

REMINISCING

by

Robert Mudge Niquette

I was four years old when my father died. The only recollection I have of him occurred while in a driving rain storm; we stopped on the lee side of the Holcomb School. I was scared of the storm, so Dad and I played a game. He would guess the direction from which the next lightning bolt would come. He told me that the sooner we heard the thunder, the closer the bolt of lightning. To this day, I still get a kick out of estimating the distance and direction of each lightning bolt.

I must have been a handful early on. My father had to do some traveling from time to time. After one of those trips he came home to see a new fence all the way around the yard. This was a sturdy, high fence with 2x4's top and bottom, and it was well braced at the corners. Seems Mother had gotten tired of her son wandering off. Another problem: Frances, my older sister, had a pony that I was forever letting loose. The pony always took off to its former home. This fence was to keep us both in. It kept the pony in all right, but I simply walked up the brace and away I went. I was only three the first time I showed up at my Grandmother Thompson's house four blocks away.

When my father died, I was told that I had now become man of the house. This meant that it was my responsibility to take care of my mother and sisters. I grew up fast, and one of my first jobs was to keep the little girls out of trouble. I took my job seriously. One day when I was about 6, Mother instructed me to keep the girls home; they took off. When Mother returned, she found her two younger daughters tied to a chair! I had gone out looking for them with a saddle rope and when they gave me trouble I roped them and tied them in a chair.

Not knowing my father, the two men who really had an impact on my life were Uncle Ralph and Doc Jones. Ralph's true name was Ralph Bosworth, the former partner of my Grandfather and Father in the real estate firm of C.M. Niquette and Son (Garden City, Kansas). He helped my Mother during all those difficult years after the sudden death of Father in what to do to get as much land free and clear and how to sell the rest the best way possible. He always had time to talk any time I needed a man's viewpoint. Any manners I have are the suggestions of Uncle Ralph. He was not big in stature but was the biggest man I ever knew.

Doc was a Texas veterinarian who moved to Kansas with a bunch of "ticky" cows. He later became quite prosperous, with large holdings in Finney County, especially along the Arkansas River. He was prominent in the community; president of the local bank

and of the school board and carried a lot of influence wherever he went.

Being an active kid, it didn't take me long to find a neighbor who kept horses in his barn. That neighbor was Doc Jones. I guess I was about six years old when Doc grabbed me by the arm and marched me into Mother's kitchen. He told her I was to stay out of his barn or he would take me to the ranch and make a cow man out of me. She said go ahead. I was soon going to the ranch and allowed to drive a team and ride a horse. Before long, I learned enough to work cattle and really was some help around the farm. You can just bet I thought I was a "hand" and that the place would fall apart without my help.

Chuck has asked me, "What do you remember about your father and Grandfather Niquette?" Almost nothing firsthand, but for years as soon as I told people my name, the stories popped out.

Their real estate firm was involved primarily in finding farms for people who wanted to farm in western Kansas. These people would arrive on the early morning train. With my father driving and Grandfather sitting sideways in the front seat, they would take as many as five prospects out to see what was for sale. The whole deal would be wrapped up--land inspected, sold, and the deed made out in time for the Buyers to take the afternoon train east.

When a new owner arrived with his family and goods, my father helped in any way he could to get them settled. He must have had a steel lining in his gut, for everybody talked about how much he liked their cooking and coffee. Naturally, some people liked the area and others couldn't make it. Those who stayed often told me how great the Niquettes were in helping them over the rough spots. Uncle Ralph used to say C M (Grandfather) could just sense what was troubling the new land owner and could address those problems immediately. In all the years he was associated with the firm, Uncle Ralph said he never heard a falsehood or a stretching of the truth. You can see we Niquettes have a lot to live up to.

Grandfather Thompson, on the other hand, was the horseman, the party man. He always had one horse that could really go, and he wasn't a bit slow to race it. I remember Belle. Belle was out of Father's driving mare and as a colt (I'm told) nearly killed Father by kicking him in the head. After that, Grandfather took over and Belle became his driving horse.

One time when we were taking eggs to the store, some farmer drove up along side of us. Naturally, Belle started trotting a little faster and a little faster. We won; but when we turned into the store, the eggs didn't. Grandmother Thompson was only about five feet tall but she ate Grandfather down to a nubbin in fast order.

Her family ran to judges and teachers, but she married a man who could pick up any musical instrument and soon have a tune out of it. He enjoyed playing at dances and was always ready for fun. He never set the world on fire making money, but I'll bet it was great to be with him. My Mother supposedly had a bad back so she couldn't sweep the floors, but she exercised horses for him. I guess it about broke him up when his son preferred working on machines rather than horses, and became an engineer.

Mother's nickname was Topsy while she was growing up, and as I later found out, she was quite a tomboy. I remember when I got my shotgun to shoot rabbits. With one leg draped around the headlight of a Model T, I wasn't having much success. She told me to stop, and then climbed on the fender herself and showed me how it was done.

Every year, we had a big gathering of Dad's and Mother's friends. They came from all directions. The men hunted whatever they wished; that evening, everybody ate what they had shot. In those days there were prairie chickens, ducks, and quail in abundance. At these parties, the kids slept wherever they could, like in dresser drawers, on quilts, on the floor. It was a time for all of these people who had gone to school together to catch up. They still came for a number of years after Father had died.

TO CALIFORNIA

I was eight when Mother decided to move to Van Nuys, California. Suddenly, I was expected to be a typical city kid and get a big kick out of playing ball and having not a lot to do. We lived in an apartment house and played in the school yard. It was mighty boring; I had never played any games and didn't care too much about them. The next year we moved to Orange. I had to make all new friends and, of course, prove myself by licking some smart kids and showing them they had better not mess with me.

A Mrs. Wood was my fourth grade teacher, and she was determined to make me fit her mold. She caused me to have sties, stutter, and hate the thought of school. Then I came to the realization that two could play her game. Why not make her hate to come to school? I got my chance. She came out to the playground at recess and played second base during a ball game. I came up to bat, got a single, stretched it to a double, and came in to second base sliding. She ended up in center field. Her legs, as far as we could see, were skinned--plus some we couldn't. She and the principal came to Mother saying I was incorrigible and a menace to society. They found out where I got my temper because Mother told them exactly what this woman had done to her sweet likable son. That summer we moved back to Kansas.

BACK TO KANSAS

When we returned to Kansas this time, I started working for real at the ranch. My first team was a pair of mules, Jack and Ned. I went to raking hay. The first few days were torture. I couldn't easily reach the trip so I had to slide off the seat to trip the rake. My tail was so sore it looked as if I had been whipped. Gradually, I toughened up and I started looking how I could get on a horse. If I got up early, I could go after the horses. This was heaven to me. I got up in the dark, got my horse, and took off for the pasture. The horse I rode could find the other horses and as it began to lighten I found the others and sent them trotting for the corral. As the sun rose, each horse's head would be outlined against the sunrise. Talk about beauty! That was it!

That fall I got my chance to be a rider. We moved cattle around to keep them on good grass. Also, there was a lot of separating. Some cows failed to have a calf and were moved to the feed lot to be fattened for market. Calves were culled to be either sold as feeders or kept as herd replacements. I got my string of saddle horses. I was some proud of them. Man, I sure hated going back to school. I was told I could work weekends and keep my string of horses. As long as I worked for Doc Jones, I had a say as to my string of horses. Sure, I kept picking horses because a lot of that first bunch were old retainers but they were something special for a 12-year-old boy.

Each Saturday afternoon the ranch knocked off work. There was a rush to the stock tank to get a bath and to put on clean clothes. We loaded up in the truck and headed for town. When you had spent a week in the sand hills you hadn't seen anything green for that period. So when the truck hit the last hill overlooking the Arkansas River bottom I thought it was heaven to see all those green trees and alfalfa.

As soon as I could grow some fuzz on my chin, I joined the rush to the barber shop. We came in and sat down in the first empty chair. As the barber finished each man, the whole line moved up to the next chair. For a long time, I didn't have much to shave off, but I liked the hot towel and the Murine in my eyes to take out the sand and dust.

At the barber shop, we got a chance to say what had happened on our spread that week and find out what the others had done. Our bunch was always comparing my latest stunt to Bobby Long who had started with Caldwell Hicks' Spread about the same time. Of course, nobody stretched the truth much. At least most of the time, I recognized the incident. I also liked the stories. No horse bucked quite so hard as they did in that barber shop. Louis L'Amour could write another 100 books with that material.

You can bet my skunk story was told for weeks after it happened. I'd heard that a skunk couldn't get you if you pick it up by the tail. Well, I was raking hay and saw a family of skunks

walking through the mown hay. I raised the teeth of the rake, drove over the skunks, then reached down and grabbed the last baby skunk by the tail. Nothing happened! Perhaps it was too young, but I wasn't sure. I drove over to where they were stacking hay and threw the baby skunk to the top of the stack. It was not too young. The stackers came off that stack any way they could. In fact, they had to move to another area. Yes, they tanned my tail but good with a pair of chaps. The guys who were not involved laughed so hard they couldn't kill me.

Looking back, I remember working, rather than fun and games, all through high school. Moreover, I was growing too fast to keep my feet from knocking over chairs. Mother decided that her son should join the Silver Slipper Dance group. Maybe some dancing lessons would teach me to know where my feet were going next. Ever so often, we also had a party dance. I quickly learned that the teacher was the best dancer, and she felt darn nice too. I would go early and learn the new dance step for the evening. Later, she and I demonstrated the new step to the class. I liked that.

I can remember being envious of several of the guys. The undertaker's son had the Cadillac to drive on important dates. Another guy's dad had a car agency, so he always had wheels. The rest of us walked on our dates. Not counting the Model T (a \$10 bargain), I didn't have wheels until I was a sophomore in college and that only lasted a year.

This Model T was great. You could never depend upon it starting, and you had to watch your turns when driving. If you turned too short, the body wouldn't follow the chassis. For that reason, we never fastened the floor boards. You also had to remember that as the steering wheel disappeared you had to jerk up the gas and spark. The latter were two levers on the steering column. Otherwise, you might be run down by the chassis. I didn't keep it long; bronc riding was safer.

The summer before I started to college, I was in one of the last cattle drives of the old West. We moved a herd from the Garden City area to the sand hills of western Nebraska. Dr. Jones' commercial herd was made up of some 2,500 head when he decided he would go to purebred cattle only. He found a buyer in Nebraska. The cost of shipping cattle that far would be terrible, so he decided to move the whole herd in a cattle drive covering some 300 plus miles. This took considerable planning, as the herd could move only about 10 miles each day. He would need a place to bed down the cattle as well as provide something for them to eat. This might be a pasture he could rent, or a farmer's yard with hay to feed them. Once or twice we left them on the road where we fed them hay. If they spent the night on the road, we put up one lantern at the front and another to the rear of the cattle. One Saturday night when we were camped beside the road, some fellow who had drunk enough silage juice to attempt to drive through them stopped permanently after he hit a bull.

My job on the drive turned out to be rather simple. I was to make sure no farm dog came out barking and scared the cattle. I soon learned that the best way to do this was to get my rope down and try to rope the dog. It is harder to rope a dog than you think. However, the dogs didn't know this and would take off for the house. Of course, a few of those farmers didn't like me chasing their dog, but I told them that it was better to chase the dog than have 2,500 head of cattle going through their front door.

One team of horses had followed cattle drives for years. This team always brought up the rear and was as good as a rider in keeping the cattle moving. If a cow decided to have a calf while we were moving, the team stopped until someone came back to put the calf into the wagon. The cow followed along bawling. Getting those calves out in the evening was a chore. A range cow does not take lightly to somebody messing with her calf. The calf bawls and the cow (plus her friends) gather around to defend the calf. The cowboy tries to drop the calf where the cow isn't. If these cows get too numerous, somebody has to drive them off. That, too, can be a chore.

CALIFORNIA, AGAIN

We had a rather strange setup while we were growing up. Mother was determined to live in California as much as she could. However, our income came from Kansas. Absentee owners eventually suffer loss of income, so we were forced to return to Kansas. We would spend two years in California and two years in Kansas.

In California, to earn spending money, I found a market for newspapers. These papers had to be unfolded and rolled into big rolls so they could be used to wrap bunch vegetables. A lot of people saved their papers for me, and I picked them up with my wagon every other week. The only trouble was I soon saturated the market and had to sell the excess papers for dam little money.

I tried working in a furniture store. This meant I was doing a lot of dusting and polishing and once in awhile going on the truck to deliver.

I finally convinced the manager of a food market to let me sell produce on commission. I soon learned that a big smile plus a lot of attention to the customers paid off. I would ask the housewife for her shopping list, ask where she had parked, and tell her of any good deals we had. Then, I would fill her order and take it to her car. When the customers had finished buying groceries, they would come by and pay me. I knew which ladies canned fruit and could tell them when a certain fruit would be at its peak. Some of them would buy five or six lugs to can.

I was damn good. Too good at times. I was earning 7 cents on each dollar I turned in, and I made more money working on

Saturday than the regular help did all week. Several times I was told to rebuild stands or wash up bunch vegetables. Then, when one of my regulars asked for me, the boss would ask somebody else to wait on her. Many times the customer would just walk out, or say, "I'll wait for Bob."

One Saturday night after I had had a really big day, the boss informed me that I had earned more that day than he did for the entire week and that I was through working for him. I went to the other side of the street and started to work for that store. The first Saturday I stayed out in front where my customers could see me and before long most of my regular customers had followed me to my new store. That hurt!

One of the stores I worked for was called Alpha Beta Market. One Friday night the store caught on fire, so when we reported for work we started cleaning up the mess and repairing the building. A contractor was in charge of the repairs. Well, about 11 p.m. one of my buddies who had gone to L A the night before to get vegetables for the market and had worked some 28 to 30 hours was not working too fast. The contractor started raising hell with him, and I spoke up. He made threatening noises, so I dropped a crowbar because I was up on the rafters and he was below me. That got his attention, and he said he was coming up. Before I could part his hair, the boss yelled for us to quit for the night. He told this contractor he was to keep his mind on building, and he would direct his own men. To this day I don't know what would have happened if this guy had come for me. I was a high school freshman at the time.

One of the best courses I ever had was high school General Science in California, taught by a lady with the name, Jessamina Tilda Brown Eye. She was fabulous in pointing to new horizons and then letting us run toward whatever we found interesting. I started a butterfly and a mineral collection and developed an interest in astronomy, tree grafting, biology, and bacteriology. As I said, she taught General Science with a capital G.

I had a dog named Jack, a German Shepherd, who followed me to school one day. He slipped into the room where she was teaching. The kids started laughing, and I jumped up to take him out. She stopped me and explained that this was a chance for us to study muscles and how they work. Jack spent the morning on her desk.

One long lasting result of her class was a tree in our backyard. We didn't have room for three trees, so I grafted onto the orange tree already in the yard, a lemon and a grapefruit. It is simple to do if you know how. Just pick a branch about the same size as the one you want to add, make a diagonal cut on both limbs and wrap them together. My sisters and I saw that tree still bearing all three kinds of citrus nearly 40 years after I did the graft.

A group of us were interested in minerals. Our teacher found an abandoned tourmaline mine, and we were allowed to go in to look

for crystals. We also got to see several old gold mines. My favorite mine was full of quartz crystals. This mine was close enough for me to ride my bike so I fully explored this one. Whatever we discovered or collected was described with the Latin name, where it was found, and any use if applicable. We then made displays to be shown in the science hall.

BACK AGAIN, KANSAS

I was back in Kansas for my sophomore, junior, and senior years of high school, working at the Jones' at every opportunity. That's when my selling experience in California really helped. Doc Jones had a herd of registered cattle, so there were bulls to sell. The foreman was great on getting the work done but seemed incapable of selling anything. At any rate, I took over.

When a prospective buyer was expected, I eased 10 well-marked bulls into an adjoining pen. Then, I showed him the big corral of bull calves. At the same time, I would sorta lean on the fence where I had the 10. Invariably, the buyer would ask, "What are these bulls?" I would say they had been picked out for Doc to look at because we needed some young replacement bulls. The upshot was he would offer to pay full price if he could just pick from these 10. After a bit, I could be persuaded because after all I was "just a fool kid".

When someone asks, "Where did you go to college?", I sorta grin to myself. I got through high school in 1936 with 10 hours college work already under my belt. (Garden City Junior College at that time was in the same building as the high school.) Mother and the girls were moving back to California that year. I went along to help drive the truck of furniture, and we all looked for a place for them to live. I returned to K State, but before I had my degree I would also spend a year at Santa Ana Junior College.

K STATE

Grandmother Niquette and Aunt Winnie figured I would need a sober, hard working roommate as a good influence during my first year of college. They fixed me up that summer while I was moving Mother and the girls back to California. I took the train back to Topeka with a stop-over in Garden. Since I was a bit stiff from two days on the train, I immediately took off my shoes to run around the block. When I saw the Joneses on their porch, I stopped to talk.

When I returned to Grandmother's house, here was this hand-picked roommate-to-be and his mother. Aunt Winnie had told them I would not go far without shoes. His impression of me was not great. We took the bus from Topeka to Manhattan. The bus filled. For added seating capacity, there was a board to pull out across the aisle. I saw a good looking girl coming, so I stood up and gave her my seat if I could leave my junk where it was. I sat on the board and got acquainted. She was a K State senior and told me

about a dance at the rec center that night. I told her I would be there. Carl, my new roommate, disapproved. He talked long and hard about the fact that I didn't know her or her family, or what kind of girl she was, etc. Later, I found out she was an honor student, a wheel on campus, and I ended up representing the freshmen class largely due to the fact I was acquainted with the seniors who were running campus politics.

I was on the committee to organize the Independent Student Union and became active in the YMCA. Ruth Haines, the YWCA director, found me an excellent antidote for homesick girls. NO, I didn't do a thing. I just listened and let them do my homework for me.

SANTA ANA JUNIOR COLLEGE

I went back to California that summer to make some money. It was great not to worry about rent and eating money. As the summer wore on, I decided I would attend Santa Ana Junior College for a year. That way I could save enough to relax a bit later. Officially, I was saving money to go back to K State the following year. But I bought a Chevy coupe. At that time, three of us named Bob were dating three Helens. We three Bob's bought a can of paint and painted our cars the same color, a sorta robin's-egg blue. My car had a seven-mile horn running off the intake manifold. When I blew my horn, those ahead expected to see a semi-truck pass them. I had one problem: I lost power every time I blew the horn, and going up hill no way could I pass anybody. Another nice thing, one Helen's folks had a cabin at the beach; another Helen's folks had a mountain cabin. I went back to Kansas State with only the money I got out of the car.

Oh, yes, during that year, I tried several new kinds of jobs. I was an assistant rural mail carrier. This involves putting the mail up into the proper bins, wrapping bundles of mail so you can deliver all of it without back tracking. My biggest problem was keeping track of whose kids were whose, for I had five or six with the same last name.

I also tried being an assistant mortician. When somebody died, we went for the body. The day of the funeral, I was an usher before the service and, afterward, a driver to the cemetery. If you were lucky, you drove the flower truck (standby hearse). In this case, after the crowd left the service, you threw the flowers into the hearse and chose a back way to the cemetery. The flowers had to be spread over the mound of dirt before the family arrived. The next easiest job was driving the hearse. Nobody could bitch at you there.

The family car? You can have it. One family I'll never forget. They were all big people, and we had to use the fold-down seats. These seats folded down into the floor when not in use. If we had more than four people in the family car, the front seat was pushed forward and these seats came up where you normally would put your feet. This one fellow behind me was taking it really hard, and he would snort in my ear. Every time he snorted, the

car jumped forward. That Lincoln had the touchiest gas pedal I ever drove...One of women in the family added to my problems when she asked me to please stop at the next gas station. It wasn't easy letting the director know that I was going to be late, and making sure that the procession kept on going instead of following me into the gas station.

When I went back to K State, I recommended John Stoner for this job. He was just starting to date my sister, Ruth. In addition to the jobs I performed, he often sang solos at the service. Because there was a hedge of gardenias outside the funeral home, we both hated the smell of them ever after.

RETURN TO K STATE

The second time back to K State I tried to be a good student and stayed away from all those time-consuming activities. It was boring as hell until I met my future wife. She studied most of the time and her idea of going out was to the library. My grades improved. Well, this is almost true. Weekends were free for fun and games, and I proved to her goofing off wasn't all bad.

Back at K State, I did whatever kind of job was available. The School of Agriculture had some mares that had been shown at halter for years but had never been broke to harness. There was an offer to buy them if they were broke. I got the job. First, I had to get their attention, as they were not scared of anything and not about to work up a sweat.

I also played midwife to a bunch of pigs. I had to stay in the farrowing house at night and could study until I heard a sow grunt. That meant pigs on the way. I picked up the baby pigs, cut off the wolf teeth, dipped the cord in Iodine, and dropped the pigs into a heated barrel until all the pigs were born and the sow had gotten up to drink.

I dipped ice cream at the school creamery. I even did some teaching of judging while the profs were at meetings and livestock shows. The first time I taught, I brought chewing tobacco to give the students when I told them that's the only way to judge. When the class arrived, to my dismay, I saw girls in the class!

WORK TIME

I graduated at midterm and started looking for a job. Nobody wanted to hire me in a worth-while job, for everybody knew it was just a question of time until I would be in the Army. I went to the Ozarks to interview for a job managing a dude ranch. When I saw the horses all with collar marks, I had to ask how much they paid people to ride work horses. I didn't get the job.

Another job was on a goat farm. I was to milk the goats and make cheese. No thanks!

While in school, I had worked for Perry Packing Co. The Company had trucks running around to farms picking up cream, eggs, and chickens. The chickens were put into special pens and fed a high milk, high fat ration. The Company also had a chicken slaughtering plant. While I was working for them, they purchased Manhattan Ice and Cold Storage. I soon found myself warehouseman at the cold storage. In addition to ice making and commercial cold storage, they had a room with lockers so people could store meat and vegetables. In time, this became a locker plant and I was in charge of this too. This was a new industry, and since Manhattan was a college town there was a need for somebody to buy quarters of good beef, cut and wrap, and store it. I had to turn down being president of the Kansas Locker Association on account of the war.

The College had started studies on freezing foods. They experimented with different methods of freezing meats and vegetables. A good thing for Enid and me, was the fact that all of these foods had to be eaten and evaluated. The job didn't pay too much, but we ate well. I also introduced such ideas as using wooden blocks to illustrate how thick customers wanted their steaks. etc.

WORLD WAR II

Being of military age during World War II, my first experience occurred in the line for a physical examination. Every boy 18 to 36 had to take this exam. You should have seen the rejects! Some were blind, some with retardation of all kinds, and I'm sure many were faking to stay out of the Army. At any rate, the saying was: If you're warm, you're in.

I was in; and they made me report two days before my first wedding anniversary. They took us by bus to Camp Lee. There they shaved off my hair, issued me some GI clothes (some fit) and started our shots. A lot of fellows fainted as soon as they felt the needle. Of course, they hit you on both arms. I don't know how many shots we had in all but I can tell you our arms were mighty sore for a few days.

Then we were interviewed to determine where we would fit in best. If somebody said he understood horses and would like the Cavalry, he became a typist; if he cooked for a living, he was sure to end up a mechanic. Since I had been working with K State in the infant industry of freezing vegetables and meats, and my job in Manhattan was in this field, I thought I had a good background for the Quartermaster Corps. I was sent to the tank corps and basic training at Fort Knox (Ky.).

It was strange in a way, but six of us who happened to be college graduates were all looking around to see who we wanted next to us. We picked bunks in a row. Before long, one fellow stood out. I found out later he was a Rhodes Scholar, an All-American football player, and was a lawyer in the FBI. The Army had

offered him a Major's commission in Washington, but since he had studied in Germany he felt he could be of more service in a line outfit. Well, he was upset with basic training and felt it should be improved to at least the twentieth century. Every night the six of us helped rewrite the book.

CIVILIAN IN UNIFORM

Officer Candidate School was open, and we all applied. All of us were accepted subject to a physical exam. Of all times, just before the physical exam, I got too much dust and had a good case of hay fever on the day of my physical. The Army didn't want any sniveling officers, so I was bounced. I then determined to become a civilian in uniform.

Somewhere, an officer re-read my interview, and I became a meats instructor at the Cook and Baker's School. This didn't last long, as somebody discovered I had never even attended either this school or the school for Mess Sergeants. I was then made Mess Sergeant of a mess hall in the training depot. However, since I was still under the Cook and Bakers School jurisdiction, I didn't get my stripes. The Company had given this Staff Sergeant's rating to one of their cadre. In short, I was an outsider.

Before long, this got a bit serious in my eyes. The mess had received a demerit for dirty silverware; so, in return, I kept the K.P. (Kitchen Police) all night washing down the place. The next morning, their Corporal showed up with dirty boots to raise hell. I ran his ass out quick and he went to the First Sergeant. By this time, I was unhappy. The Sergeant started into the mess hall also with dirty boots, and I let fly with some dishes over his head. Before long, the Captain showed up. I then explained that the Captain's name was on that gig as well as mine. I also pointed out that I was doing the work of a Mess Sergeant--without the rank. I reminded him that this could be the basis for an inquiry. The whole thing ended in a stand-off because there was a shortage of officers for overseas duty, and he wasn't interested in making waves of any kind.

Not too long after this, the Army decided it needed cooks; and all of mine were on that list. I was left with some 400 men to cook for, and nobody knew how to boil water. Well, after a time the replacements began working out, and I decided to go to Louisville for a change of scenery. That night it was too far to go to my bunk so I just unrolled a mattress at the Cook and Bakers School which was near the gate. The next morning I stopped at the PX for a donut and coffee. Somebody tapped me on the shoulder and asked, "Aren't you Mess Sergeant for B 12 Mess?" I said yes and he told me the Colonel was looking for me--by raking the ashes of my mess hall. Very soon, I was on a shipping list.

My next stop was Camp Campbell (Ky). I was to take basic

training all over again and learn to be a good soldier. They failed. One of the first things to happen was spending a whole morning listening to an officer explain that "this is a Colt revolver." I got a bit sleepy, and he saw it. He told the crowd that "This is the kind of man that will get you killed. Come up here, Soldier, and fire at the target." Well, I was so flustered I picked up the gun in my left hand and fired away. I got 49 out of a possible 50. Then he said, "Fire Army style." (right handed). I got a 50. For the next six weeks, I didn't get off the firing line.

A Second Lieutenant and I became friends. We mounted a machine gun on the hood of a jeep and tried to reduce the rabbit population. We got caught. That night, he volunteered for the airborne, and I was on K.P. At least, I was through with the firing range. Incidentally, I qualified for every gun in the armored forces and got certificates to prove it.

One day when our company was on a field exercise, one of the problems was to cross the Cumberland River. It was dusty as heck and the half-track loaded with a maintenance gang missed the pontoon bridge. Everybody went into the river, tools and all. Most of the mechanics also went to the hospital. One of them had a really good job: He dished out oil and rags at the motor pool. Before he got back to the company, I had taken over. Who wants to clean tanks and guns if he can better himself?

The next thing I knew I was off to Fort Knox to learn how to be a tank mechanic. This was my third school at Fort Knox; I had already spent time at Cook and Baker's School and at Mess Sergeant's School. But, that was just the start. Orders would come down to send somebody with a high aptitude number to another school. I qualified as the schoolboy: Radio School, Anti-Aircraft School, and several others I can't remember.

My official job was to drive the maintenance officer's jeep. The only trouble was I couldn't see at night, so he was forced to drive all night. I ended up sleeping, either in the maintenance tank or the half-track. Later, Tiny (my mechanic partner) and I ended up with the maintenance tank, and the others rode in the half-track.

We went on Tennessee maneuvers. This means living in the country like a bunch of Boy Scouts, with war games thrown in. It was fun as long as nobody carried food to their pup tents. Hogs running loose all over the place were the world's best sleuths. When they went for the food, everything between them and the food was torn to shreds. You can imagine being awakened by a hog in your pup tent. I thought a lot of my fellow soldiers, especially those from New York, were pretty slow. But they learned in just one lesson from those hogs.

In these war games, a bunch of umpires decided who got shot. If you were dead, you were supposed to return to the bivouac area flying a black flag on your tank antenna.

Did you know all roads in Tennessee go through Nashville? At least, that applied to all the roads we "dead men" in tanks traveled. Since most of us had come from small towns, we didn't understand all those arrows (one-way streets) in Nashville. With that many arrows, we expected to see Indians, so we were watching for Pocahontas or any other beautiful Indian maid. We never did see any Indians--maidens or otherwise. What we did see was red-faced citizens driving striped automobiles with red bubbles on top who blew their sirens at us. We blew back at them; very politely, of course. Some of them got very careless and were nearly run over by our tanks. Needless to say, we got a choice dressing down by the officers in charge of maneuvers.

One weekend I drew K.P. Late Saturday night the Colonel, Smoky Joe, came wandering up to our mess and demanded something to eat. The cooks went into fits, so I rolled out from under a table and told him to sit down. I fired up a range stove and while it was heating cut a fillet. I smashed it once or twice with a cleaver and threw it on the stove. As soon as I could pry it loose, I flipped it over. I again pried it loose and served it with a piece of bread and butter. I also gave him a wedge of lettuce with salad dressing. The next Saturday night he showed up again. He demanded that I fix him up with a steak, nobody else would do.

We soon ended our Boy Scout war games and returned to Camp Campbell. One morning, with the company all lined up for orders of the day, here comes Smoky Joe driving down the parade ground looking at each soldier as he passed. He stopped in front of us, looked at me, and told me to get on his jeep. Seems he was going to have some officers for dinner and he wanted the same kind of steaks I had fixed for him. What's more, I had the use of his jeep for the day to get what I needed. To say the least, the Captain had figured I was in for a general court martial and didn't know why the Colonel didn't have any MP with him.

The next stop was Abilene, Texas. A place called Camp Barkley. The barracks were made of plywood, and we could lie in our bunks and flick cigarette butts through the cracks. At Camp Barkley, I found out the hard way not to leave tools on the deck of a tank. They got too hot to pick up.

Oh yes, there was one good deal for me at Camp Barkley. We had a series of tests to see if we were ready for war. One test was tank-against-tank, with live machine gun ammunition. The officer who was to judge this test turned out to be the Colonel who had busted me at Fort Knox. His tank had a big white stripe around it, and we were told not to fire at his tank. By this time, I was a tank commander; I told my platoon who this guy was. Well, we took off and looked for a place where we had a good field of fire at this striped tank. We proceeded to shoot out their periscopes. As fast as they put another one in, it was destroyed. The Colonel was screaming over the radio, "Cease fire; cease

fire..." Somebody got good or just lucky and shot off the tank's antenna. After a while, we started shooting at the junction of the turret. If any lead gets through, it is in such small pieces it will just sting.

This was Texas in the summertime, and we nearly cooked him before breaking off for lunch. Besides, we had used up all the ammo. The Colonel was taken off in an ambulance with heat prostration. We tankers had learned to exist in the heat, but he hadn't.

We knew this was our last stop before going overseas. Enid quit her job in Washington to be with me. The only place we could find to stay was the football players' dorm at Harden Simmons College. Our double-decker bed was made of 4x4s wrapped in steel. There was one small, and I mean small, window for air. Enid was scared to death of the occasional tarantula or other hairy insect we saw crawling on the walls. We tried to move the bulky bed away from the wall a little bit, but we couldn't budge it. Too heavy. After a night or two of no sleep because of the stifling heat, I suggested we sleep on the lawn. It was great; we had AIR. In the middle of the night, a night watchman and his dog woke us up and said, "You can't sleep here." I agreed and suggested he take his dog walking somewhere else. He couldn't leave it alone. I then suggested if he didn't want to be seen with a dog rammed up his rectum he had better get lost. Enid drug me off. The next day she found another place for us to stay.

OVERSEAS

Toward the end of the summer, the division was restricted to Camp. Each day our wives came to spend the day with us. Then, one evening, the orders came: We were to leave at 10 p.m. and we were forbidden to call anyone, including our wives. The next morning when they arrived at camp, we were gone.

When we headed East, we knew we were going to Europe. Fortunately, I was able to tell my sister, Ruth (who was in school at Princeton), that we were in New York; and she let Enid know. No mail left the division until we arrived in England.

In New York Harbor, we were loaded into a "Liberty Ship". Canvas bunks were stacked 12 high, with about 18 inches head room between bunks. Air was not good and when somebody got sick, the lower bunks caught it all. Needless to say, I was sick!! We were not supposed to go on deck. I didn't care; I went. What the heck? All they could do was shoot me. Well, not quite. They put me on K.P. That was great, for I found the ice cream locker; and I lived on ice cream for several days. In fact, I felt so good I invested in some crap games and ended up taking some officers' money--and spent MORE time on K.P. when the Captain caught me.

We arrived in England and were sent to Tidworth, a 16th Century Army barracks. For heat, we had fireplaces; and we used coke for fuel. Soaking coke in oil with a little gas would make it burn. The only problem was that we soon had very dark complexions from

the burning oil.

All our guns and tanks were covered with Cosmoline, a grease that prevented rusting on the trip overseas. All of this had to be removed before we could test the guns and get the tanks tuned up. As fast as a tank was cleaned, Tiny and I road tested it. In this way we explored the Salisbury Plains, stopping at roadside Inns and bars. The tea was terrible and the beer not much better. Why should we complain? This was War.

I got a pass to London. Since I didn't think I would ever be back again, I wanted to at least see Buckingham Palace, the Changing of the Guard, and Big Ben. The other guys were set on Piccadilly Circus, so I was on my own.

To make a long story short, I ended up getting acquainted with a girl and inviting her to dinner. While we were eating, the Germans sent over some V Bombs, a forerunner of today's rockets. I had to be back at the train depot by 12 p.m. or face a court martial, and here I was trapped in a Blackout. I told her my problem, and she grabbed me by the hand and we took off running. Everything at street level was blacked out except for burning buildings and bomb craters, but she knew a subway that was still running. We would come out on the street and run for a block or two, and down we would go again for another subway. At any rate, thanks to a chance encounter with a young British school teacher, I got to the depot in time to catch my train back to camp. I thought later that she could have dumped me at any time and I wouldn't have blamed her. After we got the depot, she had to make her way back again all by herself.

After a few weeks of drinking English tea, we were loaded onto an LST. In my opinion, these boats were made by some guy who was making row boats and got carried away. They are flat bottomed and if they don't hit waves straight on they regularly take on water over the sides. Up front is a loading ramp which can theoretically drop onto the beach to unload its cargo of men and tanks. This ramp is also the front of the boat, and it stands up high enough so nobody can see what's ahead. It took a week for us to cross that 60 miles of water called the English Channel. Between a storm and these crazy boats hitting one another, we were ready to land anywhere. I met a fellow Jayhawker who was a Navy medic. He had picked up some 190 proof alcohol, and I liberated a case of grapefruit juice to go with it. This mixture was called "torpedo juice".

The tanks on our LST were crashing back and forth on the lower deck. A call came down for volunteers to chain the tanks together before they knocked out the side of the boat. It was fun catching these tanks on the slide and chaining them when they came together. If I had been sober I couldn't have caught them.

Finally, it was our turn to land. We had made waterproof boxes to go over the tank's air intake. These boxes stood well above the

top of the turret. It was a good thing, for when we drove off the LST, my tank went to the bottom. My driver and assistant driver had to stand up to keep their heads out of the water enough to breathe between waves. When we reached shore, I told the assistant driver to loosen the escape door in the bottom of the tank. He did and just plain lost it. At any rate, we didn't have water in our tank. We drove for 60 miles and then just stopped on the road. We were wet, cold, and tired. Everybody tried to sleep--without much luck.

The next morning we were told to dig a slit trench, Army style, complete with a roll of toilet paper. We still knew no reason for the stop nor did we have a hint as to when we were moving. Tiny and I saw a farm not far from the road and went to visit. We spent the night in the barn haymow. We cleaned up with good hot water, thanks to bartering with a few cigarettes. The First Sergeant came by and looked at us. He raised all kinds of hell, but joined us that evening. We were the only clean soldiers in the column. The next night we heard a jeep coming; it was the maintenance officer. I guess he figured if we got into trouble he might as well be in it all the way. Besides, he wanted to sleep dry and clean too.

As far as I am concerned, the Twelfth Armored Division had only one major battle. Intelligence had come down with the story that we would have no opposition; so Combat A was to take one town, Combat B another, and the Reserve yet another. The Germans had gotten the same story. We met head on.

That morning we pushed off, with the maintenance tank in the rear of the column, as usual. Not too far from our starting place, we got a call from the company commander; his tank had thrown a track. We pulled along side the crippled tank and transferred our tool chest to that one. They took our tank, and we stayed behind to replace the track. By this time, the half-track and the rest of the maintenance crew arrived. While the rest of us worked, the maintenance officer stayed on the radio. Before long, he turned up the volume so we could all hear. There was yelling and cursing; and we kept hearing that so and so got it. Gradually, we heard fewer and fewer voices. We began seeing fellows running back on foot. Their tanks had been hit. By this time, the track was back on. Johnson, the maintenance officer, said, "Let's go and give these guys support."

We moved up to a hill where we could look over the ground ahead of us. Can you imagine seeing every tank in the division on fire or dead? Balls of black smoke indicated the Germans were hurting as badly as we were. A canal cut through this valley and we could see pockets of guns firing away at each other over the canal. That night, we rolled up to the canal and kept up a steady fire, so no Germans could cross the water. As soon as barrels got too hot to go back in battery, we changed them and continued firing. We went back for more ammo.

Johnson had taken over as company commander, as the Captain had been promoted to battalion commander. The Captain pulled me aside and asked if I could find the supply trains. I was to report to the Major in charge of the trains and tell him to get under way immediately, instructing the cooks have a class A meal ready for us upon arrival at our headquarters. The cooks all announced that they couldn't cook while moving. Then I dropped the other shoe. Any truck not moving in five minutes was to be blown up. I then moved out into the field where I could see if my orders were being followed. Would you believe it! Our company cooks cooked Spam. I thought for sure they would be killed on the spot.

By this time, Eisenhower's headquarters had issued an order saying that maintenance men were "irreplaceable" and were not to go on the firing line. However, every other man was to be used to stop the Germans. That meant cooks, first sergeants, truck drivers, the works, were up there seeing action.

Tiny and I, as well as the rest of maintenance, were told to stay in the cellar where our Headquarters was set up. We went down and looked for a spot to spend the night. In the first room was a pile of rotten apples. The next room housed a sow about to farrow. She had been there for several days. Right across the street was a bar with bedrooms above. Somehow, we found ourselves sleeping above that bar, lying on a feather bed with another over the top of us. During the night, the Germans started shelling the town we were in. Needless to say, we made acquaintance with the sow in short order.

The shelling stopped. The pig smelled to high heaven! We crept back across the street to our feather beds. The next time the shelling started, we just rolled over and went back to sleep. The next morning, Tiny said he didn't remember seeing holes in the door the night before. I didn't either. We got up and opened the door to go down the steps. There weren't any. In fact, the whole side of the house was gone. It was sorta late to have diarrhea, but I endeavored to be a bit more GI the rest of the war.

Later, after we had been relieved, we heard that the ground on both sides of the canal had been covered with dead soldiers. I don't know how many men were lost in that action, but our division had a 300 percent replacement by the end of hostilities.

The Twelfth Armored Division was under the command of General Patton. He believed that you had a 50% mortality with green troops. Consequently, he used up a division until everybody was gone, dead or wounded. Enid would read in the papers about a "mystery division" breaking through the German lines somewhere in Europe, and two or three weeks later get my letter telling about it.

When we were ordered back into the reserve to reorganize, the first call was to get some rolling stock. We needed 71 tanks. Orders came down to send two men for each of these tanks. Tiny

and I were among the group to go to Metz to pick up the tanks. We were taken in a six by six trucks, arriving after a long night's drive. The first crack out of the box we were in trouble with the MP's there. We were out of uniform, dirty, and unshaven. Remember, most of the fellows on this truck had lost a tank to the German Army within the last week, and several of their crew had been either killed or wounded. Needless to say, we looked over this bunch of MP's with ideas for retaliation.

We got our tanks and started looking for the MPs. If we could have found an ammo dump, we would have shown them some real action. As it was, all we could do was roll over a few jeeps. We were threatened with court martial--but from a safe distance over the radio. I'll bet they stood clear of any more guys who came for tanks.

Back in the reserve we also got a bath, the first in a long time. It was a big tent with showers. We peeled off the dirty clothes and went in to bathe. As always, some guys in there were constantly telling us to move along, with not too much success. When we came out the other side, we picked up new clothes. It sure felt good; I had worn those other clothes about a month of Sundays. I had tried washing them in gasoline, but after that I only itched worse than before.

In the reserve, we also drew PX (Post Exchange) rations like cigarettes, candy, beer and some good stuff like watches, cigarette lighters, etc. I drew these rations for the company. Of course, the quantity was based on the number of men we had. Since I hadn't heard how many men we had left, I used 155, the number we had started with. Nobody was going around counting. Since we actually had fewer than 50, we all fared well. Our company commander had been promoted to Colonel; and when the supply officer caught on to how many men we really had and tried to raise a stink, he didn't get far.

The action that got us the headlines was a laugh. The enemy had been driving back the French for six weeks until our whole flank was exposed. The Third Army sent one infantry division and the 12th Armored Division to cut off this pocket which was later named Colmar Pocket. In only 24 hours, this was accomplished. For three days the French celebrated. We came into Colmar, and the women gave us wine and flowers. DeGaul was on the reviewing stand taking salutes. We all received the Colmar Citation, an "ironing cord" to wear around our shoulder.

Two things in that action stand out in my memory. We learned that the French were driving American Lend-Lease tanks. Since we needed parts badly, Tiny and I liberated a French tank, drove it back to our bivouac area, and proceeded to cannibalize it for the needed parts. Oh, yes, the French were issued tank helmets while we never had had any. One French tank yielded helmets for us as well as parts to repair our tanks. We took the parts we could use, then drove the tank back close to their motor pool. Since one of the things we needed was an engine, that tank didn't

exactly fly back to their motor pool. Its a good thing light tanks had two engines.

It was also at Colmar that I met my first French Moroccan. We were making coffee and when I reached for my cup, a black hand reached over and beat me to it. I looked around and here is a big Black man with filed teeth and a big curved sword. Heck, I didn't even know they were anywhere around.

I got my purple heart by being at the wrong place at the right time. We had to cross a bridge to enter Bad Durkin. When our tank had reached about the middle of the bridge, the Germans decided to blow it up. Since we couldn't clear the bridge going forward, we backed off and found shelter near a big building. We could hear some big motors running and decided this was a power plant. We just had to see if they had an electric welder we could liberate. While in this power plant, be darned if some German didn't undershoot the bridge and put a high explosive round through the roof of the plant. The concussion knocked off my helmet, and I reached down for it as I ran toward the cellar. When I reached the cellar, Meisner, the radio tech, was already there, but he was carrying a big piece of steel in his leg. I told him to leave it in, and I would go for a first aid kit. When I reached ground level, all I could find was ammo trucks. A few shells were still coming in, and the place was loaded with absentees.

I was struggling to get a first aid pack out of one those ammo trucks when Ashby, another mechanic, showed up. I told him Meisner was hit; he immediately reached for the box and tore off a whole side panel with the box on it. Together, we ran to where Meisner was lying.

Soon, some Medic showed up. He started yelling, "Take that gun away from that wounded man." In a little bit, we had the bleeding stopped; but about that time the Medic started yelling again and pointing at me. Heck, I wasn't feeling any pain. As it turned out, I had an 18-inch cut in the back of my combat jacket. Each layer had less and less of a cut, and my back was just sliced enough to bleed well. I also had a jillion holes in the front of my combat jacket--with just enough blood to make it interesting. I'm glad I was reaching for that helmet as I ran to the cellar. Otherwise, you guys would not be reading this.

At any rate, the Germans were not done messing up my day. A jeep was brought in to evacuate us. Another shell came in and blew out two tires. They had to patch up the tires before we could leave. We were taken to a field hospital, only to find the Krauts had been there before us and had strafed the hospital. Most of the doctors had been killed or wounded. I looked around at these wounded guys and talked my way to go to the trains. I never have been so scared as I was that night. Every time a shell was going or coming, everybody hit their foxholes. I had only one arm and nothing but my helmet to dig with, but I dug my first and only

foxhole there. I was glad when I could talk my way back to the front. At least, we only had to worry about what was coming in.

Speaking of shells, the company had found a real chateau to spend Christmas. Each tank crew had their own room, and we had a big hall for Christmas dinner. After we had moved in, an artillery company came up. They had a 155mm cannon. Well, they set up in an orchard just below the chateau. On Christmas Day, they sent greetings to the Germans. When that gun went off, every tile on the roof of the chateau went too. We had nothing but snow mixed with rain coming in. Except for the arrival that day of about two weeks' mail, Christmas was a bummer.

Somehow, I got a reputation with the company commander. He seemed to be always present when I deviated from the plain ordinary GI. One time, we had found horses from the German Calvary and, naturally, several of us wanted to ride. We were keeping up with the tanks with no problem, but suddenly we ran into some enemy fire. I put the pony I was riding into high gear and had to pass other tanks to get to mine. One I passed was the company commander. He saw me make a flying dismount onto the back of my tank.

Another time, I liberated a German motorcycle and had a bit of difficulty trying it out. The company had set up the command post at the head of one street. I had not explored the town and about the time I had the cycle in high gear, I ran out of street. Ahead of me loomed the house with the command post in it. I had no brakes; I unloaded; the cycle continued onward crashing into the house. The Captain was doing paperwork at a desk. He thought a shell had come in and went under the table, hitting his head. After a bit, he raised up to see the motorcycle wheels still spinning, and me getting up by degrees. Cobblestones are not the best medium for sliding. He was a bit upset.

However, the antic that really got me in dutch was an Opel roadster. Every time a tank was knocked out, we seemed to end up with gas masks and musette bags to carry in the half-track. When I found this Opel, I figured we had a place for all this excess gear. Besides, it had a good radio and was a lot easier riding than a tank. After the Germans failed to completely knock out a big bridge across the Rhine, the 7th Army put in sections of a pontoon bridge where the bridge was gone and tried to get as many troops as possible on the other side before the Germans could finish blowing up the bridge. Well, I drove onto the bridge, going gung ho. When I hit the pontoon part, I slid halfway across before I realized I was high centered and my wheels were not reaching the road. Talk about brass, I had so many officers telling me to move it, I lost track. They tried to throw it over the side, and finally some General told the truck behind to push it on or roll over it. The Captain was asked if he knew what to do with this car. He said he did. At the other end of the bridge he asked me, "How do you drain the oil?...Do it! How do you drain the water?...Do it!" Then I was told that he personally would

shoot me if he ever saw me in or on anything but a GI (government issue) mode of transportation.

Everything went fine for awhile. However, every time we lost a tank we acquired four men, supposedly as replacements. Most of the time we did not lose the entire crew. This meant extra men were riding in the kitchen truck or the maintenance half-track. We soon had enough men so the tank crews and maintenance did not pull guard duty. One day, I saw a German ambulance stuck in the mud. It had a stove, wood-fired, in the rear. The stretchers would make fine bunks, I thought, and we could get rid of all these excess men. We pulled it out of the mud, painted it O D (olive drab) and painted stars on the doors. Since Tiny had not been threatened with death, he was the driver. We had long since lost our tank and had been riding in the half-track. Later, the stretchers were replaced with benches, and after the war was over in Europe, we used the ambulance for sightseeing. One day it was used for GI's, the next for officers. Since we did not want to lose our ambulance, Tiny installed about a dozen switches, all of which had to be activated before it would start.

We drew too much attention. Orders came through that X number men and tank mechanics were needed as cadre for new companies being formed for the invasion of Japan. We were the first to be called.

We soon found ourselves on board a train in one of those forty-and-eight cars. This means it was big enough to carry eight horses or forty men. Somehow, those engineers had found forty dwarfs to use for scale. The train moved so slowly it was possible to jump off, steal produce out of a garden, and not get left waving at the troops. We ended up at Omaha Beach in a camp called Lucky Strike. (American Heritage Dictionary: Omaha Beach. Code word for a beach on the Normandy coast where units of the American forces landed, June 6, 1944.)

Lucky Strike was a tent city with nothing to do. We were on two-hour alert for a trip to the states. First thing, they took all our money to be converted into American dollars. It would be returned to us on board ship. Fine, but we waited 30 days for our ship. Thirty days with no money. One good thing did happen: Our bags, which we hadn't seen since we were overseas, arrived. I had stashed a few cartons of cigarettes in my bag. Suddenly, they were worth money. Cigarettes, in those days, sold for about 16 cents a pack. We bought them at the PX (Post Exchange) for a nickel. NOW, we could sell them to the French for a dollar a pack. For \$1.25 we could draw PX rations: A carton of cigarettes, chewing gum, and a six-pack of beer. I traded those year-old cigarettes to the other guys in my group for their six-packs of beer. Tiny and I had it made.

At last, our ship came in, and we loaded up with no problems. Well, almost no problems. Tiny had found a Boxer puppy and was taking it home. As usual, the Army frowned on anything good. Tiny put the pup in his overseas bag, and the rest of us caused enough

commotion that none of the brass was aware of a moving bag. The trip back was slow, at least to us. It was interesting to listen to the men. You could tell quickly who had seen action. They didn't talk much until some Johnny-Come-Lately tried to shine up his share of the war.

PEACE!

We were kept abreast of the war in news briefings twice a day. When the first bomb was dropped, nobody got too excited, but!! We docked in New York Harbor and were quickly bused to Camp Lee. You could feel the excitement: We would soon be home and the War would soon end. This time the Army moved fast, and in a few hours we were on a train headed west, with a 30 day leave. As we left the station, whistles started blowing and we thought we knew the reason. But we didn't know for sure that the war was over until we asked somebody at the station in Philly.

Enid was in Ames, Iowa, a place I had written to but had never seen. She started this job after I had gone overseas. I arrived and found her apartment. I was busy cleaning up when she showed up. Somebody had called her office and said there was a strange man in her apartment.

Later, she wanted to show me off to her co-workers. As we walked to her office, the noon whistle sounded. It sounded like a shell coming in. I grabbed her and dove for the shrubbery. She came out of that with a skinned knee and some bruises. I had learned not to be curious or guessing when I heard an incoming shell, and my reaction was automatic. It took some time for me to relax.

We had a great 30-day furlough. We took the Union Pacific to California in a roomette. That meant we didn't need to dress unless we wanted to, and it gave me a chance to calm down before seeing Mother and the girls. One of Mother's friends gave us a week at their cabin at the beach. Each afternoon, Enid and I walked down the shore a bit to buy fish fresh right out of the boat. Then we walked back to our little kitchen to cook.

One thing happened during that 30 days that I found amusing. Ruth and I were rough housing when she scratched me on the neck leaving a red mark. A few days later, when I went to the barber shop to get a hair cut, the barber asked if the red mark on my neck was the reason for my Purple Heart. When I told the story at home I darn near did need another Purple Heart.

My driver's license had long since expired, so I decided to get ready for civilian life by getting a California license. The procedure involved a written test as well as a driving test. The State Trooper told me where to go, and I took off. We did some talking about the war. When I got back to the station, he told me I was a skillful driver, but I had also broken about every law in the book. When you are driving tanks, you must accelerate making a turn or you will throw a track. Among other things, I was doing some accelerating every time he wanted to turn. He liked my

stories though, and I got the license.

DISCHARGE

My last Army Camp was near Muskogee, Oklahoma. I soon learned that I was the ranking NCO (non-commissioned officer), with some 82 men to keep out of sight (and out of trouble). That required a bit of creative talent. For starters, we stripped down a bed to its smallest wire, then rebuilt it. We then had to find out if we had improved the sleeping quality of the bed by taking a nap. It required considerable ingenuity to stay busy as we awaited discharge from the U. S. Army.

Part of the process of discharge was taking inventory of what we had for equipment. My turn came and the Lieutenant in charge was going to charge me for two pair of shoes. Troops going overseas are issued one pair of combat boots. These are nothing but ordinary shoes with uppers sewed on to put your pant legs in. Since a lot of men didn't make it home, these uppers were cut off the shoes and given to us. I found a German shoemaker to sew mine on. I was charged for that pair of boots plus my own that were cut up by shrapnel. I made a protest and reported to the Colonel. I found out quickly he was from the 12th Armored himself, and he had a pair of combat boots like mine. That evening we waved good-bye to this young Louie--on his way overseas.

Since this camp was near an Indian reservation, we saw a number of horses loose around camp. We stretched tent ropes between barracks and caught some. I hadn't been on a horse for a long time, so I had to show the soldiers how to ride--with only a tent rope around the horse's middle. I recalled that the last animal I had ridden was a calf in Germany--who proved to me he wanted to stay German. We had taken a part of this town, and the enemy was still very much in charge of the other. There was a sort of no man's land between us. This calf took off for no man's land. I had a bet on that I could stay on longer than the guy who was riding another calf. The Germans were laughing so hard they didn't even shoot at me. However, those Oklahoma Indians were not laughing when they saw me riding their pony.

LIFE AS A CIVILIAN

With an Honorable Discharge in hand, I had to pick up the role of taxpayer and start life all over as a civilian. It was a tall adjustment: From dreaming of what I wanted to do, to doing it. The first thing was to find a job, and jobs were scarce. I wanted something connected to what I had been studying for the last twenty some years. Enid said she could not be happy on a ranch, especially in Western Kansas.

My first job was as assistant manager of a slaughter house in Falls City, Nebraska. I would be buying cattle one day and slaughtering them the next. At least, that was the job

description. It turned out a little different. I was on the killing floor most of the time and curing meat the rest. At night, I killed cockroaches. The apartment we lived in had a brown moving carpet of the pests. We tried bombs, bait and prayer--none of which was effective.

When war was declared four months after we were married and I was reclassified to 1A in the draft, Enid had scurried around and found a job in Washington D.C. I went to Washington with her and went to a Congressman to ask for a commission in the Quartermaster Corp., as I was one of only a few people with experience in frozen foods. No soap, I was too warm for the quartermaster's. I had my draft status changed from Nebraska to D.C. While I waited for the Army to call me, I worked for High's Ice Cream. The Union tried to move in, but I didn't see any reason to strike. As a result, I moved up to a job foreman in fast order. After my discharge, High's found out I was out of the Army. I got a wire and a phone call offering me a job as foreman at twice the money I was getting at the slaughter house and a 40-hour week rather than: How much can you stand? I was never so glad to quit a job in my life.

Being foreman of High's Ice Cream was interesting, for I was working black, white, male and female employees. You had to be on guard against showing any favoritism. I solved that by going out of my way to compliment good work and kick tail of anybody slacking off. We had an Irish engineer who was terrific in refrigeration, but every six weeks or so he started drinking and drank until he saw pink elephants. After a time or two of this, I fired him and hired another engineer. The first one could do a better job hardening ice cream when he was drunk than the new man could when he was sober. As a result, I took the test to become licensed as an engineer so I could take over when Irish fell off the wagon.

We needed more refrigeration, so the Company ordered a big 14 by 14 to be installed. The Carpenter's Union sent men to build the frame. Then more Union men came to pour the cement. I came by and saw they had not put in the bolts to hold the machine down. I was told they were not engineers, so they could not do this. I said I could and called some of my boys to lower the machine to get the bolts in the right place. The Union people walked out, and in a few minutes I got a call from head office. The Union was going to strike because I used scab labor. I said, fine, we'll do it ourselves. These Union guys were in the way, anyhow. We had that new compressor on line in less than a week. Since a lot of my guys had come from West Virginia, they were used to dealing with Union muscle men. They simply picked up speed going into the plant yard and scattered pickets right and left.

Many of these people who had come from the hills got snared into buying all kinds of junk. Payday came around and collection agents appeared out of the woodwork--there to collect. If one of these employees got too far in debt, he just looked for another job and let the collection agents find him. I didn't want to

spend all my time training new help, so I came up with an idea. I had my pay table moved to the back of the plant. By coincidence, the trucks were parked along the back fence. It was simple for any of those not wishing to go out the front door to simply use the truck ladders and jump the fence. Naturally, there were strong objections from the collectors. But I was officially only obeying the law when I insisted that unless they had a health certificate within the last 30 days, they could not come into the plant.

LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA

Raymond Watt was production manager of High's. We had talked about going into the ice cream business together and looked over several locations. We had to buy an existing business, for ice cream mix was still under ration. We finally found a place in Lynchburg, Virginia. The guy who owned it had drunk himself out of business. Enid and I owned a third of the business we called Wanettes (WAttNiquETTE). We started with three stores and the ice cream plant.

Enid and I lived in one room on the second floor of a private home. Renee was on the way, and we had to find a more permanent place to live. We found a house under construction that we could buy with a VA (Veteran's Administration) mortgage. We were assured the house would be ready before Renee arrived. It wasn't. Since I couldn't take my wife and new baby back to a second floor room with no cooking privileges, I was in a real spot. Enid and Renee spent a few days more than necessary at the hospital while I frantically hunted for temporary housing. Finally, I found a room on the first floor where we would eat with the family. And there we stayed for the weeks which ran into a couple months before we could move into our own home.

To put it as simply as possible, this business was a disaster. We lost our shirt, and it took a lot of doing to pay off our debts. Raymond had a nervous breakdown and went back to the D. C. suburbs, leaving us to cope with the creditors. I can look every one of them in the eye. A number of our creditors told me they would work with me if I wanted to continue on my own. No thanks! This had been so traumatic for both of us that all we could think about was getting out of a bad situation, and on with our lives.

We learned two valuable lessons from the experience: Don't ever go into business as the minority stockholder--for you have no voice in the way things are run. And, be sure you understand the bookkeeping system. We were broke and didn't even know it for a long time!

My next job was with Blue Ridge Frozen Foods. This was a locker plant which carried a line of frozen foods to sell to stores in Lynchburg, Roanoke, and the surrounding area. I was the salesman. John Weathers, the manager, was always interested in increasing

our line. Soon, we were selling dressed chickens, ready-cut meats, and frozen fish to little stores in the area. Since there are a number of colleges in the area, I decided to go for that business also. I soon learned that the colleges were eager for somebody to price their food at cost per serving. We did right well. The next thing I knew John had been offered a much better position and moved on. My new boss was a nephew of the majority stockholder. He had no other credentials as far as I could see, and soon I was looking for another job.

Barker, Moore & Main (Philadelphia) needed a salesman for Virginia, West Virginia, and Ohio. They sold minerals, vitamins, and pharmaceuticals for livestock and poultry. This was my first traveling job. I learned a lot but fast. The pay was a modest salary plus commissions. I soon learned that as soon as you hit quota and could make some money, your quota was increased. The expense money was so inadequate, I constantly kept abreast of area bathrooms from eating in greasy spoons. But the worst thing to me was the weekend letter. Since the Company was in Philadelphia, they used letters to cut tail every week. If you had a bad week, as everyone in sales will have occasionally, they really tried to eat you up. One week I opened the mail, saw it was the usual stuff, slipped out my check and threw the rest into the round file. Somewhere in that letter was a summons to the office. I found out about it the middle of the week when I called in a rush order. I just told them I didn't bother to read crap, for if I did I was liable to get mad.

One of my best customers was Lynchburg Milling. They wanted me to take over the broiler business and be in charge of consumer sales. Chuck had arrived when I was in the Philadelphia office, but I didn't see him until he was two days old. I figured being a traveling salesman was for the birds. So I became a feed salesman and broiler contractor. By now, we were expecting a third child. Before long, we learned it wasn't a child, but twins. We had been talking about finishing the second floor of our Cape Cod house. With this news, I was working up there every night.

When the twins arrived six weeks ahead of schedule, they were too small to come home when Enid did. Each day we called to see if we still had both babies. Donna was the largest so she came home first. Then Denise arrived. Life became complicated. Enid and her Mother wore themselves out during the day, and the twins were on a three-hour feeding schedule. I tried to take over some of the night feedings. We were all tired. One time, I remember driving toward a customer's place and suddenly realizing I didn't know where I was. My eyes were open, but I was driving by instinct.

Chuck, who was three, soon became my constant companion. We arrived at a farm and he took off to play on the farm machinery or whatever he wanted to do. I would call him, take him by the horse trough to wash up, and he usually slept until the car stopped. He knew every coffee stop as well as I. In spite of his

tender age, I can never remember a time when he became a crying pest. Renee, too, was forced to grow up over night and became a second mother. She would meet me at the door and tell me the latest on the twins. I was and am darn proud of my whole family.

Money was still very tight. We tried camping. I found very quickly we had four very different but lovable kids. They gathered around me, each in their own way, to help please their Mother who could not sleep comfortably in a tent. We all pitched in to make it as pleasant as possible for her. Donna and Denise charmed all the other campers in the area. When they went for water, you never knew who they would bring back carrying the water for them. I know this period was a real high point for me.

Lynchburg Milling didn't fare well in the broiler business. The company didn't have enough capital to sweat low markets, so we were soon trying other ways to build consumer business. Stan Aylor, one of the owners, and I went to Lancaster, Pa. and purchased a mobile mixer (grinder) to mix feeds on the farm. I spent a lot of time working up business.

USI

One day, one of our suppliers told us about a new concept for feeding cows: A liquid feed-supplement called Morea. We bought some and fed some steers. There was a meeting in Baltimore where a Dr. Prebluda was going to talk to steer feeders. I went to hear him, learned that he was a biochemist but didn't know much about feeding cattle. Those steer feeders were backing him into the corner fast. I spoke up and gave them the results of our little test. By the next morning, I knew I would be working for him; I just didn't know how soon or where.

U S Industrial Chemicals, where Dr. Prebluda was Special Products Manager, wanted a field man for the California area. I interviewed for the job. The only problem: The California Manager wanted nobody recommended by New York. Some kind of internal politics was at work.

After a bit of stalling, I was hired to work out of the New York office and cover the Northeast. The first order of business was that of where we would live. New York decided to move us to the York-Lancaster area; we could chose any town in the area.

Morea contains alcohol, and the first question we needed to answer was: Might there be religious scruples against feeding alcohol to animals? I was told to find as many religious groups as possible, sell them Morea, and report back to New York. When I came back to New York to report, I found the room full of mostly bankers who made up the Board of Directors. I told them it did not make any difference if a buyer had to pick up his cassock, put his beard in his shirt, or wear a black hat, he would jump as high as an Irishman for a dollar bill. I then held a dollar bill over my head.

Since this was a new concept of feeding cattle, all the Ag schools wanted to test it. For a long time I felt like I was back in school, as I was on college campuses checking feeding trials and reporting back to the Company.

When I was hired I was told that my sales efforts would be reviewed every six months. At that time, I would either have a raise or be fired. I was really happy. I got my first raise after only three months, and I got the top raise every time they reviewed my record.

One of the feeding trials down South really tested me. The College had sent in their final papers to the office and without comment they went to my desk. As soon as I scanned them, I knew we had a real problem. I went to Dr. Prebluda, and he instructed me to get all my facts on paper and then go down there. Well, I went. I asked the head of Extension several questions: "Is it possible for 40 animals to gain exactly the same weight for two months in a row? How could anyone explain animals eating 16% of their body weight per day when the average is 2%?" He was irate and asked me to leave immediately and never come back.

Before I left, I assured him that other people would be asking the same questions. After calling the good doctor (Prebluda), I was told to stay where I was and wait for him. Before we were finished, the president of the college and several of the board of trustees had asked the same questions. We learned that the scales had broken so they pencil weighed them. A darky was doing the feeding, and because all the burlap bags he used to grind feed in said 100 pounds he put down 100 pounds. The college agreed if we would keep still, they would.

My big customer was Hespenheide and Thompson in York, Pa. When their plant opened, we had a big open house. USI brought in people from all over the world. A Frenchman stole the show. I had picked him up at the airport and as we drove up to the plant he saw some Amish. Grabbing me by the arm, he asked me if they were hill-billies. He had read about hill-billies but had never heard of Amish.

I acted as trouble shooter for this account. Since we were selling a new product, we had to solve each problem as it appeared. A lot of mistakes were made, as you can guess, but gradually we gained confidence and knowledge. Before long, each time I arrived at the New York office, I was met at the elevator by the secretary of the Vice-President in charge of sales. In his office, I was meeting with all the bigwigs. They wanted to talk to me before Prebluda could "brain wash" me. I was invited to lunch with them at the Chemist Club, the Princeton Club or the Harvard Club. Yes, I was a curiosity to them, not having attended an Ivy League school and the only Agriculture graduate in the Company.

USI had a sales meeting every year at some famous golf course. Everybody plays golf. That first year I was about to have a fit.

I hadn't played since I flunked golf at Santa Ana Junior College, and there was a vice-president in my foursome. I went to the driving range several times, but that's all the time I had. Well, to make a long story short, by the third hole the Vice President told me he was glad there was one salesman who could not play any better than he. I shot back how scared I was to be playing with a Vice President. Then, we both went to work and showed ourselves how to shoot over 100 and enjoy it.

It soon became evident that the highly trained chemical salesmen at USI weren't going to fare well in selling agricultural products. They started hiring one sales person for each division with an Ag background. One of my jobs was to train each new salesman who, incidentally, was hired by the division manager. This was a laugh, for most of them were worthless. One had been a professor in dairy science at Purdue. After a week in the New York office, he was sent to me to teach him about expense accounts. He had spent some \$1200 taking junior employees to the French Quarter. I told him we were expected to keep our meals under \$20.00 per day and that included drinks, tips, and cigarettes. At the end of the week, he gave me his expense account and I promptly redlined about half of it. He called New York and was told to send it in and they would go over it. They knocked off another big chunk and told him as long as he was under the New York office he had better smarten up or hit the road.

USI went international with Morea. During the time I was employed there, I found myself training foreign groups. The first group to come to this country was from South Africa. Since Texas was the closest duplicate to their climate and conditions, they were sent to Texas for training. When they returned to New York, they announced loud and clear that they knew all about Texas but nothing about Morea.

It so happened a group from Norway was also in the office. I had met them in New York and since I knew nothing about their country or about what they had to feed, I went to their rooms and began to ask questions. The Norwegians told me that beets were their principal feed for cattle. I immediately started calling to find some place in this country where they fed beets and also used our products. I found an area in Michigan where sugar beets were used extensively. That's where we went. Since I was selling our products, not the State of Michigan, I spent most of our time fitting Morea into their specific programs. The contrast between training sessions of the two foreign groups in New York resulted in my being the official guide from then on out.

One young lady came from Uruguay. She spoke no English, so we used an interpreter from Porter International. He spoke seven different languages, but cow language wasn't one of them. This young lady owned gobs of land as well as the major chemical businesses in Uruguay and Argentina. We soon learned we could understand each other up to a point without the interpreter. He was always trailing behind trying to keep his shoes shiny and

clean. All at once we would give up and start telling him to tell the other this and that. By the end of the day, she was pressuring me to come to South America. I learned later that her husband-to-be had flown into a mountain on the way to the wedding. Although they never married, his family willed all of their big chemical business to her.

Another young lady was the private secretary to the Lane Company's Chairman of the Board in Australia. She had been in the WAC's stationed in Australia and stayed. However, she still had an apartment in New York and had come to the U.S. to close it. Since she was coming to the U.S. anyway, she was told to look into Morea for the Company. What I mean this girl was wired. If I expounded on a subject she got it on tape. If I pointed at something she had it on film. She didn't miss a thing, including some of my cow language. On my next visit to New York, I was told to clean up my language. She had played the tape to the big shots of USI. At any rate, we got the business in Australia.

Everything was going great for me when the brass of USI decided to divest themselves of all of the small divisions or companies and sell only polyethylene. We in sales had heard the rumors, but I got the word over a roadside phone. I told them I couldn't hear well because of the traffic and would call them from the next town. That town was Intercourse. My message was on the company conference phone so all the brass could hear how I felt about the news and expressed it by calling from Intercourse.

FEED SERVICE CORP.

I was told that Feed Service Corporation of Crete, Nebraska, would be taking over our Special Products Division and that the president of FSC wanted to talk to me in New York. I had met Phil Anderson several times and talked with him on the phone a number of times. We had our conference, and I agreed to join FSC. Phil excused himself immediately, and explained that part of the package was his agreeing to hire the assistant manager of USI's Special Products, but that he had not yet talked to McGinnis. In less than five minutes he was back, red-faced, and almost shouting, "Do you have to ask your wife if you can work for me?" Enid and I had discussed the possibilities before I went to New York, so my answer to his question was, no. He had offered a job to McGinnis and retracted it when McGinnis asked for time to talk it over with his wife.

Anderson asked me which of the 100+ salesmen of USI he should hire. I told him I had trained only five salesmen and didn't know much about the others. He asked me to contact those five, and if they were interested to contact him. All six of us met in Lincoln (Nebraska) and the next day toured the plant, met the staff, and had interviews with Phil Anderson and Joe Nosky, owners of Feed Service. Oh, yes, the night before I had ordered a six-pack of beer to my room. Anderson said he was not buying beer or cigarettes. I just had to tell him: OK., you won't see it on our

expense accounts but you will be paying for it just the same.

There was a world of difference in working for the two corporations. At that time, FSC had never had a salesman outside Crete, and we were told that nobody had time to read sales reports, just send in orders! We were also instructed to select premix jobbers large enough to cover one or two states. In turn, the jobbers would set up dealers in their areas. FSC salesmen were to handle the training and trouble shooting for these new dealers.

I was offered the job of sales manager. I quickly told them I would be senior salesman and would help where ever necessary. I wanted no part of a desk job, and neither Enid nor I wanted to move to Crete. After several days of orientation, Joe Nosky came into the room with a dish of keys. We were to select a set of keys, go out to the parking lot and find which car we would be driving for the next year. We were given credit cards, all kinds, including air travel, and sent on our way.

I was given the entire area east of the Mississippi River--to run as I saw fit. Since I was training Steve Dawson at the time when the turnover occurred, I decided to let him handle all established USI accounts in the territory. And I took off for the southeast. USI hadn't sold a gallon of Morea in this area, but it was loaded with big cattle owners. It took only a short time to find premix distributors who could and would produce business for FSC. In six months, this area was producing twenty-five percent of the total FSC business.

When I joined Feed Service, Renee's life was affected the most. She was at Bethany College in Lindsborg, Kansas, just a little jaunt from Crete. That way I got to see her quite often. When I arrived on campus, she could have a change of scenery as well as food. Also, she was my little girl again, with no competition, able to say what she wanted to without having to explain her feelings. I'm sure this period cemented our father-daughter relationship that exists still.

My new business associates in the southeast included some colorful characters. Among them was B.R. Smith, better known as Bad Risk Smith. B.R. was unique in a number of ways. During WW II, he had been a Chief Bosun's Mate in charge of under-water welding, and he always retained that take-charge attitude. When the war was over, he found a job as a "dog man" for Geehaw Combahee Plantation at Beauford, South Carolina, and worked his way up to be resident manager.

When I first met Smith, he was president of the South Carolina Livestock Association. He had visited the Hesperheide and Thompson operation in York on a tour, along with a number of southern potential dealers. He stood out, for he questioned everything that was said and wasn't bashful about getting into barnyards to check what we were saying. Before long, he invited me to the plantation to see his cattle and to learn how this

Morea Program could benefit South Carolina cattlemen.

Geehaw Combahee Plantation was owned by Standard Oil. B.R. took orders directly from Christian Herter, who had become Secretary of State under Eisenhower. My first visit to the plantation was a great experience for this Kansas Jayhawker. The last person who had stayed in my room was President Eisenhower, and I brought back to my children a part-box of matches he had used. The plantation included big stretches of timber, and a lot of swamp--complete with alligators. Pumps were used to drain land for pasture. Near the river was a fence, and I just had to ask if this fence was to keep the cattle in when they ran out of blood. I figured they would just float out cause I had never seen or felt as many mosquitoes. And ticks! You checked for ticks every time you came out of the pastures. I found out later the main purpose of the plantation was to provide quail hunting for Herter and his friends.

Quail shooting on these Southern plantations is something else. Dogs are trained by a dog man. After training the dogs, he is in charge of the hunts. A number of quail are released prior to the hunt, and the hunters ride horses following the dogs until they point at a bird or covey. One or two hunters dismount and the birds are flushed. The dogs retrieve the game, and the hunter puts the birds in his vest. At noon, a station wagon drives out to the hunters to provide lunch. Card tables are set up, complete with white tablecloths, napkins, etc. Drinks are served while the staff brings out the food.

I was surprised to find no showers in the lodge. Instead, guests sit in galvanized tubs while water is poured over them by a colored servant. This was called roughing it!

On this first visit to the plantation, I got acquainted with Golden Retrievers. The Smith's had two: Bud and Sissy. When I went to the door with my suitcase in one hand and brief case in the other, Sissy opened the screen door by sticking her paw into the screen guard. She then held it open until I was through the door. The Smiths just laughed when I told them and said she had been doing that for Bud for ages.

B.R., among other things, was a game warden and he was called out that evening. Mrs. Smith and I watched TV until bedtime. The next morning when I got up, I couldn't find my boots. As I went down the steps, I spotted them under the Smith's bed. What should I say? This was my first night in their home. Well, Mrs. Smith cracked up. She had felt Bud crawl under their bed during the night, but she didn't dream he had my boots. I fell in love with these dogs and in time the Smith's promised me a puppy.

Before long, we had our first blending station below the Mason Dixon Line, and we were selling FSC products in the southland. About that time, I picked up my nickname, Dr. Bob Cat. All of these plantations depended upon colored help and no way could they pronounce Niquette. Since I was making sure everybody

understood how the program worked, I spent a lot of time on these plantations.

Soon Feed Service had so many new plants scattered from Virginia to Florida, and west to the Mississippi, that Joe Nosky came to help me with training meetings. Joe was a terrific speaker and created slide presentations that couldn't be beat. However, he was at a loss in the field, and when questions came from the floor he could only spread bull. We soon worked out a deal. He made the speech and showed the slides. I answered all the questions.

Joe had a son, Bruce, who was slightly younger than Chuck. Joe wanted his son to have some of the good things of life, like deep sea fishing, and deer hunting as it's done in the Carolinas. Before long, Joe and I were setting up meetings--simultaneously working in deer hunting or fishing for the four of us. No way could Chuck ever have had these trips otherwise.

I'll never forget the day of the turtles. Joe and I had put on a meeting near West Palm Beach and left the boys in our adjoining rooms at the motel on the beach. Later, when we returned to the motel, we found the boys asleep in the same room. We took the other one and went to bed.

The next morning Joe went over to his room to shower. Almost immediately, I heard a yell--and a torrent of cow language! Joe had stepped into a bathtub crawling with little turtles, each about the size of a fifty-cent piece. The boys had found newly-hatched sea turtles on the way to the water and figured this was the way to get rich quick selling turtles. Since there is a fine of \$500 for each turtle removed from the beach, we had to destroy their dream of riches and get those turtles back to the ocean, but fast.

Joe and I took our sons to the plantation for their first deer hunt. A group of retired Army, Navy and Marine officers plus a few selected South Carolinians regularly hunted on the plantation. Immediately, I made it plain that Chuck and I would love to hunt with them, but we expected to follow their rules, etc. They put us in stands and told us the dogs would move the deer out of the swamp. Since there was an old road in front of us, we had about fifteen feet to spot the deer, determine if it had horns, and shoot. If we missed, tradition demanded that our shirt tails be cut off and fastened to a pole.

Pretty soon, we could hear the driver yelling at the dogs. He was riding a horse down in that swamp, and making sure we all knew where he was. All at once, Chuck let fly with his gun. The buck was running straight at him. Chuck knocked it down, but it got up. Chuck was so excited, he jumped out of his stand to finish off the deer. From all sides, he was told to get back into his stand. When they gathered up the slain deer, Chuck was able to show where he had hit the deer. He wanted the antlers, but we told him no way were we going to ride 1,000 miles home with

smelly horns. B.R. had already given me the high sign that he would get them mounted for Chuck. When the wooden box arrived before Christmas, Chuck was plenty curious as to what kind of present that could be. And he was one happy kid when he saw his horns.

Another group I especially enjoyed was Don Virts and his customers in Virginia. Don was a young farmer with plenty of ambition, and he wasn't afraid of work. He had one big customer, the well-known radio personality, Arthur Godfrey, who also broadcast a TV show out of New York. Godfrey's hobby was a big farm in the Valley of Virginia where he raised Hereford cattle. He supplied most of the 4-H calves in the Leesburg area. He also had a fenced-in area he called the game park which was stocked with all kinds of deer, elk, and a few buffalo and long-horn cattle.

One night, Don and I were sitting in Arthur's kitchen drinking beer when the question of size-of-antlers came up. Would free-choice minerals and protein increase the size of the rack, he wanted to know. I said, yes; and the next morning I was up on a watch tower observing Arthur photograph bull elk and deer. We agreed to do this again the following year. That way we could prove or disprove our claim. Not long after, I got a call from the Chicago Zoo wanting to feed our products. Sometime later, we also started feeding the elk in the Tetons. It proved that Arthur Godfrey could sell.

There was a problem in this whole area. Cattle had been dying for no apparent reason; and all the colleges in the area plus the USDA had used reams of paper describing the disease but offered no suggestions as to what to do about it. There appeared to be a lack of magnesium, but we still had deaths after we fed magnesium free choice. I gave the Godfrey farm manager a nitrate kit so he could test for high nitrates. One day after he had tested some grass and then washed his cup in a stream running through the pasture, he noticed a milky precipitate formed when he was washing the cup. He called me and finally caught up with me in Florida where Joe and I were working together. Joe called Phil Anderson, and we all met at the Washington Airport, proceeding from there to Godfrey's farm.

Phil knew that heavy metals, lead and arsenic, will cause this milky color. The whole Valley is known for its apple orchards, and the trees are commonly sprayed with lead arsenic. To make things worse, a heavy layer of limestone runs beneath this ground, and the water follows this limestone ledge, running off into the streams. When a cow gets enough lead into her system, she dies. We had already noticed that no young animals were affected. Phil seemed to have the answer: Lead poisoning.

The only known antidote for lead had been developed during World War I as an antidote for mustard gas. One company still made some of this antidote for use in case someone ate rat poison. It was packaged in glass vials, each containing enough for a 150-pound

person. We needed enough to treat a 1500-pound cow.

We hired a few local women to open vials for us, and we started shooting Godfrey's cows with the antidote. Somewhere in the middle of shooting these cows, the housekeeper came sailing out and said Arthur wanted to talk to one of us during his next commercial. He was in New York doing a radio show. He had decided we needed some untreated cows to act as controls.

The cows were then turned back on grass, treated and untreated. We waited and waited. It was six weeks before we had the news, two untreated died, one treated got shaky but recovered. Several months later, I picked up a Readers Digest and read an article by Godfrey telling how HE had solved this major problem which had already cost Virginia, West Virginia, and Maryland farmers millions of dollars. He forgot to mention Feed Service Corporation.

Another of my most memorable distributors tried very hard on several occasions to save my soul--or at least change my ways. One time, we were snowbound near Buffalo, New York, at a Howard Johnson Motel. After we had eaten and were on our way back to the room, I saw a cute girl in the motel office. The office was completely enclosed in glass. I told the distributor I was going to talk to this girl for awhile instead of watching TV. Well, to make this story short, I learned to handle the switchboard and had a great time passing an otherwise boring evening. When I got back to the room he was on his knees praying for my soul. Another time, he invited me to his hunting camp providing I would promise not to smoke, drink, or swear. I had to tell him if I did not smoke or drink I would be swearing.

DADDY BILL

Dale Anderson, sales manager for Hesperheide and Thompson, met Daddy Bill (Enid's father) and me down in Virginia to visit some prospective distributors. Dale had a feeder on the trailer behind his car. We were having some trouble registering Morea in Virginia, so we decided that I would take his car and trailer on to Richmond to show the feed registration people and try to cut some of the red tape. As soon as Daddy Bill and I took off, he wanted to know if Dale was my boss. Then, you're his boss? I tried to explain that Hesperheide and Thompson were customers, and we were just working together to make Morea sales. What if we wreck his car or he wrecks your company car, he worried. I said that somebody's insurance company would pay the bill. He only shook his head.

Later, we went down South. He observed that I never "took an order". This was killing him, for he was sure I would be fired. One day, I asked him to ride with one of the salesmen and once again, he fired questions. The salesman explained that my job was to train salesmen and that when he had a problem he could call me at any time for answers. If I didn't know, I could usually

find out and call him back. And that this was true of all the other people selling Morea. As far as he was concerned, I WAS Feed Service. I think it took five years before Daddy Bill felt comfortable that I was doing what I was paid to do.

YANKEE

With the pressure of my job, the traveling, and working long hours, I had forgotten what I had wanted for years. I was forcibly reminded one weekend when Denise asked if we could have a horse. That idea really found a home. Very soon after that, I visited a customer in Kentucky. He was damning his luck, for one of his daughter's fine gaited mares showed up with a buckskin filly. I looked at this little colt and said, "If you don't want it, I do." All he asked was whether I would take it away the day it was weaned, and I agreed. Well, I sure wasn't going to take such a filly home to kids who didn't know how to ride.

I went to the New Holland sale and looked for a cheap horse that the kids could learn to ride. I found a cheap one, so cheap even I wouldn't ride it. It was either blind or stupid, or both. At any rate, we didn't have it long enough to matter.

The next horse was a thin palomino that had seen some hard times. This time I tried him out before letting the kids know we had another horse. I had been impressed with the way the horse moved in the sale ring, and when I rode him I knew he was for real. That first afternoon I took him through a field near our house and too late saw the ditch at least six feet wide. The horse just picked up his feet and jumped across without even snorting. We named this horse, Yankee.

I thought that grain and plenty of water would improve his looks very soon. I was right. We also found out he needed a lot of riding to keep him happy. Denise, who started this deal, learned to ride and to ride my way. We started in the corral: Starting, stopping, turning, until she felt at home on top of the horse. We started doing this at a walk and worked up speed until the horse was really going all-out. By this time, the horse and she had confidence in each other. It was great to see her handle this horse who was no pussy cat. A lot of Chuck's friends found this out the hard way. That Yank was no pussy cat, I mean.

In due time, we brought the Kentucky filly home--complete with a leg injury. The big gash on her leg was covered with proud flesh. Enid and Denise treated her every night. I had showed them how to put a twitch on her lip, so she wouldn't kick when they were doctoring her. When I got home that week-end, the twitch was nowhere in sight. They were feeding her oats out of their hands, and the filly was sticking out her leg to be treated.

Since the filly's father was a buckskin, that made her half a buckskin. It was easy to shorten this down to half-a-buck or

Fourbits. Fourbits didn't know she was a horse. When we turned her loose in the corral, she flew around like a whirling dervish, doing her best to never have more than two feet on the ground. If we sat on the log, she was soon peeking for something in our back pocket like a hanky and would run off with it. If nothing else, she would slide her head under an arm to be petted. Another thing Denise loved: She did all her business in one corner, leaving her bedding all nice and clean. Yank was just the opposite; he rolled in it so he looked dirty almost every day.

The proud flesh just would not go away. After three local vets had worked on it, I finally took Fourbits to Tristate Vet Hospital in Port Jervis, N.Y., so Dr. Frank Simpson, (whom I considered the best in the country) could work on it. He did an excellent job, but during some icy weather when she couldn't be outdoors, she broke it open kicking the box stall, wanting to run. I took her back to Dr. Simpson and during her convalescence she died when a fire-bug set fire to the hospital. This meant Denise and I never got a chance to go on that ride from Valley Forge to Furnace Hills which we planned. I still regret we couldn't have had two healthy horses to make that trip.

Denise always seemed to share my love for horses, but Donna inherited my selling genes. Who, other than a real salesman, could convince Catholic Social Services that a degree in religion is just as good as one in social work for the job they were trying to fill?

I used to get the greatest kick listening to her tell how she got the order when she was selling Avon. Of course, after she banged up her Penny car and had to crawl out the window, how could anybody refuse to buy--especially when she wore a short skirt? Later, when she was making "dust collectors", I marveled at her success in a field filled with competition. She's good, and she knows how to sell. I often wonder how much of her work was copied and used as a pattern for some group.

SELLING REAL ESTATE

After a number of years with Feed Service and traveling continuously, I began to burn out, letting little things bother me. I thought I was ready for a new challenge. I first talked to the banks. I thought with my background I would be ideal for a trust officer or certainly an agricultural lending officer. That idea was dropped fast when they talked about money. I could make more driving a bread truck. I then talked to Johnny D about real estate. If I could sell or even list a farm I could support my family as I was accustomed. I ended up selling investment property and an occasional home. I could not sell a farm for farming when the proceeds of the farm would not pay the interest on the loan.

John had a lot of problems with me. The first time a lawyer called and asked me to go to the courthouse to get him a legal description (a copy of the deed), I told him he was closer to the courthouse than I, have at it. When others called and said they were too busy to have a settlement when the buyer wanted it, I said, "Fine, I'll get another attorney." Each time, John almost screamed, telling me I couldn't talk to attorneys that way. One time, the attorney for the Real Estate Board started to take my measure for not paying attention to his title, Esquire. I gently brought to his attention the fact that his pay check came from real estate and I expected employees of mine to come to their feet when I came into the room! The hardest jolt to me was that all sales associates were expected to step and fetch it for John because he was the Broker. I took it for some time--10 years--all the time looking for something I really wanted.

Real estate did have its pluses. I was able to help Donna and Jim find a lot in Lancaster County and a builder who would build a good house. Of course, that too was a bit of a strain with Three Mile Island so close. Can you imagine my feelings when the builder called one day and said the men were pouring cement when the sirens and whistles went off--and he doesn't know where or if they dumped the cement. At any rate, this scare prolonged construction twice as long as we expected.

Their second house turned out to be a steal. This was the result of two things. I could use my hard-earned real estate knowledge to buy it right, and Donna could visualize what might be done with a big "Plain Jane" house.

One of the biggest pluses of the real estate experience was that Enid and I accumulated some very good investment properties during those years.

LIQUID FEEDS, INC.

Breaking out of the real estate field came in the darnedest way. In the early sixties, Camp Milling Company, a distributor in New York, had a problem dairy account. After several trips to the farm, I finally recommended that they call in Frank Simpson, my veterinarian friend and a real cow man. He was able to help them--and I got the credit for being a real salesman. Thirty years later this same farmer had a chance to become a distributor for FSC and wanted me as a salesman.

After I had talked to him about the possibilities, I got in touch with management at Feed Service and was urged to make a trip to Crete. When I left Crete, I was again Eastern Division Manager of Feed Service Corporation. The understanding was that I would make only limited effort at building business in the East. In return, my remuneration would be a darn good percentage, but no salary or paid expenses.

The territory was a replication of what I faced 30 years ago: No

business. I soon found I needed a going distributorship to show potential customers. Liquid Feeds was set up for that purpose. It's like the tail wagging the dog, I am still so involved with with Liquid Feeds I have not done justice to the Feed Service area.

I'm having so much fun solving nutritional problems for my customer's dairies, I find every day too short. Each day, seems to bring another ego trip. Yesterday was a good example. This young Amishman had held off from buying our products for months. He had gotten himself into a big bind, with breeding problems and cows going off-feed heading the list. I told him at the start it would take time to correct. Yesterday, he showed me his breeding record. Every cow bred only once and every cow safe in calf. His milk is at an all time high. He is increasing his herd and getting out of tobacco farming.

To brag a bit. When Liquid Feeds started, most of our customers were producing 13,000 pounds of milk. Now, these same dairymen are working on 17,000 pounds. The average feed cost for producing a 100 pounds of milk on our program is \$2 less than the county average, according to DHIA records. Sure, I'm recommending better bulls, providing management tips, and anything else I think will help increase profits. This is like farming for myself--without the labor.

THANKS TO A WONDERFUL FAMILY

I've had fun reminiscing about my almost 69 years. The up's have far surpassed the down's. My family has always been a great source of pride for me. We started with two of us. Then, there were six of us. Before we knew it, the in-laws began to join us--and then the babies--who are no longer babies.

Catching myself bragging about some of our family's recent achievements made me think: I am damn proud of all my eight kids and that goes for some fabulous grandchildren. Isn't it great to love and be loved? Each of you is very special to me.

May 1987