great fun. Sail all afternoon, then eat and drink and bit, and as the sun was going down, we would go over near Rockwall where they had music and then we could see fireworks from around town and it was fun. On those days, we overloaded the boat a bit. Usually, for sailing I only allowed 3-4 crew besides me. These were not pleasure cruises, everyone did something, pull the line for a sail or hand on the rudder. Or bring up sandwiches or whatever had been brought for us to eat and drink from all the crew. We sailed a lot from that marina until the lake was so low, we could not get down the channel in the marina to go out to sail. So there was one more marina on the bridge road that crossed the lake that had deep water, so I sailed over there and got a slip from them. I liked that marina the best, easy access and no issues with the water level, and easy to get out to the lake. But the lake was so low we would have to sail almost across it staying close to the road before we could turn south and get into the middle of the lake. With these frustrations, I decided to sell the boat. I was lucky I thought that anyone would even buy it with the water was so low.

In the meantime, my buddy had been finishing his ASA courses in Kemah, and sailing in Galveston Bay for his classes. He liked

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them, the same price as here at the Yacht Club but they completed each course in a weekend, instead of doing 3-4 Saturdays in a row. By training down there he was able to also charter boats there for sailing. We started getting some of our friends on the meetup to come down there and sail with us. The only problem with doing charters there is that since none of us had a “Captain’s Certificate” we were not supposed to go as low in the bay as “Red Hook” and we were not allowed to go down the channel to Galveston. We also were required to have the boat back before dark, so our 1/2 day charter, turned into 11 am to 6 pm for sailing.

I got the idea that I should buy a boat down there and since we were charging people to come sail with us, I could do it as a business. I found a very nice 34ft Hunter and made them an offer for it. I got a berth for it there in Kemah at the Watergate Marina where we had been chartering from. It was very handy but expensive. We had several fun trips on Galveston Bay with my boat, “Stinson Sue”.



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We had friends from Meetup.com come to join us in Kemah on a Saturday morning and we would sail and go down to Red Hook to anchor and have a bite to eat and then back up into the bay. It was so fun, there would be dolphins swimming alongside us too sometimes. I made a point of having everyone help with the sailing. I stressed that being the Captain and owner, I would oversee the sailing that they would do.

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I would keep them headed the right way. We had some really fun people sail with us and we would make a party of it each time. Sometimes I had very formal wear for the sailing.

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I tried many times to see how far over I could get Stinson Sue when sailing but she was not able to be pushed over as much as the 25 Catalina. We had a lot of fun sailing on Stinson Sue but it became evident very soon that it was more than I could really afford and I was fortunate to find a buyer that winter, so I did not lose money on the boat.

Of course, the fun times we had, gave a lot of people the chance to enjoy sailing and several wanted to go to the BVI for sailing. So I chartered a 50 ft monohull from “The Moorings” and we

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enjoyed sailing around Tortola to the other smaller islands for a week at a time. Visiting Norman Island, The Dogs, The Bathes, and Virgin Gorda to the Bitter End Yacht Club. I did this trip 2-3 times and had so much fun every time.

Well of course, after I had sold my boat at Lake Ray Hubbard, it starting raining again and the lake filled back up. So I was on the hunt for anther boat and my buddy and I went together to buy a 27ft Catalina and share costs.

I was asked a lot about what was the name of my boat. Actually for both the 25 ft and 27 ft Catalina, neither had a name on the stern. I would tell people they were my "Next Ex". Partially for that, they were my current love and partly because of the saying about the 2 best days in a boat owner's life. The day they buy the boat and the day they sell it. Well for me I had a LOT of very good days sailing them.

My buddy and I were trying to see if we could get this Catalina to keel over as far as our first one but it would not. Again, we found that because of the ballast in the keel and that we only had available wind, not high waves and other hazards, it was impossible to capsize it. I had the 27 ft Catalina for a while, I think it was after I had semi-retired and sold the house, that I found trying to keep up with costs was not as easy. So I was able to find a buyer on the lake and that was that.

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I think I started the sailing in fall of 2011 and had boats of my own until the fall of 2016. Now when I get a chance on cruises I take snorkeling excursions that let me be on sailboats. I am hoping to get another trip or two for the BVI to take friends for a week of sailing fun down there.

Life as I know it today.



I was very happy to find this house south of Tyler, in Rusk, TX. With my VA benefits, I was able to get a VA loan and have now a very nice, recently remodeled, 900 sqft + 2 bedroom. It sits on 1/3 acre, so just enough grass to keep me busy mowing. I purposely did not buy a riding mower. I have an electric that can mow longer than I can walk behind it.

The house had been built in the 1980's and remodeled in 2020. Including adding new AC and tankless water heater. Also, the walls were sheet-rocked and plug almost everywhere except in the kitchen. They did not do much with the floors and the carpets are old but that is fine.

I started by having grey rock brought in to make the driveway and using my pickup to add a little more to expand it enough to have two spots for parking. I was going to build a workshop but costs and most places had a waiting list for a few months. So since I had a nice little enclosed trailer I was thinking about

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selling, I decided to turn it around and put it on jacks and stabilize it. I can store tools and the mower and junk.



So this was a great saving and it has been very easy to use and holds everything I need.

To be able to finance and do all this, I was lucky enough to sell my 34 ft Open Range travel trailer and after I was done using it, sold the 2005 GMC for what I had paid for it 5 years ago.

The other thing I did right away, was to fence in the front porch. I had contracted to get the fence built but the guy ended up getting posts in and some 2x4s to attach fence planks too but then seemed he never had time to come back and finish. So I fired him and put the cedar on the fence myself. Then I bought a hot tub to go on the porch. I also then started working on putting in a water garden.

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I really love sitting in my little yard. The hot tub is nice to get me wake up each morning and I have 7 fish in my water garden and enjoy it a lot.



I now live a quiet life. I keep a schedule of M-W-F to go to the gym here in Rusk. The T-Th I go to Jacksonville to enjoy a workout in the pool there and then stop at the car wash, I have a monthly deal. Then if I need some groceries, I stop by Walmart. Jacksonville is only 14 miles away and has almost everything one might need. So mornings are the hot tub, gym, or the pool, and then iPad and iPhone games. When needed, afternoon or evening for yard work. Evenings are for reading, tv, and sitting on the

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patio to watch the sunset.

Rusk also has a small theater that I had joined to have seats for the plays they put on a few times a year. I always liked helping out too. Last summer I helped with a program for kids for summer acting.

Some of my doctors are in Tyler, where Wendy and her family live. So going up there occasionally for appointments gives me an excuse to visit. Also being only 35 miles away, I can visit for any functions for the girls or help Wendy with the yard or house. All this makes it easy to keep up with my cruising life.

Cruises have been taking up a lot of my time the last few years, but the plan is to trim that down to free up some of my budget. I am hoping some time to either be able to buy a small sailboat again or take trips to the BVI to charter a 50ft sailboat to enjoy the islands.

So I can't really complain about life, but then who would listen? I work pretty hard getting the VA to keep up with my health issues, but they manage to finally take care of things. So life is good...

My final goal in life!



While I was in high school some very good friends of the family moved to Tomales. Margaret and Neal Fenton both got jobs at the high school. Neal was the Vice Principal and Margaret was a gym teacher. Neal had the dubious distinction of being the only principal I have had call me to his office. That morning before school as I was driving by some of the guys in the hotrods in the center of town, one of them kicked the side of my Sprite. I got out and we had a pretty heated discussion but did not come to blows. But Neal had heard of it and wanted the two of us to work it out and shake hands.

Margaret was a really active and outspoken lady. She was a fun person and she decided that one of the things she was going to teach in our co-ed gym class was dancing. As you can imagine this did not go over well with the guys, but she was a force to be reckoned with and we all participated. I actually found I liked it and I also found the girls really liked it and wanted to dance.

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Years later when living in San Antonio I had the opportunity to do a little more dancing. Mom, Dad, and Candy had moved to San Antonio as well and as Candy was going to college and then married a Texan, going out dancing on the weekend was just a norm. So when they came from South Texas to visit, the whole family would go out to the Golden Stallion or the Farmer's Daughter. Everyone would be dancing but my wife would complain, I could not dance, so she would only dance a slow one maybe while there. So I danced with Candy's girlfriends from college and I had fun.

Again, time passed and I got divorced in the early 80's, the first thing I did was go out drinking and dancing. With the gas station I was running in Flippin, AR failing, I moved to Springfield, MO. I started going out to clubs that had free dance lessons before the bands would come on. Most of what they taught were line dances, very popular then. I caught on real quick.

Then as it turned out the instructors moved from Springfield and the club needed a new dance instructor. I stepped up and started teaching. It was a racket, I got \$40 a night to teach an hour and free drinks the rest of the night. All the ladies wanted help with their dance steps after lessons too!! I had my Trans Am and had been working hard on my Burt Reynolds look-alike and it was working for me. A lot of people only knew me as Burt.

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So then I start teaching at some other clubs on different nights as well and even produced a book for the line dances so that people could practice at home and do the right steps. While I was teaching I had a friend, Ida, that helped me teach. We styled ourselves as Lady & The Outlaw. It was great. I was teaching at a club in Branson, MO on Sunday evenings and one night my ex-wife, came up and asked if I would help her!!

Well, I left Springfield to go into the Army, but that did not slow me down. Once I got to Ft. Riley, KS, I was teaching again at some clubs and having a great time. I could teach anyone, even those that said they had tried, I was a very good instructor.

I think the secret to my successful teaching is that I quickly adopted the attitude, that the steps do not have to be perfect or even right. You just have to be having fun. I never scolded a student, just told them to try again and relax and enjoy.

The only scolding I ever did dancing was..... Knowing the fact that I AM NOT IN CHARGE ANYWHERE, I was in charge on the dance floor, so just follow my lead.

One of the things too was that with some alcohol involved, I knew no limits. I danced with female singers from the band and if any of the guys I was with challenged me to meet and dance with some really cute gal, then it would happen.

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When I was transferred to Germany I did not teach but I danced. I found it funny when I went out dancing in German places. The bands sang all the songs I knew in English, but you would go up to chat with them and they did NOT speak any English. I found lots of gals to dance with and I had one gal that I danced with a lot she kept telling me about this Ferrari she had but did not have it licensed, so I never saw it. When I got my orders to ship out to the states, she said she would get it out for me to see. She came over and picked me up and let me drive it to go into town for lunch. I hardly had room for my size 13 feet in the floorboard and not be stepping on two pedals at once. I was doing almost 200 km and still had two gears to go!!!

One night after a couple of drinks, I saw two ladies dancing with each other, so I told my buddy to come on and let's go dance with them. We went onto the dance floor and offered to dance with them, but they declined, pointing out boyfriends sitting at a table. I had had a sheltered life and had never seen that girls liked to dance with their girlfriends.

It was funny, even in a disco, I could manage to do the two-step. I continued dancing and when I went back to Germany as the Rod and Gun Club Manager, I would DJ and teach dances to the club members and Germans in the club. My second wife and I had a great time dancing. We would do drops and turns and pretty much clear a dance floor if it was not big enough to

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contain us and others. If I happen to break one of her nails, then we had to stop and find it. She would glue it back on at home. She spent hours working on her nails.

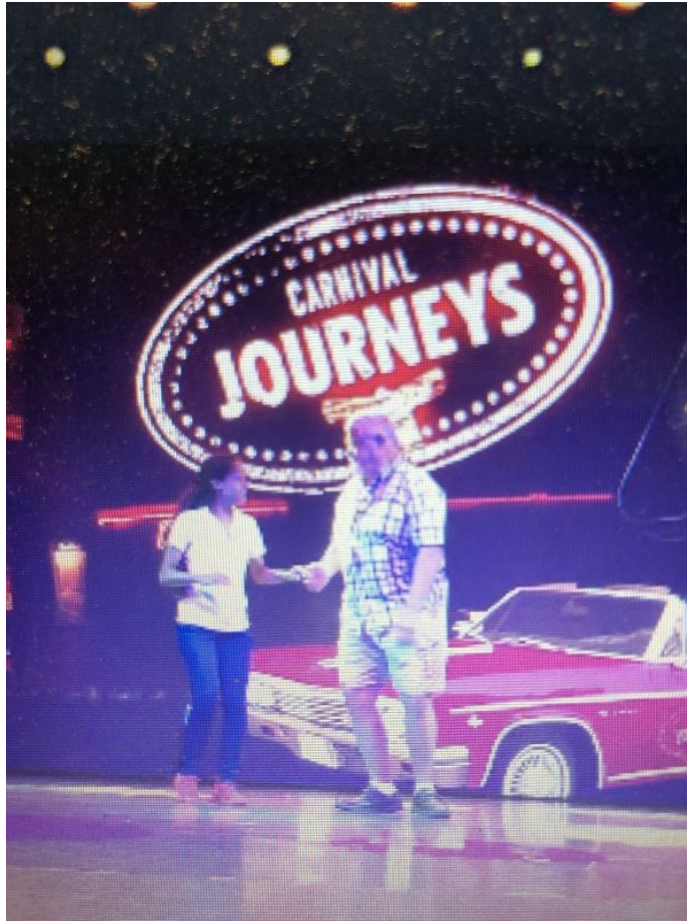
After the second divorce, I was out dancing and met my third wife. I met her one night and we danced and then again the next night and that was it, we were a set. But then in our life, we did not do as much dancing.

After my last divorce, I got back out again and burn up the floor at the little club in Reno I went to. If a polka came on I knew one gal that liked polka and we would spin and spin for the whole polka.

Then moving to Dallas, I started dancing 3-4 nights a week at 2-3 different clubs it was great. I took lessons and got very good at the progressive two-step. I never had a problem finding a partner, everyone wanted to dance.

But now as I am in my retirement, with 3 hip surgeries, knee surgery, a toe amputation and my back bothering me, and overweight from 3-4 years of low activity and rehabs, I can hardly dance.

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My final goal in life is to get serious and lose 50 lbs and get back to dancing. I want to be able to go out any Saturday night and hit the dance floor and dance to the end of my life.

