Larry Torres - U.S. Air Force

It was the Fall of 1966 and I was attending East Los Angeles College (ELAC) majoring in Liberal Arts. I was taking General Education courses so that I could someday transfer to Cal State University Los Angeles. I had been attending ELAC since the Fall of 1964, which was the year that I graduated from Cathedral High School. I was not sure of what career I wanted to pursue, but I attended because I was encouraged by my father to obtain an education so that I could secure a financially rewarding job later on. Each evening there were television broadcasts of the War in Vietnam and I would read in the newspaper about the number of enlisted men who were being sent to war and the number of soldiers who were dying in battle. One day I received a notice to report downtown Los Angeles (LA) for a physical and was later classified as 1A and available for the draft. My father encouraged me to enlist in the Air Force or Navy even though he had honorably served in the Marine Corp during the Second World War and had been provided with a Purple Heart for being injured in battle. I recall getting seasick during an earlier trip to Catalina Island so joining the Navy seemed to be out of the question. I visited the downtown LA office of Congressman Roybal who represented El Sereno where I lived. The Congressman's deputy indicated that he could help. I asked him if I could be allowed to complete my current semester at ELAC and then join the Air Force. In addition, I requested to be assigned to an administrative position. The deputy asked for my draft board office address and indicated that my requests would be made. In less than a month I received a reply that I was able to complete the current semester at ELAC and that afterward I was to be enlisted in the Air Force for a four year term. I enlisted on March 6, 1967 and was sent to Amarillo Texas for Basic Training.

Basic Training was grueling and stressful. We were constantly being yelled at, marching, doing calisthenics, competing on the obstacle course, maintaining our room so that it was in inspection order and following orders. We qualified on the shooting range with the M-16 rifle which many said had been jamming. I remember our drill instructor named Sergeant Breed. He didn't like those who came from California and continued to call us California queers. Our first afternoon on the base Sergeant Breed asked us to line up in a single file outside the barracks and call out our name and where we were from. A voice toward the end of the line said "Guess sir". Sergeant Breed asked the airman to again state his name because this was not a guessing game. The airman again repeated in a softer voice "Guess sir". At this point everyone laughed as Sergeant Breed marched down the row and stood in front of the airman. The airman again stated his name, but added that it is spelled "Gess" and that he didn't mean any offense. We all laughed again and were reprimanded for our outburst. I continued my stay at Amarillo, Texas for Technical School. I was being trained as a Personnel Specialist so I was sent to typing school and was required to type 25 words a minute before I graduated. I passed, but there were some who didn't and they had to repeat the session. I remember that we had to get up early around 4am or so to march to the cafeteria where they would provide us with breakfast. Who could eat this early even before the sun was up, but we got used to it. We would constantly be shown movies of planes dropping armaments in Vietnam or airlifting supplies and materials to support the war efforts. I recall that we would hear and see B-52 bombers take off on the nearby flight line and how huge, black, gruesome and menacing these planes appeared as they slowly lifted themselves out of no where into the sky.

One day we were told to assemble outside of the barracks so that our next assignments could be delivered. They yelled out our name and then provided us with an APO number which had to be decoded at the Base Library. My APO was 09132 and I was to be assigned to Bitburg Air Force Base (AFB) Germany. I looked it up on the map and soon realized that I would be assigned overseas and a long way from home. I took a short leave and returned home and then left again on September 19, 1967 for my new assignment realizing that it would be quite a while until I would see my family again.

I flew to Frankfurt Airport in Germany and was bused to Bitburg AFB and assigned to the 36th Tactical Fighter Wing. As we approached the base it was strange to see all the buildings a green camouflage color and I was later told that it was difficult to see the base even if you flew right over it. I was soon provided a room with a bed and a locker located at the end of the barracks with about 15 other airmen. Later on I was moved again to a room which I shared with three other individuals who became friends. I was first assigned to work in the "Leave" section in the Personnel office. Anyone desiring to take a leave had to fill out paperwork at their Squadron and have the leave paperwork sent to their Commanding Officer and then to the Personnel Office. We then checked to see that the leave request was filled out correctly and then coded and sent to a machine room where the data was manually entered into a computer. The computer was large, taking up an entire room and very noisy. Afterward, I was assigned to the Officer Assignment Section where I processed Air Force Officers arriving on the base and those who were leaving. I would arrange for the officers to attend jungle survival school or some other training enroute to their next destination. The assignments were provided by headquarters United States Air Forces Europe (USAFE) on IBM cards and the destinations had to be decoded. I would send a letter of notice to the officers' squadron commander and schedule a briefing with the affected officer. At that time I would get all the information I needed to type their orders and send the orders back to the Squadron. In addition, I would arrange for the officer and their family's flight out of Frankfurt, Germany. One Colonel indicated that he could provide me with a flight on the base C-47 prop plane to Torrejon Spain and Rome Italy. This was under the condition that I would be able to obtain approval for additional hold baggage allowance from headquarters USAFE located in Ramstein, Germany and provide the officer orders with no errors and an early flight out of Frankfurt for him and his family. If there was an error in an individual's orders they would need to carry extra amendments and they didn't like it. Well, I went on the trip and was able to see Madrid, Spain for a night and Rome, Italy another night. I promised myself that I would return to these countries to spend more time once I was out of the service. A fellow airman and I assisted the officers to load the C47 with furniture that they had purchased in Spain and Italy and were bringing home. Officially, I had been told the main purpose of the trip was to pick up a weapon in Spain that was to be delivered to the Italians for their use and training. I also recall that I was in the cockpit of the C47 as we took off from Torrejon, Spain and traveled into a thunder cloud. I could see the lightning from the cockpit of the plane and almost got sick as the pilots managed to pull the plane out of the thunderstorm. I didn't have to be told twice to buckle up.

In addition to Germany, I was able to visit the following cities and countries: Holland, Paris France, Luxembourg, Belgium, Switzerland, Sweden, Copenhagen, Rome, Denmark, Italy, Mallorca and Madrid Spain, along with boat trips down the Rhine and Mosel rivers to explore ancient castles such as Berncastle.

I processed our new base commander who was Colonel Bernard Fisher. He had been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor which was only bestowed by the President of the United States to those individuals who had gone above and beyond an act of bravery. During the Vietnam War, 12 medals of Honor were awarded for valor to Air Force men. Fisher was the first airman of the war to be honored. I asked Colonel Fisher to tell me what he had done to be awarded this medal and he told me the following: "I was in a small two seater A-1E sky raider aircraft flying over Vietnam when I noticed that my wingman had been hit by enemy fire and was down in a ditch adjacent to an airstrip as his plane began to catch fire. I also noticed that the Vietcong were closing in from all sides in attempt to capture the downed officer. I strafed the surrounding area with gunfire and the Vietcong retreated somewhat. Then I proceeded to land the sky raider on the runway next to the downed aircraft while avoiding hazardous debris. I pulled the injured officer out of the burning plane and placed him in the sky raider and took off amidst gunfire from the Vietcong. He said that crews had later noticed 19 bullet holes in his aircraft. I asked him if he ever felt that his own life was in danger during this time, and he calmly replied that it was not something that anyone else wouldn't have done in the same situation".

Another officer that I processed off the base had top secret security covered all over his personnel records. Once again I asked him if he could summarize the reason for the top secret clearance. He replied that he was one of the officers on the base that was assigned to Fail Safe. The officer explained that during an alert his plane was one of the first to be in the air, fully loaded with nuclear weapons that were meant to be dropped on a specific destination. He knew his targets before hand and would not return unless he received radio communication from the President himself.

I would complete a monthly report and send it to USAFE reporting the number of officers that were in silos located near the flight line on the base. These officers would be ready on a moment's notice to run out to their camouflaged F4D Phantom jets and scramble in the air within minutes. The planes were located in concrete hangars that would be difficult to damage unless by a direct hit. Our personnel offices were near enough to the flight line that I could hear the jet engines and smell the JPL fuel each day. We went on several alerts while I was stationed at the base including days that it was snowing and cold. We would be awakened by the tune of William Tell playing over the loud speakers and the announcement that we were in alert status and that we were to dress in combat gear and proceed to the Police barracks. Once at the Police Barracks we were provided with an M-16 rifle and a magazine clip of bullets and were told to lock and load. We would be transported in the back of a truck to the flight line where we could still see jets taxing and taking off. Once on the flight line we were close enough to see the pilots in the plane with lightning streaks on their helmets as some saluted us and proceeded to taxi to the top of the runway. On one occasion I heard that there was a threat made by the Russians to invade Czechoslovakia so most of the planes were in the air on a moment's notice. At that point I felt very proud to be in the Air Force and to know that we would be there when needed.

My last assignment was Tyndall AFB, located in Panama City Florida where I was once again working in the Personnel office handling officer assignments. Our offices were close enough to the beach that we could almost hear the waves. I liked this assignment; however, I was determined to leave the Air Force and return home to complete my college education. I was honorably discharged on August 6, 1971 and returned to East Los Angeles College (ELAC) to

complete a two year degree and transferred to Cal State University Los Angeles where I received a Bachelor of Science degree in Recreation Administration and Master of Science Degree in Public Administration. I worked for the City of Montebello Parks and Recreation Department as a Recreation and Maintenance Manager for about 18 years and also worked for the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority for another 19 years as a Transportation Planning Manager before retiring June 2010. We own our home and have lived happily in La Mirada for the past 36 years.

John Widosh, U.S. Army

I graduated from college in the summer of 1965 with A BS is Chemistry. Soon after my draft status was changed from S-1 to A-1 and by the end of the year I was drafted. I was sent to Fort Bliss, El Paso Texas right after Christmas. I spent New Years at the reception center and started basic training Company D on Jan 3rd 1966. My training lasted 23 days.

I was 22 years old while most were trainees were 18. This meant that the physical side was rougher on me as I was out of shape from college life. So all the marching, running and push-ups were tough on me. I also had no experience with guns and had some trouble qualifying on rifle range. On the other hand I was not as intimidated by the drill sergeants.

I was also encouraged to apply for Officers Candidates School (OCS) since I was a college grad. At first I resisted because it would mean spending more time in the Army. But they kept after me and convinced me by saying it would be easier being an officer and it would look better on my resume. Since I wanted the Chemical Corp I would have to go to infantry OCS and after the first part of training transfer to Chemical Corp training. I had interviewed before three officers but it was easy. Before I signed up for Infantry OCS the Army had cut orders to send me to Ft. Rucker Alabama to train as fix wing airplane mechanic. The Army changed my orders to Fort Ord California for Infantry advanced individual training (AIT).

After a short leave, I reported to Ft. Ord on March 19th. AIT was much like basic. I lot of drills, shots and running. Also got to train on a lot more weapons - machine guns, grenade launchers etc. I also trained on other skills like First Aid, disarming mines and booby traps, map reading. AIT lasted 6 weeks. While I was still in AIT I was told that I could not go to Infantry OCS because my OCS physical showed a problem. The problem was not enough to give me a medical discharge. I said does this mean I am not qualified to be an Infantry Officer but am qualified to be an Infantry private? They replied yes. I was never told the nature of the problem but suspect it was a vision problem since I had some dept perception issues.

As was the procedure when I was in the OCS program orders were cut for me to go Fort Ord's reception area to aid in processing the arriving trainees while awaiting orders for OCS. When I dropped out they did not change the orders so I ended up at the reception center. At the reception center I was given acting Corporal stripes so I would look like someone of authority to the newly inducted Army trainees while they were processed. I was assigned a barracks in which I had a small private room. When my barracks was full I would take the trainees around to get

their shots, uniforms, haircuts etc. The process took about 4 days then I would get a new group. However I was assigned an overfill barracks so there were times when I had no trainees so they would assign me some other duties but a lot of the time I was free to kill time on the base. So I would go swimming, play ping-pong watch TV. Sometimes I slept till 9 AM.

Because Fort Ord had an outbreak of meningitis, the reception center had certain restrictions on the new arrivals even though by this time restrictions had been lifted on the rest of the base. One of these restrictions was the new arrivals were not allowed to use the dayrooms. This meant that I and the rest of the cadre had our choice of day rooms were we could watch TV, play pool, listen to records and other activities. Life was good at the reception center. We kept passes in our pockets and could leave base almost at will. I would go into Monterey at night sometimes. On weekends I would go to San Francisco or go home to LA a lot. During the week I would go to the movies on the base and to the clubs.

After awhile I was put in charge of the small satellite supply room for the reception area. They took away my acting corporal stripes and promoted me to PFC. I also moved to another private room in a barracks that wasn't used for trainees. Overtime I got an air force bunk, which has a better mattress than the Army bunk, an easy chair and brought my stereo from home. The supply duty was like a civilian job. I started around 7:30 and was done by 4:30. Life was easy and I could have happily continued like this until my service was done. My only regret was I hoped to see some more of the world when I was drafted. However those who were waiting for their OCS transfer complained because it was taking too long. An investigation took place and they discovered I had dropped out of OCS so they put me on the list to be shipped overseas. In November I got orders to report to Germany.

By the beginning of December I was in Germany assigned to B Troop 2nd Squadron 9th Cavalry. The 9th Cav was billeted in Warner Kaserne an army base outside Munich. After Ord it was quite an adjustment. First the weather, for the first month never got above freezing and it snowed a lot. Now I was back to a regular military schedule. There were regular formations, daily PT, drilling etc. Besides duty on the base we spent a lot of time out in the field, areas of forest reserved for military maneuvers. Right after I got there the 9th Cav was sent out on border duty. I went around on a jeep patrolling the Czechoslovakian-German border.

A Cav Unit is like a miniature army. It has scouts, infantry, mortars (small artillery) and tanks. Since the infantry was full I was assigned to the scouts. As a scout I rode around in a small track vehicle. Our major function was reconnaissance. Shortly afterward I was transferred to tanks. The tank I was on was an M-60 class with a four-member crew – loader, gunner, driver and commander. During by time in Germany I held all positions but commander. I started out as loader. At the range the loader loads the 105 mm shells into the main gun. When the 105 gun is fired it recoils into the back of the turret and the spent shell shoot out the breech and bounces all around. The loader has to load another round and pick up the spent shells and store them in a safe place. While driving around the loader does nothing and has a small fold down seat for sitting. After being a loader I was rotated between driver and gunner depending on need.
The gunner has the most comfortable seat in the tank and does little while on the road.

On the range he has to fire at the targets. I enjoyed firing the main gun. A driver does nothing at the range except for qualifying where the tank is driven from target to target. The rest of field

time the driver does the most work. I spent more of the time as driver. At times it was fun to drive and others it was tiring. I was a good driver.

One of the benefits of being stationed in Germany was I got the chance to travel on leave. I took one 2-week trip on my own going to Vienna, Austria, Venice, Rome, Milan, Italy and Nice, France. I took another leave with a college friend, who also ended up in Germany, to London. I also spent a lot of time going into Munich. Because I went in around Christmas time, I got an early out to get home before Christmas and was home Dec 8th. When drafted you spent two years active duty and two years active reserve where you would report one weekend a month for continued duty and a couple of weeks in summer and two years inactive reserve. Because there were so many returning soldiers and did not have to do active reserve. So four years after active duty I received my honorable discharge.

Howie Beach, U.S. Army

Howie, moved by his deep sense of patriotism, jumped at the recruiter's urge to serve in the military, and volunteered for Army duty. That was in June of 1943, and shortly after his eighteenth birthday he was signed up. Reporting to Camp Grant, Illinois, in time to celebrate the Fourth of July Holiday, he could be found peeling potatoes and slicing numerous roasts of beef on K P duty the very first day. Hey, I thought, the Army isn't all that bad, really. I would be changing my mind soon!

Arriving at Camp Wallace, Texas for basic training, the coming months of extreme heat and humidity tested the mettle of every rookie, and would brace us for what was yet to come.

After intensive training in five more State side camps, (seven all together, including radio school in three of them,) Howie shipped out from Boston to Liverpool, England in May of 1944. With only time for about three days of preparation in the English countryside, Howie's cadre of replacement infantry was directed to land at Omaha Beach in the Normandy Invasion following earlier waves that suffered heavy casualties. We lost a number of men that third or fourth day, including a chaplain. Temporarily assigned as riflemen in the struggle to move inland from the Beach the next several days, each G. I. was eventually assigned to a permanent unit. I became a member of the Ninth Infantry Division and placed in the 9th Reconnaissance Troop as a radio man in an armored car and/or a Jeep. About 40% of our patrols, however, actually were on foot and mostly at night. It was essential that recon units in small numbers of men would maintain close awareness of the enemy, as the name implies, which involved advanced and unknown locations and frequent battles. Usually our patrols were one or two squads.

During the five Campaigns and the eleven months of steady combat that ensued through France, Belgium, Luxembourg and Germany, Howie survived battles at St. Lo, Huertgen Forest, crossing of the Rhine River the first day of the Ludendorf Bridge capture, the liberation of the few remaining occupants of the Nordhausen Concentration and Extermination Camp and meeting Russian Army personnel at the Elbe River.

After all was said and done, Howie was awarded five Battle Stars, the Silver Star Medal, and various other recognitions. As part of the U. S. occupation force after the War ended, he had the great privilege of serving as an honor guard for General George Patton in Ingolstadt, Germany. (The 9th Infantry was celebrating their 5th anniversary on August 1, 1945, for the Division's reactivation at Ft. Bragg, N.C. in 1940.) General Patton asked me from what State I was inducted (Wisconsin), and my name, of course. Then he issued the command, "Present Arms", and inspected my M 1 rifle. Exciting as it was, I was able to perform the order without a glitch, thank The Lord; a proud and memorable event.

Howie wrote a book of his memoir, The Private War of Howie Beach, available at Amazon.com, or directly from him. (howielbee@aol.com)

Richard Garza -- U.S. Army

My name is Richard Garza and I was born on January 26, 1946 in Los Angeles, CA. I was the last child of Andres and Juanita Garza. They had six sons and three daughters. My father was a minister so we moved a lot. We lived in many different cities and I went to several different schools, which I hated.

I did play sports in high school and college. Track and cross country were my best sports. When my father retired we then stayed in one place and I went to one final school. I got to stay in the same high school for four years. It was Santiago High School in Garden Grove, CA After graduation from high school in 1965 I went to Santa Ana College. There I also ran track and cross country, but then I met a girl names Linda M. Ludwig. While I attended Santa Ana College I had a part-time job at Disneyland as a cook to earn spending money.

On March 15, 1968 Linda and I were married. We settled in Garden Grove and found an apartment close to her parents. Linda decorated it beautifully and little did I know that she would become a better decorator, as our life together progressed. We were married just about five months when I was drafted into the Army. I entered the Army on August 22, 1968. I took basic training at Fort Ord, CA which covers 28,500 acres fo rolling plain and rugged hills that makes it ideal for infantry training.

I had eight weeks of basic training and shot expert with the M 14 rifle and received my expert badge. During basic training visitors were only allowed to come on Sundays. My wife always came up to visit and I looked forward to it. My other came by bus, by herself and I really enjoyed her visits too. After basic training at Fort Ord we took advanced infantry training there, but we were moved to different barracks. When I finished my training, I was assigned to Camp Roberts near Paso Robles, CA for 40 days to learn more jungle training.

Finally, after all this training was completed, I was sent to Vietnam on February 22, 1969. I flew out of Travis Air Force Base. When I first stepped out of the airplane I thought it was the hottest place in the world. It was hot.

I was assigned to the 9th division in the Me Kong Delta. My unit was the 6th Battalion 31st Infantry. I was there for a whole year. We went on many ambush patrols. Many times we were taken by truck, helicopters, and boats into the jungle. Of course we also walked from a base camp into the jungle. I had many jobs as an infantry soldier. I carried the radio, sometimes I carried the M 60 machine gun and I would walk point for many months. With God's help I came home without a scratch.

From Vietnam I was sent to Fort Riley in Kansas to finish my military obligation. I had about six months before I was discharged on August 21, 1970. Now that I was out of the Army, I started my life with Linda. I got several jobs but when I got hired with United Parcel Service in 1972, and I stayed with them for 29 years. I drove safely for 28 years without an accident and I got an award for this.

Linda and I have a daughter named Linda Carrie born on April 26, 1974 and a son named Richard Kyle Ludwig born on January 2, 1983. They have left the nest and now me and Linda are enjoying our retirement. We do some traveling and stay busy. We make our home now in Yorba Linda, CA. I got a medical scare in 2002, nine months after retiring from UPS. I was diagnosed with throat cancer. The treatment I was to have was eight weeks of chemotherapy and eight weeks of radiation. The treatment was so strong that I had to be hospitalized for 51 days. With God's help I licked it and have been eight years cancer free. In 2004, I did get more cancer. It was prostate cancer and God took care of me again. Now I am cancer free.

One of the things I do to stay busy and motivated is by attending three veterans groups. I also march in the Vietnam Day Parade and the Huntington Beach Fourth of July Parade. My parents gave me strong religious background so we are active in Church too. Now that my golden years are here, I hope God continues to bless me and my family.

Carl Lauper - A Submariner on the Sunfish

I was born in South Los Angeles on September 6, 1925. I had three sisters, two older and one younger. I lived in the same house, except when I was in the service, until I got married in 1950.

I attended local schools and graduated from Fremont High School in June 1943. I was 17 when I graduated and there was a war going on. I knew that as soon as I turned eighteen, I would have to register for the draft and that I would be inducted into the Army shortly thereafter.

The thought of foxholes didn't appeal to me so I decided to join the Navy. I was inducted in early September 1943 and sent to boot camp in San Diego. After that, I went to a sixteen week electrician school in San Diego and graduated number one in a class of 53 students. At graduation, I was on the first draft for submarine service. I was told that I was selected because I had graduated number one and that they were looking for the "the cream of the crop.

After a seven day delay in route, I reported to the Destroyer Base in San Diego for submarine training on an old WW I S Boat. Upon arriving there, we were told that submarine service was strictly a volunteer service and anyone who did not wish to serve on a submarine would be

transferred. I had not originally volunteered but I decided to stick with it.

After submarine school, I was shipped to Pearl Harbor and assigned to a relief crew. Relief crews take over a submarine when it comes back from a patrol and do any repair and maintenance that is required. During the time that repairs were being made, the submarine crew went to the Royal Hawaiians Hotel for two weeks of Rest & Recreation.

After a few weeks, I was assigned to the submarine U.S.S. Sunfish. I made the last three patrols on the Sunfish during which time we sank eight Japanese vessels and damaged another off the east and west coasts of Japan. We survived many prolonged depth charges and missed a floating mine by about five feet and I thank God that we made it.

When I got out of the service in 1946, I went to work for the Pacific Telephone Company and enjoyed 35 great years with them. I worked as a manager, Special Agent and had various staff assignments.

In 1950, I married my wife and together we raised three very fine sons of whom we are extremely proud. We have been married for over sixty one years. Two of our sons live in the area and the other one resides in Idaho. We have five grandchildren and one great grandson.

Tom Rosholt -- U.S. Coast Guard

Tom was born and raised in Rantoul, Illinois, graduated from RTWP High School in May, 1964 and entered the United States Coast Guard a month later. His youth was typical of anyone growing up in a small, rural, one-high school town next to a U.S. Air Force Base.

Tom's youth was mixed with play, school, and sports. Spending money was earned delivering newspapers, mowing lawns in summer, and shoveling walks and driveways in winter.

Tom served with the U.S. Coast Guard during the Vietnam Era, from 1964 to 1968. His boot camp was three months at Cape May, NJ; then attended Radioman School for six months at Groton, CN. He served as a radioman at the Coast Guard Station Miami Bch, FL; aboard the CGC Hollyhock at Miami Bch, FL; and the CGC Citrus at Kodiak, AK.

The majority of Tom's activities in the Coast Guard were varied, providing voice and CW communications between ships and shore for Search & Rescue missions, Maritime Law Enforcement, as well as routine Aids to Navigation activities aboard the Coast Guard Buoy Tenders, Hollyhock and Citrus.

Tom was involved in searches for overdue boats; rescue missions for pleasure boats out of fuel or having run aground; boats taking on water & sinking; a Cruise ship on fire; rescuing Cuban

refugees; tracking gun smugglers; safety operations in preparation for threatening hurricanes; and extinguishment of a fire onboard a Japanese Vessel in the gulf of Alaska, for which Tom and his shipmates were awarded the USCG Unit Commendation Ribbon. Tom was discharged in June, 1968 as a Radioman 1st Class.

Following his military career, Tom launched a career in field service of office products for Magnavox Corp., Lanier Business Products, Savin Corp., and Ricoh Corp. Starting as an electronic technician in June 1968 and retiring as the Western Region Service Manager, in June 2006. The Office products included: dictation equipment, facsimiles, word processors, computers, and copiers.

Tom is retired, living in La Mirada, CA with his wife of 30 years, Avelina. They have four adult children and three grandchildren.

Eddie Ford

I'M PARTICIPATING IN A VETERANS' WRITING CLASS TO ESTABLISH THE HISTORY OF MY YEARS IN THE KOREAN 'CONFLICT', 1952 AND 1953. THE CLASS IS ENCOURAGING ME TO WRITE, REMEMBER MY OWN EXPERIENCES, AND SHARE OTHER VETERANS' STORIES. IT IS OUR LEGACY TO ALL THOSE WHO SERVE NOW AND ALSO SO THAT OUR FAMILIES WILL KNOW WHAT WE DID TO HELP OTHERS IN NEED.

IT SEEMS THAT I HARDLY EVER TALKED ABOUT THE KOREAN WAR TO MY FAMILY OR FRIENDS UNTIL MY WIFE EDIE FOUND SOMETHING REALLY OF INTEREST ON THE INTERNET IN 2000. THE KOREAN BUSINESSMEN'S ASSOCIATION WAS INVITING KOREAN WAR VETS TO COME OVER TO BE RECOGNIZED AND HONORED FOR THEIR SACRIFICES IN SAVING SOUTH KOREA. THIS WAS SOMETHING I THOUGHT I WOULD NEVER DO: GO BACK TO KOREA! WE FOUND OUT THE ACCOMODATIONS WOULD BE ALL TAKEN CARE, IF WE WOULD PAY OUR OWN AIRFARE. WE WERE SOON OFF TO SEOUL, KOREA, THE DMZ AND THE REST OF THE SOUTH KOREAN PENNISULA. THIS WAS A WONDERFUL TRIP WITH MANY BANQUETS, PRESENTATIONS, CITATIONS FROM THE KOREANS, AND GIFTS HONORING THE VETERANS. IT WAS VERY TOUCHING AND HUMBLING. FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE KOREAN CONFLICT I WAS MEETING OTHER VETS AND THEIR FAMILIES. WHAT A DIFFERENCE FROM WHEN I CAME HOME IN AUGUST, 1953 TO A COUNTRY THAT DIDN'T CARE; PEOPLE DIDN'T EVEN KNOW WHERE KOREA WAS, AND CERTAINLY DIDN'T SAY: 'GOOD JOB, WELCOME HOME'. IT WAS KINDA LIKE, 'OH WERE YOU GONE SOMEWHERE?' THERE WAS NO INTEREST OR HONOR.

I BEGAN REMEMBERING, TALKING, AND CONTACTING SHIPMATES. I FINALLY TALKED TO MY KIDS ABOUT BEING A SAILOR ABOARD THE USS BOLSTER ARS 38 IN THE KOREAN WAR.

IN FEBRUARY OF 1948, WHEN I WAS 18, I JOINED THE NAVAL RESERVES IN MY HOMETOWN OF GLENDALE, CA. MY OLDER BROTHER WAS A CAREER SAILOR AND HE RECOMMENDED I SIGN UP BEFORE THE WWII GI BILL WOULD BE TERMINATED IN JULY, 1948. I WAS THEN ON THE EXTENSIVE WWII GI BILL. I DID NOT GET CALLED INTO ACTIVE DUTY UNTIL NOVEMBER OF 1951, AND WAS PUT INTO A 'B' COMPANY. 'B' COMPANIES WERE THE NAVY RESERVE COMPANYS AT THAT TIME. WE WENT THROUGH

BOOT CAMP IN 8 WEEKS (BECAUSE WE WERE SUPPOSED TO KNOW SOMETHING) INSTEAD OF THE NORMAL 12 WKS.

I WAS GIVEN ORDERS TO REPORT ABOARD THE USS BOLSTER IN SASEBO, JAPAN. AFTER TWO WEEKS ABOARD THE USNS GENERAL WILLIAM WEIGEL, I TRANSFERRED TO THE BOLSTER AND WAS HEADING TO KOREA. I WAS 19 MONTHS ON BOARD; 13 MONTHS WERE LINE DUTY IN THE KOREAN WAR ZONE.

WE WERE IN THE WONSON OPERATION DOING DECOY RECONNAISSANCE FOR THE BATTLESHIP MISSOURI, THE CARRIER PRINCETON AND THE CARRIER USS BOXER. WE OPERATED THERE SEVERAL DIFFERENT BATTLE TIMES. WE DID SUBMARINE BUOY MARKINGS AND SETTINGS, TO KEEP THE DESTROYERS FROM GOING AGROUND DURING BATTLES. THE BOLSTER TRAVELED FROM THE YALU RIVER TO INCHON, WONSON AND PUSAN AND MOST ALL PARTS OF THE NORTH KOREAN ENEMY AREA. WHEN WE WERE NOT ON LINE DUTY, WE WERE CALLED TO RESCUE SHIPS IN TYPHOONS AND GALES IN THE JAPANESE STRAITS, GUAM, IWO JIMA, CHI CHI JIMA AND YOKOHAMA BAY. WE ONCE HAD A SHORT RUN TO PEARL HABOR, BUT OTHERWISE WE WERE IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC, JAPAN AND KOREA.

THE USS BOLSTER WAS AWARDED 7 BATTLE STARS FOR ACTION IN KOREA, WHICH WAS THE MOST OF ANY SHIPS OPERATING OUT OF THERE DURING THE WAR. BY THE TIME SHE WAS FINISHED IN VIETNAM SHE HAD 8 MORE BATTLE STARS AND CAME TO BE KNOWN AS 'BATTLE STAR BOLSTER'.

WHEN I RETURNED TO GLENDALE, CA. I ATTENDED GLENDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND GOT MY AA DEGREE IN BUSINESS. DURING THAT TIME I MET MY WIFE EDIE. WE BOUGHT A HOME IN WHITTIER, CA. AND HAD 3 CHILDREN, MARK, COLLEEN AND DAN. WE HAVE BEEN MARRIED 56 YEARS.

AFTER 40 YEARS WORKING AS A MANUFACTURER'S REP. FOR RESTAURANT EQUIPMENT I 'RETIRED' TO MY OWN BUSINESS. FOR 10 YEARS I HAD MY OWN BUSINESS AS A MFR'S REP. FOR GALLEY EQUIPMENT, MAINLY TO THE US NAVY. THE BIG 'C' FINALLY SHUT DOWN THAT VENTURE, BUT I AM CANCER FREE 12 YRS. AFTER THAT BOUT!

I ENJOY SENIOR LEAGUE BOWLING, TRAVELING, WALKING 2 MILES A DAY, AND TRYING TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN THE STOCK MARKET. I LOOK FORWARD TO TIME WITH FRIENDS, SUSTAINING EACH OTHER IN PRAYER, READING OTHER PEOPLES' EXPERIENCES, AND ENJOYING CHURCH FELLOWSHIPS.

SINCE MY NAVAL DUTY WAS ON A SPECIALIZED RESCUE SHIP, EDIE AND I FOUND A GROUP OF VETS THAT SERVED ON 'FLEET TUGS'. THIS GROUP IS CALLED 'NAFTS'—NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FLEET TUG SAILORS. WE HAVE A COMMONALITY, AND THIS HAS BEEN A GOOD GROUP FOR ME. IN THIS GROUP ARE SAILORS WHO SERVED ON RESCUE AND SALVAGE SHIPS FROM WWII UNTIL THE GULF WAR. WE MEET ONCE A YEAR IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, AND ARE IN CONTACT BY EMAIL THE REST OF THE TIME.

I FEEL GOOD ABOUT BEING PART OF KEEPING SOUTH KOREA FREE. THE KOREAN WAR MEMORIAL STATES IN LARGE LETTERS: 'FREEDOM IS NOT FREE'.

Ernest R. Newman

I was born in Hollywood, CA on April, 21, 1923, graduated from John Marshall High School in

June of 1941. I was drafted on April 19th 1943. Two days before my 20th birthday. I was 6ft 3in and weighed 141 lbs., which was 13 lbs. under the minimum weight requirement and I was assigned to limited service in the Army.

I was transferred to Boise Barracks for four week medical basic. I was given the opportunity to go to clerk school for two weeks, and after graduation I was assigned to be the company clerk. Medical training company in the same place I had taken my medical training. Most of the fellows I had trained with were transferred to Army hospitals or other medical facilities in the United States to do medical works. In August 31, 1943, I was promoted to the grade of Technician 5th Grads (corporal). In April of 1944 I was transferred to Camp Grant, Illinois for four months of medical basic. After completing our basic training, a field general hospital was organized. In September, the first sergeant came by and asked if anyone could type. I raised my hand and became a headquarter's clerk.

On September 12, 1944 we left New York on the British troop ship H MS Seythia and arrived at Cherbourg Harbor on September 24th 1944. We set up our pup tents and began to set up our ward tents and build the 165th Field General Hospital.

After the Battle of the Bulge in December 1944 thru January 1945, a number of us in the hospital that could pass the physical were reassigned to the infantry. By this time I weighed 175 lbs and passed.

In February 1945 we crossed the English Channel to Southampton where we boarded a train and traveled to Tidworth Barracks, near Salisbury. We had six weeks of infantry basic training and there was no longer anyone asking if I could type.

On April 1st, Easter Sunday in the evening of 1945, we crossed the channel in a landing craft, infantry and arrived in Le Havre in the morning. The next day we traveled by box cars, 40 and 8 (forty men or 8 horses). While traveling across the French countryside towards Germany we threw K-rations and sweets to the French kids that were nearby the railroad tracks.

When our train reached Aachen, Germany I saw many burned out tanks and other vehicles and one dead German solider in a fox hole near the railroad tracks, so I thought we were very near to combat. We finally arrived on April 26th in the small village of Castelaun, about 26 miles west of the Rhine River where we celebrated VE Day on May 7th 1945.

We were to be security guards for the 539th field Artillery Battalion. After about two weeks on patrol, I was re-assigned to be battery clerk of Charlie Battery. I served one year in Germany in occupation and on April 8th 1946 I boarded the S.S. Ernie Pyle and saw the Statue of Liberty on April 16th 1946. I went by rail to Fort Bliss, Texas where I was discharged on April 25th 1946. On August 14th 1950 as an enlisted inactive reservist I was called back to active duty and instead of going to Korea I was transferred to the Presidio of San Francisco and became the company clerk for the 338th Machine Records Unit, 6th Army Headquarters.

On February 10th 1951, Patricia and I were married and lived off the post until I was released from active service on August 31st, 1951. We purchased a new 3 bedroom tract home in Whittier in June 1952. In March of 1955 I transferred from the Veterans Administration as a

payroll clerk to the U.S. Marshal's office in the Federal Courthouse in downtown Los Angeles as a clerical assistant and in a few years I became administrative assistant to the U.S. Marshal where I received many letters of commendations and appreciation. I retired on June 30th 1978 after 35 years of the federal service. Patricia and I will celebrate our 61st wedding anniversary on February 10th 2012. We adopted our son, Gary in 1957 at the age of 3 months and our daughter Lori in 1959 at the age of 4 months. We had the privilege to be able to go through all the trials and tribulations of raising children.

Ted B. Garcia - Cold War, Germany, 11th Airborne Division 1950's

I'm from a military family of thirty-three extended family veterans including my five brothers and me. I was introduced to and became intrigued by the veterans writing project headed up by Elijah Levy, Ph.D. The class consisted of veterans who served in the military from WW II to Iraq and Dr. Levy suggested we individually write about our military experiences.

The veterans who participated in this project were enthusiastic and their enthusiasm prompted me to write my book about all of the veterans in my immediate and extended families which included my family's Rosie-the-Riveters from WW II. The appropriate name for my book was to be, "My Family y Mi Familias." It took over a year of arm twisting research but I finally put together a very time consuming book and it was well worth every excruciating minute. After copying the 128 page master fifty times, I had the copies professionally bound with a cover of our veteran's dog tags which my son, Mitch, designed.

"My Family y Mi Familias" is focused on our men who did their duty for our country from WW II to Desert Storm. My family members were in the U.S. Army, the U.S. Navy, and the U.S. Marines. Our nephew Stan, who served in the U.S. Marines, was in Vietnam and before he was KIA, you better believe that he made the VC pay over and over again.

The Garcia family military legacy will continue to grow as our younger generation family members, who have been inspired by my book, become men and women who will emulate their elders. To borrow a phrase from then Veterans History Project, "We too were there!"

Herman Beverburg

I was born at 4:30 am August 23,1922 at home in Gillett, Arkansas. This small town (720 population) is in the Mississippi delta near the mouth of the Arkansas and White rivers. My first memory is of my fourth birthday which would have been August 23, 1926. My Dad bounced me on his knee and said that I would soon be big enough to let him on my knee but that never happened. I had two older brothers; Alvin Lorenz born October 12, 1916 and Arnold August born January 1, 1919.My oldest brother Lorenz graduated from high school in Gillett in June of 1935 he went to the same school in Monticello where he was four years ahead of me and into the same guard unit. He spent 30 years on active reserve duty and died in 2003. My middle

brother enlisted in the Navy through WWII and died in 1971.

I remember the great Mississippi flood of 1927 when the entire town was under water, about this time Charles A Lindbergh made his flight across the Atlantic Ocean, My memory of the depression was not about the lack of food. We always had things to eat in our half a city block garden. I had followed the plans in "Popular Mechanics" magazine and built a very complex 6 foot by 18 inch Box Kite. It went through at least two monthly installments. When I finished it I didn't have money to buy a stout enough kite string to fly it. This lasted about three months until I could plant some garden and sell vegetables.

My Dad collected old radios and let me experiment with the ones that didn't work. I soon learned to assemble the good parts to get some to work and learned to convert them to short wave for international listening. I listened to river barge traffic, amateur, and broadcast transmissions. I especially remember listening for Amelia Earhart to come on the air and tell me and the rest of the world where she was down at sea. I did hear and copy some of the navy and coast guard traffic and confusion first hand.

I enlisted from a nine month waiting list, on June 25, 1940. The unit that I enlisted in was Battery "B" 206th CA (aa) of the Arkansas National Guard. This Regiment was federalized into the Army of the United States on January 1,1941 for a period of one year. In January 1942 my enlistment was extended for the convenience of the government until October 28,1945. At the time of my enlistment I was in my freshman year at Arkansas Agricultural and Mechanical College at Monticello, Arkansas. I lived in Harris Hall then a freshman dormitory on the Campus.I joined the National Guard to get the pay for the two drills a month and the two week summer camp each year. It was the only branch available at the college I was attending.

The first day of National Guard service was starting a truck convoy from Arkansas to Camp Ripley, Minnesota. The first day of Federal service was starting a truck convoy across Arkansas and Texas to Ft. Bliss, Texas. Some non-commissioned officer was usually detailed to study up on a subject and give the scheduled instruction. The subjects were "Military Courtesy," "Gunnery," "Infantry Tactics," "Hygiene," etc. For most of the scheduled instructions I was excused so I could work on trucks and keep their scheduled maintenance and their records up to date. The work was easier than I was used to but not as satisfying because you never got through with anything. Most of the time of our boot camp was spent moving the guns (3" Antiaircraft) from one location to another over the raw desert in the dark. All this to be finished and camouflaged by daylight the next morning.

I remember arriving at Ft. Bliss it was very different, the climate was very dry and no trees at Ft. Bliss. We all had sore dry throats and got sunburned. My assigned Military Occupational Specialty was "Light Truck Mechanic," I repaired and performed scheduled maintenance on all trucks, tractors and power units and kept their records up to date. I served in World War II, June 25 1940 until October 28 1945.During that period I had duty stations at Fort Bliss (El Paso) TX, Dutch Harbor AK, Camp Haan CA Fort Lauderdale FL, Hulbert Field (Ft. Walton Beach FL, McDill Field (Tampa) FL.A couple of my most memorable experiences.

1) A close call for the first B-17 of WWII. At the summer encampment of the Arkansas National Guard in 1940 at Camp Ripley, Minnesota. The Air Corps

154th observation Squadron had great fun in seeking out the ground troops and bombing us with small sacks of flour. They seemed to like to locate our mess preparation area for this, so when they succeeded it affected the timing and quality of our mess. So a few of us decided to return fire. We had a few saluting charges for the 3" AA Gun so we set the gun up to cover the mess area. The next plane that approached was one of the very few B-17s the Army had at that time; we very carefully waited for the plane to be in the right position. Then we set off the saluting charge under the right wing of the B17 about 8 feet off the ground. The muzzle blast under the right wing raised it in the air but as the right wing went up the left wing came down to less than a foot from the ground. The plane was able to climb away but none came back to bother us for the remainder of that summer camp.

2) A ringside seat to viewing the Japanese Attack on Dutch Harbor, Alaska June 3 and 4, 1941. My duty assignment was to operate the power generator (1000 watt) to provide power for the 3" guns and their fire direction equipment. The generator was located with the guns and equipment on hill 100 just south and looking down on Fort Mears. From my foxhole I could see the seaplane ramp, the dock, the tank farms, the Navy radio station and the town of Unalaska. I saw unidentified planes approaching, I could hear the height finder crew discussing and debating their identity and I heard the height finder observer who was looking through the strongest optics announce that they had red balls painted on their sides. Very soon we could see the red balls with our naked eyes and see the bombs falling away from them. That settled the debate; friendly planes don't drop bombs on you. We still had voices in perfect English shouting "Cease Firing—Friendly Planes" but we were not convinced and kept on firing. We later saw the dive-bombers going after the oil tanks and our patrol planes. We didn't have to wonder much or listen to rumors about what was going on, we could see it all as it was happening.

The above picture was taken in 1985 when I visited there for the first time since 1943. I am standing in the entrance to the dugout which housed our power generating unit, I was in this hole in the ground on Pearl Harbor Day December 7, 1941 and on Dutch Harbor Day June 3, 1942. The Japanese held the best hand both days. Below is another picture of the same entrance taken from a little further away.

The question of whether I saw Combat depends on how you define "Combat" I had airplanes within 35 yards overhead shooting at me or my emplacement and dropping ordinance. I was shooting back with my M1—30-caliber rifle at planes well within its range. I saw several people drop from strafing fire and fragmentary bombing. The picture below is the exterior wall of our cold storage food locker after the raids. During the raids on June 3 and 4 1942 my job was to traverse the road past this. I concluded from seeing this wall that they weren't shooting blanks

During the Japanese raids on the Aleutians we had only about 16 casualties out of 1500 members in the 206th We stayed in touch with our families through the U.S.Mail, I wrote letters to my parents, not as often as I should have. I could visit my brother when he and I were on the

same part of the islands. I was lucky enough to get a 15 day furlough in September 1942 on a 5 day train ride from Seattle 5days at home and 5days more train ride back to Seattle. The food with very few exceptions was adequate, well prepared and wholesome. I liked Spam and SOS. The exceptions when food got weird were when the boat couldn't dock at Hog Island. We then ate what was on the back shelf in the storeroom. I did notice one time when my job was to haul groceries from cold storage warehouse that the frozen chicken was branded with the date "1928", this was in 1941.

The supplies were also adequate with the same exceptions as the food.

I was awarded the:

1) Asiatic Pacific w/1 bronze star
2) American Defense Service medal
3) Good Conduct medal

I received them all just for being there. In Alaska I saw: Joe E. Brown, Bob Hope, Errol Flynn, Martha Driscoll in the U.S. :Dinah Shore, Shirley Temple. While on leave I went bird hunting with my Dad and went to church with my Mom. We had a family get together with both of my brothers present. In the army I found it better not to be the long pole in the tent or attract attention to yourself.

People entertain themselves by listening to the radios or phonograph records, Pursuing hobbies, carving old ivory this was readily available on the beaches. Fishing in the best fishing ground in the world, model airplane building, making and repairing short wave radios.

In the summer of 1940 before being federalized into the Army of the United States the Arkansas National Guard traveled to Camp Ripley, Minnesota for firing and maneuvers. This was the first time they gave me a uniform to put on. We drove a truck convoy from Monticello, Arkansas to Camp Ripley, Minnesota. We camped at night in city parks along the way. I remember camping in Harrison, AR; Springfield, MO; DeMoin, IO and St Paul,MN. We found ice when rolling up our tents on Aug 15, 1940 and camped one night in a birch grove where we could peel bark off the trees use it for paper to write letter home. It was also a new experience to stop at a roadside snack shop and let everybody buy what they wanted, get all transactions paid up, back in the trucks and rolling again.

When we were federalized Jan. 1, 1941 we started a convoy from Monticello, AR to Fort Bliss, TX. We camped overnight in Gainesville, TX; Midland, TX; Fort Hancock, TX. I remember an oil drilling machine shop out in the middle of West Texas making a new water pump shaft for the old prime mover we were using to pull one of our big guns.From Fort Bliss we loaded the whole Regiment, guns, people and baggage on a train for Fort Lewis, WA. There were many people who rode that train who they went through many towns in the Western United States, Albequerque, NM; Santa Fe, NM; Sacramento, CA; etc... I personally remember Yuma, AZ; Indio, CA; Fullerton, CA; Los Angeles, CA; Portland, OR and Fort Lewis, WA. We then convoyed to the Seattle Docks (the same ones that are now filled with tourist attractions and restaurants)

We put our guns and baggage on and boarded the U.S.S. St. Mihiel and proceeded out of Puget Sound directly to Dutch Harbor, AK arriving there on August 28, 1941.

After my stay in the Aleutians my next duty station was Camp Haan, CA just west of March Field, CA. Travel there was by train by way of Arkansas. I was assigned to the 516thAAA Gun Battalion Battery A as chief of the range section in July 1943. I stayed in this unit until it shipped out to the Pacific in the fall of 1944. I was then transferred to the Air Corp and sent to Wichita Falls, TX for Air Corp basic training. From there I was sent to Ft. Lauderdale as a maintenance man for Radars (APQ-13) used in Air Navigational Training.

From there I was sent to Eglin Field, FL the Air Corp Proving Ground Command to operate their Air Defense Sites stung along Ft. Walton beach. These were an interesting combination of U.S., German and Japanese systems which we operated against scheduled missions of the Proving Ground Command. This collection of equipment included not only current systems but a lot of far out experimental systems and gadgets. Returning from my furlough in Arkansas, I was traveling by train through Texas and had to change from the Missouri Pacific to the Southern Pacific Railway system at a very small town in Texas with about 8 hours to wait. To help use up some of the time I decided to get a haircut. When I found the barbershop it had one chair and 3 people waiting. This made no difference to me, I had all day but soon another person came and counted the people waiting and looked at his watch several times. I introduced myself and explained my situation to him and invited him to go ahead of me in the line for which he thanked me and things proceeded. When the barber finished with me I found that my haircut was paid for and anywhere in that town that I went that day people knew of my generosity at the barbershop and I couldn't pay for a thing.

While in the Aleutians, we received a new recruit from southwest Texas. This guy was spending a lot of time in the guard house. We finally realized a correlation that he only got himself in the guard house when his name appeared on the roster for KP. When initially asked about this he replied that he would rather do guard house duty (hauling the garbage away) than KP. To most of us that was weird, the KP in a nice warm kitchen and the garbage hauling very dirty and out in the rain, sleet, and snow. We finally found out that one of the cooks just rode him unmercifully which was what made him dislike KP. He had also discovered a sure way of getting on garbage detail. The detail was determined by the MPs picking up all of the GIs that stayed in Unalaska after curfew.

Photograph taking in the Aleutians was restricted during the war. I returned there in 1985 and in 1992 and took some pictures which I will incorporate appropriately throughout this document. Fortunately the sites haven't changed much in the 65 years since our thing happened up there
The officers and fellow soldiers all had their job to do and in the main they did it. In the summer of 1945 I was at Hulbert Field (Field 9) of the Eglin Field complex in Florida. I had a significant assignment of tasks to get equipment ready for testing at the proving ground that day, on the way to the mess hall I met a black full Colonel Air Corp. We were completely isolated, no one else is sight or hearing. I was so absorbed in figuring out how I was going to accomplish for that day that I failed to salute him but I did give him a "Good Morning,Sir" in a friendly tone he asked me if I was aware of proper military courtesy . I told him what I knew, the need for it and the result of disregarding it. At that he saluted me rapidly turned his back and hurried away not really giving me a chance to return his salute. I worried for the rest of my time in the service that

the MPs were looking for me but I never heard anymore and I never figured out why.

I was at Fort Walton Beach, Florida (Air Corp Proving Ground Command) the day Japan surrendered. I had more than enough points to qualify for immediate discharge but all the discharge centers were very busy. The discharge center in Arkansas was one of the busiest. I was given the option of choosing another discharge center that would process my discharge sooner. I chose McDill Field, Tampa, Florida and received all pay due and transportation to my home in Arkansas.

I arrived home in Gillett, Arkansas about November 1 1945. There was a great labor shortage so the day after I got home I was working in the fields in the rice harvest of 1945. After a couple of weeks the harvest was over I was allowed to enroll in classes at the Arkansas A& M College at Monticello, Arkansas. After completing my sophomore year in Arkansas I went to Texas A&M for my next 2 years of Electrical Engineering because the University of Arkansas didn't have space. This out of state student status complicated the Administration but was not insurmountable.
My entire career was involved in Electronic maintenance, first in training, then in project management. I retired in 1987 in Depot Management. My most enjoyable moments were teaching someone to be able to troubleshoot and fix a complex system. In the depot the challenge was to manufacture a system or part that had been designed 20 or 30 years before (material and processes had to be completely redone or reinvented).

At first I thought that everything to do with the military was thoroughly planned, well thought out and debated and critically studied. I later realized that things happened kind of haphazardly, people just acted as if they had been planned that way and made the best of it. Having been inducted into the federal service as a group we had many friends that we knew where they grew up knew their parents and had visited in their homes since before 1940. I continued the friendships that I had made while in the service, I chose as a lifetime brother in law by marrying his youngest sister on January 1 1948. I visited many former members of Battery B 206th CA (aa) at the annual reunions and in their homes up until March 2006 about 66 years or Two thirds of a century and counting When I first got out of the army I joined the VFW and was active for a few years. I also joined the unit organization, the 206th CA(aa) and stayed with that until it disbanded in 2003.

Having spent 5 years 3 months and 23 days in the service, I was a much more mature person for the last half of my college career. I think for this reason I was much more motivated and attentive during the latter part of my college days. I also realized that the young kids just entering had gained some time on me and I had to work harder to keep up. My veterans organizations gave periodic scholarships and established scholastic scholarship funds My unit the 206thCA(aa) has had annual reunions at Little Rock Arkansas since WWII ended. I attended all of those while I lived in Arkansas(until November 1955) Since I moved to California I have made only about half of them I don't think that I can classify myself as a hero. I just did as I was told went where I was directed, tried to figure out what my job was and do it.

Since our unit Battery B 206th CA (aa) was assigned a tractor (International Harvester Model TD-18) to move the guns around and there were very few roads to move them on we did not use it much, so other units wanted to borrow it. Our motor Sargent would loan it out with me as driver

rather than let just anybody drive it. This led to a lot of memorable experiences but since it had no cab or protection for the driver, after much exposure to the wind, sleet and glare I developed a severe eye irritation. The medics gave me salve for the irritation and some one found me a pair of aviators goggles to keep my eyes out of the wind. This irritation lasted for several months (November 1941 through March 1942) and when the irritation went away I had reduced vision in my right eye. I went to the medics for some lenses to correct this as I was then working on the SCR-268 radar and needed to make a lot of micrometer readings but they had no lenses to correct my problem.

When I got back to the States I went to the Camp Haan General Hospital and they told me that my loss of vision was due to a dense cataract that had formed over my right pupil. I was hospitalized there for several months (May1943 to June 1943) to try to determine the cause for infection and my eye problem. I often felt that they thought that I had entered the service with this problem.

When the 516th AAA Gun Battalion was getting ready to ship to the South Pacific, I was approached with a waiver to sign that waived the Army Medical Department's requirement to take care of my eye problem because they couldn't be sure that they would have the facilities to adequately meet that requirement in remote areas of the South Pacific. I declined to sign this request and thereby lost the respect of some of my buddies and maybe my officers. If I could not be sent overseas I was not much good to the US Army and they were going to discharge me in October 1944

The US Army Air Corp was looking for any body with a radar spec number even if they could not be sent overseas. So I was transferred to the Air Corp in October 1944. At the time of my discharge in October 1945 I and everyone was told to fill out a certain form if you had ever been to a sick call. This would prevent your medical records from being archived and make them more available if you ever needed access to them. I submitted the document and eight months later I received notice that I had been declared thirty percent disabled service connected and have been compensated monthly ever since then. This next picture is picture of the trench just below the entrance to my hole in the ground. Since it was very hard to camouflage a hole in the ground, we just dug trenches all around all of the mountains so ours would no stand out.

This was my hut on Hog Island when I lived in it was a full length Quonset Hut since then various campers have moved the ends together so they don't have so much space to heat
The next two pictures taken in 1985 show the remains of shower bath we rigged up so we wouldn't have to go across the bay to Dutch Harbor every time one of two hundred and fifty needed a bath. I will leave it to the reader which picture is outside and which is inside. It was one of my extra duties to keep this supplied with liquid water at all times.

I also got a picture of my brother in law checking on the condition of his pinup pictures that he was forced to leave on Hog Island.

Jean Higa --- Witness to Pearl Harbor

Although I am not a war veteran, I am a member of Dr. Elijah Levy's Veterans Legacy Class in La Mirada and am happy to be welcomed here. A few years back, a friend of mine told Dr. Levy that I was in Hawaii when Pearl Harbor was attacked 68 years ago on December 7, 1941 and he thought that I should join the class and tell about it. He felt that what I had experienced was a part of history and that I should document it, particularly because I am of Japanese descent and an American citizen. Following are a couple of chapters from my memoirs.

Memories of Pearl Harbor and World War II

Next May, I will observe my 85th birthday and I thank God each day for blessing me with longevity and good health. Unlike some of my friends and relatives, I continue to have a clear mind and I have vivid memories of that fateful day 68 years ago. It was an ordinary Sunday morning. Everyone in the family was up by 6:00 AM since each of us had chores to do, except my youngest sister who was 7 years old. She was the pampered "baby" of the family. Even so, she was up early too, pestering everyone to play "jacks" with her. At 16, I was the eldest of six and my assigned Sunday morning chore was to do the weekly wash. This was no easy task since we did not have a washing machine. I was outside at the fire pit where we used a sawed-off oil drum as the vat in which we boiled the laundry. The first thing I had to do was build the fire with firewood of kiawe branches (algarroba). I then had to fill the vat with buckets of water in which I poured flakes of strong soap and a cup of lye. When the water began to boil, I added my parents' work clothes which were stiff with dried mud from the cane fields and their sweat. I "cooked" them for about an hour, intermittently stirring and poking with a long stick. It was at this juncture that all the action started and I was a direct witness to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

Our house was located in plantation Camp #3 in the middle of the sugar cane fields in the hills overlooking Pearl Harbor. The Japanese attack planes came from north of these hills where Schofield Barracks and Wheeler Field are located near Wahiawa, swooping low over our house in approaching Pearl Harbor. Each double-winged plane which thundered over our house had a single pilot flying it. They flew close enough to the ground that I could see the pilots had goggles on and were waving something white with their left hand as they flew by. I had no idea what the significance of this gesture was and to this day it's a matter for speculation. As wave after wave of these planes flew towards Pearl Harbor, I could already see the fires and explosions on the ships in the harbor. We were too far away to see the names on the ships, but in retrospect, I now realize that I probably witnessed the sinking of the Arizona, the battleship that is now the famous memorial at Pearl Harbor.

My parents were immigrants from Okinawa, Japan. My father was one of the hundreds of laborers who were imported from Japan, Korea, China, and the Philippines in the early 1900's to work in the sugar cane fields of Hawaii. He left his impoverished home village and joined the gangs of 18-19 year-olds whose one-way passage across the Pacific had been paid for by the Hawaiian plantation companies. Every one of these young men expected to "make a pile of money" and return to their homeland within a few short years. There were no females among these groups of immigrants. As the years went by and they approached their 30's, these men

realized their expectations of monetary gains were futile and they began resorting to arranged marriages with women from their native villages. Thus, with the advent of the "picture bride" system, many of these men started their families and settled permanently in Hawaii, some of them never once returning to their homeland even for a visit.

When my mother debarked from the ship in Honolulu Harbor in 1924, she was one of a boatload of "picture brides." Most of these women had never laid eyes on their future husbands but would never have dreamt of disobeying their parents by refusing to travel to a distant land to marry strangers. Obedience and subservience were the signs of filial responsibility to their way of thinking in those days. So, my parents met each other at dockside for the first time and a couple of hours later joined the rest of the men and women in a mass wedding ceremony at the immigration station next to the Aloha Tower. (Some of the couples had already been married by proxy in Japan.)

When these marriages were arranged, compatibility between the couples was the least of the matters under consideration. So, even though they were totally incompatible (in my assessment), my parents were friendly enough on occasion to produce six children, me being the oldest, the two boys and three girls in eleven years. They both toiled in the sugar cane fields six days a week, weeding and irrigating, while raising their brood. They were paid less than a dollar a day. Needless to say, it was an extremely difficult existence, but like the rest of their counterparts, my parents practiced "gaman" (perseverance) and had an attitude of "ganbatte" (go for broke, do your best) in coping with their life.

As I said earlier, each of us had designated chores every Sunday morning. My two brothers, ages 15 and 13, were members of the FFA (Future Farmers of America) at school and every Sunday morning had the assignment of irrigating the asparagus which grew on a couple of acres adjacent to the cane fields. The plantation owners had lent the acreage to the FFA as a patriotic gesture, and the students learned to plant, maintain, and harvest the asparagus. The Sunday irrigation was a special assignment the FFA teacher had given my brothers because we lived so close to the fields. The boys had taken Miyo (my 7-year old sister) to baby-sit while they did the irrigation. They described the scenario when they got home later that morning.

The boys first made the rounds of the irrigation pipes to turn the sprayers on and found a spot on the hillside where they could sit and get an excellent view of Pearl Harbor which lay off in the distance below. The boys were excited watching the "maneuvers" going on, with the planes diving and bombing the ships in the harbor. By the time the boys had turned on all the irrigation sprayers, the attack on Pearl Harbor had started so it was just around 8:00 AM when they sat down to watch the "action," Miyo innocently sitting next to them. When she started getting sprayed by the dirt coming from where the anti-aircraft shells had landed nearby and started to cry and wanted to go home, the boys reluctantly gave up the show and brought her home, scolding her all the while. When they arrived home, our parents would not let them return to the asparagus fields because by then the radio was announcing that this was real war and not "maneuvers." (During that period, the armed forces carried on frequent maneuvers on Oahu.)

By around 10 o'clock that morning, we were all huddled around the radio in the parlor, petrified by the awful announcements coming over the air. Neither of my parents understood English, so

I did the translation. Martial law was declared effective immediately, complete with total blackout and curfews. There was a great fear of imminent invasion by the Japanese.

School was suspended for a week, and plantation workers were ordered not to report to work until further notice. Around 4 o'clock that afternoon, carloads of people began passing by our camp. They were evacuees from Pearl City and Aiea, towns adjacent to Pearl Harbor. They were headed for the mountains beyond our house. A Japanese couple with four children (ages 5 thru 12) stopped and asked to stay with us. Their car was loaded with bedding, clothing, canned goods, and other things. We later learned that these were relatively prosperous watercress farmers from Pearl City, no wonder they had a car. In retrospect, I feel my parents were extremely generous to allow complete strangers to move in. My memory of that time is not very clear, but I do remember a couple of things that kind of irked me. One was that the Mother of the family sat in the same spot in the parlor, covered by a blanket practically the whole time they were with us. What she had under the blanket must have been the family treasures, her handbag, and other things precious to her. She was afraid their hosts were thieves, I suppose.

Another thing that bothered me was mealtimes, which was a big hassle. At first we were going to take turns using the kitchen to prepare separate meals, but both families were short of food supplies so we decided to pool our resources. The father of the other family drove to Waipahu town to try to purchase food supplies but all the stores were out of everything. Fortunately, my folks had a small vegetable garden and a few chickens, so we made chicken hekka (sukiyaki) on some days and alternated with canned goods and vegetables on other days and pooled our supply of rice, our daily staple. We did all our cooking on a 3-burner kerosene stove.

We were fortunate that the house was big enough to accommodate two families. We had just moved into this house in plantation camp #3 in the summer of that year. Since this camp was very remote from the center of town (about 40 miles), the plantation owners had decided to build 3-bedroom houses with indoor toilets here in order to lure workers to live here. All the houses in the camps closer to town were 1 or 2 bedroom houses with outhouses. We had three bedrooms but only one double bed (for my brothers), the rest of us used futons on the floor which were folded and put away during the day. My brothers had one bedroom, my sisters and I had the second bedroom and our parents the other bedroom. Our unexpected guests slept in the parlor, all six of them. The kitchen was large enough for one long table and two wooden benches for our family to use at mealtime and to use for homework in normal times. For the duration, the two families ate in shifts. Our houseguests went back to their house in Pearl City after staying with us for a week and I, for one, was glad to see them go.

In March or April of 1942, a few months into the war, everyone in Hawaii was issued a gas mask to carry everywhere at all times.

Growing up Japanese American in Hawaii

I was born in 1925 and started first grade in 1931. In those days, there were no pre-school or kindergarten classes. We went to regular American school from 8:00 in the morning until 3:00 in the afternoon. Most of our teachers were imports from the mainland. I remember them as pretty young Haole women, eager to help us learn to read and write English and to communicate with

each other in English. Haole is a Hawaiian term for white people. Miss Martin, my first grade teacher had a terrible time trying to pronounce our Oriental names. So she decided to give each of us "haole" names, i.e., Mitsuko (my Japanese first name) became Mitzi, which I didn't like so she later changed it to Jean. Junko became June, Masako became Mary, Kenjiro became Kenny, Bok Hee Lee became Benny and so on. These names stuck with us throughout our school years and many of us had them legalized when we became adults.

Most of us were children of immigrants from Asia. In school, we mixed with children of many nationalities: Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Filipino, Portuguese, Spanish (from Spain), Puerto Rican, Hawaiian, and Samoan. We all spoke our parents' language at home and spoke Pidgin English to interface with each other at school. Pidgin was considered broken or substandard English and the teachers tried to discourage us from using it at school. Pidgin originated in the early years when the sugar plantations began hiring people of so many different language backgrounds that it became necessary to develop a common means of communication. It is a mixture of English and Hawaiian, with words from Japanese, Chinese, Korean, and other languages thrown in. Examples are as follows: "You pau kau kau?" means "Are you finished eating?" Or, "Da manapua was rill ono." means "The pork bun was really delicious." Despite the earnest effort of the educators in Hawaiian schools to eradicate its usage, Pidgin has lasted for more than a century and is still used by many in Hawaii.

Growing up in Hawaii during the depression years, we were affected by the extreme poverty of our families due to the meager wages our parents earned as laborers on the sugar plantation, but we never went hungry. Hot lunch was served in the cafeteria at school, but most of us could not afford to buy lunch so we always brought lunch from home in a little aluminum box about 4x7 and 2" deep. In this box, my mother had packed about a cup of steamed white rice with a preserved red plum in the middle and a couple of slices of Spam on the side. One day, Bok Hee (Benny) decided my lunch was better than the one he brought (just rice with kim chee), and insisted on an even exchange. To this day, I do not like kim chee (Korean pickled cabbage with lots and lots of garlic). Miss Martin ran a daily lunch inspection because she didn't think our lunches were nutritious (no fruits and vegetables, and no milk.) As a result, she decided to give each of us a needed dose of castor oil every day, instructing us to bring a teaspoon each day to school. In retrospect, I suspect she bought the bottles of castor oil with her own money, bless her soul. In any event, I just could not swallow this nutritional remedy Miss Martin provided. When Benny saw how I was almost passing out from holding the castor oil in my mouth, he volunteered to take my share from the next day on when Miss Martin was not looking.

Miss Martin was still my teacher in 1932 when the Lindbergh baby was kidnapped and murdered. One day another teacher came to our classroom and whispered something to Miss Martin and they both began to cry. I had not witnessed such drama in my life so I was full of curiosity. When I got home from school, I told my father about what happened at school that day and he told me the news about the kidnapping and murder of Charles Lindbergh's child. He had read about it in the daily Japanese newspaper, the Nippu Jiji. Although he had only a fourth grade education in Japan, my father could read and write Japanese very well and he could read and understand a little bit of English. Under different circumstances, I am sure that my father could have achieved a lot better in his life.

I was in the fifth grade when I experienced the most humiliating day of my life. It was raining so

hard continuously for two days that all the plantation workers were forced to take time off, without pay. Most of them just stayed indoors and played cards or just caught up on their sleep, but not my father. He trudged to my school in the rain to visit me and to have a parent-teacher conference in his limited Pidgin with my teacher, Mrs. Lodge. Mrs. Lodge was the wife of a plantation field supervisor so she could understand Pidgin quite well. He stood by the door until Mrs. Lodge invited him in and after she found out that she had an interested parent visiting her classroom, she was tickled to death and carried on a long conversation with him, with my father using body language and Pidgin to communicate with her. He told her that while I was in school, she had complete jurisdiction over me and if I didn't behave, she had his permission to render corporal punishment on me. All this was going on in front of all my classmates who were snickering and carrying on. From that day on, I dreaded rainy days. In retrospect, I should have been proud that Mrs. Lodge heaped praise on my father in front of everyone. Now, I say God bless him and may he rest in peace.

When they came to Hawaii in the early 1900's, my parents brought with them their own set of values that they tried to instill in us as we were growing up. Of utmost importance of these values was the maintenance of "family image." There was strong emphasis on the avoidance of the shame we could bring to our family by committing any kind of misdemeanor or rowdy behavior in public, or playing hooky from school, etc.

Even though I knew that playing hooky from school was a big nono, I was tempted to do so many times, not from regular school, but from Japanese Language School which we were forced to attend every weekday afternoon and on Saturdays. Each day after regular school ended at 3 o'clock, we walked about three miles to Waipahu Hongwanji Church where we were enrolled in Japanese Language School. The sessions were one hour long on week days and three hours on Saturdays. We were children of Japanese immigrants (Isseis), and were known as Niseis (second generation) and were all required to go to Japanese school, not to learn Emperor worship as some suspected, but to learn the language and to learn about our heritage. I attended Japanese Language School for ten years but did not retain much because I was not dedicated to learning Japanese. My main interest was in regular school because I was getting good grades in English composition and enjoyed it very much. In retrospect, I am ashamed to say I didn't appreciate the sacrifices our parents were making in scraping up tuition money for this extra education.

Japanese kanji (written characters) is extremely difficult. Kanji is pictograms of Chinese origin used in modern Japanese. On the following page are examples of kanji that I practiced while in the 9th and 10th grades. I discovered these scraps of homework in a box of old school books and letters. We were taught to read and write kanji from the 6th grade on. Before that, we learned Japanese words in what is called "kata-kana" similar to block printing in English. Then we advanced to "hira-gana" similar to script in English. From then on, we advanced to kanji. I feel that the thing that Japanese Language School failed to teach the Niseis of Hawaii was how to carry on a conversation in Japanese, using contemporary language. Since we were mostly the offspring of peasants from different prefectures in Japan, the Japanese we heard our parents speak was indigenous to the various regions from which came. When they conversed with others from the same prefecture, they spoke their own "lingo" and got along fine, but when they talked to other Japanese from other prefectures, they spoke in a stilted manner in language that was considered "old-fashioned Meiji era language." I heard many Niseis of my generation

comment that when they were stationed in the army in Japan after World War II, they were ridiculed for the Japanese they spoke.

What little kanji I remembered came in handy when my ex-husband and I moved to the mainland in 1955 and I could use it to correspond with my parents on rare occasions. The whole process was extremely tedious and difficult but I managed to write a few letters in hiragana and kanji. I would think about what I want to say in English, then use an English-Japanese dictionary to translate my thoughts to Japanese.

In all my rambling, I failed to mention transportation to and from school. There were two or three enterprising Isseis in our plantation town, Waipahu. These were immigrants who went into business after completing their initial contracts with the sugar plantation as field laborers. One of them was Mr. Kaneshiro who not only opened a small grocery store in Waipahu, but invested his profits from the store into a General Motors truck which carried children to and from school for a monthly fee. His route covered three plantation camps: #3 (our camp), #5, and #10, and picked up and delivered about 50 children each weekday and Saturday. The truck had long benches so most of the kids had seats but if we got to the truck late, we had to stand all the way. Mr. Kaneshiro picked us up at Camp #3 at 6:30 AM and dropped us off at 6:30 PM each weekday and at 7:00 AM and noon on Saturdays.

Even at a young age, I really admired Mr. Kaneshiro. He was certainly an entrepreneur and a go-getter. He and his wife had only one child, a son, who he sent to St Louis School, a private college preparatory high school in downtown Honolulu and to a mainland medical school to become one of the first Nisei doctors in Hawaii.

Military Service in World War II

My ex-husband Mike (now deceased) was a member of the 442nd Infantry Regimental Combat Team who served in Europe during World War II. When we got divorced after 15 years of marriage, he took his photo albums with him but I found two pictures in my other albums. One shows Mike in his uniform with the 442nd emblem on his upper sleeve, and the other picture is one that was taken at a veterans' get-together in some night club in Los Angeles. My brother-in-law Mori (now deceased) was a member of the 100th Infantry Battalion, which was the nucleus of the 442nd Infantry Regimental Combat Team.

In February 1943, when the United States government announced the formation of the 442nd Infantry Regimental Combat Team, Mike was among thousands of Japanese Americans (Niseis) from the mainland and Hawaii who volunteered to serve. These Niseis felt that they had to demonstrate their loyalty to the United States if they and their families had any hope for a future in this country. There was rampant racism against us during this period so these young men were adamant about disproving the unwarranted suspicions about their patriotism. Their slogan was "Go For Broke!"

The following is an excerpt from a publication that Google provided me:

"When this unified unit arrived in Europe, they had to prove their competence, as well as their loyalty to white soldiers and commanding officers. However, after liberating the small town of

Bruyeres in Southern France and rescuing the "Lost Battalion" (141st), the Japanese American soldiers gained the respect of their fellow soldiers, the townspeople of Bruyeres, and particularly the members of the "Lost Battalion." For their performance, the 442nd was recognized as the most decorated unit in United States history. 18,000 total awards were bestowed upon the 442nd, including 9,500 Purple Hearts, 52 Distinguished Service Crosses and seven Distinguished Unit Citations."

When these veterans had their 40th Anniversary Reunion in October 1984 with the people of Bruyeres France, my brother-in-law Mori took my sister Amy with him. She was the first one in our family to go to Europe. She said they visited the beautiful cemeteries in France and Italy where many of the soldiers from Hawaii are buried. She said that the reunion with the townspeople of Bruyeres was a very emotional one. They also visited Dachau, the concentration camp in Germany and towns in Italy where the boys from the 100th Infantry and 442nd Regimental Combat Team had served.

The President's Visit

In 1938, while serving his second term as President of the United States, Franklin Delano Roosevelt made a visit to the Hawaiian Islands. His itinerary was published in the local newspapers, including the Nippu Jiji, the daily Japanese newspaper. My father made it a point to ensure that all his children caught a sight of President Roosevelt when he passed by in our neck of the woods. On the given day, he instructed us to walk to Kamehameha Highway which was about two miles from plantation camp #5 where we lived. He said that the President's motorcade would be using this highway to return to Honolulu after his visit to Schofield Barracks in Wahiawa at about 6:30 that afternoon. He said that the timing was going to be perfect because we would all be home from school and that he and our mother would be home from work by then. I was 13 years old at the time and the oldest so he put me in charge and so I lined my two brothers and three sisters up and told them that Oto-san (Father in Japanese) wanted us to go to Kamehameha Highway to see the President go by. In the meantime, he would go take a quick bath and put on some clean clothes before he joined us.

The kids and I walked the dirt road in our bare feet (the majority of the kids in Hawaii went barefoot in those days (see next page) and waited at the shoulder of Kamehameha Highway for the President's motorcade to go by. It was only about five minutes after we reached the highway that this happened. I don't remember exactly how many cars there were in the motorcade but I think there were two cars ahead of the President's open convertible and two or three after that car. As the motorcade approached us, it slowed down to a crawl so we could see the President very clearly, about fifteen feet away. He sat in the back seat with someone else, and waved and smiled at us. He had a 100-watt smile, I can tell you. There were only about 15-20 kids in our group, all of us barefooted ragamuffin country bumpkins (and all Orientals) and here was the President of the United States smiling and waving at us. AND, our father missed the whole thing! All because he wanted to be presentable! We met him on our way home and he was fit to be tied!

When FDR signed Executive Order 9066 by which all people of Japanese descent on the west coast of the mainland were sent to internment camps in 1942, I wonder if he remembered the bunch of Oriental kids by the roadside in Hawaii with whom he exchanged such warm greetings

a few years back.

Incidentally, Executive Order 9066 did not apply to us in Hawaii, except for a selected few, mostly prominent community leaders and a few language school teachers. A large portion of the population in Hawaii in those days was of Japanese descent (approximately 200,000), so internment was deemed not feasible, mainly due to economic reasons. However, due to the prevalence of suspicion at that time, the FBI investigated each and every Japanese household in the Hawaiian Islands for any indication of disloyalty to the United States. The agents visited each house and looked for pictures of the Japanese imperial family and letters received from relatives in Japan prior to December 7th. They found that they were on a wild goose chase since they found nothing incriminating anywhere.