CIVITAS
The Journal of Citizenship Studies

The Memoirs of George D. Coyan

Northwestern Oklahoma State University Institute of Citizenship Studies

CIVITAS

THE JOURNAL OF CITIZENSHIP STUDIES

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***Civitas: The Journal of Citizenship Studies*, a publication of the NWOSU Institute for Citizenship Studies and Department of Social Sciences, produces** Humanities and Social Science articles, book reviews and data as they relate to citizenship topics. Submissions should be sent to: Dr. Aaron L. Mason and Dr. Eric J. Schmaltz, Department of Social Sciences, Northwestern Oklahoma State University, 709 Oklahoma Boulevard, Alva, Oklahoma 73717, or email: **<nwics@nwosu.edu>**. Institute Website: **<http://www.nwosu.edu/school-of-arts-and-sciences/social-sciences/nwics>**. Phone: (580) 327-8525.

CIVITAS' MISSION STATEMENT

Civitas: The Journal of Citizenship Studies is an interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and peer-reviewed publishing venue aimed at promoting scholarship concerning the Humanities and Social Sciences as they relate to citizenship matters. The NWOSU Institute for Citizenship Studies and Department of Social Sciences facilitate the Journal and welcome both qualitative and quantitative submissions by faculty and advanced undergraduate and graduate students from Oklahoma's regional universities, two-year community colleges, and other institutions of higher education and beyond.

DEFINITION OF THE TERM "CIVITAS"

The term "civitas" emanates from Roman antiquity. It originally described a type of settlement or political entity. Later on, the word was used to express the condition of individuals living within the Roman state and to address whether they were full members of the Roman polity. As such, "civitas" differentiated formal citizenship status from those who were not citizens. These early Greco-Roman ideals left an indelible imprint upon the concept of citizenship in the modern Western world. Thus, the modern disciplines of the Humanities and Social Sciences are inexorably intertwined with the concept of citizenship. The word connotes the concept, quality and condition of citizenship and therefore is an appropriate word for the Institute.

EXPLANATION OF THE INSTITUTE LOGO "STATUE OF FREEDOM"

The symbol used by the Institute has appeared under a variety of names, including "The Statue of Freedom," "Armed Freedom," "Freedom," or as she was originally called, "Freedom Triumphant in War and Peace." An allegorical figure representing the concept of Liberty, it was selected to stand on the Dome of the United States Capitol because of the inclusive nature of her physical style and esoteric meanings. Her design, for example, incorporates both classical Greco-Roman and American Indian dress as well as the combination of war and peace motifs. As such, she represents both the Old and New Worlds. This figure also incorporates a number of other important features. First, she faces east toward the main entrance of the United States Capitol to symbolize that the sun never sets on Freedom. Second, the base upon which she stands is inscribed with the Latin phrase "E Pluribus Unum." Third, the statue is imbued with deep symbolic value because of President Abraham Lincoln's insistence that the figure be placed on the Capitol Dome in 1863 to commemorate the eventual reunification of the Union. Thus, all of these factors together make the statue a fitting symbol for the concept of citizenship.

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Warm regards from the campus of Northwestern Oklahoma State University in Alva, and welcome to the 2024 special edition of *Civitas: The Journal of Citizenship Studies*.

At present, Northwestern stands as the only regional state university in Oklahoma to operate an endowed institute and to publish its own journal. This special publishing platform opens research doors to young scholars and others from different fields. Not many smaller universities make possible that kind of opportunity. For the public record, in addition to posting the digital versions online, we are placing multiple hard copies of each *Civitas* edition at the NWOSU Library in Alva, the Alva Public Library, the Oklahoma Historical Society (OHS) in Oklahoma City, and even at other venues when the occasion might require it.

Again, we call upon students from interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary fields, especially at the graduate level in Northwestern's American Studies Program, to consider submitting appropriate original research findings or book reviews for potential publication in *Civitas*. Besides university faculty here and elsewhere, independent and local scholars are also invited to contribute their work to the publication. *Civitas* is important because it provides another means of helping preserve part of our local, regional, and national heritage, as well as broader comparative topics that might sometimes be global in reach.

Several individuals and groups deserve appreciation for their continuing support of Institute and Departmental activities this past year, including the NWOSU Senior Administration, the NWOSU Foundation, and the Masonic Charity Foundation of Oklahoma. Additionally, we wish to recognize the professional assistance provided by Alica Hall and her staff at the NWOSU Printing Services. Not least of all, a profound thank you goes to NWOSU graduate intern and copy editor, Kaylea Brown, who helped design and produce this year's excellent special edition volume.

Dr. Aaron L. Mason and Dr. Eric J. Schmaltz
Co-Executive Directors, Civitas: Journal of Citizenship Studies


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"One small step for man; one giant leap for mankind."

PREFACE

I had the privilege to know George D. Coyan many years ago when I was a student in high school and college. In 1988, Mr. Coyan was a senior faculty member in the Social Sciences Department at North Iowa Area Community College (NIACC) in Mason City, Iowa, when the department hired my father to teach course sections of American Government and United States History. Mr. Coyan retired in 1989 but remained friends with my father.

As was the case of Mr. Coyan, some of the younger members of the Second World War generation were still employed in the workforce in the late 1980s and early 1990s. As a history enthusiast even in my younger years, I grew quite interested when I learned that Mr. Coyan had served in active combat during the war at the famous Battle of the Bulge from December 1944 to January 1945.

In the Cold War's final years, it seemed to young Americans like myself that "the end of history" already had occurred in 1945 with the Second World War's dramatic conclusion. For those of us growing up amid the longstanding superpower standoff between the United States and the Soviet Union, however admittedly punctuated by diplomatic, military, and geopolitical oscillations of stability and tense uncertainty, the Second World War was something different, something consequential. Though less distant, even the Korean and Vietnam Wars seemed not as distinct historical epochs as had been the Second World War, certainly more morally ambiguous than their predecessor.

Perhaps my sensibility or, dare I say, nostalgia, about the Second World War is how subsequent generations sometimes view the now bygone Cold War of my childhood. For us children of the Cold War, the Second World War presented itself as a dramatic, high-stakes political power game taking form in a titanic military struggle of political giants striding the world stage and adhering to clear-cut ideological differences—Churchill, Hitler, Mussolini, Roosevelt, Stalin, and Tojo.

The "Pax Americana's" relative calm and prosperity of my youth, of course, did not truly mark "the end of history," as if little or nothing of significance had occurred after 1945 (only consider the Civil Rights Movement, the Space Race, or the Information Age), much as the West's premature and triumphalist announcements about "the end of history" had proved unfounded in Soviet Communism's collapse and the Cold War's immediate aftermath in the 1990s. History is in constant motion, even if we are not conscious of it on a daily basis; history is always just getting started, with each generation having to relearn what came before them, just as our present day and future serve as prologues to the past.

The events surrounding the last world war were nonetheless earth-shattering, when even ordinary people had to rise to the occasion and, in the process, make history themselves. That world felt somehow just out of reach by the 1980s, but there were still those men and women who experienced and made their way in that world. George D. Coyan was one such connection to this

not so distant time and place. But in a way, it showed us a path whereby we, too, could leave a consequential and positive mark in our own time.

Mr. Coyan's autobiography describes a world prior to the Second World War, growing up during the Great Depression in a working-class family in Iowa and Nebraska. Detailing a more prosperous postwar America, it also provides an intimate view of Midwestern America in the middle decades of the twentieth century, the so-called "American Century." Equally important, his story is one of public service, whether as a citizen-soldier, public educator, or family man.

I wish to thank Mr. Coyan's late wife, Noreen, and their family for making this story available to a wider audience. Nearly a decade ago, not long before her passing, Noreen reached out to my father and donated the autobiography and an assortment of old American newspapers that her husband had gathered over the decades. She also shared with me that her husband probably had suffered some form of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as a result of the war, little quirks that she had noticed over the years, but they made more sense after she had discovered his autobiography following his death. For example, she noted that he avoided parades and firework shows, and he often tried not to sit next to windows at public venues among other things.

It is my honor and privilege as editor to preserve, publish, and publicize this memoir. In the late 1990s, Noreen had set the process into motion, typing up the text and adding photographs to make booklets intended for family members at first, but I have subsequently scanned the entire booklet into a workable digital format. As editor, I tried to keep the text as close to the original, capturing Mr. Coyan's personal energy and style. With the assistance of my copy editor, we only made editorial changes or insertions in the case of occasional misspellings or irregularities found in the original typed manuscript. We also took the liberty to place the family photographs at strategic points throughout the narrative to make it flow better. Finally, my copy editor painstakingly scanned numerous newspaper headlines taken from the pages of Mr. Coyan's old newspaper collection in order to create a vivid collage to go with his story, capturing many of the great events during his lifetime.

Dr. Eric J. Schmaltz
Departmental Chair of Social Sciences, Northwestern Oklahoma State University, and Senior Editor, Civitas: Journal of Citizenship Studies

MEMOIRS OF GEORGE D. COYAN—AN AMERICAN LIFE (1925-1995): VETERAN, EDUCATOR, AND FATHER

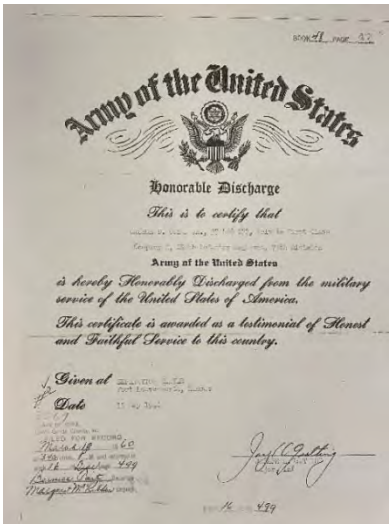
GEORGE D. COYAN
SUBMITTED BY NOREEN COYAN

INTRODUCTION

All the world's a stage and all the men and women are merely players. They have their exits and entrances and one man in his time plays many parts. Life is a set of personal experiences, and an individual will view those incidents according to their own background. We do not all see the same happenings in the same fashion. My life is viewed by myself. When I was growing up, there was a popular song called *LIFE IS JUST A BOWL OF CHERRIES.* Well, maybe in a way, but one has to remember that there are some sour ones, sweet ones, and a few pits or you have to take the bitter with the sweet. I am writing this journal as a way to convey to my children some personal experiences of my life. Maybe I should have written this when they were born so they would have better understood why their father did those crazy things and expressed himself in such a fashion. Remember most of all, I love you all and it's been a wonderful experience.

BEGINNING YEARS

To begin, my name is George D. Coyan, Jr. as affixed to my U.S. Army discharge certificate. On my birth certificate, it states Junior Coyan. My father once told me Junior meant I took his complete name. However, most of the time, I simply wrote George Coyan after my father died. My father was born in 1898, the same year George Dewey defeated the Spanish at Manila Bay in the Philippines, so is the origin of our name. I never did like being called Junior which I interpreted to be smaller or lesser than someone else. That was just my mental fix.


Army of the United States

Honorable Discharge

This is to certify that

Army of the United States

is hereby Honorably Discharged from the military service of the United States of America.

This certificate is awarded as a testimonial of Honest and Faithful Service to this country.

Given at

Date

Figure 1: George D. Coyan's Honorable Discharge

The U.S. Army assigned me a number, 37486877, since I was a piece of equipment or generally known as G.I., Government Issued. This is a number I will never forget as we had to refer to it continually while I was in the service. In 1944, we as soldiers were taking a bus to Bridgend, Wales. The vehicle was stopped by British Tommies who charged aboard in battle dress and machine guns. While they pointed the gun barrel at our head, they searched for our dog tags under our shirts. The soldier having the tag in his hand asked, "What is your number, soldier?" After they questioned all of us, they stated there was a report of some German parachute units in the area wearing American uniforms. Always remember your number even under duress. The federal government also assigned me an identification number so they can monitor my existence in the nation. 502-22-1443 does make payments to the federal and state agencies at tax time and also receives social security payments for retirement purposes. Someday in the future, they will affix one's number to the left cheek of the posterior. When one asks who you are, it can be a complex answer.

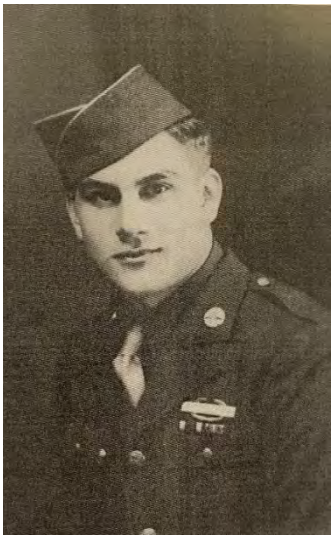


Figure 2: Empire Studios, London: April 25, 1945

Well, this George Coyan was born in Council Bluffs, Iowa, on August 15, 1925. By that, I am a native Iowan just like the rest of you folks. However, before I was one year old, my mother, Dorothy, and father, George, moved across the river to Omaha, Nebraska. To be exact, 4614 Izard Street at the end of the street car line. It was a new house and we were the first occupants. We lived there about six years until I finished second grade at Walnut Hill School, a school I taught at my second year in the Omaha school system. One of my first recollections in life was riding in a children's wagon with my father pulling it to a marble works. At the marble factory, he would pick up scraps of broken pieces of marble with a polished surface so that he could construct a sidewalk around the formal garden in our backyard. My father developed a series of two terraces with a waterfall coming down that would incline into a figure eight shaped pond with a raised curved bridge going over the water. He

constructed walkways and stairs around the pond that had water lilies and numerous plantings of flowers and shrubbery. It was beautiful and a pride that he had conceived it in his mind and created it with his hands. His tools were a little red wagon to move dirt, building materials and a shovel.

The Great Depression was something that hit every family financially in the 1930's and our family was no exception. My family found it difficult to pay a $2.00 a month phone bill or the bill for coal that went into the basement. Such fun for a small boy to watch through the dining room window as the coal slipped or rolled down the metal shoot into the basement with a shaking thud as it hit the floor. The coal dust would sift up into the living area putting a thin coat of greasy oil over most of the polished surfaces. I wanted to be a coal man! My father took salary cuts almost every month for a period of years until we lost the house and had to move. Dad remarked that he was glad to be able to have a continual job at Firestone as a bookkeeper. It was not unusual for him to have to work nights to unload tires that had arrived by truck that day. Everyone was willing to do any task assigned to retain their employment with no extra or overtime pay. I believe my father's salary finally stabilized at $110 a month during the 1930's. At that time, rent was between $27.50 - $35.00 a month, bread was 5 - 10 cents a loaf, lunch meat 8 - 10 cents a pound, soap was 5 cents a bar, a shirt was one dollar as was a tie, stamps were 3 cents for a letter and 1 cent for a postcard, pop was 5 cents as was a candy bar, street car tokens were 10 cents each. College tuition in 1946 at the University of Nebraska was $35.00 a semester.

After we moved out of our home, we first located an apartment on busy 33rd and Cummings Street. Two months later, we moved to another apartment near Walnut Hill School and a month later, we moved to a house on about 50th and Writ Street. So I transferred from Walnut Hill to Monroe School in the third grade. All this movement created frustration within the family. My father was forever putting his diamond ring in hock with a loan agency for a few dollars to make ends meet. We always had adequate food and clothing. There never seemed to be any want with these necessities. As a youngster in kindergarten, I had to wear short pants to school no matter how cold it was and sometimes my legs, during the winter months, were blue in color. Later, I got elevated to knickers with long socks, and my final rite of passage was to long pants. I had arrived! It always seemed I was dressed too well compared to the rest of the children in my class. My mother, at this time, was considered a clothes horse for buying clothing and having a closet full of dresses, coats and hats. There were forever arguments about spending too much money for clothing between my mother and father. Let me put this in another perspective. At the time, my mother was in her early to late 20's. I was born when my mother was 19 years old, and maybe that in itself explains her attitude and behavior.

Before the fourth grade, we moved to 48th Avenue between Biondo and Grant Street. From that location, I walked to Clifton Hill School until graduation from elementary school. We had a Fox Terrier called Pooch. He was a stray to which we gave a home, just like our adopted cat called Tom. He was a wild one that slept most of the time on top of the downstairs furnace or rode Pooch around the basement at night once in a while. We moved once and the cat wouldn't stay moved, so we eventually lost Tom to our old neighborhood. The house location was within

walking distance of grocery stores on Military Avenue, such as Hinky Dinky, and a new store chain opened on 45th Street called Safeway. On Military and 45th, we had a real shopping center with drug stores, restaurants, hardware store, dentists, bakery, a theater called The Military, and a couple of taverns, one called Monday Mountain. Also on Military, we had a Reeds Ice Cream Station. Ice cream was 5 cents a cone and a 12-ounce bottle of pop was 5 cents. There was also a Dad's Cookie Factory where we could buy broken cookies by the pound for 10 - 15 cents. My mother loved a fudge bar called The Champ that was a quarter of a pound of candy for 5 cents. Gasoline at a cut rate station called Correl was 10.9 cents a gallon and watermelon at Louis Fruit Market was 1 cent a pound. One of the big advantages of being near Military Avenue was one had the choice of two streetcar lines, one to 45th and Ames and the other to Benson.

On 48th Street, I had a couple of friends. I remember one was Bud Stater. His father was a salesman and drove a beautiful Auburn that was a fire engine red with a boat shaped trunk. There was Forest Woolford, his brother died of polio one summer. With that incident, we were kept inside to play for weeks. We were told not to play with other children.

Our next house move was to Burdett Street, but it was only a block and a half away from our old place. So, we actually lived in the same neighborhood and I had the same friends. Across the alley lived Joe Archibold, a friend and associate for many years through grade school, high school and college years. Joe attended Holy Name School, Creighton High School, and Creighton University. Over the years, Joe and I did many activities together, sort of together but different.

In 1937, our family extended with the birth of Ronald Champion Coyan. Champion was my Grandmother's maiden name and my mother had had a very close attachment to them in her earlier years. For years, we always called him Champ. Our father made a very elaborate wooden cradle for Ron to be put into when he was brought home. It was pink because the doctor told Mom and Dad it was going to be a girl. The cradle was hand carved with roses at the top and leaves at the base. The basket cradle was suspended by chains. Dad also built a chest of wood with hand tooled water lilies on each end. These were beautiful projects of some size with the flowers being some 30 inches across. My father used to spend hours working with wood, and I'd sit and watch from a stool.

On Burdett Street, I had a room of my own upstairs in an attic, my own hide away. The room had no heat ducts, but it was a place where I could work on my model airplanes by the hour. My mother used to mention that I was on a dope high with the room all closed up. The glue and paint fumes were very prevalent. I used to make models and fly them off of the garage roof. If they didn't fly right, I set them on fire for their last flight.

One summer while Dad was working on the front lawn, he found a ring. The neighbors told us that the house we lived in was used to make and distribute alcohol during the Prohibition period. Dad did have it appraised by a jeweler and actually confirmed that the ring contained

an authentic diamond. Years later, that diamond became my college graduation ring and is now worn by my wife, Noreen.

As I remember, our first automobile was a two door 1929 Willies Whippet. With all four cylinders working strong, it could get us to 35 miles per hour. On a trip to Sioux City to see my Grandmother Stoesiger (my mother's mother), it would take a morning and we'd come back on Sunday afternoon on old Highway 75. The highway wandered through Council Bluffs and Missouri Valley. Most of it was paved, but it was a long winding drive along and among the Loess Hills. A tank of gas would get us there and back. The old filling stations had pumps with gas at the top and you could see it through the glass. The attendant would put the hose into the tank and gravity would propel it into the gas tank, which if I remember right was in front of the windshield. Going to Grandma's was always a big trip. She could cook up a storm and make the best cakes with a handful of this, a pinch of that, a couple of eggs, milk and stir. Her three-layer banana cake was delicious and homemade noodles with beef and dumplings. For a young boy, it was like hog heaven. I remember, at that time, everyone would go to a drive-in and they would serve tubs of beer. Of course, I always got a sip or two. After the Willies car, we had a 1933 Ford with suicide doors, but they lost that to the finance company and replaced it with an old 12-cylinder Willies Knight. That was one big system. Our final car that lasted through the war was a 1935 Ford. I never did learn to drive until I was in the service, and that was with a jeep and a fire truck.

One grade school year, Joe Archibald and I went together and bought some $10 worth of fireworks through some mail-order outfit. For hours, we studied the catalog and finally sent in our anxious order. Fireworks in Nebraska were illegal. The most memorable incident of those fireworks was my father saying one weekend that we ought to try this candle device and see what it does. So, we went to the backyard and lit it. This device made a big fuzzy track in circles up to 60 - 70 feet and then let off one huge explosion. My dad said, "Let's all take a ride". We all loaded up into the car and left the neighborhood for an hour. The rest of the fireworks I had to set off at Carter Lake. That was an area which was supposed to be in Iowa, but at times, no one knew what state you were in around that horseshoe lake.

Growing up and going to Clifton Hill School was a fun experience. We used to have playground before school, with recess, and at noon. I used to take my lunch to school in a wrapped newspaper with a string around it. Two sandwiches or four slices of bread with an apple or banana and some cookies or a cupcake. I remember good old bologna with mustard or peanut butter and banana sandwiches or a bean sandwich. After eating, we were revved up to go outside and play. All the boys of a room had to stay in a specific locality on the playground. We always had a marble game with a triangle or a circle of potties. With potties, there were four or five holes we had to dig. We all seemed to have knives. It was like an armed camp. When your parents bought you a new pair of boots, they had to have a little pocket with a small knife. If your boots didn't have a knife, they just weren't any good. We also had a game called Territory. You drew a large square on the ground and with each knife throw that stuck, you would cut the territory down or in half, so half became halves until no one could hit on the

remaining territory. As I remember, no one ever got attacked by another student with knives, but we all carried them. Another successful playground toy was the yo-yo. We practiced by the hour, developing yo-yo tricks, like Walk the Dog, Around the World, and Rock the Cradle, and those are just some of the ones I can remember. Of course, you had to own a Dunken yo-yo made of wood, and it had to be scuffed up to prove you could "walk the dog" a lot.

In academics, I was not one to excel. I just got along and did the work assigned. I tended to graduate from one system of spelling to another depending on the school you were in and what was in vogue at that time. At Clifton Hill, they developed a different system for the later years of grade school. We had different teachers for various subjects. Mrs. Scriven taught history and geography and Mrs. Carpenter taught English. The latter was one of my principals when I taught in the Omaha School System. I did my civic duty by being on safety patrol helping students cross the street at 45th Street. It was a busy street with traffic and street cars.

Our neighborhood gang of boys used to go to the movies for a Saturday matinee and see triple features for 10 cents. Our parents would love to get rid of us for 15 cents which paid for admission with a bag of popcorn or sometimes we took our own snacks. They always had a serial of Tom Mix or Tarzan with a cowboy film of Hoot Gibson or Ken Manard, maybe a comedy and some other B movie with always a cartoon in black and white.

Once they had a Robin Hood movie and afterward we started to make bows and arrows. We went to the lumberyard and bought a piece of ash wood and then to the hardware store for linen thread which we weaved into a bow string that had to be waxed. We then put knife blades on the tips of the arrows. We'd shoot those projectiles into the air and only God knows why we didn't kill someone. We were always making some darn thing or something that was in vogue. Kites were made of wood from orange crate boxes. It just took a couple of split pieces of wood cut, sanded with the help of our knives, a piece of a daily newspaper and loads of string. Every March, we flew kits and sent messages up to them via the string. Some kids bought expensive box kites or three stickers. But 90% of us flew two sticks with a lot of tail from rags. If a kite's string broke, you ran and ran to retrieve the string. One of the movies or serials we saw at the matinee was Tarzan. So we all started to swing from trees in a vacant lot with a lot of piss ass elms or box elder trees as they were called. My friend, Bud Stater, was jumping and yelling and he missed the limb. He fell and broke his arm. We got orders from our parents, "No more Tarzans."

We learned to make rubber guns, another use for orange crates. Cut out a gun with a handle and put a clothes pin on the rear, then notch the barrel end and sand it all up. We cut inner tubes for rubber bands and the size of the inner tubes determined the length of the barrel. We had wars and armies with strings of ammunition on our belts. As I remember, rubber gun fighting stopped with the polio outbreak.

Wooden cheese crates were another fascinating building material. We could make paddle boats out of them with a rubber band motor, or we could make mouse traps and capture live mice.

We built a sliding door rigged to spring at the rear of the box baited with cheese. Then we'd drown the mouse in a bucket of water. We got rid of mice in the basement, that is those that Tom, our cat, didn't get.

On many summer nights we played Kick the Can, Hide & Seek, and had rubber band fun fights. On the 4th of July, the older boys blew up cans with cherry bombs. Boy, they really went up high. The boys all had bicycles, knives, kites, rubber guns, yo-yo's, and BB guns. I had a single shot Daisy while most of the boys had Red Ryder lever action, some with leather strips hanging from the butt of the arm rest. We all had sleds. The real status symbol of this day was a Flexible Flyer! But any sled with waxed runners went down the Grant Street hill fast before they paved it. After that, we used an alternative run down alleys on Grant or Burdett. But the garbage trucks were forever destroying our runs. With spring, there was always baseball and, in the fall, football. There were enough of us boys in the neighborhood so we could choose sides for games. Baseballs were forever breaking out at the seams and they had to be taped with electrical tape and, of course, our bats had to be taped. The neighborhood was hard on equipment, but someone always had a bat or ball. We all had baseball gloves. If we weren't playing ball, we played catch. Everyone practiced to be a pitcher. The leaders were the oldest boys when we chose up sides with the runts being picked last and getting to play way out in the field. It was either that or be left out. We really didn't have many fights. The big fellows could beat the little ones up, so that settled most disputes.

A lot of arguments were just talk that was loud or some pushing and bumping. Once in a while, there would be a fist fight but it was rare, more of a power dispute of boys the same age. Most of the time, the football we played was two hand touch but sometimes the touch got a little rough and progressed into tackle. There were a lot of scratched hands, arms, and legs. A few bloody noses and cuts but mostly just headaches. We didn't have helmets just a football and a group of enthusiastic boys trying to prove themselves to the gang. I never did get to be a leader because I was just too young. It seems as I got older there were other things to do such as go out for school sports, practice my music, or work. While I was in the fourth or fifth grade, my mother made me take a couple of lessons in tap dancing in a Benson studio. It just didn't take! There was too much group pressure and a stigma that it was a sissy activity. I can still remember one step – "brush, brush, hop, step, brush, step, step." Anyway, my mother learned a few steps but for me it was a waste of time and money. Then there was an attempt to have me become a musician or clarinet player. That I enjoyed and practiced. I think my parents bought into a package deal. With so many monthly payments, you got a clarinet and lessons above the music store on Farnam. At least it got me started, and I was playing in the grade school orchestra and later the high school orchestra. I did reach a point where I could play second clarinet and in a pinch do first clarinet. Our orchestra teacher was Mr. Herrington, a nice, kind individual that never seemed to get angry and made most of the orchestra sessions an enjoyable experience. I must have played that instrument for six or seven years. Never practiced much, but I could read music and knew the instrument well enough to have fun and improvise. It became an opportunity to learn to appreciate music and participate in a group activity which was disciplined and created an enjoyable sound. The last time I played the clarinet was for a

high school pep rally in Carroll (a faculty band). The band leader said my clarinet sounded like a blue bird in heat.

At this period, families in our neighborhood did little traveling. Our yearly treks were to Sioux City to see my grandmother and that was a half day trip. However, in 1934, we took an extended trip to Illinois and on to Chicago to the 1934 World's Fair. Motoring across Iowa on old Highway 6 (now I-80) was all paved and called the Lincoln Highway. We stopped overnight in tourist rooms and in Chicago stayed in a hotel. On this trip, we first ventured to Catlin, Illinois, to see my mother's relatives, the Champions. I remember in one large brick house on the front living room floor they had a polar bear rug with a large bear head attached. It was also there I learned to make darts with nails on the end from wooden shingles.

There are only two things I can remember regarding our trip to Chicago. One, we got lost on a big street and Dad asked a policeman where the hotel was located. The policeman told Dad it was the other direction so he stopped the oncoming traffic and directed Dad to make a U-turn so he could go the right direction. The other thing I remember was my father took me to see Sally Rand do her famous fan dance. I sat on his shoulders. Why I went and not my mother, I do not remember. But there I was, some nine-year-old boy seeing this, then risque' performance. No wonder all my sexual attitudes are deviant.

The only other trips I can remember were taking the street car to Council Bluffs to see my Grandmother Gardner (my Dad's mother). These trips were mostly taken with myself and Dad. My mother and my Grandmother Gardner had a communication problem and when they did communicate it was bound to be a crisis situation like sickness or death. I can remember only one family picnic we ever had that included my father's family and our complete family. It was in Council Bluffs at Fremont Park on a summer day. I had a good time but there must have been some other shortcoming because it was the only one I remember. Pat Coyan is my older half-brother on my father's side of the family. My father was married to a Mary Coyan, and Pat was a son of that relationship. Upon the divorce, my father was awarded his son. Pat was raised by Grandmother Gardner after Dad married my mother, Dorothy Zehr. My father and I would take the streetcar downtown and transfer to a Council Bluffs line. In Council Bluffs, we would get a haircut free from Charlie Gardner who was a barber by profession and when he closed the shop, we'd go to Grandmother's for a huge dinner. Grandmother Gardner was a woman with a terrible temper, always drove a large Oldsmobile and owned several apartment houses from which she collected her own rents. As I remember, you never joked with Grandma Gardner.

After trudging off to Clifton Hill School for years in various routines, we finally graduated. Our class trip was a day excursion to Lincoln, Nebraska. We toured the state capital which had been newly built. At Nebraska University, we went through Moral Hall of Natural History and the University Stadium. We also visited a robber cave that was used prior to the Civil War as an underground-railroad station for escaped southern slaves. On our way home, we stopped at Father Flanagan's Boy's Town. At that time, they had one building. It was late in the evening so

Father Flanagan came out to the bus and talked to us about his philosophy regarding the orphanage. Boy's Town at that time was far out on Dodge Street in the middle of cornfields.

We moved on to high school after nine years of grade school. It really wasn't high school because we were located at Monroe School. Benson High School was across the football and track field from Monroe. But Benson was so crowded we attended 9th grade at this location. Across the street, west on Monroe, was Krug Park, a private facility where as a boy I took swimming lessons. The park used to have some rides but I knew the area as a place to swim. It had a large shaped pool (by a 10-year aids standard) with a change house on the North end. But my beginning experience in swimming was at the downtown YMCA in Omaha. For years, starting at 10 years old, I would take the streetcar downtown to the "Y" on Saturday to swim and participate in the Boy's Club activities. We played volleyball, had a story time and sang songs. I also got 15 cents so I could go to Woolworth's dime store on 16th and Farnam and buy a lunch of a chicken salad sandwich with potato chips and water. I would walk the stores a little and then take the streetcar home. I think my trolley rides were 5 cents or 6 tokens for a quarter. The old street cars were available to almost all areas of the town and ran about every 10 minutes during rush hours. People built homes and located families so that they could be close to a trolley line and, at the end of each line, was a suburban area with a drug store, grocery store and maybe a tavern or hardware store, just neighborhood shopping centers.

Figure 3: June, 1946 at home at 2304 Happy Hollow Blvd. Omaha, Nebraska

In 1937, about six months after the birth of Ron or Champ, we moved to 2304 Happy Hollow Boulevard. It was a block and a half from our Burdett house. It seems to me the rent was $35.00 a month and over the years was raised to $37.50. The house was owned by a man named Mr. Potter. He built three houses on two lots facing the Boulevard. The house faced East on Happy

Hollow Boulevard which, at the time, was a black top road with a 25-30 foot parking to mow. The Boulevard was a beautiful tree lined lane with massive elm trees located on each side of the street. Mr. Potter had been a plaster contractor and so the walls of the house were sold plaster on the inside and white stucco on the outside. As the years went by, Mr. Potter sold the house to my parent for about $2,500 or $2,750, using the previous rents as a down payment. 2304 was a very modest home with a small kitchen, dining room, and living room on the first floor. Upstairs, there were two good sized bedrooms and a rather small bathroom with a four-legged tub. There was a one stall garage for a Model T-sized car. Eventually, when Dad purchased a 1946 Ford, he built on an addition to the garage to accommodate the larger vehicle. My father was forever planting flowers and starting seedlings in a hot box he constructed (on the South side of the house) from a couple of storm windows. Dad was also always trying to create a good lawn. Most lawns of that day in our neighborhood were made up of crabgrass or water grass. I remember once he spaded up the entire lawn by hand and planted it into Kentucky Blue Grass. It grew and grew and he wanted it to go to seed. It got so tall we had to cut it by hand with a sickle before we could cut it with our hand push lawnmower. It turned out to be a respectable lawn for a period of years. But to tell the truth, most lawns were weeds that were kept mowed.

On the inside of the home, my mother was a fastidious housekeeper. Even as a young child, I remember being assigned to comb the fringe on the living room carpet. The house was super clean! Mom did the washing on Monday. The water was heated by a side arm gas heater attached to the gravity coal burning furnace in the basement. She used a square tub May tag machine with a wringer and two tubs on legs. One filled with hot water and the other with cold to rinse the clothes. After washing, the clothes were hung either outside on clear days or inside during rainy or snowy days. During the winter, clothes would freeze stiff and eventually would freeze dry. You'd see a pair of pants flying in the breeze stiff as boards. Tuesday was ironing day. However, most of my father's shirts were sent out to Kimball's Cleaners and they came back with cardboard and pins that were great to use to mark on plans for airplanes and pinning down balsa wood. As I remember, Wednesday was cleaning day and Friday was sort of do what was needed day. Most grocery shopping was done on Saturday with the store's specials advertised on the windows in white bold painted lettering. We'd drive from store to store looking for various food specials. People, at this time, were very penny conscious. I remember once while my mom was shopping for a special on Military we were parked near a veterinarian building. The doctor had a young tree in front of the building that he started to trim. He would cut a branch, then stand back, cut another branch and stand back. As you can guess, he cut every branch off and in the end had a straight stick of a tree.

Most grocery stores of that time were small independent family owned business. But in a few years, there was a grocery revolution with the starting of a local chain called Hinky Dinky and a national chain called Safeway moving into Omaha. Up on Military, Safeway even had a parking lot. Our meals at home were big dinners. Meat, that meant pork chops or pork tenderloins breaded and fried, or round steak, or beef roast, or hamburgers. We always had a meat dish for dinner with mashed potatoes and good old pork or beef gravy and a can of beans or peas. It

didn't matter if it was 100 degrees outside at the evening meal, we had a big dinner cooked and eaten in that small kitchen with the sweat running down your arms and backs. The only steak I knew was round steak that was tenderized with a butcher's hammer, fried with egg and cracker crumbs. My first beef steak was in the service after the age of 18.

For breakfast, we always had fruit, during the week oranges, grapefruit, or bananas, and sometime prunes. Very seldom a juice, but if it was, it was tomato. We had cereal and toast with coffee. Going to high school many times my mother didn't get up for breakfast, so my dad and I would have our breakfast and coffee together in the morning. On the weekends, we would have bacon and eggs with toast. The eggs were fried in a skillet full of grease so Mom could baste the eggs. It was great and smelled so good! Most of the boys going to high school took their lunch so they could have enough to eat. Besides, hot lunches cost 15 to 20 cents. We had a sack lunch of three sandwiches or six slices of bread, fruit with cookies or cupcake. All that food and at graduation, I weighed 137 pounds and going in to service at 145 pounds.

I went to Sunday School at Clifton Hill Presbyterian Church. As a child, my parents encouraged me to go. After Sunday School, Dad and I went to the church service. I was baptized and confirmed as a Presbyterian and later taught Sunday School in the same church. At one time, as a young adult, I was elected to the church's Presbytery or the Governing Board. However, in all of this church activity, I never remember my mother ever going to church. She stayed home on Sundays and cooked an enormous noon meal which more than likely was roast, potatoes, carrots and maybe sometimes homemade noodles. With the leftovers, we had a beef hash dinner one night of the week.

Louie Bliek and I walked to high school together every day no matter what the weather. It was probably about 1 1/2 miles each way. School to me was an activity. I'd go to classes and study a little. There was little pressure to excel, just don't get into trouble. I enrolled what was then called College Preparatory because Pat, my half-brother, was going to Drake University. Therefore, I would also be going to college. I struggled in French for two years and mathematics for two years and did my year of science. The only encouraged study I ever remember was Dad and I reading English assignments of House of Seven Gables, Lady of the Lake and lvanhoe. I truly believed he enjoyed reading them. To me, it was just an assignment. At the age of 17, I was a junior in high school, and Mary MacNarmara, the principal, called me into her office and mapped out a program of study so that I could graduate before I was 18. At that time, World War II was in full swing, and they were drafting 18-year-olds who were still in high school. Many students dropped out of school and enlisted in the navy at 17 years of age which was legal. The war started on December 7, 1941, while I was in high school. As a family, we first heard about the attack late Sunday afternoon while buying some lunchmeat for evening sandwiches. The Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor - where was that? The entire country became instantly patriotic and a nation totally dedicated to war. The war in Europe was very well known and our sympathies were with England standing by itself against the aggressor Germany. Movies at the time were loaded with propaganda against Germany, and it was not uncommon for young men to go to Canada and volunteer for the RCAF or some other Canadian duty.

Others joined the RAF or the Flying Tigers in China. As I remember, once one joined another countries' military that person gave up their American citizenship, so it was a very serious commitment.

It seemed within months we began rationing. Since Dad was with Firestone Rubber & Tire Company, I became well aware of a growing shortage of tires. The Japanese were threatening our sources of raw rubber in Southeast Asia. We began hearing about synthetic tires being made out of coal oil. Tires were rationed, then gasoline with various classified types of needs. Dad always had a pocketful of someone's stamps—dealers would give stamps to Dad as a bribe for tires or a reward for tires. We had clothing books, sugar stamps, meat stamps, and general food stamps. We had aluminum drives at the high school for old pots and pans to make airplane parts. Scrap drives were common for paper, iron, tin, and copper. Shortages began to become apparent at the stores.

Everyone was becoming patriotic, like putting a star in the window for a man in the service from that household. Songs on the radio and in the movie theater were constant reminders of the war. Films on war were common. Everyone must serve their country by working in defense oriented businesses or volunteering for the armed forces. It almost became a crime to be 4F or unfit for military service. People would make nasty remarks to young men on street cars who were of draft-able age calling them draft dodgers, leaches, scum, or Nazi lovers. For many who had lost loved ones in the war, there was a bitterness for those young men who were not in a uniform. For us, in 1943, we had been fed propaganda for over two years about serving in your armed forces, so we readily knew that upon graduation we would go into the military in some capacity. Our high school classes were not occupationally oriented, they were military oriented.

I was out for high school football like every true red-blooded jock every year. I played freshman football and on the second team getting beat up by the varsity. I tried quarterback, halfback, and end. I was probably less than 130 pounds most of the time trying to compete in a school that could recruit a team from 1,200 students. About my junior year, I figured maybe I would be better off going out for track. In my senior year of the last semester in high school, a friend of mine and I began to train for track in February. We were the only ones running around that darn track in sweat clothes with towels on our heads under the hoods and towels around our necks. We were running to condition the legs and also doing what was called wind sprints, run the straight and walk the curves. We practiced day after day and when the season started, we were in reasonable shape. I was not a great athlete but I was very respectable in the 100 yard and 220-yard dash, probably the third best dash man in the school. On one good day, I was timed about 10.8 seconds. I'm sure that was with a good wind or a fast watch. We ran in the rain, sleet and snow the year I lettered. The track team and I did rather well that spring. We accumulated our share of blue and red ribbons for sprints and relays in the 440 and 880. I got a few 3rd's and 4th's in dual meets. Our relay team qualified for the state in the 880 and we thought we had a good chance to win. Our school track team was so poor the pants and T-shirts were plain white. The coach said we'd be the ghost team and everyone would ask, "Who won that race?" The state track meet was held in Lincoln at the University Track which was in

Memorial Stadium. It was supposed to be the best cinder track in the state. On the relay race, I was second on the exchange and was ahead until I pulled a leg muscle. I stumbled and bled a little but finished second and that's where we finished in the race. The team that beat us was Omaha Tech and we had beaten them several times before. That pulled muscle was the end of my racing career. I hobbled around for several weeks and never did run again even though I followed the team the rest of the season.

We had a Skip Day in the spring of 1943. On that day, a group of us with a 'go to hell attitude' went horseback riding in Elmwood Park. We rented the horses at the Ak-Sar-Ben stables. We did get there a little late and the only saddles left were English and the only horses left were "spirited." As luck would have it, I got a polo pony and it loved to run. When we trotted and raced, George was in real danger. The horse I was riding tried to pass another horse on a narrow trail. It brushed my leg against a tree and I fell off. I can still remember seeing that hoof coming up to hit me in the eyebrow. A telephone man bandaged the eye with a compress pack and I was taken back to the stable in reasonable shock with blood all over my face and clothes. Someone took me to Methodist Hospital on Cummings Street for 12 stitches in the eyebrow after it was shaved. What a sight I was for graduation exercises!

With a bad limp and a shaved eyebrow, I was ready to graduate from high school in June of 1943. The entire graduating class had to go to Sunday Baccalaureate services at Dundee Presbyterian Church. Mary McNamara stated it was compulsory. If you didn't attend, you just don't graduate. On Sunday afternoon, donning our gowns, we marched as a sort of practice for graduation. Mary McNamara was one of those people who leaves an impression on your for the rest of your life. She was a single matronly person that was 5'6", maybe 110 pounds wet with grey hair in a bun with those pinch nose glasses.

I remember her standing at the front entrance door (the only door open) in the morning as school opened inspecting the student attire coming into the building. No overalls, no work pants allowed. Boys with dress shirts and tie and girls in skirts. That was the dress code for Benson Public High School. If you didn't like the rules, you could transfer to Omaha Tech High School. Mary ran that school and there were no discipline problems.

If you were called to go to the office, it was like a visit to God. She was hard, but fair. I suppose she also chose the school colors of kelly green and white because she was very Irish Catholic. I remember a male student didn't wear a tie one day and she tied a sock around his neck for that day. For days, he had to check in with her before he could attend classes. The school symbol was the Bunnies. We were the Benson Bunnies, rabbits, and cottontails. As the story goes, the first football game played at Benson High was in an alfalfa field and the rabbits were running all over the place during the game. We generally had football and basketball games in the afternoon with few non-school spectators. But because I worked at the bakery most Friday afternoons and evenings, I never saw many games during my junior and senior years. With the war starting in 1941, many school activities were curtailed or eliminated. I remember the boys basketball team went to the state tournament but school went on with normal classes. Travel

required gas that was rationed, so it became patriotic not to travel. One of the noted alumni from Benson of that era was Nile Kinnick, an All-American football player at the University of Iowa (and the football stadium is named after him, Kinnick Stadium). I played football with his brother, George, my junior year.

My working career began at about age of 12. I delivered door to door circulars and a shopping paper for the Benson area. One summer, I spent full time dressed in white pants and white shirt with a billed white cap going door to door throughout Omaha delivering sample boxes of Kellogg's Rice Krispies. We worked in groups of four to six blanketing the city from the North end to the South and carrying a white bag filled with the cereal. We knocked on the door or rang the doorbell, then handed the box to the occupant. I figured out once that I made 15-17 cents an hour on my first full time job in 1939 or 1940. I remember that my parents had to sign a work permit for me.

The next job was working in Safeway stores. It seems I was in a different store every Saturday working as a sacker and carryout boy until my father in some way was able to talk me into a job by his phone call. The next week, I began work at the Safeway Bakery on about 11th and Davenport working on the bread wrapping machine. So there I was at 16 years old, working on Friday nights after school and Saturdays making 55 cents an hour and later up to 65 cent per hour and that was union wage, a very good rate! I worked on the bread wrapping machine in the beginning, hour after hour taking bread from tall racks and putting bread one by one, four at a time, six at a time into the slicing and wrapping machine – Julie Wright bread. From that machine, the bread was put into boxes for shipment to stores in Omaha, around the region and also to military installations in Nebraska and Kansas. Gradually, I was elevated to giving work breaks to everyone in the factory bread shop. I learned the mixing room job, the divider (putting dough into 1 and 1 *1/2* pound sizes, twisting the bread, and working on the oven. Of course, I learned to grease pans, sweep the floor and unload flour. I remember I had a choice to unload the flour by the hour or by contract. I chose by the hour because I never knew who I was going to work with on this task. Box cars would usually be packed with 1,000 to 1,200 sacks that weighed 100 pounds each. I preferred to have a crew of at least two, but it was possible to do the job by yourself, but it was hard. You took the flour out of the box car and sent the sack down a chute into the bakery basement. Then the flour was stacked, twenty to a dolly. So, for one 16- to 18-year-old unloading and stacking was a full Saturday's work. On a hot summer day, you would sweat and get flour on your hands, face and arms just like art paste. I had to rely on public transportation for going to work at 2:30-3:00 in the afternoon then finishing at any time between 10:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. or later if you had a machine break down. One night, I worked so late the street cars had stopped running so I walked home after 1:00 a.m. from 11th Street to 46th Street. With avenues included, it was a good six miles. I was always taking loaves of bread home after work. We baked white, wheat, rye and I think we did a raisin bread.

The more I worked at the bakery and the hours increased, I eventually stopped working at Safeway stores on Saturdays. So with work on Friday nights and Saturday, I had little time for school activities other than those that took place Monday through Thursday. Working gave me

a savings account and I bought many of my own clothes. I remember I bought my own graduation suit and wristwatch, plus all my own dental work. In addition, when I worked I was expected to make some payment for room and board. When I graduated from high school, I kept working at the bakery full time waiting to be drafted. Even after I returned from the service and was in college, I still worked at the bakery. Upon graduation from college, they offered me a chance to be a foreman in the system. But I said, "It's not for me. I'm going to be a teacher." When I graduated from high school, I still didn't have a driver's license because everyone used public transportation. I remember the parking lot at high school where parking cars was permitted. There would be eight to ten cars in it and most of them were teacher cars. A couple of seniors had a car or someone would get their family car for the day. Not many people ever drove. My father was the only one that drove in our family.

Pat had volunteered to enlist in the Navy and was in the Air Force as a pilot. It was a dream I always had, to learn to fly and be a pilot. For years, I constructed model airplanes and studied aviation. So I prepared for a test to get into the Army Air Corp. I went down for the written test on the assigned day and passed with the highest grade that day. Wonder how that happened? Then I took the physical. The first test was color blindness. I flunked it, and that was the end of my flight career. My options in the services were drastically reduced – no Air Force, no Navy, no Marines, no Coast Guard, but maybe the Seabees, a construction work organization for the Navy. I decided I would take my chances with the draft.

I worked the summer of 1943 and had a nice bank balance of $800 - $1,000. If cars had been available, I could have bought a new one. Well, like everyone else at 18 years old, on August 15, 1943, I registered for the draft. The notice read, "Greetings. Your friends and neighbors have selected you." The bakery told me they'd get a draft deferment because I was involved in government contract work, but I declined. I wanted to be patriotic and was drafted for the duration of the war plus six months. I was not going to enlist for so many years, but I did want to go into the service to help in the war effort.

TRAINING OF AN INFANTRY SOLDIER

In September of 1943, I was assigned to have a physical at the military installation in Ft. Crook in South Omaha. During the physical, my blood pressure was elevated so it had to be retested. In the end, I, as well as the others, were declared fit for military duty. In October of 1943, I reported to the Union Pacific Railway station in Omaha to be transported to Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, for induction into the Army. At this point, I think it's time to reflect upon the drastic change that takes place with the induction of a civilian into the service. We civilians or most of us came from a stable home environment with a family that was caring for each other's welfare.

We were raised in an atmosphere that championed the idea of work and it was good for you. The end product was earning money which you prized and saved as much as possible and you paid your bills on time. We were encouraged to stay clean and have clean clothes and in some way that was a quasi-religious function. Don't lie, cheat or steal – be a good neighbor and be concerned for others with a smile and a hello. Yes, I know it all sounds like a Boy Scout oath but it truly was a way of life for my first 18 years.

There I was, 18 years old, maybe having been away from home for a few days here or there (a week at Grandma's in Sioux City) in this strange alien environment. I truly was glad to be in the Army. Happy that I passed my physical but you know what? I didn't know anyone in the group, not one soul. Lonely and anxious but that's really how the service was to me. You met people you could interact with, go someplace either on leave or to the PX (Post Exchange), or to a movie, but you only got so close to them because it was all sort of a temporary relationship. You were inducted into the service with a group, then you took your basic with another group. Then you were assigned to various, what we called repo-depo's, and later you were assigned to a division, regiment, battalion, company, platoon, and finally a squad. It seems like we were continually meeting different persons and associating with them for a time. Then someone would be reassigned – new group, new people, new friends. The army issued us all new clothing that was 00, olive drab, and we were required to send our civilian clothes home. They began giving us batteries of tests for IQ, personality, and vocational preferences. We had to learn the military code and memorize it. We were taught how to salute by the numbers one two, stand at attention, and learn to march – forward march, to the rear march, squad right, squad left, cadence count. It was simply a convenient way to move a large group of men from one location to another. You have to have discipline if some 50 soldiers are going to live in a confined area.

There wasn't much room for a free spirit. We were taught how to make a bed military style with crisp corners, sheet folded over the top blanket and another blanket folded in half to make a dust cover for the pillow. Then bounce a quarter on the middle of the bed and if the quarter didn't bounce, the sergeant tore the bed up and you started over again. We all got a G.I. haircut, not a flat top, just run the electric razor over the top of the head with a short blender. I had one friend that they cut his hair like that and it never grew back. We were taught how to dress - tuck in the tie, shine your shoes, hang up your clothes, and pack your barracks bag. They gave us

another physical and we received our various inoculations or shots as they were called. We had short arm inspections for clap. They'd have us as a battalion fall out in shoes, rain coat and helmet liner. About 1,200 men all lined up in this selective attire being inspected by lines of medics. Skin it back and milk it down. Sometimes I wondered what the medics must have thought seeing hundreds or thousands of penises on those days. We'd go to the mess halls and they'd feed hundreds of men at a time. All this was new and exciting, yet frightening.

In 1943, the war was about two years old and the pool of manpower was getting low due to low birth rates of the 1920s. Because of that, we had quite a few men who were in their late 20s and 30s with wives and children at the induction center and also in our infantry basic training unit. For these men, the military was a much more threatening experience than for a young, strong 18-year-old. This was my first real life adventure and a real adventure it turned out to be, believe me. It left an imprint on my mind, body, and personality that changed me from a naive sheltered boy to a tough, hardened, suspicious, negative, and at times a rough nasty person who was eventually trained how to kill, destroy, and mutilate another person without remorse. So, to an extent this is a tale of the transformation of 37486877.

After my introduction to the armed forces at Ft. Leavenworth with basic military drills, we boarded a train for Camp Walter, Texas, which is near Mineral Wells, Texas, about 45 miles from Ft. Worth. At that time, Ft. Worth was about the size of Omaha. I only had an opportunity to visit it once and then I passed through it on my leave. We used to call it a 'delay in route' on my way to Omaha. I remember on that day in June, it was over 100 degrees standing in the shade and I said to myself, "I don't ever want to come back to this damn Texas again!"

Camp Walter was a new camp built for training infantry troops for World War II. Its location, like all military camps I was stationed at, was “outside the middle of nowhere.” The camp was made up of poor sandy soil with scrub trees and wild goats running around. The story was those goats were our meat supply and they ran the damn beasts to death before they killed them. That's the reason why the meat was so tough in the mess halls. At Camp Walters, we were put into companies and platoons for our basic training that was supposed to last sixteen weeks. At first, it was said after our basic training we would be eligible to transfer to other branches within the army. But after only a few weeks, it became obvious that we were to be replacements for infantry organizations that were already established. Our company training sergeant was a soldier from Boston with accent. He was probably a 6'2" man who had been on Guadalcanal with the infantry. He had malaria. Every so many weeks, he would have to go to the hospital for his shakes. Then after a few days’ treatment, he'd rejoin us. As a training officer, he was patient and sympathetic, but as time went on it became apparent that he also instilled confidence in the company of recruits. Our barracks were a two-story wooden framed building with a large latrine on the first floor. We had somewhere close to 50 men in the building. Most of the time, the head of the bed was next to the wall. However, with winter cold and flu season, we slept head to toe with a tent pole and shelter half to create a blind from the soldier next to you. Then they opened windows on one side of the room from the top and the other side from bottom.

The dress clothes were hung up on a wall peg and our other clothes were neatly packed in the wooden footlocker at the base of your bed. Beds were made with one olive drab wool blanket folded at the base of the bed. We had two white sheets with a white pillow case tightly tucked so there were no wrinkles. Beds were made with folded military corners on the blanket. Sometimes if the windows were open we would take the foot blanket and made a dust cover over our pillow. Everything in the barracks was lined up from beds, foot lockers, clothes, and rifle racks. Periodically we would get latrine duty and it had to shine. Sometimes it was more difficult if the platoon got the G.I.s generally called “the shits.” There would be lines of men waiting to sit. These were all open stools with no dividers. As they used to say, “Either shit or get off the pot.” Also, the latrine was known for its rumors or Latrine-a-Grams, also called shit house rumors (What's going to happen?).

On inspection days, usually Saturday morning, we would have a G.I Party. Sweep, mop, scrub, clean windows with toilet paper, dust, arrange clothes, line up clothes in the foot locker, and shine shoes. Dress as neat as possible, clean your assigned M-1. Police the area – which meant line up 50-100 men across, and pick up anything not attached on the ground over an area. As the Sergeant would say, "I want to see nothing but assholes and elbows". One time, the Sergeant came in and asked for someone to drive a truck. A soldier volunteered and later we saw him pushing a lawn mower. But we also have been known to all fall out and cut grass with bayonets. In the service as a soldier, you were supposed to learn to field strip a cigarette (this was before the filters), tear the paper cigarette down and roll it into a small ball and disperse the tobacco. This was so the enemy wouldn't know you've been there. As the song used to go, "we like our barracks nice and clean." For training, we wore fatigues most of the time with one pair of shoes. The other pair was always shined under the bed ready for inspection.

There were rifle racks in the center of the room with about 30 rifles to a rack. Since each rifle weighed a little over eight pounds, it was a sizable object to move and clean under. Eventually, we were each assigned an M-1 Granary rifle, semi-automatic, gas operated, 30 caliber, clip feed that held eight shells. In training, they were never loaded except on the firing range. A soldier we had in our platoon was trying to get a so-called Section 8 (unfit for military duty). He claimed he had nightmares and would yell "Fire" in the middle of the night and run out of the building. It got damn tiresome having this nut wake up 50 some men at 2:00-3:00 a.m. a couple of times a week. One night, we turned our rifle rack crosswise. He came down yelling one night and hit that immovable object with one big thud and surprise. He had no more night sorties after that incident. In a way, we were a devious bunch of bastards. Like giving a hot foot—someone asleep with their boots on. You take shoe polish, put it on the instep of the shoe in a glob, then light it. Everyone then sits down doing something else. All of a sudden, this poor soldier wakes up yelling trying to get his shoe off or a fellow is asleep in his shorts with an erection of the penis, you put his hand in warm water and he either climaxes or pees on himself.

Putting 50 soldiers or people in a confined area who never knew each other, that came from all walks of life, is quite an experience. We had men from 18-38 years old in our barracks. High

school graduates, truck drivers, salesmen, a couple of whisky runners from Tennessee who ran booze to Georgia in fake gas tanks, a stevedore who loaded ships, mostly unskilled persons, no college graduates or those that went to college. We had a large representation from the South. So the Northerners and the Southerners would fight the Civil War verbally about once a week – who won the war? The stevedore didn't take daily showers and he smelled strongly at times. So one weekend, some soldiers gave him a G.I. shower, which means they stripped him and washed him in a shower with scrub brushes that were ordinarily used to wash floors. He was shipped out of our company that day to who knows where, at least we were through with him.

Every morning, we fell out at 5:00 a.m. all dressed in the black of night in neat lines at attention to take roll. It took me weeks to find out what the officers were saying. They'd call out, "All present and accounted for." Here you'd have four companies in a squad or a battalion, all dressed and at attention. They'd play some damn take of a recorded trumpet. From that formation, we went to the mess hall for breakfast. All the knives, forks, and spoons with plates and mugs were lined up on all the tables the length of the hall. When you were on K.P. (kitchen police), you learned to line up each item with a long string. We all stood behind our place and sat down at once. We were served family style by the K.P.s or sometimes on weekends when some soldiers chose to sleep in, we just went through a chow line. The entire company ate at one hall at one time, all 200 in one building. Eating was monitored and if a soldiers' manners were too grotesque they were put at a special table and required to eat out of a hog trough with no utensils. If someone asked to have something passed to them and they tried to serve themselves with someone holding the serving dish, it was simply dropped. After a few days, a set of manners were developed by the troops.

Figure 4: Our four Germans who do our Daily tasks. All are from Cheg And have been wounded at least once. The third from the right was in the last war. Jan '46

We were all selected for K.P. a couple of times during our basic training. The guard would wake you at about 4:00 a.m. so you could start breakfast of breaking eggs, making powdered milk or oatmeal, or coffee or toasting bread in an oven – nice dry, hard, cold toast. We always had plenty of food and seconds were possible. At the tables, there was always marmalade and peanut butter in gallon cans with bread and grapefruit juice. All the cans were OD [Olive Drab] in color. I was on K.P. once and my afternoon task was to clean four to five cases of frozen chickens. The chickens had never been cleaned and still had their innards intact. I'd never cleaned a chicken before in my life (they all came cleaned from the store). My instructions

from the cook were to cut a hole around the ass hole and slit it a little so you could reach in and pull out all the innards. Well, halfway through the project I found there were still some innards I hadn't been getting. I cleaned those damn chickens all afternoon, seemed like hundreds. By dinner, I sure didn't eat chicken no matter how they cooked them. After dinner on K.P., we did the dishes in a machine and the pots and pans by hand, all cleaned and scrubbed. Plates were lined up on the table with the silverware, we swept and mopped it all and by 9:00 p.m., it was finished. One long day!! When I joined the 75th Infantry Division, our company had soldiers who were permanent K.P. personnel. It cost each of us a few dollars a month, but we never pulled K.P. again. With the end of the war, we had German POW's do the KP. The military chow must have been good as I went into the service weighing about 145 pounds, and after my basic training I weighed 165 pounds and felt like one tough kid!

With basic training and barracks life, I learned to play poker but only what we called real poker, five card draw, seven card stud, and blackjack. On occasion, the deuces could be wild but not often. I also learned to shoot craps and the various odds to bet determined by the point to make. Most of us young ones played a limit of 5 cents to 25 cents, but the older, more “devil may care” troops would play a dollar limit or no limit and some wild card games sure were fun to watch. Many time they collected a large crowd.

Most all soldiers smoked and we got cigarettes at 10 cents a pack or free in some dry meal rations. Besides every hour, there was a 10-minute smoke break. In some cases, if you didn't smoke you were given a detail. So it didn't take long to learn – to rest, you smoked. In the barracks, we had butt cans for cigarettes. A half-gallon can half full of water and those were emptied every day. Someone always had a radio and an iron for us to use and sometimes we had a guitar player in the group. So on most weekends, there would be a card game in most every barrack and a radio going or we would just take a walk to the PX (post exchange) to buy some candy or toilet supplies, buy a pop or a beer in the beer garden. One time they called me "35 cent Coyan." They could get me drunk on 35 cents or seven beers at 5 cents a glass. A group of us laughed together, drank together, and went to town together. With most of us being 18 years old, we were really devil may care oriented. Poor Mineral Wells, Texas. It was a small town of some 10,000-15,000 souls with a weekend soldier influx of 5,000-7,000. Really not much to do but go to a show and pay more than you would on base, have an ice cream cone, go to a junk store, get a shoeshine, or a haircut. All these services were available on base, but Mineral Wells was a place to go. Just take a government bus into town for a couple of hours and walk around then come back. Well, after a couple of trips, everyone was saying, "Why go to town?" Some recruits had their wives in town that they had put in some room and those soldiers always wanted to go to town everyday but for most of us it just wasn't worth it.

In basic training, we were taught to be a soldier in the infantry. We learned to march, do close order drills, take hikes of one, five, and ten miles which molded us into good physical shape. We close ordered drilled over and over again. We learned to make a backpack of a blanket rolled into a half of a pup tent (shelter half) with poles and stakes and a rain coat. A nice tight pack with an entrenching tool on the outside of a pack. We were told a good tight pack would float in

water. Never tried it and we were never around water anyway, not in north Texas. We always had an ammunition webbed belt with a first aid kit, canteen and bayonet attached. A loaded pack and equipment was 40 pounds and the assigned M-1 rifle was about 8 1/2 pounds. Some soldiers were also assigned to carry part of a machine gun or mortar. Both broke down into two pieces. A mortar has a tube as one piece and a base plate another while the machine gun has a barrel and a tripod. The 60 MM mortar is really the artillery of an infantry company and the machine guns the major automatic weapon of the company. Both were relics of World War I. The 30-caliber machine gun is air cooled belt fed and requires two people to operate it. When the belt is disengaged, there is a bullet in the chamber. In combat, one of our machine gunners took out the belt and slung the weapon onto his shoulder holding onto the barrel. The trigger, which has no housing, hit his shoulder and discharged, sending a bullet down his leg. Another Purple Heart and battle casualty. The mortar really has three pieces: the barrel, the tripod, and the sight. The mortar can be operated in a defensive position easily when there is time to set up various aiming points. But its use by moving troops is questionable. Unless someone will take just the tube and put it into the ground and guess at the range and tilt of the barrel. Then you have to hold the barrel tight and determine the number of increments on the shell. An increment is a buster device on the shell's four fins. For less distance, one or two could be torn from the fins. However, before putting or sliding the shell into the barrel, one had to pull its pin. The trick was if it didn't fire how to get the shell out. Simple, just cup your hands around the barrel mouth and slowly tip the barrel so the projectile slides down. Just don't touch the nipple tip as it will kill the entire crew. They are point detonating. Always for some unknown reason, the shortest and smallest fellow in the unit got the B.A.R. (Browning Automatic Rifle). Another carryover from World War I. It weighed about 12-15 pounds and was magazine fed. Usually one person was also designated to carry the ammo for the weapon. First, you learn to pack it, then carry it on hikes up to 20 miles, and then you have to learn to use it. I remember in combat during the winter in Belgium, the B.A.R. men were forever trying to thaw them out every morning, either by passing them over a fire or stove or firing them. Every morning, you could hear the chug-chug-chug in the still of the forest. At least, we knew they were our troops.

In basic training, there were training films on most every operation we were to learn. I remember the "Why We Fight" series showing the history of the aggressive action by Nazi Germany, Italy, and Japan and the atrocities they committed. "Turn that film off and we'll go out and kill every one of those bastards." We had films on poison gas, military tactics, treating wounds, firing weapons, and VD. After seeing some of those VD films, you were afraid to shake hands with a woman. Invariably after a large lunch and in a hot Quonset hut with a temperature of 100 degrees they would show some blood and guts movie and the soldiers would be passing out like flies. Also in basic training, we learned to strip down an M-1 rifle, a B.A.R, a machine gun, and a carbine 30-caliber—clean, oil, and assemble. It was all supposed to become mechanical, so we did it over and over again. Like all training, we were taught to do things without thinking whether it was putting a rifle back together, doing bayonet drill or commando tactics. Do it so often that it becomes natural behavior or reaction. A Browning 30 caliber machine gun is one weapon we dry fired for days then fired with live ammunition on the firing range. After they were fired, we had to clean them in the barracks and return them to

the company supply sergeant. The Browning machine gun when it is stripped down, has a rod that must be threaded into a massive spring when reassembled. The spring, as I remember, is 18-20" long and is extremely difficult to manipulate. In the barracks, it was not uncommon to have someone assembling that device and it would slip sending that rod zipping across the room and God help anyone in its way. It would sting like hell. Then you'd hear some dialogue like "You dumb son of a bitch, watch what you're doing" or "You hit me with that bastard and I'll beat the shit out of you." All nice quiet dialogues well below the normal street level vocabulary. A sergeant in Supply yelled over the bitch box (our sound system) one night, "I'm short two machine guns – somebody better start eating M-I's and shitting machine guns by 20:00 or you'll be sorry." We all learned a new vocabulary, maybe it was acting tough or just in vogue. But every sentence had the word fuck in it. You fucked up, fuck you, crazy fucken idea, fuck the army. Even military slang had the fuck in it—FUBAR – Fucked up beyond all recognition and SNAFU – Situation normal all fucked up. It was a word that lost its meaning, and it had become an adjective to show one's dismay about anything, anyone or any place.

We were taught that we could do anything, we were tough, we had the best equipment, we were good, we were righteous and we hated the enemy. Excellent training to build the ego of an 18-year-old to be taught to kill that lousy, cheating, dirty enemy that kills children and rapes women. We had to learn to kill using any tactic. No Queensbury rules. Kill anyway, cup your hands and bang the ears on each side, blind the enemy with fingers in the eyes, break the nose with a chop and drive the bone into the brain, break arms--stick them with a knife or bayonet, pull bayonet out fast, pull the trigger on the rifle works best. We had judo lessons by the hour over and over again. Bayonet drill day after day going back over the book routine, against straw dummies and against each other with scabbards on, of course. Finally, we began working toward the firing range. How to hold a rifle, use the leather sling, the various positions of prone, squatting and standing. We dry fired for days. Then we used small 22 caliber rifles as a warm up for big things to come. We seemed to be on the firing range for weeks. They divided us up in crews, some firing, some helping those firing and some pulling targets. Targets were shot at as I remember at 100 and 300 yards. We had a buddy system, if you help me and I'll help you. We shot at targets that were cloth on a frame that was raised and lowered via a pulley system. Shot patterns were noted with a red oval piece of metal on a pole. If a soldier missed the target completely a white flag was waved called "Maggie's Drawers" for an embarrassment to the shooter. Safety was the word on the range. Before any group fires, the firing officer would say, "Ready on the right. Ready on the left. Ready on the firing line. The flag is waving. Targets up. “Commence firing” or “Fire at will.”

Once I remember the firing officer getting to "the flag is waving" and some overeager soldier fired. The firing officer yelled, "Who fired that God damn shot. Get the man's name and serial number." We learned to shoot from the rear to the front sight and squeeze the trigger. Then you'd learn to get the rhythm of sighting and the recoil firing over and over again. After a while, it became automatic. Don't hurry too much, squeeze the trigger—don't pull it. We fired machine guns and mortars and learned how to throw hand grenades (smoke, concussion, and fragmentary). Usually in this training exercise, some damn nut got scared and dropped the

grenade or did not throw it far enough. This exercise was carried out in an L-shaped trench so if the grenade was dropped it was in the trench with you when it went off.

We had accidents almost every week, and they'd call for the meat wagon. The one exercise where we had the most casualties was at the infiltration course. The infantry was trying to simulate a combat situation with several machine guns firing about 30 inches above your head and you would crawl with rifle and short pack about 50 yards toward the guns to a trench. They also rigged dynamite to explode in areas circled by wire and you crawled under barbed wire that was rigged close enough to catch your pack once in a while. As I remember, every third round in the machine gun was a tracer so you could see the bullets moving over your head. It was said at least once a week some soldier would get scared and stand up and then there was another wounded one. Once a rattle snake was on the course in the morning and was responsible for another casualty.

We also learned to dig fox holes. It is a hole about 4 feet by 2 1/2 feet and maybe 4 feet deep with a firing step. I've dug holes in Texas, North Carolina, Kentucky, and all over the Belgium Ardennes. The joke used to be that in the service we became the soil experts of Europe because we dug holes all over the place. On one exercise in Texas, we dug part of a fox hole in late afternoon only to be stopped to return to the barracks. We returned the next day to finish our fox holes, one fellow in our outfit jumped in and out in one motion because during the night a rattler had fallen into it. There always seemed to be some activity that was not normal that made a daily event extra ordinary.

We learned to use gas masks and recognize various types of gas. They put us in a quonset hut and opened gas canisters, then we'd put on our gas masks, or we'd have our gas masks on already, and were expected to take a quick smell by putting your finger under the side of your face mask. Of course, some soldiers would get a little too much smell and get sick. But in combat, we threw all our gas masks away and used the container to store K-rations or C-rations or D-bars or anything else of value. In a gas attack, the first line troops more than likely will not survive intact. Besides it was cold in Belgium and gases don't work very well with a lot of fog and snow. We were issued steel helmets that fit over a plastic helmet liner. In basic training, we always wore some cover and 95% of the time it was our helmet liner with our last name printed on it in bold white lettering for ready identification. The steel helmet later in combat served for multiple functions. You could wear it, carry water in it, heat water in it (that sure didn't help the metal), pee in it at night in the foxhole (in combat, it is dangerous to go out of the hole at night and pee), sit on it to keep your ass out of the mud or snow. In combat, we were told never to use the cloth strap under our chin. The concussion of a shell exploding close could break your neck as it would blow your helmet off. Inside the lining webbing, we stored important items like toilet paper, letter writing materials such as paper and envelopes, or letters from home. The helmet maybe was the only dry place on our body.

One of the late training exercises we had was the 20-mile hike in full pack, gas mask, rifle, and rifle belt. At that time, it was spring in Texas so to make the hike easier it was really a night

exercise to counteract the day's heat. We started about sundown after a light meal. Off we went full of spirit and energy, singing as we began our evening stroll. The Sergeants began teaching us a few marching songs to a cadence count 1,2-3,4:

Your left, your right, you had a good home and you left, your right
Mary had a little lamb, She tied it to a heater –
Every time it turned around it burned its little peter, 1,2, sound off, 3,4
If I die in a combat zone, box me up and send me home –
1,2 sound off, 3,4

LuLu had a baby and she named him sunny bim She threw him in the piss to see if he could swim He swam to the bottom, and he swam to the top, LuLu got so excited she grabbed him by the cock. Sound off, 1, 2, Sound off, 3,4.

Those must have been standard infantry marching songs as I remember singing them going through the English countryside and towns at one or two in the morning. We always marched at night so as not to tie up traffic. Our sergeant would scream, "Let's let these Brits know they're protected by American troops. Sound off."

Back to the evening stroll. Some real tough ones brought chewing tobacco along to keep their whistles wet. So they passed it around and some soldiers who had never chewed before, just had to try it and some like that made the mistake of swallowing a little. So they'd cough, sputter, gag, and cuss. It was a long hike for many. Every 50 minutes we'd take a rest break for 10 minutes. Some smoked but most of us just rested with our backs against the packs pushed back to a tree or rock. Then take your helmet off and lean your head into the pack. It got so you could even learn to sleep for a short nap. I've even seen soldiers sleep while they were walking on hikes. Well, after about 10-15 miles, some soldiers began having problems. Somebody would have to carry their rifle and maybe someone else their pack, but we wanted everyone to finish. Others would have a blister problem that began to form and then break and bleed. But very little conversation existed. Then one soldier yelled, "Hell, I just unbuttoned my pants and took my cock out. If I'm going to carry a load like a jackass." It seemed like the longer we trained the rougher the outfit got. Maybe primitive is a better word. Profanity became normal conversation. All these soldiers we kept coming in contact with were just temporary relationships. We trained with each other but after we finished basic training, we never saw each other again. Just a mass of humanity with no close relationships.

The last exercise in the basic training was our bivouac experience, sort of like a graduation exercise. Originally we were to be in the field for about ten days living in a pup tent and doing various field exercises out in God's half acre. The weather, however, was so bad and the flu quite evident so we simply stayed in the field for a much shorter period. We marched out to the desolate area of camp and set up our pup tents. Each soldier had one half of a tent and the tent

buttoned along the top. First, you had to team up with someone, then button them together, find a reasonably level spot, put the tent up with no wrinkles, put the pegs in the ditch 4 inches deep. Never put a tent in a wash area, so you pitched high and ditched it deep. First you put newspapers down as insulation then your blankets on top of the newspapers. Rule One – never touch the tent if it is raining as it will start to leak at that point. In reality, instead of being in a tent, if you sat under a tree in a rain coat, you would be better off.

In the field, we did some compass work during the day and night. I remember on one night project, our team got lost and was miles away. They were sending up flares hunting for us. We were truly lost in the woods and the clouds had destroyed our star sightings. Oh well, another project SNAFU. As we began finishing our basic training, I asked an officer if I could get G.I. glasses as I only possessed my civilian rimless ones. The G.I glasses had stainless steel frames and were much more durable.

Generally, I could see without my glasses except for viewing objects at an extreme distance. I was given an examination and the officer noted I qualified for glasses and they would be issued. However, it would take weeks to get them to Camp Walters. So, off my colleagues went for their delay en route and I stayed in camp. Later from someone I met after the war in Omaha, I learned the majority of the men were used as replacement in outfits at Arezzo, Italy, better known as the German shooting gallery. Getting glasses was one of my first lucky breaks.

While in camp, I became part of the training cadre for field exercises. We learned to rig dynamite explosions, cap, and booster dynamite. Just don't play with the cap too much or get it hot as they were sensitive. We created explosions to make realistic combat situations. I remember one part I performed for trainees with a rubber glove covered with a red substance. We had two or three in our little play. It was an explosion and then I yelled as in pain with that blood dripping from my hand and I confessed I picked up an object that apparently was booby trapped We always wanted to make our performance as realistic as possible and maybe we could get some soldier to pass out. Later in combat, I came across a set of warm leather gloves with a Lugger pistol in a tree crotch. I just passed them up. It appeared too obvious a trap in the forest, but even to this day, I would like to have had that Lugger because it was a beauty – but who knows? After several weeks of this sort of detail, my glasses did arrive. I was given my ten day leave that we called a delay en route to New Jersey's Fort Mead, point of debarkation. I was elated that I was going to Europe and not the South Pacific.

Home sure looked good and it was nice to see Mom, Dad and Champ. Sleep in a large bed, eat at a kitchen or dining room table. Most of my friends were drafted and gone. The only friend I had at home was Joe Archibald because he was 4F from a leg infection he had as a child which caused a lame and weak ankle. Being in the service uniform, I could go into any bar to drink beer even though the legal was 21 years old. No one ever refused a man in uniform a drink by age. Funny thing when I got out of the service I was still under 21 and it was illegal for me to drink in a bar, but I had no trouble getting a beer in uniform a year and a half before. Crazy. At

that time there were three local breweries in Omaha – Mets, Storz, and Falstaff. Ten cent drafts with 10 cents for a bottle and 25 cents for non-local beers.

Oh well, home fed me well and after ten days, I was off to Chicago by train. In those days, railroads put any kind of moving stock they had into service. I was on one train that was so tired that when the train stopped, the lights would get real dim and when it started up again, the lights would brighten up. There were always more passengers than seats so soldiers would give their seats to girls and women. We would then sit on our barracks bags for seats either in the aisles or between the railroad cars for most of a day or night. We wore suntans in the summer and after sitting between cars for any length of time we would be covered with soot from the steam trains. The joke was that we were so covered with train dust we could play Jolson and sing "Mammie." As the tales went on, "I rode on a train that was so old it had a sign on the end of the car 'Please do not shoot buffalo from the windows.'" My mother kissed me good-bye and she and Ron waved from the dining room window and Dad drove me down to the train station in our 1935 Ford. There he hugged me and kissed me, both thinking we may never see each other again. The train took me to the Chicago Central Station where I transferred to an electric Pennsylvania rail train to the New York area. I missed my routed train but a trainmen said that was no problem because there was a train every hour from Chicago to New York.

On my train trip in June to Omaha from Texas, I remember it was announced that the Allied troops had landed in Normandy, France, and there was a loud cheer and jubilation. But this trip was uneventful and with the proper transfers, I reached Fort Mead, my assigned military post for debarkation to Europe. The first day, we were required to fall out in dress uniform with leggings, but my brother, Champ, had rethreaded them while I was on leave unbeknownst to me. So there I was at attention with my leggings, half on and half off. The officer hearing my explanation for being out of uniform brought only a smile. At that post, I was informed that I was too young to be sent overseas. Congress or the President had issued some law or statute that a soldier had to be 19 years old before going overseas in a combat role.

So there I was 18 years and 10 months being reassigned to another infantry station, the 89th Infantry Division in Camp Butler, North Carolina. The same division that made history during World War I on the Western Front. Well, this division had been an experimental unit that was called a light infantry outfit. No vehicles. Everything was on two-wheel push carts for all equipment. I'm just glad that they were converting it at the time of my arrival to a traditional infantry division. Well, to make a long story short, I was put into a situation where we did more infantry basic training. To this day, I remember very little about the unit. We were assigned to units by the alphabet. As I remember most of the platoon were "C" last names and we all stayed together in the next transfer to the 75th Infantry Division. While in North Carolina, we had a couple weekend leaves to Raleigh, a beautiful city at the time. But most of our time was spent marching or hiking up and down the hills of North Carolina and sweating for much of the summer. We were mustered out one day and reassigned to another division by the alphabet. Being a "C," I was transferred to the 75th Division at Camp Breckenridge Kentucky. Those

whose names were in the later part of the alphabet were assigned to 106th Infantry Division that was in Indiana. I wanted to go to the 106th because it would be possible to get home by train on a long weekend pass. My second lucky incident. The 106th Infantry Division was in Belgium and the Ardennes, the middle of the German thrust that began the Battle of the Bulge. It was the only American Division ever destroyed and not reformed during the war. Most of the troops were killed or captured.

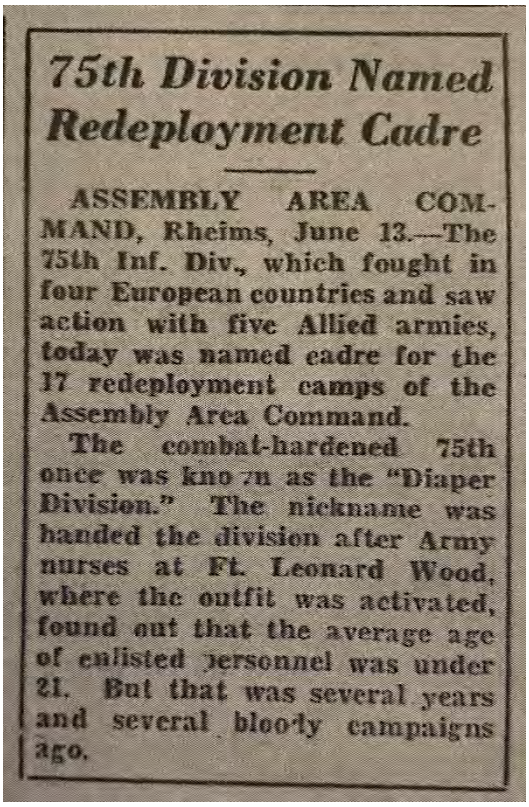
As I said before, all military installations for the infantry are located in the most God forsaken territory with hills, scrub timber, bushes, and damn poor soil. I know I've dug in a lot of them. So joining the 75th Division we were again given more basic training. All told, I had at least 2 1/2 basic training orientations. But now, in the infantry, we were starting to get the drop outs or close outs of the air force. Wouldn't it be a jolt in the army air force one week and in the infantry the next!

Hell, I could assemble and disassemble an M-1, machine guns, and BARs. We used to break down the M-1s in the dark just to see if we could do it. Well, the foothills of Kentucky were like the foothills of North Carolina. But now we trained as a unit. One advantage to our unit was we had permanent KP's. The only soldiers ever to volunteer for KP were a group that came back late and drunk from a leave in New York City. They pulled KP the entire time we were on ship to Wales. In combat we were getting cold meals delivered to us at night. The Captain said if we couldn't get one hot meal a day, he'd give a gun to everyone in the kitchen, and put them in the front lines. After that good service improved and almost every night or morning we got a hot meal. If it was at all possible. Not always great meals, but hot coffee and a meat dish.

We trained once again in our small contingents of C's. Coyan, Crawford, Cottrel, and Crowder. We were placed into units that needed a body. Like ammo carriers, mortar carriers, grunt jobs no one else wanted. At first, we resented it, but hell, we learned again how to operate the mortar by the numbers, and we carried six-eight mortar shells a piece in a canvas bag that was like a full apron – four in the front and four in the back. Someone carried the 60-mm mortar tube and someone carried the base and two ammo carriers. We joked that we were the rear echelons of our infantry company behind the lines.

I was assigned to the 75th Infantry Division, 290th Infantry Regiment, Company G, Second Battalion. There were four platoons. Three platoons are rifle, and the last platoon is weapons. A 1st or 2nd lieutenant commanded each platoon with a non-commissioned officer. A rifle platoon has three squads of 12 soldiers each with a sergeant in charge. The weapons platoon usually had five five-man squads commanded by sergeants. On these squads were 30 caliber machine guns and 60 mm mortars. The mortar squad had a sergeant, gunner, assistant gunner, and two ammo bearers. The infantry squads all carried M-1 rifles and weapons squads carried 30 caliber carbines. Some officers and sergeants carried 45 automatic pistols but in combat most officers and sergeants transferred to the M-1's. Well, our squad being rear area of maybe 100 yards behind the front line of our infantry platoon, that doesn't sound like much but it was behind a

wall of a building or on the back of a hill. However, in combat, most of the time we were all one unit and there was no line. Anything you can see, you can shoot at.



75th Division Named Redeployment Cadre

ASSEMBLY AREA COMMAND, Rheims, June 13.—The 75th Inf. Div., which fought in four European countries and saw action with five Allied armies, today was named cadre for the 17 redeployment camps of the Assembly Area Command.

The combat-hardened 75th once was known as the "Diaper Division." The nickname was handed the division after Army nurses at Ft. Leonard Wood, where the outfit was activated, found out that the average age of enlisted personnel was under 21. But that was several years and several bloody campaigns ago.

Figure 5: Newspaper Article About Coyan's Infantry Division

The 75th Infantry Division was originally created in Missouri and at times was called Truman's Division. A news article released quoting an army nurse called it "The Diaper Division." The average age of the division at that time was less than 19 years of age. I suppose today they'd call it "The Kiddy Car Unit." Our Division was made up of three regiments, the 289th, 290th, and the 291st and each regiment had 3 battalions. There were four companies in each battalion. The First Battalion would have companies A, B, C, and D. The Second Battalion would have companies E, F, G, and H. The Third Battalion would have J, K, L, and M companies. Companies D and M were heavy weapons which meant they had 30-caliber water-cooled machine guns and 81 mm mortars. An Infantry Division is triangular with three regiments – three battalions, three rifle companies, and three rifle squads. The ideal philosophy was two on the line and one in reserve. When we got down to 16 men in the company, you could throw out all organizational charts. Our division commanding officer was Major General Ray Porter. I think I saw him once or twice in a formal military review. That is when they call out the entire division to march in a Pass in Review. It was really quite impressive with 15,000 or so soldiers assembled in one major area marching by companies. Our regimental commander was Colonel Carl Duffer, a Sergeant in World War 1. He like to be saluted and always carried an ornate swagger stick. We saw more of him than we did our battalion commander, Lt. Colonel Russell Harris. The officer we had the most contact with was Capt. Bernard McGraw, our company commander, also called Capt. Mc. I remember he once made the comment to the company at a formation that he was going to get the entire unit through the combat engagement with very few casualties. By the time I left the company in Belgium, he looked like a beaten man. Later, I understand, he was relieved of duty for physical or mental reasons.

OFF TO EUROPE FOR WAR AND OCCUPATION FORCES

In October 14, 1944, we boarded a train for Camp Shanks. As I remember we were there only a brief period of time but long enough for several of us to go into New Your City on a night pass. One soldier who had been in the city many times showed us some sights of the big city. We visited Times Square, went to Jack Dempsey's Bar on Broadway, and ate spaghetti in Greenwich Village. Of course, we got back to the base early in the morning, but we were young. We'd get a couple hours of sleep and off we'd go again. Our brief stay at Camp Shanks was four days and then we boarded the *USS Brazil*, on October 22. There were 5,000 men on board for 10 days. The Brazil had, in its earlier days, been a luxury liner in the Latin American service. Bunks on the ship were three to four tiers high and the way we got up to our bunk was simply to step from one bunk to the next. Of course, the enlisted men were in the cargo area and officers in the state rooms. Even the swimming pool was lined with bunks on the inside. Can you realize wide-eyed young men having this as their first ocean experience? I remember seeing the Statue of Liberty as we left port and wondering if I'd ever return. On board the ship, we were served two meals a day. We ate standing up at tall tables and in shifts determined by your bunk locality. We could move around the ship, but there were only certain deck levels we could use. Soldiers read, gambled, talked, smoked, and slept a lot. We were practicing life boat drills by groups, showing how those boats and rafts were to be dislocated and loaded. Usually, netting was dropped overboard and the soldiers disembarked by scaling down in mass.

One of the gambling incidents I was involved with was late at night and for lack of anything else to do I got into the crap game. Beginners luck maybe, but I ran a few dollars on a streak of marks up to $300 on my turn of the dice. I wanted to leave but was encouraged to stay and lose some of it back before I went to bed. So I lost a hundred dollars. I remember on our way back to the states, a couple of fellows set up a house on the ship and there was a perpetual card game. They raked in a percentage of every pot and they were the house for black jack. I never entered that game, as it was not a friendly activity.

In October and November, the North Sea gets a little rough. We were the flagship of the convoy and the largest vessel. The small ships in the convoy would disappear with the waves and by magic would reappear on another roll. Our vessel had a gyroscope so we were rather stable in all types of weather. But in a group there is always someone that will get sea sick. You just hope they didn't exist on the bunk above. Well, some were sick for the first few day and others were on liquid diets for the entire voyage. We always had plenty to eat for those who attended mess. You could always put a couple of hard boiled eggs in your pocket to eat at another time. The bunk area was policed every day and kept clean. We were not allowed to smoke on deck as a cigarette burning at night can be seen for miles and that was true for all night smoking. The burning ash was covered with the hand as a light shield in any direction. Smoking was something to do. Everybody did it and it was cheap, $2.00 a carton or less.

Cigarettes were given away all over except after the war when they became a trading commodity at a standard price of $20.00 a carton. By the time I got ready to come home the

cigarette prices were down to $10.00 a carton and most soldiers would rather give them away than smoke them at that price. When we took leave we'd always take a carton of cigarettes for exchange, tips, or as gifts. After the war, money exchange was the market we reverted into. An American dollar with a green seal was worth three to four times its value in that foreign currency. Men going home after the war exchanged their foreign currency for yellow sealed dollars. Foreign banks did not accept yellow seals, but they did accept green seals. Being in Rheims for many months, I'd send money orders home depositing French invasion Francs. Then I'd have my mother convert that in $5.00 bills in green seals and send it back to me. Then I'd go to a converting process and send more money orders home. Not big time, but a little larceny. But you could do the same thing with British pounds. That was easy because after the war, someone was always on leave going to the Islands. After the war, our outfit would sell anything we could get away with. There was always extra equipment laying around not nailed down. I remember the most famous Coyan transaction in a cellar of a Paris railway station with some Moroccan soldiers. We must have been crazy; the two of us were not drunk. These two Moroccan approached us in broken English asking us if we had anything to sell. We were going back to Rheims after a leave in England and Scotland. We gave a positive reply and with sign language and facial expressions the bargaining was on. You couldn't do these transactions in the open so to avoid the MPs we went into the railway station basement two floors down into the men's room with one naked light bulb. One Moroccan and I went into a toilet stall area with stand rests (No stool to sit on). I traded pounds, a blanket, and cigarettes away. Hell, we could have had our throat cut by those Moroccans. I was 5' 11" at the time and weighed 180 pounds in good shape, but these guys made us look like midgets. And they always carried those damn long knives like bayonets. Well, we made a couple bucks to pay for our leave. I suppose by that time most of us felt that we were invincible.

While I was aboard the *Brazil*, my most memorable activity was to go out on the deck at night and walk the bow. There I'd be by myself watching the bow cut through the ocean waves. At dusk or dawn, you could watch the other ships struggling in their endeavor to keep up with the convoy. Also it was a way to be by yourself in a ship loaded with thousands of troops. With some 20 days at sea, we docked in Swansea, Wales. Remember now, we were told very little about where we were going or where we were at. No one ever came up to a private and said, "We are here and we are going over to that location." So we were continually wondering where are we and where are we going. Later, it got to be who gives a shit? If I don't know, I don't have to worry about anything. Really, we lived in a small world and had to learn to cope with the situation. From Swansea, we were taken to Porthcawl, a resort city in South Wales. Our company billet was to be at Miners Rest. We were in England later to be told we were in Wales, not England, but it was a foreign country to a 19-year-old. Little houses, driving on the wrong side of the road, talking with a funny accent, and using a different currency. But we had a view of the ocean from our billet. We had a nice wide beach to run and play games on. We did run on it when the tide was out with our rifles and packs. It seemed that the officers' favorite activity was bayonet drill, and hand combat drill. You had to keep 19- and 20-year-olds busy and tired otherwise you'd have problems. Once you train a group and teach them that they can kill anyone – after a few drinks in a bar or pub there can be real problems with various service

rivalries. We were in Wales for a little over a month during November and December. It was cold, foggy, and rained almost every day. The rest, or Miner's Rest, was about two miles from Porthcawl.

Almost every night we walked into town and later would take a bus to Bridgend because they had a larger population and more bars. Besides it was some place to go. At Porthcawl, we would go to a tea shop for a tea and sweet and once a week they had a dance in the pavilion across the street from the ocean. At all the dances the men outnumbered the females maybe three to one. We met British working and uniformed women and talked with them for several hours in a bar for want of no other activity. There you had women who had probably met scores of American soldiers explaining their culture and social system to a group of Allied people. Along the South Wales coast, it was a cold, foggy period. Once in Porthcawl, it was so foggy you couldn't see your hand in front of your face, yet the colonel chewed out an enlisted man for not saluting him. As the soldier said, "Hell, I didn't even see him." One of my favorite activities was to sit upon the ocean benches and watch the December surf pound into the shoreline and break over the huge rocks and boulders. Or to see distant vessels moving slowly along the ocean horizon. It was a whole new world to a boy from Nebraska to view such an expanse of water and be so close to it for a period of time.

Our accommodations at The Rest were bunks stacked two high in rooms previously used as living rooms or lounges. The toilets and bath rooms were outside in another separate building. Not a fun run to make in the middle of the night or in the rain. Once falling out in the morning for report or formation there was a pair of 00 shorts that had been dirtied out – the poor soldier just didn't make it in time. In the service with the change of water or the diet a large group of soldiers would get the G.I.s or the shits. Then we'd all line up for our tablespoon of paregoric and the Mess Hall would have cheese in slices, bulk, and in the food. In the service, we had two types of sandwiches – one called Hinder Binder cheese of course, and the other was Donkey Dick, or more commonly called salami.

In Wales, we were now fed a lot of British grown vegetable and sausage. We had those damn little cabbages at lunch and dinner for weeks. They must have had a bumper crop that year. So many of us had never tasted them before but it was a vegetable we were continually fed over and over again. We'd have night marches along the country side for miles and miles. Then we'd go through those small British villages in the dead of night and an officer or sergeant would yell out – "Let's let the Brits know we're here."

OH HIDEY TIDEY CHRIST ALMIGHTY
WHO IN THE HELL ARE WE?
ZIP ZAM, GOD DAMN WE'RE THE INFANTRY.
WE'RE CAPT. HOWARD'S RAIDERS,
WE'RE RAIDERS OF THE NIGHT
WE'RE DIRTY SON-OF-BITCHES
AND WE'D RATHER FUCK THAN FIGHT!

You get 200 souls at 2:00 a.m. going through a small village yelling this tune and you get a response. “Those damn Yanks are overpaid, over-sexed, and over here!” Wales at that time was a coal mining region, and it was not uncommon to see a large number of slag or pilings hills that were almost mountains. It was a beautiful green countryside when the sun did come out. The British at this stage of the war were hurting with rationing and scarcities. Most of the girls we met were from families of hard-working labor class. To have someone buy them a Lager or Shambles (sort of a lemon non-alcohol), take them to a movie or for a cup of tea was cheap entertainment, and it gave us an opportunity to associate with someone other than another GI. One group of women we associated with were uniformed farm workers from the cities. We also crowded into the picture houses we call the movies. If you sat in the balcony you could smoke, but the seats cost more, because the Germans used time detonating bombs. So a bomb would go to the basement then explode. In the balcony, it was safer than the orchestra area. Well anyway, that was what they told us gullible Yanks at that time. In general, the British were very friendly to us and we enjoyed our relationship with them. Of course, we had exceptions as one soldier stated, "I want to get off of this God damn rock." At one time we were told that we probably wouldn't see any combat as we were to be used as the occupational force after the war in Germany. They didn't want combat soldiers filling the roll of an occupational army. Well, that once may have been the strategy, but it changed around the first part of December. But in the meantime, a few of us took a weekend pass to venture to London town. We left Friday night and took a train into London arriving late, but getting a billet at the Red Cross lodging around Marble Arch. It was just great to walk around the big city. As I remember we didn't see much bomb damage then – a lot of empty lots but no buildings standing with broken walls or windows. Most historical segments of London were closed during the time we there – no Tower of London, no Parliament, but we did look into Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral. Looking back 50 years, the two things that impressed me the most in those churches was Poets Corner in Westminster and the funeral coach of Wellington's in the basement of St. Paul's. Every time I have gone to London, I enjoy going to Westminster Abbey and just sitting there to drink it all in – the size, the age and the history – I'm impressed! As a walking tour of London by infantry men, we covered a lot of territory seeing buildings and walking along the Thames River. What a delight to see London and beautiful women in dresses and men wearing suits. But also brass all over the place, saluting, saluting and more saluting. We were encouraged to eat at the Red Cross or Salvation Army billets to help preserve the British rations. Possible they didn't want the enlisted men to over flood the facilities.

Figure 6: March 15, 1946 - LeHavre

December 9, 1944. It was time to move from Wales so they put us on the train destined for South Hampton. We crossed the English Channel on a British Packet craft called "The Invicta." It was a small vessel we were on for less than two days on our way to LeHavre. I remember the crossing was so rough that at times we would put our feet on the side of the ship to keep our balance while walking. Then I was laughing at everyone that was seasick after drinking the hot tea that was issued. I was fine until we ate, and it was then with all that motion I also got sea sick. That little vessel just bounded around in the winter waves. We were glad when we landed in the harbor of LeHavre onto a huge floating metal pier. LeHavre as a city was a complete disaster with bombed out buildings and pier region. Well, there we were put on 6x6 trucks that took us to Andrmanst Plain near a village called Yvetot. As the Army would have it, we unloaded and were marched to a field that was wet from rain. We struck our pup tents in nice even rows and bedded down for our first night on the continent in the mud. First, we were able to put down a little straw, then a raincoat, and then our sleeping bag, we called a fart sack. It was miserable in the cold wet mud. After about five days we travelled north on 40x8's which means the box car can hold either 40 men or eight horses. It was cold and they shut the box car doors, so we were all in the dark – in more ways than one. We had no idea what our destination was to be or the country. Once when the train was stopped, we heard a motor like an airplane. Then the motor sputtered and stopped, then you could hear the object descend with a rush of air and then an explosion – a buzz bomb known later as a V-1. We soon learned that if the motor was still going over your head, we had nothing to fear. That was our only buzz bomb experience as they were directed at Antwerp that night.

After a cold miserable trip of two days in 40x8s, we were put onto 6x6 trucks and told we may have to fight for our bivouac area. So we loaded onto the truck with all our earthly goods and everything we could put on. The attire was long underwear, two pair woolen pants, a wool shirt, a wool sweater, a field jacket, an overcoat, two pair of socks, gloves, and a stocking cap pulled down over the head with lined helmet on top. A soup spoon in your pocket, letters and toilet paper in your helmet liner, a bible in your field jacket in the area around the heart. Any

candy bar you had in your pocket. Your rifle belt with first aid kit, canteen with a cup and a couple magazines of ammo. Then we carried a carbine rifle, a small pack with a blanket and rain coat and that damn ammunition – six rounds. As I remember, we traveled in those cold 6x6 trucks for several hours. Once we stopped for a rest break (Pee Break). Ever try to find a penis that was cold and small under two pair of pants and a set of long underwear? You could pee your pants before you could find it!! As one soldier said, "I'm going to put a string on it and let the string hang out." He never did. As I remember no one got out to pee. We all just stood up on the seats and let it go. Eventually our truck convoy stopped and let us off. However briefly we had arrived at our destination, we could believe to hear the artillery firing and explosions. Sort of light rumbles at first and the closer we got the more separate the artillery explosion became. Not much talking now, no wise cracks. We were resigned to the fact this was the real thing and we really never were told how close to the line we were or where we were. The officers then spread us out in a skirmish line, and we began to move into the forest and up the hill.

There was an old infantry story that might just fit in here. The new recruit told the sergeant, "I don't want to fight and I won't fight." The old sergeant looked at the recruit and said, "No, we can't make you fight soldier, but we can take you where the fighting is and you can use your own judgement."

On the eve of the 24th of December, Company G spearheaded the attack on Wye, Belgium. The enemy held the high ground as we moved into the front and up the hill. It seems we had only gone several hundred yards and all hell broke loose. Machine guns firing at us in a steady fashion. I can remember being on my back on the ground looking up at the tracer bullets flying about 12-18 inches over my head. It seemed as if I could raise up my arm and touch them. At first there was nothing but confusion, but in a little while a group of our soldiers began to return the fire. We are the mortar section behind the lines – maybe 30-50 yards with all the yelling, screaming and firing of weapons going on. By daybreak we had progressed to the village and were firing our mortars at various community objectives. By mid-day, we had most of the village under control. A group of German prisoners with raised hands were brought to the main street, if a village does have a main street. Some appeared to be wounded by mortar fire which made us feel like we had made our contribution to the battle. As I remember the shape of the village was an inverted L. The houses with barns attached and the stone walls marking out a court. The structures and walls made secure shelters as the walls all appeared to be 2-21/2 feet thick. It was just a small village with maybe 15-20 farmhouses and a cafe.

By the end of the day, we had secured the community and dug in outside the area on the top of the slopping hill. A battle leaves a putrid sulfur smell in the air. It just lingers for days or if we would jump in an artillery shell crater it was sickening. There were some bodies on the ground, some of ours and some of theirs dead, not wounded. As we progressed through the town I remembered that I lost my canteen, so I took one off of a dead American soldier. We were looking for the enemy around the community and little did we know they were just across the draw and into the woods. One of our squad members went to the toilet in an outdoor privy. The Germans could apparently see him go in so they placed a round that burst about 15-20 feet

away. He came out of that outhouse like a shot with his pants down and hobbling with a crazy expression of surprise on his face. He had run about 10-15 feet away from the privy with his pants still down and that toilet disappeared completely with a direct hit. His face just showed disbelief. It was funny even at the time. Well, I was behind a wood pile made up of a lot of twig lumber, scared and down on one knee. I began to pray and say the Lord's Prayer. Something or somehow I seemed to be propelled away from that hiding place to a barn door. I no sooner got there and that wood pile also disappeared with an explosive direct hit by an 88 mm. You could hear them piss-boom. They were a rifle anti-tank, anti-personnel, and anti-aircraft weapon depending on the type of shell they used. At that time we had nothing close to that weapon. Against us, it was in their tanks and mobile units. Gutsy, they lost their sense of humor as most of the shooting stopped for a time. We set up the mortar in a barn yard with walls and started to get a cache of ammo for it by truck. We were told we would have a hot meal that Christmas night. Our food up to that time was a couple of apples we stole from a farm house kitchen.

The Belgium hospitality had left in one big hurry by the way they left their houses. Cows wandering around wanting someone to milk them. A couple farm boys did milk a few and we made a sort of drink from it with a chocolate mix we also stole from a kitchen. You don't have to worry about the infantry stealing too much. They have to carry it and we lived it light.

Every day someone developed a new password with a counter verbal signal. Like the Cubs – Chicago. One of my first nights of the combat experience I was walking to some assigned duty and turned a corner. I was told in a soft voice – "HALT" – give me the password. There I was looking down the barrel of a 57 mm tank rifle. Scared me to death. At that time the barrel looked like a hole 5 foot across. I think I said something like "OH SHIT – I don't know, let me think." They laughed and let me go on.

Another time in our first couple of days of combat, I was standing guard and our Capt. McGraw came around inspecting the guard and advanced close before I spoke "Halt." He commented he could have been a German with a grenade in his hand. I said, "Captain, (I could tell it was him), the slack in the trigger is all taken up and one more move and I'll squeeze a little more." We all learned those first few hours and days. The first few minutes in combat we lost a Lt. because he had on a grey officer's trench coat that looked a little like a Jerry coat. One soldier yelled, "A German," and he was shot by his own men. The first day jitters!! After that all the officials put on enlisted men's overcoats, took the bars off of their shoulders and helmets, traded in their 45 pistols for an M-1 rifle and tried to look like enlisted men. We dug a slit trench to urinate and defecate in out in a field away from the walls after the first day of combat. About the next day a German sniper set up and as a soldier would take down their pants and straddle the ditch, he'd drop a bullet very close. I don't know how far he was shooting from, but he forced several into that ditch of shit. We always felt that bastard was laughing at us. A couple of fellows said, "Coyan, let's go get that sniper." Well, you have to have someone to have the sniper fire at so you can shoot him. I asked who was going to act as bait. They said we thought you might. I said, "Fuck you guys, go hunt him yourself. He's not bothering me." After a while,

it all seemed like a delay game of cat and mouse, but at times you were the cat and then another time the mouse.

The battle field for the next few weeks was made up of small fields surrounded by forests. Some of the forests were man made and planted with fire breaks that were maybe every half mile. These fire breaks were maybe twenty-thirty feet across. This was the only route a truck or tank could take as the timber was mature being pine trees 2-3 feet thick. Large enough so someone could hide behind. One night we had a German counter attack that killed several riflemen. I got put on the detail to bring in several bodies and go back into the fox holes that were vacated. You could see the Germans across the valley and into the field. The soldiers that had been there for several days said they move for meals so watch and we can get a shot at them, maybe one or two. It was at least a 700-800 yard distance and those Germans were not fresh recruits. They'd run one, two, three seconds and drop, run three to four seconds and drop. It takes 3-6 seconds to draw a bead on a moving target. They knew that we only had M-1 s, and I had a carbine. We all took shots like a shooting gallery but to no avail. For all we know the Germans may have finished the war as soldiers. We sure never touched them.

Our first mortar position was in the village against a wall, but our sergeant moved our position to get more of a fire field. We were on a hill behind a hedge near a tree. We spent all day moving the ammo and digging it into a covered trench. (For all I know it might all still be there.) He chose to go out by himself one night with a tube and a few round of ammunition to harass the enemy. I remember he was elated about his success. So the next day we set up the mortar with base plate, tube and ammo sight, and began firing one hell of a lot of rounds. We lit up the enemy forest for a few minutes. Well, the Germans must have got real pissed off because we got back a barrage that blew the hell out of the place. We were definitely mismatched. The sergeant was wounded. I remembered taking his First Aid Kit to dress the leg wound. I started in the front of the leg where there was a small hole and back around there was a huge wound. I said 'to hell with it' and I and another solder carried him to the first aid station at the village. He was in pain but also shock. Never saw him again, and really, that was the end of a functioning mortar section. From that village on we always seemed to be in the woods, and that is not a place to fire a mortar. Since the shells are point detonating, if they hit a branch going up, they explode on you. I remember that once we were on the march in the forest and looked across the field and there were some Germans in a light area. An officer called for the mortar. Well, we were all standing out. I don't ever remember if we ever accumulated all the pieces of the mortar. Well, the officer was real pissed off and said we might as well disband the group. The mortar is a stationary weapon not an offensive tool. Well, eventually we all got reassigned into other functions. Just ran out of manpower to have a mortar section. I eventually became an officer's body guard.

That night I dug his fox hole and took turns standing guard with him. But that job only lasted a brief period as he had his heel blown off. We were on a skirmish line on both sides of a fire break and he was out in the road. I remember saying that you are going to get your ass shot off out there, get here next to the edge. Well, he moved a little bit when we got stumped by a group

of Germans in a real fire fight. The Jerries had dug in replacements very well. Their holes were covered with timber and they'd set up their lines of fire. Also the snow made the land marks of these replacements difficult to detect. We were spread out as I remember, and the Lt. commented, “Coyan, you don't have any overshoes.” I replied, “They were torn, sir.” His comment was "Well, hell, go back to the barn, we'll be out here all night." Well, I left, and it got worse. The only reason I know is I met him on the hospital boat going to England. He mentioned he'd have to use a cane the rest of his life. I never heard from Lt. Perry again. He mentioned he had put me up for promotion to Sergeant, but I guess I never lasted long enough to get the advancement. When I left the company the only officer I remember we had left in the company was the company captain.

The last day I was with the company in January 1945, we all stood in a circle, and I asked where are the other men? I was informed that this was the company, 16 or 17 (I don't recall) of 200, and we'd been reinforced twice. When you didn't see a friend for a while you NEVER remarked where is such and such? It became like denial but we always noticed we were shrinking in numbers. For weeks we maneuvered in that forest or woods. Lost in the woods!!! In that case your range of persons were soldiers to your immediate right or left and the one you fox-holed with which could be anyone at random to the right or left. So you can see our world kept getting smaller in dimensions and numbers.

In the beginning we'd attach the hand grenade on our small pack straps and hang them by the handles. Tie one on each side until we had one fellow who was pinned down and crawling on the ground. He accidently pulled a pin when crawling and killed himself. In the woods we heard to our right a pop and another explosion then a deadly scream. After that we stuck them into our gas mask bag that had food, smokes and an extra pair of socks – no gas mask. As time went on we were a sorry lot of soldiers. We cut our blankets in half to tuck under our helmets and into our coats so we could stay warm in the neck area. We'd put our rain coats over our overcoats for extra warmth even though it was only cotton with a rubberized interior. But the trouble with that was your body retained the moisture and then the overcoats would freeze. So we'd take off our rain coat and the overcoat would stand up on edge by itself--frozen like a rock. We didn't have razors, but at my age then, it really wasn't a heavy beard but the hair was worse. We had a tooth brush to brush our teeth. Six weeks and I never brushed my teeth or got a haircut. We always wore a helmet and never washed or combed our hair. When we went into combat, we never saw our own barracks bag again. They did drop loads of bags from a 6x6 once, and we sorted through those bags trying to find something we needed--like socks, soap or a tooth brush. I did find someone’s tooth brush that I put in boiling water to sterilize it (God only knows why that was a concern), and all the bristles fell out. We did have one shower. They took us off the line of support area to a couple of semi like buildings that had showers in one. They had us strip and walk into the shower area. As I remember, we got three minutes to get wet and soap up. Then they turned the water off after washing for about five minutes, they turned the shower on again to rinse for three minutes. The water was nice and hot, but when we left to dry off it was cold. We got clean underwear out of the deal. Then they put us on a 6 x

6 and transported us back to our billet.

In reserve most of the time we were housed in a hay barn and someone always had a fire for hot water to make coffee or our cocoa mix. Wash, no way – nothing to dry off the hands and face with. Sometimes we tried to get so close to the fire and our clothes would steam and shoe blackened. In digging a fox hole it was important not to do it in an area of trees. A mortar will hit a tree limb and you get a tree branch that comes down into the hole with you. So you were supposed to dig in front of trees but then the enemy can see the fresh dirt thrown on top of the snow. Well, we tried to camouflage that also. One day we had a group of replacements come in and were assigned a flank area to guard. Well they started to dig their holes in the trees. I told them to move that damn thing as that is a dangerous area. They just waved and the next day with a mortar attack of screaming moments, they moved them out in meat wagons. As we went on, we learned to calculate the situation and take the advantage of less risk.

I got a replacement once who was a hard rock miner from West Virginia. I selected where the hole should be dug and went off on a volunteer duty. Last time I ever volunteered. Well, when I got back that damn fox hole was 6 feet deep. I mentioned we'd never get out of that in an emergency so I made him fill it in a couple feet. He told me he was so scared he'd stay up all night. That's great, I'll sleep. The next morning when I did wake up we had a foot of snow all over, on my helmet, shoulders and in the hole. That night the Germans retreated. However, the day before there I was walking along in snow up to your knees in a skirmish line in the forest eating out of a can of 'C' rations and the damn shot rings out – pizz-bang. That 88 mm shell went in one end and out the back end of a Sherman into the fire break. It was easy to see the shell break and it was a tracer. Then, the tank began to rev and explode. I remember scrambling to get behind a large tree still eating. Then, there was the starting of a kill tiger German tank. A distinct diesel sound of enormous power. I was in a state of total fear as we had nothing to stop him. We could and later did call in for artillery. As I remember the artillery fire was short and was hitting us more than the Germans. You'd hear the troops cussing the artillery and the officer yelling – “Raise your fire, You're hitting us, God Damn It". Eventually the Germans did get the fire and retreated because the tank left us. As the Sherman tank blazed in the night, a corpsman came by asking for help to get infantry men away from those who were wounded. Well, myself and several old troops went out and picked up two or three men who had been affected by the confusion. We ended up dragging one out with broken legs. I remember the snow was so deep we couldn't see the legs and I wondered if he had lost one. He was yelling that he hurt so much. We replied you'll be taken care of soon, be quiet. The tank was on fire and its shells were exploding once in a while. I'm sure if the Germans had chosen to shoot at us we would have made ideal targets. The next day I heard the corpsman got a silver star for his exposure to enemy fire. We also wanted him to attend to some wounded, but it was long gone. Later they came around to give bronze stars to others participating, but by that time I had had a foot inspection for frost bite or trench foot, and a couple of us were put on a truck and sent back to an evacuation hospital. That was well worth more than a bronze star.

When I think back as to what some of the memorable experiences were during these four to five weeks in my life that made the most impression. One would have to be walking and sleeping in the cold and snow. I always seemed to be wet and cold — our gloves, our shoes, our socks, and ————. When we were in the hospital, the nurses told us all we had to do was wash out our socks and dry them. We just laughed. Start a fire, in what water, how do you dry wet socks? Sometimes even when I will walk outside on a cold winter night with snow on the ground and the stars out, I can easily recall what it was like in that December and January – cold and frightening. It was supposed to be the worst winter Belgium had in 29 years according to one article in the STARS AND STRIPES NEWSPAPER. Most mornings you'd wake up, get out of the fox hole, and pee. Someone was always stirring around talking or yelling. Make noise and let them know we're here. Open a 'C' ration – maybe the cooks would have hot coffee they brought up with the hot eggs and bread. That coffee would go into a cold aluminum canteen cup that dropped its temperature by 10-15 degrees. Some soldiers would fire their rifles and bars in the morning to unfreeze them and clean them out. No oil was put in weapons as that would freeze them up.

It seemed like we were always marching for some place. For all I know it may have been in circles, but we usually were near a village of several houses. We did get to sleep in barns with hay a few times but most of the nights were spent out of doors in the timbers. Our food was most likely to be C-Rations with a few D-bars thrown in for snack purposes. We also had K-Rations or a dry ration. The prize rations we came across were the 10-1 Rations that the tankers carried on their contraptions – we called them steel coffins. Let's see if I can remember all these rations. The C-Rations had three choices, beef hash, beans and wieners, eggs and bacon in one can each, and then another can had crackers. We felt they were made by some stove lid company in the states. Two cigarettes (Camels and Lucky Strikes were the favorites, but you might get Kools, Pall Mall, Raleighs or Old Gold). Two pieces of a hard crystal candy, a little toilet paper, and a dry coffee mix or a hot chocolate mix. The hot chocolate mix was preferred as one could eat it dry and it tasted just like the present hot chocolate mix. Several times we could mix our chocolate with snow and milk from the village cows that wandered around wanting to be milked. The K-Ration was a dry assortment of crackers, candy and smokes with a small can of canned cheese or a potted meat or an egg and bacon mix in a waxed box. The D-Bar was a milk chocolate English bar that was about one-third of a pound in a waxed box. We used to carry those for snack purposes as time went on. However, I remember one soldier selling a regular 5 cent candy bar for the first few days in combat for $15.00. When the cooks brought food and drink up in the night or in the morning, some of the dry rations were also available to just pick up.

It seemed like we always were doing some activity. Eating, smoking, sleeping a little, walking a lot, shooting a little and a lot of artillery, ours and theirs. Artillery is something you can hear from miles away. To the untrained ear it’s just noise, but after some time one can become an expert as to what type of shells are coming in or going out.

The 240 mm were the largest shells we came in contact with and on a cloudy day you could see the shells go through the air. They sounded like someone was rattling a large sheet of tin and they were overhead. Then the Germans had a mortar shell that they attached a noise maker too – we called them 'screaming meanies'. You could hear them as they started their descent back to earth. If there were several in the air at one time they really created a chilling effect on the troops. Sometimes they sounded like they were going to land in your hip pocket, but in a fox hole with no trees around, and if you kept your head down, one was reasonably safe. Except for a direct hit which was unusual and just a lucky shot. Tree bursts were our fear because the shrapnel would come down from above and hit the hole.

Another disturbing factor about artillery was the smell after an explosion. It was a sickening sulfur that lingered so if we parked for a time in a little hole you were reminded as to what made the hole. Those holes we considered safe because a shell very rarely hits in the same spot. As artillery pieces fire, it's forks dig the ground a little each time and artillery shells distances are determined by the amount of powder and elevation of the piece. But it was not uncommon for us to call in artillery and they actually hit us and not the enemy. As I understand it, we called in artillery and noted where it was to be landing by grids on a map. If you waited, shells put a few hundred yards in front of you – you'd hope they'd start long and keep coming closer. Well, with human error, sometimes they started by putting them in our location. I know there were times that if we had an artillery observer in our midst we would have killed him. They were hitting us. So between theirs and ours it was always a problem, but you have to remember most of the time we were not in a stable position. We seemed to be always marching through those forests meeting Germans that had built some beautiful defense positions of logs and ground cover.

Then there was the Tiger Tank, we called the King Tiger Tank. Its diesel engine was distinctly recognizable as they started up or were moving. In a quiet forest you'd hear those damn things start and it would send an alert signal down your spine. They carried the destructible 88s that would shoot a shell through anything around us – trees, walls and the steel of a Sherman tank. One thing in our favor was they couldn't come into the forests. They had to use the roads or fire breaks. Because of the terrain, a lot of conventional weapons were not adaptable – mortars included.

The Germans were good soldiers and much more battle seasoned than we were. They also seemed to be better equipped with winter materials such as snow packs for shoes, white snow suits for camouflage, and machine guns that fired 1200 rounds a minute (one of those firings sounded like someone pouring beans into a metal pail). One fellow got hit with machine gun fire and had five bullet wounds in one thigh. The Germans had better tanks and they had the '88'. Our tanks at first had 57 mm rifles and before the Bulge was over, some of the tanks had 90 mm rifles. Of course, the Germans had been at the war for over five years. There we were still using machine guns, BARs 45's dating back to the Philippine revolt in the late 1800s, mortars, and equipment designed for World War I. We had a few machine pistols, or burp guns we called grease guns, that were stamped out pieces of junk. Toward the end there began to appear

recoilless artillery. We truly had a superior rifle, the M-1 Semi-automatic and the carbine with a magazine.

Our greatest asset on the ground was numbers. As a POW once told me, "We'd knock out two or three tanks and the next day there'd be 10-15 in its place." Numbers were our powering, but I still believe our greatest asset was the Air Force. I remember one day seeing the sky filled with our aircraft from horizon to horizon-s-a sky of 10,000 planes. We just laid on our backs and looked with delight at the show of force. But the Germans appeared to be battle-tested and besides we were opposed by the SS, supposedly Hitler's elite guard with superior equipment. Another lasting impression of the Ardennes were the tall pine trees and how beautiful they looked dressed in the white snow. We always seemed to be getting a new dusting of snow that eventually became knee deep. We all preferred to walk in the fire break area, but in any skirmish situation we trekked through the snow. We were issued a pair of goulashes of questionable quality, but then I'm sure they were not made to endure the use and abuse we put them through. Our footwear was a couple pair of socks, high top shoes and maybe a pair of leggings with pants folded on the outside. So, our feet seemed to be always wet.

Belgium did not have the biting cold of North Iowa, but it was a damp, penetrating environment. If we did have a fire we'd try to dry out our gloves and warm our hands. Our feet had stopped having feelings weeks before. We never seemed to have sleeping bags, just our clothes on our backs and a few cut up blankets. One belief was that if you were in a sleeping bag you were enemy bait unable to move fast enough or get the bag unzipped. In any case, it had to be unzipped and a blanket around the shoulders provided almost the same warmth. If we slept in a barn we just burrowed into the straw for a nice warm sleep. We usually had constant reminders of death around us. Like intestines hanging from the trees or blood on the snow, a body here or there, one run over by a tank, someone screaming when they got shot or like one of our Chicago heroes who went into a hospital barn of wounded Germans soldiers and killed them all with his trench knife. I felt good when we later found out a wall fell on him and broke his back.

When we were in combat, we heard about the massacre at Malmady and the execution of American POW's. For a time if we took prisoners they were executed. Like take these prisoners to the POW camp and be back in 20 minutes. It always astounds me as to how close to an animal men can get in their behavior. I guess I've been there to see it and to live it.

The troops were friendly to each other but as combat went on we associated with most everyone but didn't get too close. It seemed we were digging fox holes with different soldiers all the time. No regular buddy system. I remember once we had walked all day and were put in a defensive position in a tree line and were told to dig a fox hole. The damn ground was too hard to get through the first layer without a pick. We didn't have one so we dug a little hole about a foot deep and laid in it. A lieutenant came along and told us to dig a hole. After he left, we went to another position. Someone had dug a hole and left it so we just took over that hole. I remember the other soldier and I said to each other "We're so tired and cold maybe we can get

hit and go someplace to get some sleep." Fuck the war, the Lieutenant., the food, the enemy, we just wanted to sleep. Not two hours on and two hours off stuff, a real night's sleep. In a fox hole we're supposed to be on duty for two hours then sleep for two hours. However, there were times we'd wake up at sunlight and everybody was asleep – all the guards had gone to sleep. So what the hell, I'll go to sleep and never wake up – no big loss. Maybe you could call it "give up-itis." You've gone down so far in the quality of life and you're so isolated it became overwhelming. I'm just so cold and wet and I'm over tired. What good is it all?

One morning with the Captain present, we had a foot inspection, and they picked some of us out with frozen feet. We felt great – a million dollar wound and I can sleep, maybe we'll get back to the evacuation hospital for a few days to get warm and sleep. When they evacuated my pack, I thought I'd be off the line for at least a week. And when they sent me back to Wales, I thought I'd be gone for at least a month. In reality, it was the end of the war for me.

As I remember, we were still in the vicinity of the burned-out Sherman tank for the foot inspection. The company of 16 stood in sort of a circle looking at each other. The medic had each of us take off a shoe and felt our feet. I never was told what his criteria was but some of us got on a 6x6. Funny, no one said good-bye as we thought we'd be gone a few hours. Of course, who to say good-bye to as we were the lucky ones. But after the foot inspection, the company went off the line and that's what the Captain wanted. As a group we were depleted and deflated mentally – totally exhausted. So it would be just four months before I returned to the company, and the war in Europe would be over by then.

We went into combat on December 24, 1944, and I left the company in January 1945. During that period, we began our combat activity. The overall military objectives were to just get down the road, through this village, sweep those woods, dig in here. For weeks, we were in the woods or forest from one small village to another. Maybe they weren't even villages, but just a clump of houses with barns attached. But also remember 50 years cause our minds to cross thoughts and I forget naturally or simply eliminated those happenings as undesirable. Combat hardens your feelings and insensitivity to certain activities – so what – that's life as I knew it. As time went on, I didn't hate the enemy, they were just out there on the other side. You also become aware of how cheap human life really is in combat. We were just a G. I. with a piece of equipment. When the equipment was used, it was no longer clean. We were dirty, bent, scraped, chipped, and had been reprogrammed as the young ones would say today, and I truly felt badly used, plus poorly equipped for the job at hand. As my stretcher went from one locality to another, I began to see everyone else was better equipped than we as combat soldiers were. They had rubber boots, combat boots, warm jackets, warm gloves. We had truly lived in a different world isolated from the real world, sort of like let the animals fail. I suppose it all had to be done – someone had to be in that locality – I was among the chosen few.

When we were unloaded to the Evac hospital, they put us on cots with blankets and in seemingly hours I was loaded into a hospital train for Turis, we later were to learn. I don't remember much of the train ride, probably I slept all the way. Our shoes and socks had been

taken off with our feet sticking out from under the blankets. We were given a shot of penicillin and that was the extent of all the treatment I received. In Paris, we were unloaded and placed in a meat wagon whose driver took us on a tour of the city. We saw the Eiffel Tower, the Arch of Triumph, the Champs Elysees, and Notre Dame. I never did know where we were. But as I remember it was a large gym room with rows and rows of soldiers on cots. It was in Paris, the nurses told us. Our Trench Foot was all our problem because we didn't wash our socks. Well, we were given clean underwear and our valuables. A chance to wash up and finally get a tooth brush and change. Again we were loaded up and shipped by train to the channel and a hospital ship where I met my Commanding Lt. Perry who had lost his heel. We wished each other good luck and I never saw him again.

At South Hampton, they put me on a train that was bound for Wales. It was a British hospital train and we were given the royal treatment with conversation and tea. An older gentlemen was constantly talking and encouraging us to notice the attractive young nurse assistant also in the car. At the time, everybody on the cots took notice of me. At this time, I could walk on the outside of my feet but the front part of my feet and toes began to hurt. The feet would jump up from the bed at times all on their own account. Then they began to change color to a brandy and then to black. My hands began to peal skin as did my ears and nose. Well, the halls in the hospital were so crowded they put us any place. I ended up in the head ward. There were men with a variety of injuries and broken jaws. For weeks, I was exhausted and slept most of the days. My feet hurt and stung most of the time. The only treatment was to leave then uncovered at room temperature--of course everyone got a shot of penicillin in the arm or butt and sometimes both places. It was the 1940's cure all. At first they placed me in a private room for what reason I'll never know. Maybe to isolate me from the others in case I had a contagious disease or I screamed at night. At first I slept most of the time but I remember a couple G.I.s with broken jaws coming in to try and cheer me up with a ukulele with their jaws wired shut singing anyway.

Shine, shine, who wants a shine—
My name is Freddy and I'm always ready—
My brushes are new and my polish is fine—
Hey mister, hey mister, don't you want a shine?

Roll those boots, roll those boots, roll them on the square
Roll them on the sidewalks, the streets or anywhere.

That's about all the words that I can recall, but those two did bring a little joy to my life at that time. I must have been one sorry looking person. At first, we wouldn't leave the bed so we were constantly calling for ducks to urinate into delivered and deposited by the ward boys. In weeks, I was hustling around on the side of each foot to the bathroom. We slept, read, and listened to the radio. Then someone came up with the idea we should make silver rings. The way we did that was to take a British florin (a little smaller than a half dollar) and put it on the end of the bed, then strike it with the handle of a mess knife while holding onto the blade. So there you

have some 20-25 G.I.'s sitting on their beds pounding on coins splitting them in a barracks ward. It was the most productive thing we'd done in months. The noise must have driven others to the edge of insanity. Every once in a while, a nurse would yell – STOP – as she entered the ward. Well, to make a long session short, we did split the coins. Someone got a dentist to drill holes in them and the end product was a ring that was polished to perfection with some buffing. As you all may know, I've carried that ring with me on my key chain. I either wore it in the service or carried it. Guess I never thought of it as a good luck charm or simply just a part of me.

Well, I got stronger from sleep and food. In a head ward at that time some patients had one or two teeth taken out and their jaws were wired shut. They were on a liquid diet of malts, eggs and ice cream, liquid soup, and juices. Well, wouldn't you know they got tired of that food morning, noon and night so they just gave away some of their malts enriched with raw eggs. That was putting us poor infantry men in pig heaven. It was sure better than those old C-Rations. When I left the hospital to go back to my outfit, I weighed 190 pounds of pure fat. Now, remember, I was in the hospital for over three months. We got new clothes and shoes. No division markings, just plain shirts. We were told after a couple months we could start to go to town for an afternoon pass. So a group of us combat veterans went into Ebbw Vale [Wales] on the bus every day. We'd get off of the bus and hit the bars first for a few pints of ale before they closed at 2:00 p.m. and opened again at 4:00 p.m.. We'd take in an afternoon movie or walk the town or along the country side. Then at 4:00, we'd hit the bar again until we felt we should take the bus back to the hospital. One of the four of us always had some money. We hadn't been paid for three or four months so when one of us got paid they'd buy all the beer until their money ran out. Then someone else would get paid and then we'd spend all of their money.

In the process of time, we all got paid and we spent it all on each other. Why save money if you were going to go back to the line and possibly get killed. Before our hospital term was finished we all began getting regular pay. Between the four comrades there was a feeling we had survived and we had been very lucky. We generally felt if we returned to our outfits we would not be lucky. At this time, I volunteered to join the paratroopers. Most of the fellows I associated with were from that outfit, the 82nd or 101st Airborne. They had a real deal – jump, fight for several days, and leave. Hell, with the straight infantry, we just stayed and stayed, hoping attrition wouldn't catch up with you – but you knew deep inside it would!!

As infantry soldiers we began to hike the valleys and hills around the town. On a nice warm spring day, we even went swimming in a small stream that looked so inviting. We stripped down to our shorts and jumped in to swim to the other side. No one had stopped to test the water temperature but it must have been in the high 30s or low 40s. It just took your breath away. Well, I walked back by a bridge. We just laid in the sun to dry out, dressed, and walked back to town. A true 'go to hell attitude.'

There were always some native women that would join us for a beer. I suppose because it was free, but no one dated anyone. It was just three or four fellows and two to three women. We

would drink, eat, and go to the pictures. At the pictures we always sat in the balcony where you could smoke. A few weeks later we were called into a doctor's office and asked if we were ready for limited duty, of course not, it was a vacation. Well, after another two weeks, we were sent back to our outfits. I couldn't get into the paratroopers as the 75th Division wouldn't release me. But getting back to the 75th was no easy task. As I remember, we had a couple days in London town, we stayed again at the Red Cross near Marble Arch.

Then it was off to South Hampton to France and Belgium. There was a group of us infantry men in light duty who wanted to keep occupied, so we were ordered to close order drill by the hours. That Lt. officer was intent on making us a crack drill team. We did close order and we got to throwing the rifles in the air – double time, quick time. Those were real 8-pound rifles not those with the housing removed. Indeed, we did get rather good.

It was there that the war in Europe ended. Going to town that night we drank a little and walked the town – it was quiet considering the situation. In weeks, I finally got back to the 75th Infantry Division, the 290 Regiment, and Company G in Hagen, Germany. The sergeant who met us off of the truck took us directly to the supply officer to be re-outfitted. So on went the division patterns, we got combat boots to wear, a steel helmet, and a rifle to clean plus all the other combat material. The Division had only been in Hagen a few days. They had taken over a nice neighborhood of houses and gave the residents only a couple of hours to take what they needed. We all had a bed to sleep in, a cover over our heads and a bathroom. As I remember, we had a bathtub in the house, but sometimes it was full of beer in cold water.

Hagen was an industrial city that had been bombed to the state that the central business district was only a wall standing here or there. Most of the streets had been cleared for traffic but buildings were just piles of bricks and rubble. The few weeks I was in Hagen, I pulled guard at several strategic localities like the brewery, the water works, the power plant, the stock yards, and the city administration buildings. The first few days curfew was enforced at night by firing machine guns down the city streets. The soldiers were not supposed to talk to the German population. "No fraternization" it was now called. But in reality we saw very little of the Germans. In a few weeks we had a massive beer party for the British unit that was to relieve us of the occupation. Our division was to be used in Reims, France, as a cadre in a processional camp to return troops to the United States on the way to the Pacific Theater. Well, it was a party to end all parties. It began with our confiscating all the party wine we could find and beers we could cart away. It all began early in the evening after dinner and we all began to drink the wine with music, and a pair of Englishman did the Abbott and Costello "Who's on First and Who's on Second?" After we ran out of wine we just resorted to beer. I became a bartender and the only thing I can really remember was unloading beer from cases and dunking them into ice water and handing them out by calling "ICE COLD BEER."

That was the only night I ever remember the bed spinning around and in the morning after drinking water. I think I got drunk all over again. The next thing I can remember, we were on our way to France in 40x8s. These types of transportational excursions put a large number of

soldiers plus their gear in a box car with several bales of hay to sleep on or stash in the corners. We were issued C-rations or K-rations and possibly we would get a warm meal now and then at a railroad depot depending on location. Someone was always heating coffee in some fire rigged up with cans. Some soldiers slept or played cards and some of us just seemed mesmerized by the countryside.

On this journey, the train tracks went near the Cologne Cathedral which stood out over the ruins of the city. But crossing the Rhine was a memorable experience. There I was sitting at the door of the box car with my feet dangling over the side watching the cathedral when all of a sudden I looked down to see the river several hundred feet below. No siding, no walk way, just a track over the river supported on some hidden construction. I remember saying, "I have to move." We were in this box car for over a week, so some ingenious soldier cut a hole in the floor of the box car so we could defecate through it. We just urinated out of the door or at the train stops, which were numerous. Once one of the soldiers was urinating out the door and we went through a town depot and there he was leaving a trail of urine along the platform with people standing back. But we had a good laugh. Yes, we were crude, but living through our experiences left us numb to the feelings of others.

In France, our division was assigned to assist at Camp Cleveland, a staging area known as the city camps near Rheims, France, to be used to protect troops on their way back to the United States or the Pacific theater. As I remember, some artillery units were being shipped directly to the Pacific via the Suez Canal from Southern France. Our barracks were old French billets that were built of stone and used before World War I. We were at first housed in a quad area and assigned to guard various locations in that region. One guard duty I do remember was patrolling around a nurses compound with live ammunition. The instructions were that if anyone would try to climb that 10-foot-high fence shoot them. No questions asked. Well, we never did get to shoot an officer. Nurses were officers and could by Army regulations only date officers. After pulling guard duty for a time I was able to transfer to the camp fire department. Sure sounded like better duty than guarding installations. Our first duty was to direct German POW's to cut the tops off of 50-gallon drums, have them painted red with white letters. I think the lettering was FIRE. Those barrels were distributed throughout the camp which was made up seemingly with squad tents. In our barracks, the barrels helped service the fire-fighting five-gallon tanks.

Figure 7: Dec '45 Geary, Heil and Coyan - The truck needs to be cleaned. Have to tell the Germans to do it tomorrow. Rough!

It was not universal for us to have shower fights using the extinguishers we had just charged. One problem we did have was the officers would use the carbon tet from our extinguishers to clean their clothes or pink pants. So, we put a stop to that by spilling a little iodine in the solution to make the pants turn red. That almost overnight reduced our problem. While we still lived in the quads we had several incidents that are worth noting. One soldier found a hand grenade and debated whether it was a smoke grenade or a concussion grenade. So one quiet afternoon the pin was pulled and thrown out into the empty quad. It made one hell of a noise echoing all over the camp – it was a concussion grenade and we got scarce all at once. Another incident was one soldier kept coming in drunk at night real late. Well, to teach him a lesson we moved his bunk outside in back of the barracks. So that night he came in after dark as usual and couldn't find his bunk. We had a little laugh out of that. Then another soldier always slipped into his shoes and out for formation almost late every morning. So to cure that we nailed his shoes to the floor. The next morning he went to take a step and fell down. We always seemed to have some form of deviant behavior in the works.

The transit troops were housed in a squad tent with wooden floors and screened sides with canvas flaps that could be raised or lowered depending on the weather. There was a heavy stove for heating the tent located in the center. Those stoves could get red hot with too much coal in their center. I remember being called to one fire, we arrived so late that there was nothing but charred remains of the soldiers possessions – not one thing left but a few burning piles of canvas. So, we all just undid our pump and put out the remains.

We had several German POW's that worked for us in the fire department cleaning and cutting gas barrels for fire furnaces. One barrel blew up killing a prisoner when he was removing the top of a barrel with a steel chisel. I remember three of our German workers, one had been in both World War I and World War II. One was a young man and the other was from Sudetenland. They did not look or act like the pride of the German Army. They looked more

like the leavings. My first experience in seeing German POW's was at Camp Walter, Texas. There was a compound of German prisoners captured in North Africa working at that base. I will never forget them. Big and strong, working in shoes and shorts with a nice tan. There we were marching in formation with full military gear, a group of young and old recruits. I remember saying to myself and we have to fight those physical specimens. Well, our prisoners sure didn't fit that image.

As they were relayed to go home or back to where they came from we gave them soap, cigarettes, and candy for exchange purposes. We tried to be fair in supervision of their labor assignments. Across the street South of the two quonsets [a building made of corrugated metal and having a semicircular cross section] that housed the fire department was the location of the German stockade. The prisoners themselves ran the inside of the compound. They had their own military discipline and would court martial their troops and execute them also on occasions by hanging. The only other thing I remember regarding the POW's was they complained about the food. Once they said they had kraut for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. That diet also affected their need to frequently visit the latrine.

On VJ Day, the guard on the POW tower fired his machine gun all around in the air celebrating his jubilation. Across the street just North of the fire house was the enlisted men's PX. It was the only place for all the base with a bar, tables, and nicely assorted displays. However, the building had a loft full of hay which we told them to remove for safety reasons. Well, one day it all caught fire and went up in flames. We put loads and loads of water from the fire truck into the building. The fire truck only held 300 gallons of water so once we used that up we had to go to the stream and get 300 more gallons of water. As you might expect, we had only four walls standing after that fire was burned out. Boy did we catch hell from everyone. The soldiers complained "YOU LET THE PX BURN DOWN!"

It was from this camp that we had day leave to go to Paris. In the morning, they'd pack us into the 6 x 6 trucks with a canvas top and we'd arrive about 11:30 to be picked up again at about midnight. It would give us a chance to walk the city and visit the historic points. So, we old infantry men walked through the Arch of Triumph to see the first Eternal flame for the unknown soldier of World War I. We could stroll down the Champs Elysees amid a population dressed in civilian clothes, walk in and ascend Notre Dame, climb up or take the lift up to the first level of the Eiffel Tower, walk up the hill to the Sachs Coeur. But the most impressive sight for me was the Les Invalides with the tomb of Napoleon and the church with all the battle flags of his regiments. Paris was beautiful with its broad avenues and sidewalk cafes for a glass of wine, and the beer was terrible. Just to watch the population walk by was refreshing. I remember one woman walking by with blue hair worked up to a bird's nest with a bird attached – stuffed of course. After living in the tents and barracks, seeing little towns and villages, Paris was a mecca of streets, sidewalks, bridges, beautiful buildings, and sidewalk cafes.

I can remember the first division, or the Big Red One, was a unit being processed at our camp and hoping to recruit some of the cadre troops. As they said, it was a good opportunity to get home. But then, they would be off to Pacific Theater. We just laughed. We'd stay in Europe as long as possible. By the way, they were the division that marched down Times Square for the victory celebration ending the entire war. Another opportunity missed. But then so was a chance I had to take French courses at the University on the Riviera, the catch being when I returned I'd pull guard duty. Once a position in the company bulletin board announced that combat veterans could be given a field commission so they would be a part of the occupation of Norway for several years. It all sounded intriguing, but five years in Norway? Lucky, I didn't do that one as I would have been in the military at the time of Korea.

Figure 8: Feb '46 Jackson, myself and PW's.

Over a period of months we had accumulated military leave that could be used from Camp Pittsburgh. We were able to take trips to the United Kingdom, Switzerland, or the French Region around Nice and Cannes. Well, Ray Jackson, a fire department friend, and I decided to take a leave to England and Scotland for 10 days. We got our leave forms and railway passes plus as always our condoms (no condoms, no pass – a simple army rule). Before we left camp, I remembered I received a cold or flu shot, but I already had a cold. So off to Paris. I vividly recall riding the Paris metro to the train station with my friend standing beside me. He had been eating a significant amount of garlic. The longer I rode, the sicker I got and making the next station I detrained and ran to the restroom or WC. What a way to start a vacation!!

Well, we took a train to LeHarve from Paris and a boat to South Hampton on our way to London. We used train passes to London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Stratford-on-Avon. We walked and walked to the historic buildings and events in London. A retired military man gave a brief walking tour of London after we observed the Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace. No Christopher Robin was not down there with Alice, but the sights of Westminster Cathedral and St. Paul's were a long way from Omaha. From the bottom of civilization in combat to the master builders was a significant step in only months. Next Jackson and I ventured to Edinburgh to tour the castle and walk the Princess Street area.

Then onto the Trossachs and Glasgow. On our trip to Loch Katrine I remember stopping at a weaving shop or shed like a cottage industry with an elderly man smoking a carved pipe running a hand shuttle on a weaving machine making Scottish tweed material. It was beautiful. We had lunch in a country house and returned to our billet in a Red Cross establishment in Glasgow. The return trip to London was on the Flying Scotsman, a crack train of its day. The menu in the diner was British sausage. We were sick of roasted rabbit!! As I remember, we enjoyed it but sometimes with enough wine or beer anything can be acceptable. Our billet in London was near Marble Arch and the speakeasy area. One British speaker complained about the American influence in Britain and that darn Cow Gummu-Rum of course. We agreed we'd have a date every night. Can you imagine the type of women we met in bars in these cities? We did have women to drink with us and possible have a dinner with but Jackson nor I could ever recheck a face, we'd say Good-bye and go back to our Red Cross billet which were hotels with some sort of privacy and call it a night. In the morning say bonjour to the city.

One afternoon, we took a train to Shakespeare country and toured that old and ancient city. Back to Paris via London for our exchange from pounds to francs on the black market with the long knife Moroccans. The black market was just petty larceny with a couple hundred dollars here and there. Maybe it was our spoils of war. But generally our attitude was we don't owe anybody anything. We've served our time in hell.

The next trip I was able to take was to Switzerland for seven days. It cost me $35.00 for food, lodging, and transportation. We were allowed to take $35.00 in Swiss currency plus any pounds, dollars, or cigarettes we could peddle. One of the major purchases G.I.'s made was a new Swiss watch. As I remember I bought a nice watch for $17.00 and later sold it to a G.I. who was trading with the Russians for $75.00. So I had a sergeant who later went to Switzerland buy me a $35.00 chronometer I wore through college. We first railed to Basel, then Lucerne and picked up a tourist boat for Vitznau where we stayed in a small hotel for several days. We rented bicycles and also took a cable car ride in a gondola with room for two with food and a tea house. Such a beautiful view. Looking down on the lake we could only see the smoke of a large steamer. On Saturday night there was a party after our meal. They had a small group who played the accordion, a saw, and a broom. It was a fun evening. It was also the first time in my life I'd slept in a bed with a down cover over and under us.

Our next stop was Montreux via Interlocken. In Montreux, we took a cable train up to where one of the Olympic Games were held in the 193's. Next we ventured to Solothurn and we visited a watch factory. On this trip our uniforms attracted a great deal of attention. We wore dress wools with our Eisenhower jackets, battle ribbons, and combat boots bloused as always with condoms (we never tucked our pants into boots). As I remember we were only the second group to go into Switzerland after the war. We'd walk down the streets followed by young boys asking for autographs. Everyone was friendly. Their first tourists in years. We were invited to an English speaking club in Solothurn so the natives could practice English on us. As I remember, we thought it odd that they all had a British accent. Other than a couple more visits

to Paris those were the travel experiences I had in Europe. But leaving LeHavre and going home I made a vow I will return to Europe again as it was a wonderful adventure.

It is hard to explain the depths of behavior that exist in societies that are ruined by war and the citizens are trying to fight for survival at any level. The entire system is in disarray and persons will sell anything that they have for food and shelter. They sell themselves as prostitutes or whores because their body is all they have left. There are no factories to work in, no capital to loan, limited food and goods to trade. These nations had been bled of man power, food and capitol for four years. How long will it take to turn it all around into some semblance of normal nation? We saw the poor eat out of our garbage cans near the mess halls, beg for food for the horses working in a field, selling themselves for 10 cigarettes (a medium of exchange), coffee, or anything that was marketable, legal or illegal. As G.I.s, we were wealthy in a land of the poor. We had food, clothing, shelter, and currency.

Sometimes we exploited others as we also had been exploited. I think I have always resented that from the military. However, with all my experiences in the military, I had a college education before I went to the university. The Army put a lot of experiences on us. We had a private in our fire department who brought a young girl back from Paris to our barracks to live for several days. She was dressed in Army shirts and pants. This was not a normal military functioning unit. Our sergeant, Geary, was not strong in discipline. Sort of go about and get along. In all, he was fun to serve under.

Well, the city camp where we were located had fulfilled those functions of processing units for their return to the United States. With the closing of our camp, the fire department was one of the last units to leave with the camp being turned over to the French forces. However, before we left two of our members chose to market numerous items of equipment to the black market, out went boots, fire axes, etc. I was only glad I never signed the equipment sheet. But the several months in the fire department provided us with a lot of memorable experiences.

One night after drinking too many, Davenport tried to climb inside of a furnace while drunk. He liked to fight and he had no trouble finding someone to bring him a coal fire. A very good looking soldier who after throwing gasoline in with the matches eventually had a cut up face and broken nose. We cleaned up the chimney pipe with an explosive.

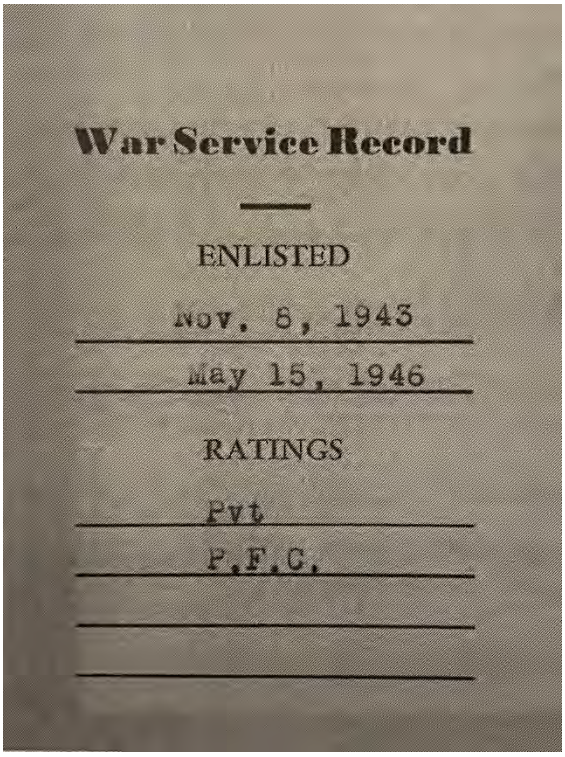
Taking boxing lessons from “Range”, a Golden Glove Champion from Hawaii, (after a couple of sessions my nose was spread all across my face) but really he never hurt me intentionally. "Range" had a wonderful smile with a couple of gold teeth. He played the guitar and sang cute little tunes. He'd say, "I'm going to the Red Cross PX and sing to the pretty ladies.” Then we had Reed, the master of the black market – always a deal. He liked to drive the jeep drunk as he said, "I drive better that way." I couldn't testify to that as I never drove with him off duty – Jackson was a buddy that I did more things with. Play cards, go to a movie, the PX, or go on leave with him. On the fire department, we had two quonset huts, one hoser, the fire wagon (6 x six with a tank, hoser, axes, ladders, pumps, paired 00) the other hut I lived in with seven others

or eight all told. We'd work two shifts of four – 24 hours on and 24 hours off. During our shift, we slept and played cards-pinochle, double decker. The games were limited to five to six hours at a time. We played into the morning hours. It was fun relaxing duty and we developed a sense of togetherness.

With the closing of Camp Pittsburgh we were off to the cigarette camps that were located around LeHavre. It was a tent city where I only spent several weeks. My job assignment for a time was to be an MP (Military Police) and drive camp patrol to check on any disturbance and pick up witnesses to take to headquarters. From there they were to be taken out of camp and supposedly turned over to the French authorities – but that was questionable, I thought.

I took leave once with Sergeant Larry to LeHavre, a French ocean port that was rather leveled by major military activities. You walked the streets, but there was very little to buy, few restaurants, poor wine. You could view the ships loading men, but leave like that once was enough. So you did patrol, read, exercised, and were bored. We were all in a bit of a hurry to get home. I had 45 points and if I'd gotten a purple heart for frozen feet I would have been home before. But oh well in May, they told some of us we'd be home in a few days. So we were processed – took away our field equipment, rifles and ammo, exchanged our French currency for dollars with yellow seals. We went to the dock and loaded us onto a LST, a slow boat to the US of A.

I don't remember much of the ocean voyage other than a couple soldiers set up a card game and they operated the house. As I remember, that house went on continually during the voyage. We landed in New Jersey and were given a traditional welcome home steak dinner that evening. They rapidly processed us and we were put on trains as there was an anticipated railroad strike in seven days. So off we went on the Penn Central RR at some 90 mph the conductor stated. We stopped at St. Louis for a change of trains and on to Kansas City and Fort Leavenworth. Here we were processed for discharge. We were called out on detail and upon returning our barrack bags were taken to another building for inspection. Only G.I. things were allowed to be kept. Any guns, ammo, knives were taken away. We were given two sets of wools, Eisenhower jackets, and underwear and socks. They took our field jackets and mess kits, web belts and canteens. I think we only had one pair of shorts. I told them they could keep that darn rain coat and long winter coat – it was spring. They gave us a brief physical, we could claim physical handicaps, we got our full pay and discharge funds and a train ticket home. While we were there one night an actual corporal came into the barracks and said we were on KP the next day. He was told to get his ass out of there and go to hell and if he didn't move fast enough he would get physically beaten up. No veteran was going to pull any of that, KP was for rookies.


War Service Record

ENLISTED

Nov. 6, 1943

May 15, 1946

RATINGS

Pvt

P.F.C.

Figure 9: George D. Coyan's War Service Record. Coyan served in the United States Army from 1943 - 1946 before he was honorably discharged.

The next day I was taken to Kansas City where I stopped in to see Pat and Lucille with their new baby, Michelle. The next day I boarded the Eagle passenger train for Omaha. It manufactures one of the LePhes of TB that was run by the Missouri Pacific railroad. It used to run under Military Ave. in Omaha about 6:00-7:00 p.m. every day. We used to hear its whistle.

I arrived at the Union Station in Omaha in the early afternoon and hired a cab to take me directly to Firestone District Office at 20th and Harvey to see my father. I bounded up the stairs to surprise my father. Previously I had straightened my tie, put my hat in my epaulet, combed my hair to put on my best, classiest presentation for the one I most admired and loved. I walked around next to his desk, he was working and I said, "Hi, Dad." The startled man put one hand at his heart and then we embraced. I had not written to my parents that I intended to be home or that I had left Europe. It was to be a surprise and it was more than I wanted. I vowed I'll never do that again! My father took up his hat and told someone he'd be gone for the day. So we walked out together with my father introducing his son to everyone we met in the store as "My son, just home from Europe!"

TRANSITION TO CIVILIAN LIFE

Home was comfortable with a constant bed I shared with Ron or, as we called him then, Champ short for Champion. It was time to get my life in order and prepare for college in the fall. But first, enjoy the summer and have a little fun. The meals at home were excellent with a lot of meat, potatoes and gravy with some kind of canned vegetable or a wedge of lettuce with some Miracle Whip put on the top. Coffee for a beverage, but I had fared well with military chow. When I left for the service in 1943, I weighed 145 pounds and on returning to civilian life, I was 37 pounds heavier at 182.

My first task the next day was to buy some civilian clothes, so I went down town to the Nebraska Clothiers. Bought a suit for $150, a sport coat for $105, pants for $50. The suit was a herring bone double breasted and the sport coat was brown with plaid pants. I went to Penny's for a couple shirts and ties. Then I went over to Florsheims and bought a pair of dress shoes.

Because of rationing and clothing shortages, my father had worn out all my high school clothes. I probably was made for the civilian market, yet workers who worked hundreds of hours over time had made money to spend. Items rationed were clothing, food, gas, tires. Then all of a sudden items went to a free market and shortages abounded. There were shortages of houses, meat, sugar, clothing, and new cars. With new cars, even to get on a list for a car took under the counter money of several hundred dollars. The car I eventually purchased the next year cost $675.00 for a 1937 Ford in 1947. I remember I paid more for the car than it sold for new. It was sound and serviceable for four years. My father got a 1946 Ford from a dealer friend who also sold tires in Odebolt, Iowa for $1,100. I remember he and I took the bus up to the town to pick up the car which was at cost. I eventually purchased the car from him in the 1950's.

After the war there was much unemployment with industry returning and service men being discharged at a record rate. At first I joined an unemployment program for service men called the 52-20 Club. 52 weeks of $20 a week. I was only in the program for a couple weeks and I found a job at Skinner Mangrove loading boxcars of spaghetti, macaroni, and cereal they sold under their name. It was where I met Howard Nordeen, 6'3", 240 pounds ex-infantry man like myself. With him and Joe Archibald, a childhood friend, my summer was filled with golf, swimming and going out on Saturday night. Someone always had to have a car – so we borrowed our parents or Joe had a coupe that sat three if one sat on someone else's lap. It was transportation.

On coming home, I planned to go to college that fall at Omaha University. I'd travelled enough and wanted to live at home for at least a year before going away to college. Well, in college you had to type papers and since I didn't know how to type I took a typing class at a Business College. Also I didn't know how to dance so I enrolled in a dancing class. Just trying to make myself a little more socially rounded that summer.

Well, come fall, I enrolled at the University of Nebraska (OU) in Omaha. It was referred to as West High. I became an instant social success with a bridge group, we had two girls out of high school, another male, and myself. We played a lot of bridge during the school breaks. I had no car so dating was not an option so my socialization was at school doings. Also, I was able to get back at the Safeway Bakery working Friday night and Saturday. I was not prepared for college at that time. My writing, speaking, and listening skills were not honed for that level. No way was I serious enough to be a student. It was not a priority for me. With the first semester I almost got kicked out of college – I was out on probation and if I didn't improve my grades I'd lose my G.I. Bill. I had a lot of fun my first semester and my social contacts made the college experience a real ball. Well, now I got serious – no more bridge, just study. I developed an association with a veterans group and they helped me learn what to study. We took classes and started to have coffee sessions after class discussing what was important and what test questions could come out of that lecture.

College became a campaign, my social life sure changed, but after the second semester with a reasonable set of grades, I felt I could finish college. By the next year in school, I finally began to be a college student. With the group I associated with, I developed an interest in reading the classics and developed a little library. Friends named MacDonald, Kaiser, and Christy were my associates. I even got to the stage where I felt I could compete for grades, and on some stages we bet a dollar as to who could get the highest grade. Studying began to be a full-time job.

Reflecting on my service after the war many of us would discuss why we didn't get killed. Was it all just dumb luck? Well, around that time I made up my mind that I'd like to do something for society in return for my life. To be a minister was not in my thinking so maybe I could be a teacher. That would be a pay back, a worthwhile thing for society. I'll teach! I like History now that I've seen so many historical places and physical education, I really enjoyed track. So crazy or not, that's how I chose to be a teacher. I sure didn't want to sit at a desk in an office or try to sell. My only experience had been as a laborer, a soldier, and a worker in the bakery. I sure didn't want to get stuck in the bakery for the rest of my life.

Part-time work was great but not as a full-time position. I had worked at the bakery for three to four years part-time on Fridays and Saturdays also filling in for vacations in the summer. Most summers I wanted some other work experience. One summer I landed a job working in a steel rolling mill, Eaton Metal Products. Jobs were tight and with an ad in the paper, Nodeen and I went down to stand in quite a line of hopefuls. As I was there, one of my college economic friends came by and said, "Come in with me." We went to the front of the line and got hired. The first day at work, they closed the plant for a funeral of a foreman. So we went home and told our mothers we got fired and went to play golf. The first week on that job I was at a stamping machine cutting steel with a hydraulic press with a one button operation. On another machine a fellow forgot to get his other hand out of the knife's path and got his hand cut off. With boring repetitious work that was always possible. Then they put on two button presses that used two hands. After a week I got transferred to the warehouse loading dock moving

grain bin pieces onto semi-trailers. There I learned to drive or back up semis. It was a dirty heavy job but we got a great sun tan.

Another summer, I helped with the change-over in Omaha from manufactured gas to natural gas. All the gas jets in the city had to be changed. So we did that on stoves, gas refrigerators, water heaters and furnaces. We worked in a crew of five to six to a block for a day. We got into some of the dirtiest stoves and houses. It was dirty work but paid very well. Also we played bridge during the lunch hour. One place I remember on Dodge St. doing the stove. The oven had two major kettles in it full of half dollars. We just looked with astonishment and did our work and put them back with never a thought of taking any. I really never ran into any excitement —— some reported drinking, naked women. All I ran into were dogs and cats and people who didn't want me to make a mess on their greasy stove.

Another summer, I worked with a construction outfit as a laborer but I got tired of that after a week of rainout and went back to the bakery. As a student, my grades seemed to get better every semester. I wasn't going to break any records, but I was going to graduate eventually. One summer I went full time to school so most of my course work was over in 2 1/2 years. The remaining courses I had to take were teaching theory and practice teaching. That I did in the fall at Benson High School under Miss Hager, a teacher I had as a high school student. She recommended I be hired, but I just didn't measure up according to the Principal. Well, on completing my course work in January, I felt I just might as well stay in school and get to work on my Master degree since I had more G.I. Bill and teaching jobs were scarce.

Figure 10: The HANDSOME college graduate!

Well, I dated a few women in college, but mostly the fellows I went around with went to hockey games, boxing matches, ball games, fishing, golfing, and swimming. It all was a lot better than being in the infantry. We always seemed to be lined up with blind dates. We delighted in getting blind dates for Noreen and get the shortest girl you could line up. He'd be dancing with some girl with her head on his chest. We just seemed to go from one fun experience to another. College for me was an enlightening experience of information and theories. Once I learned how to study it became a challenge to succeed with my colleagues. Many of them were already married and in a hurry to get finished to join the work world. It

was tough competition but rewarding.

G.I.s returning to the world of education created a confused institution. Most of us ranged in age from 21-28. Some married with children, and many had wives who worked. We developed a network of what priority to take when questions were asked on tests and gave good answers. We studied each other's notes and quizzed each other before exams. It was like a war cooperative and you survived. They used that old grading system then at Omaha University as an 'A' was 100-93, a "B' 92-88, a 'C' 87-77, a 'D' 76-70 and 69 or lower was an 'F'. A lot of my colleagues graduated in three years with summer sessions every summer. MacDonald graduated from University of Nebraska in four years with an MA. They were all trying to make up for lost time but the dropout rates were also high. One day on the college lawn we were sunning ourselves during lunch and mentioned that wouldn't it be fun to just to hitch hike a ride to California on Highway 30 down the walk. One fellow just left, threw his books in the trash can – never to be seen again. Sort of like the time in the service we talked how nice it would be to be home for Christmas. Only catch was you had to re-enlist for three years. We got this soldier all juiced up that night and I'll be damned if he didn't go down and re-enlist that next day. We met him coming back when we were going home permanently. We always said, "So many people found a home in the Army."

During my junior year, George Miller, a history student friend of mine asked me to go out with them to a Legion Club Dance. I said you get me a date and I'll go out with you. George had his wife, Alta, get a woman who worked at Brandies. She was a trim, dark haired, nice looking lass that would eventually be my wife. It was a fun evening and to make sure I could contact her again, I wrote her telephone number on the top of my dusty car.

Figure 11: Summers in the National Park Service were happy times. George and Mary went to Rocky Mountain National Park the first summer and Glacier Park the next as George worked in education. Then Mary died and George returned to Glacier for another summer.

I began seeing a lot of Mary Louise Clymer after that date. We dated as singles and with most of my college male friends. Dances were popular at Peony Park under the stars during the summer and there was the swimming pool. We took them all in at a steady pace. Mary was a legal secretary for a real estate firm and later became employed by a lawyer's lawyer. He only did consulting work. She was efficient in shorthand and typing. Later being a whiz at typing my college papers and college notes.

We dated for over a year and during my senior year planned to get married in the summer after I graduated. Also while I was in college my father suffered a severe heart attack while laying a cement sidewalk the length of our property at 2304 Happy Hollow Blvd. The fellow who delivered the cement wouldn't trail it into place so my dad was forced to move it by wheel barrel to level the depth. He just tried to lay too much at once. And for a man that spent his time behind a

desk it was too much physical exercise at once. I was supposed to help him after school but it was all laid by the time I arrived. My father was sick for two years treating the heart ailment steadily becoming more disabled. My father did live to see me graduate from college and get married.

Well, I graduated in June 1950 with a Masters in History and Major in Physical Education. I worked on the P.E. Major into my Junior year hoping to get employed with opportunities as coach or trainer in P.E. Job opportunities in history were few and far between. Well, at last I graduated from college, the greatest achievement in my life up to that point. I earned a degree, my first big rite of passage. Through it all I looked at it as a crowning achievement. Several of us celebrated. I remembered two of my colleagues bought straw hats for the occasion and we started drinking at one bar then another. By the end of the night they forgot where they left their hats. We marched and graduated in the new stadium on a bright sunny day. I was so proud and happy! I was the first one to graduate from college in our family on my mother's side.

Well, I was looking for work through the various teacher agencies and had interviewed with the Omaha School System. I also had a couple of interviews in Iowa but never received another. I continued to work at the bakery and they even asked me if I'd like to become a foreman upon graduation. OF COURSE NOT! I was trained to be a teacher. Well, as the wedding time kept getting closer, I was disturbed but I still had a year on my G.I. Bill, Mary had a job and I could always work at the bakery.

We were married during the summer of 1950 in the First Presbyterian Church with George and Alta Miller standing up with us. It was a small wedding with my parents and Mary's father and sister with college friends. We really didn't have much money and worse yet, prospects didn't look very good toward employment. Mary's father didn't contribute to the wedding. We had rented a furnished apartment in North Omaha on the third floor of an old house on Florence Blvd. Our honeymoon was in a borrowed 1946 Ford of my father's and we were off to Minnesota and Canada. We stayed our first night in an old hotel in LeMars, Iowa, and then eventually ventured up through the North Shore Drive to Fort Williams and Port Arthur, known today as the Thunder Bay area. One night in Canada, we got into a brand new hotel that must have been a brothel as doors were being shut all night. We eventually came south to Minneapolis and through Mason City on the way home. When I got home I was pleasantly surprised to find out I had a job teaching P.E. at the grade school in the Omaha School System. My father got a phone call saying they were trying to contact me to accept or reject the position. Since he couldn't get hold of me he had a friend of his send a telegram to the Omaha System from Minnesota accepting the job. I was employed, but also on the honeymoon when the Korean War was started and the United States was going to send troops. I remember telling Mary that maybe our marriage was a mistake and that I'd have to go to Korea to fight.

I was very depressed in my first job. I was at Lothrup School on 24th and Lothrup. One of my college friends was a grade schoolteacher several blocks over on 24th and Lake in the heart of

the black district. I also taught at Mammoth Park/Clifton Hill (a school I attended in the kindergarten, first, and second grades). I taught whoever the teacher marched out to me in our annex building at Lothrup. I think as I remember we started at 1st grade and worked up to 8th grade. We had the normal sports teams of volleyball for the girls, basketball, and softball for the boys and played flag ball. In class, I was expected to start off with some type of exercises. Of course, I used those I learned in the service. The more commotion we had, the longer the exercises and you can bet when I gave exercises to five to six groups a day, I could do many more than any of the class. Lothrop was a transitional neighborhood and my first year there was 60% white and 40% black. The next year it sort of flipped to 40% white and 60% black.

During those two years, I had several memorable moments. One being the Principal came to me before school (while I was talking to the art teacher) to tell me there was a knife fight on the playground and I should go outside to break it up. So here I was outside seeing those two blacks with knives out moving around with a crowd of kids around them in a circle. I sure as hell wasn't going to step into the middle of them as I'd probably get cut up. So I moved at once and grabbed his knife hand and ran across the playground carrying him. He probably didn't weigh more than 100 pounds. I took the knife away and turning the child over to the Principal who also came out to the grounds. As I recall, I wasn't afraid of the situation or concerned about the outcome.

Another incident was when I asked the 7th or 8th grade boys to line up after class to go back to their room and one was just walking around. So I grabbed his arm and put him in his place. He blew onto his arm as to brush my dust off looking with contempt. I picked him up by the arm and slammed him into the wall. He went through the plaster board and I sternly said, "When I tell you to line up, you line up!" It was a school where you'd call roll of the class and with a name you might get a member of the class to say — She's pregnant," or "She ran away last night." "He got busted or He ran away." Some of these children lived in slum housing with three to four in a bed and a transit mother or father. But as the whites fled the area the type of student changed radically. We had square dancing as one activity. I had to go to square dance class to learn that activity. Each school had records and we used that activity in the winter. The first year we sort of struggled using it as a co-ed activity. The white parents complained that they didn't want their daughters forced to dance with black boys. My supervisor said, "They'd dance" and the Principal said, "They won't." So, I was in the middle and couldn't win. Dancing died a slow death, to my enjoyment. We had softball games in class and some rather good pitchers. One black boy challenged me that I couldn't hit him. So one day, I took him up. Now I was about 26 or 27 and 178 pounds – good shape. He smokes a ball in and I hit it with all my might. It flew out of the playground, over the 12' fence, into the street and onto a drug store window across the street. When I saw that huge glass window shudder, I had my heart in my mouth. It didn't break or crack. That was the last class participation in batting.

The girls at times were meaner than the boys to each other, and their respect for clothing and themselves was very low. With my middle class values I was astonished when a black girl took off her new winter coat to use it as a base in softball in the fall. I picked it up, moved another

base, and she just threw the coat down again next to the fence. The only other thing I can remember that is worth mentioning was in boy's gym. I was teaching high jumping. We had some real good black athletes, and I wanted to tell them how much more height they could get with a California roll than a regular sizzler jump. Well, this young fellow never did make a transition, but I noticed years later he won the city championship in high jump. I always wondered if he adopted the roll?

As a special teacher in a building, you never have a place to call your own. So, we extras, like art and the nurse and myself, sort of congregated in the nurse's room. The art teacher was a pilot in the P51s during World War II in Europe like myself. He was a typical nervous nelly, bouncing and moving all the time. He got called up to fly again in Korea – always wondered what happened to him.

Well, during those two years in Omaha I kept working on my Master's Degree at night. One or two courses at a time and in the year and a half I completed all the course work. Then I had to study for the comps and take the written exams. There was a notebook circulated between the veterans about what questions were most apt to be asked and various outlines for replies. It was a code that when you finished with it, you would add questions and answers you felt could be of interest to another graduate student. Well, I took the writtens one Saturday and the oral exams were one afternoon before a tribunal of three persons. As I remember the key was to take the topic you knew about and talk the hell out of it. As a whole, it turned out to be a sincere group that wanted to help one through, but it was a dim and dull experience. Passing my writtens and orals in June 1952, I received my Master Degree in Education as a History Major. Instead of writing a thesis I had the option to take six extra hours which I did. Christie wrote a thesis and it took him another year to finish.

During the first year of our marriage, Mary contracted infectious hepatitis, and we continually tried to treat it during our married life. They tried all the antibiotics but nothing seemed to work. She got yellow jaundice and it went away and we felt maybe she was cured. We had moved from our apartment to one of Mary's friends' apartment to occupy it while he was in the service doing 12-18 months as I remember. This apartment was located south of Leavenworth on about 14th Street. It was furnished with new furniture and the apartment was a crown jewel compared to where we had been in North Omaha.

In the first year of teaching, my father died from complications of his heart condition. Over the months he just seemed to fade a little every week. It was one of the biggest blows I ever experienced in my life. My father was always kind, thoughtful, loving, and a guiding force in my life. I put him on a pedestal of humanity, and we loved each other very much. His loss was a blow to my world. (Like being hit over the head with a hammer.) Even at my age now, I would love to be able to sit down with him and talk as we used to about politics, books, football, hopes, and dreams. There I was living at home, studying and being exposed to all these new concepts for me, and he'd come up to my room and we'd just talk. I had developed a little library of the classics and during his illness he had read a great deal of it.

The death had a devastating effect on my mother. Her sheltered world was destroyed and she was in her early 40ss at the time. Ron was in Junior High and fatherless. He later became a very successful high school football player making All-Conference and All-State at guard. My father loved football, and he would have been in his glory to be involved with his son. The success would have given him a great deal of satisfaction – that would be an understatement!

Well, in Omaha we moved again to an apartment two blocks from the Military Theater into my old haunts. It was also an upstairs unit but clean and unfurnished. We began to buy furniture along with purchasing my father's 1946 Ford. I had paid cash for it because Mom needed the money. We were enjoying the good life and Mary's illness seemed to go into remission for a while.

With my Master's Degree I wanted to try teaching in a high school and maybe be an administrator. One of the history teachers died at North High School and I applied for the opening. I had two years teaching experience and a Masters in American History. I should be a good candidate. Well, the job went to an inexperienced, graduate of Nebraska University whose father was a school board member. I just blew up on finding that out. I argued with the Personnel Director explaining my training and education. Well, it was to no avail. So I felt if I wanted to teach something other than P.E. maybe I'd have to leave Omaha. Best choice I ever made!

I interviewed at Scribner, Nebraska, to be Principal and History/Government teacher and was elated that I got the job. I resigned from the Omaha System, and we made plans to move to a small town of 900 and some. I remember it wasn't a thousand! The high school has some 225 students in it and I had three preparations each semester. Let us see, I taught World History both semesters, American History both semesters, and Government and Psychology. But, I did try to learn to administer with a Superintendent who wanted to run the entire show. My main job turned out to be attendance and discipline. We had a group of teachers we called "The Old War Horses" who really ran the place which was good as they solved most of the problems. Well, I learned I liked to teach and didn't care to administrate. I did have a chance to become a superintendent at a small system near Scribner, but I wanted to move to a larger system and teach.

Figure 12: The HANDSOME high school Principal!

I remember we had an apartment above the City thoroughfare and every Saturday night in the summer they'd roll out the hay racks and the city

band would play and play and play. It was a system that we were into everything. Football, basketball, plays, dances – like a football game with cars parked all the way around the field. Also at that time Mary had a relapse and began retaining water in her body. The local doctor that Mary was working for got us an appointment in Rochester to see a few specialists. So, we drove up there for an examination. After about three days, they concluded that they couldn't do anything for her. So back to Scribner we went in the uncomfortable state with many gallons of water in her abdomen. With more pills and bed rest, she rebuilt herself so they could drain the water. I had been looking for some type of summer work other than selling encyclopedias to our students' parents and paint class rooms. I applied to be a Park Ranger at Rocky Mountain National Park.

Figure 13: Park Ranger - Rocky Mountains

With my experience as a teacher and military service I had a significant number of points on the government scale. So I was hired and we were assigned to the Fall River Entrance Station on Trail Ridge Road working at the gate collecting the two dollars in a Park Ranger uniform. We were assigned to live in a trail cabin about 200 yards above the entrance and a stream with our water supply running a few yards from the abode. As I remember most of us were new Rangers and we had a very congenial working relationship. I was a high school principal, one was a Nebraska University medical student, another a teacher in the Colorado area. I climbed Longs Peak with him one morning, another was a graduate student in Range Management from Fort Collins. I got to drive a little road patrol but 90% of our time was working at the entrance station. It was just a great big vacation for us. Mary's health always improved in the mountains, so we hiked a little up to Lawn Lake Dam (which later broke) and fished a little, slept overnight in a patrol cabin listening to the pack rats running all over after we turned out the lights – candles. We saw some huge trout 18" to 24" long in bright clear ponds. They didn't look at any

of my bait, but they were fun to watch for a Midwesterner. We always had deer or elk walking through the lodging area. I told Mary we're drinking this stream water and some moose is probably peeing in it 400 yards up stream. However, it was always cold and clear-maybe a few settlings. It was our first experience in the mountains to live in them. For three months, smell the pines, see millions of stars at night, warm days and cool nights just not like Nebraska. We shopped in Ft. Collins, a small university town where groceries were cheaper than Estes Park and so was gasoline. I even made an appointment with the Ft. Collins school personnel manager regarding a vacancy in P.E. They only paid $2400 and I was making $3600 at Scribner. That was just too much of a cut in salary.

The Ranger job had a few perks. We got invited to the Fall River Lodge for all evening entertainment with a Fall Camp Fire meal. We could go to the Grand Lake Lodge anytime in our uniforms and get a free meal. We did that only once as it was a long drive. I remember coming back over the Trail Ridge Road in the fog with myself out in front of the car hunting for the yellow line with a flash light. Crazy and we were all sober. We had a wonderful summer.

With our next school year, Mary got sick again and we didn't return to Rocky Mountain. But I was looking for a teaching job and without much luck until I got a letter that Carroll, Iowa that had an American History and American Government teaching vacancy. We drove over and I was hired that day. We looked for an apartment and located one right across the street from the park. The job paid $4,300. That was a terrific raise at that time and one of the best paying systems in Nebraska or Iowa. We moved into the apartment with the help of Taylor (Mary's brother-in-law from David City) and his cattle truck.

The apartment was very clean and on the third floor. It had a garage and the bedroom window overlooked the city park. Besides Mary was feeling good again. She always found a part-time job or work to keep her occupied. In Omaha, she worked full time except when she was ill. In Scribner, she worked for a doctor with correspondence, and in Carroll, she did church work with developing various record systems for the Methodists. In Carroll, there was really no need for her to work as my salary was very adequate for our needs.

The Carroll system was a Cadillac of school systems at that time. The pupil/teacher ratio was about 15-25 in a class with two preparations, four to five classes with the study hall or home room, with all the funds one would need for supplies. I was able to build up a beautiful reference system so my classes could do project research. The system was unbelievable to me – why would anyone want to leave. Well, the first week, I found out why I was hired. The previous America History teacher had been run out of the classroom by the students and could not conduct class without the principal being in the room. Carroll Public School had an unusual ratio of males because the local Catholic school was a girls' academy, so the Catholic boy and girl misfits and the Protestants were in the system. My last period class was made up of two girls (who could cuss and bite nails) and the rest was the football team. I sometimes laughed that I was one of the smallest people in the class. Most of the guys were German hay stackers who drank beer at home. The team was ranked in the top five in the state at the time. My first

thought was no one, no one is going to run over me as a teacher! I can be as tough as anyone. I'm an old infantry man. I've been to hell and back and the students are not going to put me through hell. I was hired because I had been a principal who ran a respected system.

One incident to which I attributed my success was a student named Harry Blummer. Harry trucked cattle to Omaha and he and I were talking one time about the city and where to eat and places to see. We had a good fun conversation. Harry weighed 240-250 pounds. He sat in the front row. One of the first weeks I was talking and some of the boys in the back also started talking, so I stopped to stare at them Harry stood up and said, "You guys back there shut up, I want to hear Mr. Coyan." NO MORE PROBLEMS! Harry was my friend and could beat anyone in the room up and probably did on the football field.

Figure 14: Summers in the National Park Service

The first year in Carroll I applied for a Park Service job in Yellowstone and Glacier. I heard from Glacier first and was hired as a Seasonal Park Ranger. So, off we went to Glacier after school was out. We journeyed out through the Black Hills to Yellowstone and up the Flathead Valley. A terrific vacation on my way to work. In Yellowstone, we were surrounded by bears in the car with the windows up — Don't Feed the Bears! Arriving at Headquarters, I met the Assistant Chief Ranger Elmer West who had worked at the park since its establishment at some capacity. He made me his administrative assistant that day. He had a very bad limp in his left leg which he broke on patrol. He had crawled out one winter in that condition back to the Ranger post. For some reason he sure took a liking to me and became my mentor. Unknown to myself at that time I had been promoted over at least six to eight Rangers who had worked there for years. Our abode was a one room cabin in a quad with other workers with a central washing facility and shower. Each cabin, as I remember, had a wood burning stove for cooking and running water with a stool. We always had bear problems, but there were enough persons with bear savvy they'd throw water on them or hit them with a stick as with a club. But the thing that spooked everyone was the mountain lion that made visits one week, jumping from one roof to another. Its screams were recognizable.

Well, we just fit in with all the other teachers from Idaho, California, Montana, Washington, and Minnesota. The teacher from the Twin Cities was a high school classmate and we played together on the football team in Omaha. On our last trip, 1994, I heard he had died but his son was a Ranger on Lake MacDonald. Elmer took me in the patrol car around the park for two days of orientation for my job as Road Patrol and also taught me to do a count of vehicles and a visitor count. He gave me a couple history books on the Park for me to study. I was a rookie trying to learn a job in days that everyone else had had years to learn. The Park philosophy then was "Go out on patrol and let people see you, stop and talk to the dudes – be nice." "Radio for

help for an accident until a Permanent Ranger can get to the area." We had bear accidents that I had to fill out a report on. One brown bear was always at the hair pin curve on the Going to the Sun highway. We called her "Goldie." Well, she bit one woman who was getting treated at the MacDonald Hotel, and they sent me to fill out the park forms. What had happened I asked? "Well," she said. "I was feeding the bear raisin bread, and I ran out of bread," so she turned to walk away and the bear bit her. Then I asked, "Where did the bear bite you?" "On the rear," was the answer. I told her she was subject to a fine for feeding the bears. So she signed a form dismissing the park of any liability. We had bears all over in every campground, and the best place to see bears was at the garbage dump. That's where they had the largest ones you would want to see. They were always trapping bears and sometimes they'd beat the Ranger back to the camp area. At Avalanche Camp ground once a mother sent her second-year cub up a tree and left it there. Well, it cried for days and the campers complained. We said we weren't going to shoot it and eventually it would come down and be looking for food. They were always in garbage cans – you'd chase them out of camp with the car siren and in an hour or two they'd be back. The bears that got mean were killed, the nuisances were just tolerated. A fellow came through the gate one evening late with his head wrapped in a bloody towel. He had stored food in the sleeping bag for a few days, but at the time was sleeping in the bag when a bear struck at it to get the food he smelled. Several hours later he came back with many stitches and an apology for being so stupid. Bears could pick up food locked in coolers and throw them against trees to open them and some learned to turn the lock to open them. Sometimes you'd see a bear go in one side of a tent and the people come out the other side. It became a comedy of errors. People didn't read the signs or believe bears were dangerous.

Being on road patrol one would meet some of the most unusual people. Like the fellow that set up camp at Logan Pass to stay. He was from California and it was so nice to be cold. Well, he understood he'd have to leave. I told him if he didn't leave the porcupines would probably eat holes in his tires at night. I was stuck in the snow at Logan Pass on the 4th of July. I was taking a fellow out for a leave we'd been in a look-out for weeks without seeing anyone. Never had anyone talk so much – he talked for the entire trip to West Glacier. Boy, was I glad to see the last of him. Work was great, I carried a camera with me on the trails most of the time. I took morning shots and evening shots, reflective shots, rainbow shots, but I guess the most fun was to stop and converse with the visitors and share what I knew about the Park.

For two years or summers I worked for Elmer and we had some great stories to tell. We'd have a cigar after lunch to relax and he'd give me the tales of Glacier. By then I'd read all my literature, taking a lot of hikes on the West Side and the Garden Wall, met all the important administrative figures (Supt, Chief Ranger, Chief Naturalist, Supt. for Roads). We had a Supreme Court Judge go on a hike from Logan Pass to Canada. The tale was the trail was raked by hand and there was enough booze for an army. I was assigned once in a while to give a guided road tour to a V.I.P. in their car. Elmer would say, "George, look good." The second year Elmer moved us into a motel that had a lake front view. Very nice accommodations. The patrol work then was opening the road gate in the morning at 5:30 or 6:00 a.m. and closing it at 10:00 p.m. coming down the mountain with no lights on and the sun still up.

The Park on the West side was truly a summer vacation with a little fun work. You'd go to Kalispell for food and gas, or Columbia Falls. Maybe you'd have someone else get you a few supplies or the women and men who weren't working would pick huckleberries if they could get there before the bears. The tale was you'd be picking berries on one bush and a bear would be on another bush. The place was always alive with berries in the Apgar area. We had huckleberry pies, cakes, Buckle bread, and on cereal. Plain or cream. The women were cooking up huckleberry jellies and jams.

At the Park on the West there'd be baseball games played in East Glacier after work, fishing trips to the East side for trout with a trout at every flip of the fly – all 6"-8," but fun as everyone won and the fish we let go. Meals cooked out on McDonald watching the sun go down. Then it was time to leave to go to work for the fall semester. Check out and say Good-Bye to Rangers and friends. Pack up and make a mad dash for Iowa driving most of the night because you left so late you didn't have time for a leisurely trip. Most of the time it only took two days to get home, so I could report for work on a Monday morning.

Back in Carroll, we had established ourselves in various areas and belonged to the Methodist Young Couples Group which was quite active and giving chili suppers, caroling at Christmas and doing various church projects. The third year we were in Carroll, I became the President of the organization. Upon arriving in Carroll in the fall from Glacier, the faculty had a picnic as a mixer. It happened I was assigned to the committee that year but Mary complained she had the flu and didn't feel well so I went alone. I received a call to go to the hospital as my wife was in Emergency Care. Upon arriving, I found she had hemorrhaged blood and was very ill taking on several pints of blood intravenously. We talked and prayed together and she was tired and the nurses felt she was stabilized. They told me to go home and get some rest. When I got to the apartment, the bathroom floor and rugs and towels were covered with blood as was the tub. Upon cleaning up that area I realized the seriousness of the illness. I had just gotten to sleep and I received a call to hurry to the hospital. Mary has had a serious seizure and has hemorrhaged again this time in a coma. She was failing by the hour and by dawn had passed away. It left me quite numb at the time, grieving and frustrated — why wasn't I able to help? Paul Forney rose to the occasion to give me support that I seriously needed at that time. He called the funeral home. The minister, Rev. Hugo, had arrived with Paul so by noon the funeral was arranged. Next, I set out to call two of Mary's sisters and explain the funeral arrangements and agreed the burial should be in David City, Nebraska, and in the family plot. It seemed like a nightmare —— home from Glacier, Mary died, the funeral, all in less than a week.

Well, my friends rallied around and sure tried to keep me busy. Paul got me involved in Rotary. Another wanted me to become a Boy Scout Leader, which I did not want to do. So I started to go back to Omaha to see Mom and go to activities with Joe Archibald on weekends. I was off to plays, basketball games, hockey games, and just a little bar movement. Most Sunday evenings after returning to Carroll, Roger and Natalie Hansen would have me over to watch TV for a couple of hours at their home. The previous year they had lived in the apartment across the hall

and Mary babysat and helped with their first born during the infant period. By spring, I had dated a couple of young teachers but they were not interesting as a steady relationship. That year my first class were seniors and maybe they also felt sorry for me and dedicated the year book to me. It was a nice honor that I was not too happy to be awarded.

Figure 15: Park Ranger - Glacier National Park

Well, it was off to Glacier for another summer. My mother wanted to take a trip west with me and I was happy to have a traveling companion. So we or I mapped out a trip to Oregon, Washington and back to Glacier where she'd catch the Empire Builder. We drove down the Columbia River Valley, around Olympus National Park and down the Washington coast, across to Vancouver Island on a ferry for a tea break in the hotel. Well, with Mom on the train and myself checked in, I was reassigned to the Many Glacier area. At the time, I felt it was a real demotion but as it turned out, it was great. New people, new friends, and an area for me to explore. At first I was assigned to live in a home trailer with a new Ranger, but we changed roommates and I traded to live in a cabin with Paul Kennedy who was from California. We really had a great summer together. First task that endeared me to him was he loaned me $20.00 until pay day. When I got to Many Glacier I had $15.00 in my pocket and no one would accept personal checks. With Paul, we cooked together, babysat for Asa and Elaine. I took Elaine to plays causing a scandal in the camp area. After a play, I bought her a drink and we danced. The District Ranger talked to me about that, but we went to several more plays. Paul was a young devil may care naturalist who worked with Asa Brooks. We all went to lectures, pictures, and camp fires at various times. We picked up each other at various locations after hikes. Asa and I hiked through Belly River one day up to the boat on Waterton, running the last few miles as we hear the boat approaching; it was the last boat and Elaine was to meet us to drive back to the States. I hiked with a camp tender who later became a naturalist. He was a teacher in a school, Charlie Scribner.

Joe Archibald came up with a cousin for a week and we hiked the Garden Wall to Devil's Elbow and down to Many Glacier in one day. I think that summer I hiked every trail in Many Glacier area, and I even got most of the way up Mt. Hinkle. It was a fun summer. I did information work at the Ranger Station, a little camp ground strolling, and drove to see the area at night once in a while. Paul was one of those fellows that could sure weave a tale with the women. He organized a party at our cabin one evening of couples, women from the camp stores and other

sundries. It was one impromptu affair, talked about for weeks. It was just a fun family gathering with food and drinks. Funny thing, we all had so much fun we organized another one and it was rated maybe a C+. As I was completing my summer assignment, I was asked if I'd like to consider being a permanent Ranger. As I remember even at the time I said NO — I like it out in Glacier, but I don't want to live there permanently. My first love was teaching.

That summer in Glacier rebuilt my ego. I could adjust to new environments, meet new people and be an enjoyable person to be around. The next school year in Carroll changed my life forever because it was the year I met this cute, attractive, intelligent female I always called, "My Little Girl.' I breezed into Carroll Sunday night and reported for work on Monday. I remember driving after work on Saturday from West Glacier on Highway 2 at 5:00 p.m.. I drove into eastern North Dakota that night until I couldn't drive anymore. I believe I made Carroll at 9 :00 p.m. that night.

The next day I was glad to see all of my old friends. This new Home Economics teacher called me up one night after several week of school and asked if I would come over for a meal as her roommate had cooked too much spaghetti. From then on, it was a whirlwind relationship. I'm no fool, it was a lot more fun to have a cute little girl on your arm than it was to sit in a green quiet apartment. We played tennis across the street from the apartment in the park. We went to a football game at Iowa State, movies any place that was out of town, basketball games at Drake. The first movie I ever took your mother to was about the natives' revolt in Kenya. It had more blood and guts than I'd seen in years. Any relationship that could endure that experience sure would be able to adjust to any extreme. AND WE DID!!! We exchanged Christmas presents. I received a set of silver cuff links and Noreen a cashmere sweater. We met in Omaha for New Year's Eve and, by spring, I told her we'd either have to get married or I'd have to quit going together because I was always broke. One shopping expedition was to Fort Dodge in her car, looking for a present for her father (I don't remember what we bought). Well, I really had to go to the bathroom and told Noreen she needed gas. She said she did not!!! I said, "Oh, yes you do, and stop right here!" That day we paid off my car with cash from a check I had to cash at a bank so I could get the title that afternoon.

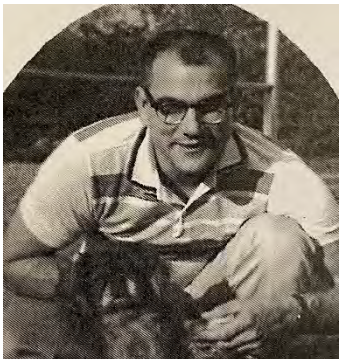
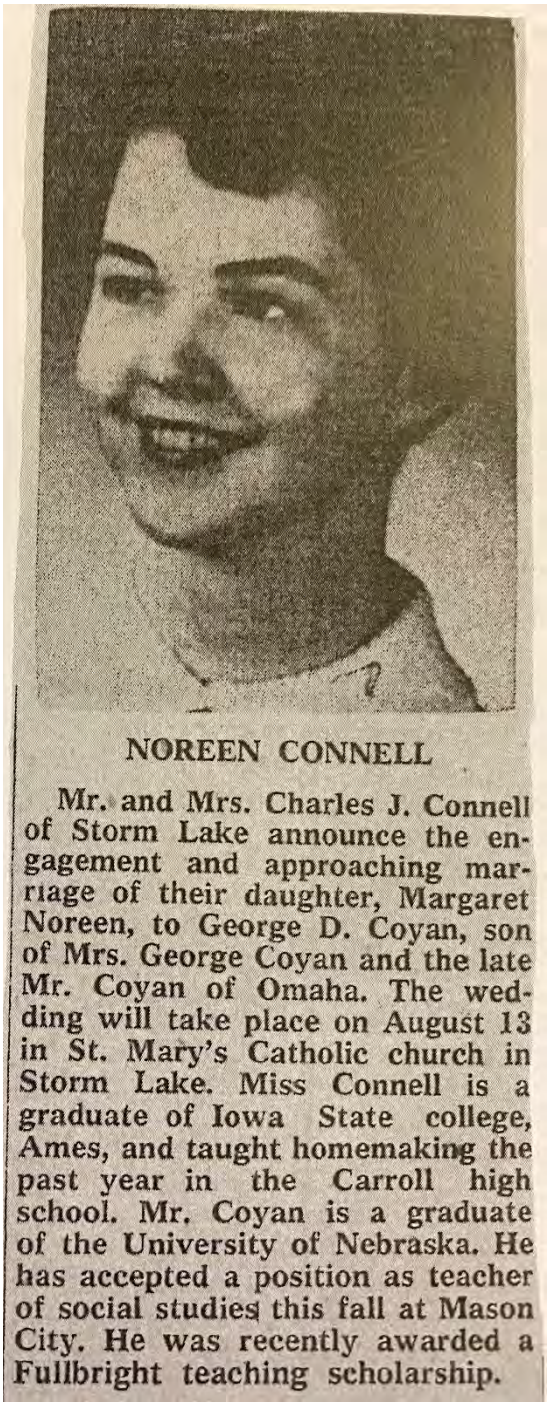


Figure 16: Leaving Carroll and on to Mason City High School. My Pekinese, Coffee from the farm.

We made a trip to Storm Lake and the Connell's for a visit. There was congenial conversation but I was not a young man and neither was I Catholic. As I remember our relationship cooled a little after the visit, but we started up our romance again.

Occupationally, I had applied for a Fulbright Teaching position in Halifax, Nova Scotia. I was informed that the arrangement was made. Paul Forney, the Superintendent, agreed that he would accept the exchange teacher for a year if I would return to teach in Carroll for one extra year. So in reality, it was a two year deal. Also, I had applied to the Mason City School System for an American History position. The interview was positive with Pearle Burnsvold-

-upon touring the high school and interviewing with the principal, John Penny, I felt I had made a favorable impression. That spring I had three positions — to teach in Nova Scotia, Canada, Carroll, or Mason City (with the agreement that I would have first opportunity to teach at the Junior College).



NOREEN CONNELL

Mr. and Mrs. Charles J. Connell of Storm Lake announce the engagement and approaching marriage of their daughter, Margaret Noreen, to George D. Coyan, son of Mrs. George Coyan and the late Mr. Coyan of Omaha. The wedding will take place on August 13 in St. Mary's Catholic church in Storm Lake. Miss Connell is a graduate of Iowa State college, Ames, and taught homemaking the past year in the Carroll high school. Mr. Coyan is a graduate of the University of Nebraska. He has accepted a position as teacher of social studies this fall at Mason City. He was recently awarded a Fullbright teaching scholarship.

Figure 17: Article announcing the engagement of George D. Coyan and Noreen Connell

Noreen had said that we had to be married in a Catholic church and I would have to convert to Catholicism. Here I was an elder in the Methodist Church, I had been an elder also in the Presbyterian Church in Omaha, plus a Sunday school teacher for several years. I had been in the jaws of hell in combat and thought I survived only by the grace of God. I didn't really feel I was very far astray as a Methodist and a God-fearing man. Now this young lady tells me that was her condition. Of course, Charlie Connell, as I understood, was going to ostracize her from the family if we were involved in a mixed marriage. Noreen told me she was worth the conversion and I will have to agree that her statement was very true. As a couple we spent many evenings into the wee hours discussing our informal relationship and arriving at an acceptable arrangement we would live with. If I was to convert, I wanted something in return. Our children would go to a public school, not a Catholic system. But even at a later period, I would have allowed the children to go to Newman and even asked them if they cared to go to high school there. To me I felt I had betrayed my faith and what I believed and how I had worshiped all those years.

POSTSCRIPT by Noreen Coyan

As you can see, yes, George and I were married in St. Mary's Church in Storm Lake, Iowa, on a lovely day, August 13, 1958. Rich and Bob tried to take our car but they did not know that it was in a garage in Alta. After the dinner reception at my Uncle Hun Huber's night club, we returned to the farm for a family gathering and when it was in full bloom, we ran through the grove to a waiting car which took us to our car and off to our honeymoon at the Dells in Wisconsin.

Figure 18: St. Mary's Church St Lake, Iowa - August 13, 1958

George prepared to teach History in Mason City High School and I became a homemaker. The next June, 1959, our first child, Candice Lynne, was born, and came home to our apartment. After all the blonde blue-eyed Connell grandchildren, my parents were surprised to see this beautiful dark-eyed, black haired little princess. George was transferred to Mason City Junior College and he needed to attend summer school so he would be certified to teach at that level. Off to live in the quonset huts of the University of Minnesota in St. Paul. My Mom and Dad and Mayde all came to visit us. It was quite a summer.

We moved to our first home on 16th Street NE and Paul Gregory joined us there the next June, 1969. George was in summer school at the University of Iowa so my Mom, Dad, and Mayde spent lots of time with Candice, Greg, and me.

Life was busy and Rodney George arrived the next October.

Figure 19: The Coyan Family in 1961

Our family was now complete and we were so blessed to have everyone be healthy and full of energy. It was 1961. The children were two, one, and just arrived. George had finished every inch of our story and a half house and we needed more room so we moved to 208 South Kentucky. A two-story house with a full attic and basement on a lot and a half. Our joy!

The usual schedule was the traditional September to May academic year and six weeks of summer school which added to George's salary and the summer was usually targeted for some house project. In a few short years that time between summer school and the fall start was given to renting a camper and traveling to see the United States. Mayde joined us and our first

visit to Glacier National Park was a particular joy for George to be back in his favorite place. Every summer was a new adventure and always a National Park. When we had covered the United State pretty well, we took on Canada, to the East to Nova Scotia, and to the West to Banff and Jasper.

During the school year, the children started music lessons with Candice playing the viola and Greg and Rod playing cello in the orchestra. They also played sports with Candice in swimming, Greg in wrestling, and Rod in football.

Noreen was teaching night classes in sewing and cooking and classes expanded in the area when Mason City Junior College became North Iowa Area Community College (NIACC) with the re-organization of the state into fifteen area community college districts. She came back with so many ideas for classes that they told her to quit teaching and organize classes for others to teach. So began her career as an administrator.

George's topic area changed from History and Social Problems to Marriage and Family and Sociology as class loads increased and faculty retired. He was eventually appointed as the Social Science Department head and still taught a full load. Noreen took night and summer school classes and earned a Master's Degree in Adult Education and then a Doctorate in Higher Education Administration. One fall when Iowa State was playing the Nebraska Cornhusker football team, Nebraska was losing and George had a heart attack in the stands. We all teased him that he didn't need to go that far for a Nebraska loss. He recovered and went back to teaching.

The children graduated from high school and Candice received her Bachelor of Science degree from Iowa State University, Greg earned his Bachelor's Degree from Mankato State and Rodney's came from Boise State in Idaho. Then came jobs and marriage. Candice and Noreen enjoyed foreign travel. With George's experience in Great Britain and Europe, he was anxious to show Noreen what he had seen after World War II. Sometimes on our own and sometimes with guides, we enjoyed all of Great Britain, the capitals of Europe several times, Russia twice, and how many times to Italy? Special precautions were taken as Communism was still in full swing in Southern European countries, but travelers were welcome and we went!

Figure 20: A little nonsense always helps and we had plenty! The Nebraska Flag for 'Big Red'!

George retired from NIACC in 1989 and thoroughly enjoyed his daily golf in summer, the Thursday lunch with NIACC retirees and of course, the Stock Club that had been a part of his life for many years. He enjoyed doing child care for the children at their homes and volunteering for the International Golf tournament with Rodney in Colorado. He was very

faithful to his jogging schedule and did all he could to stay healthy from the earlier heart attack. On a lovely October day in 1995, my birthday, he was doing his usual jogging when his heart failed him out on the street. The medics were called but it was too late.

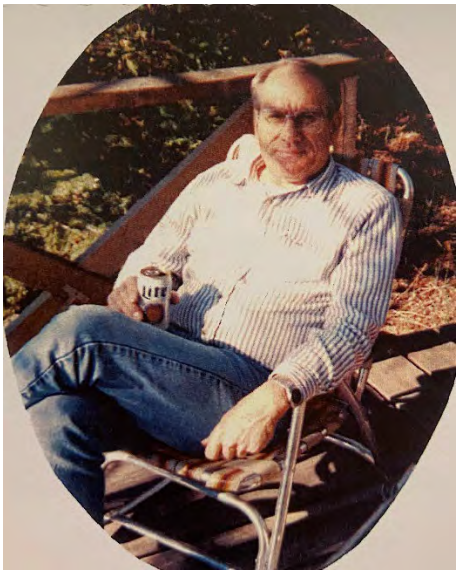


Figure 21: George loved the mountains - Rocky Mountain, Glacier, McCall Idaho - Even the Boundary Waters Canoe trip generated lots of stories!

All of us were shocked, saddened and felt the deep loss of a loved one and dear friend. George was waked at the Major Erickson Funeral Home and buried from St. Joseph's Church in Mason City, Iowa. His body was given to medical research. His ashes were interned in Mason City but later transferred to Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery here in Illinois.

The family has endowed a scholarship in his name at North Iowa Area Community College for a sophomore student majoring in education.

It gives me great comfort and peace to know that George is here with us in Illinois. The transition of his ashes were smoothly accomplished by Tom Kohrs, a funeral director and member of Don's congregation at Highland Presbyterian Church. I am grateful to Tom for all that he did. The question of what to do with the niche in the Mason City cemetery was answered by Tom as well. He suggested that it be given to our former church in Mason City to be used by a deserving family in need at the time of their family grief. The paperwork was easily finished, but I had to call St. Joseph Catholic Church to see if it had been received. Yes, it had been received, but with little appreciation from them. The lesson learned is that a person must give a gift with no strings and no expectation of gratitude. It was a humbling experience.

All the family gathered on Labor Day weekend of 2008. Don wrote a lovely service and provided great respect for George and our family. Each of the children spoke of George's influence in their lives —— Candice, an over view and George's love for Glacier; Greg on the encouragement he received in making model airplanes which led him to radio controlled planes and his current Presidency of the RC Club in White Bear Lake; Rod spoke to the many discussions of stocks and money which led to his life's career in finance. Grandson Jack concluded the ceremony playing taps beautifully on his trumpet. There was not a dry eye.

We came back to our house and continued the “George” stories over beer and pizza. Could you hear him laughing? George would have been so proud.

Attack on Western Front

LIFT STARS, STRIPES

TO THE MOON

Just Another Battle Won,

The War

President Shot

M 'ROUND THE WORLD

Moon Reflects History, Humor, W

Murder Rifle Traced to

Prosecutor to Ask Dea

PEACE

Nothing But War

WAR RESOLUTION

Space Leader

WAR ENDS, JAPAN ACCEPTS

Pay Homage to Lincol

GERMANY SURRENDERS

AWAIT WORD OF SOVIET POLICY

'Don't Fool Yourself About Hitler'

one giant leap for mankind.

How Drafting Will Be Done

ATION MOURNS SHUTTLE CREW

RULE OUT HITLER

PEACE OVER CRUSHED FORM OF POLAND

a Fight to the Finish,

Deny Nazis Know British War Aims

U.S. MOON TRIUMPH

Disbelief, Then Shock, Shatters Quiet Confidence of Calm City

BULGARIA HAILS RUSSIAN MARCH

War on Japan

More Than a Politician

MOON HEROES BACK

NAZIS STILL FIGHTING

Peace Efforts Told in

A Promise of Power Wisely Used

You're Safe, Holland Told

A SWINGS TO HITLER'S

President Was Happy Confident in Last Hou

'WAR DEPENDS ON GERM

WALKGATE

Mighty World Rulers Pay Humble Tribute

Shock Equalled by FDR's Death

NIXON RESIGNS

Moon May Hold Huge Store of Knowledge for Ma

AXIS SOLIDARITY

'Sudden Extinction of a Shining Light'

Threat Stuns

Japanese Army Abandons Axis

NOTE OF SURRENDER

Mystery Can

Foretold Fate Of President

ITALY SAYS EVEN U.S. BACKS PLAN

RUSSIA'S MOVE IS THE REASON

The Last Moments of President Kennedy

JAPAN ATTACKS U. S., DECLARES WAR

16-FOOT TYPE WHICH AMAZED FOREIGN OBSERVERS—

Nazis Roll 'Super Guns' Toward Poland

APPROVES

JAPANESE PA

What Hitler Wants

Watchful World Trains

Johnson as

How Nazis' Will Seek Peace'

Fleeing Foe

EDITORIAL POLICY

Approximate Timeline of Submissions:

The Institute follows a flexible submission timeline for *Civitas*, depending on the content of submitted materials and also anticipated special projects or themes intended for a particular volume. Please contact the Institute's co-executive directors with any submission inquiries.

Book Reviews:

Write on published works in the general parameters of the journal's field of interest (i.e., Citizenship Studies and related fields).

Write on recent published works from the previous 2-3 years.

The typical book review's length should range from approximately 750 to 1,250 words.

The journal editors may consult other form sheets and guidelines for additional ideas to pass along to the authors, but general recommendations include:

- At the top-center of the page, the reviewer should identify the author, book title, place of publication, publisher, and publication date. Italicize or underline all book titles. Here is a standard example:

  Jane S. Doe. *The NWOSU Institute for Citizenship Studies*. Alva, Oklahoma: Northwestern Oklahoma State University, 2024.

- Typically, the first paragraph of the book review should include a statement of the author's thesis (major argument) or purpose. Please identify the main points or interpretation the author is trying to present to the reader.

- The main body of the book review should be a synopsis showing how the author did or did not prove his/her thesis. Consider the book's key themes and chapters, the kinds of sources used, and the organizational methods employed (e.g., is it organized by topic or by chronology?). Please elaborate on whether the author demonstrates any kind of bias which you can detect (everyone has a bias). If so, comment on whether the bias detracts from or adds to the study's effectiveness.

- The book review should conclude wisth a critical evaluation. Is the thesis logically consistent with the materials given to support it in the book? Does it make sense to the reader? Is it convincing? Is it engaging or boring? Has the book helped the reader's understanding of the subject? How? Why? If possible, how does the book relate to the

broader objectives and material comprising the field of Citizenship Studies and related fields?

- At the end of the essay, the reviewer will double-space and add his/her full name, department and institution/affiliation.

General Articles:

Write on topics in the general parameters of the journal's field of interest (i.e., Citizenship Studies and related fields).

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Documentation of Sources in Articles/Reviews:

Since the journal is both interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary, so long as authors are consistent and concise in their academic writing, they may employ the documentation style familiar to their area of specialization (Chicago Manual of Style, Turabian, MLA, etc.).