

From Memphis to DaNang



A Tribute
to
Major James Edward Morton



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**From Memphis
to
DaNang**



**A Tribute to
Major James Edward Morton**

**by
Fred Morton**

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Forward

Major James Edward Morton, Jr.

My earliest memory from childhood is my older brother Eddie. Less than four years my senior, he stands out vividly, a redheaded big brother with a captivating smile and a yen for adventure and fun, who with restrained grace led me around, the nuisance “little brother”. He was the thrill seeker always on the prowl for fun. I was the cautious one in need of gentle guidance and protection. But Eddie pushed me beyond my comfort zone. He taught me to swim and ride a bike. Eddie was the first into the Boy Scouts and eagerly urged me to become a Cub Scout. He took me on my first camping trip as I moved up into the Boy Scout. Eddie passed me on my rank requirements for Second Class. Somehow I always was following Eddie in school, in church, in the neighborhood, in Scouts.

Eventually our paths parted as he entered the Air Force Academy while I went east to college. We each married sweethearts from close to home. He pursued a career in the Air Force and I followed the path of Methodist ministry. When his life ended suddenly in an air crash in Vietnam in 1969, I could never wrap my mind around the fact that Eddie was not around any longer to chide me on to greater adventure or grander achievement. It has been over forty years. Now I find it a challenge to commit for the record my memories of this big brother who meant so much to me

and whose life was steeped in a strong sense of honor and just good natured fun.

On Eddie's Birthday - August 7, 2010

Fred C. Morton

Bartlett, TN

Chapter One

In The Beginning: Family Roots

Born in a Depression – Reared During a War 1936-45

Born James Edward Morton Jr., my brother was always called “Eddie”. The fifth grandson on his father’s side and the first grandson on his mother’s side, Eddie was the product of two streams of lineage—one from the Ozark Hills in Arkansas and the other from the river counties of Northwest Tennessee. Both strains were mostly Scotch Irish and English. The Mortons' family boasts an ancestry that reaches back as far as the Plymouth Colony. George Morton was born 1580 and baptized in St. Helena’s Church in Austerfield, England 1598. Married he made his way to America first by way of Holland with the Pilgrim Community in Massachusetts 1622. The more recent ancestry of both Mortons and Mosses was Southern Appalachian with Baptist leanings.

The Mosses and the Mortons

James Edward Morton Sr. (called **Jimmy** most of his adult life) was the younger of four children born (1909) to **Nora Wilson** and **Charles Bruce Morton** near

In The Beginning: Family Roots

Russellville AR.¹ Early on in the Morton family, the father Charles Bruce, a nurseryman by trade, abandoned the family and left Nora Jane to raise the children alone on a fruit tree farm in Pottsville Arkansas. Coming of age in the Depression James Edward completed high school in Pottsville and attended the nearby college for one year and served very briefly in the Arkansas National Guard. James Senior was married for a tragically short time in 1929 to **Lena Mira Walker**. Apparently she suffered from diabetes and died two days after the wedding. The scourge of drought in the Arkansas valley prompted the young widower, to make his way to a more promising future in the city of Memphis in the early 30s.² Moving into the vicinity of the newly developed Highland Heights suburban community, James became friends with **Carmane Moss**, the eldest son of the Moss clan then residing in that neighborhood at the East edge of Memphis. He eventually began dating Carmane's younger sister **Evelyn**.

The Moss family had migrated from Trimble Tennessee to the Memphis area in the mid 1920s where father of the clan **Charles Cleveland Moss** set up a barbering business on Summer Avenue near National. Mother of the family was **Jesse Collins**. Her father **Paul Collins** had been a peace constable in Trimble. Her grandfather, Jack Johnson Collins, had been a veteran of the Civil War. Evelyn was the third of seven (only five

¹ The Morton family traces its roots back to England in the 17th Century. Head of the family in America was George Morton who was part of the original party which settled Plymouth Colony.

² This brief marriage to Lena Mira Walker on June 18, 1929, who died June 20, was not known in the Moss family until after his death in 1990. Source Betty Morton Wiley in phone conversation September 27, 2009.

survived) children born 1913 to Charles and Jesse Moss (**Carmane, Thelma, Evelyn, MaiFare, Billy, Nannette**). The youngest, Nannette, would be the only child born in Memphis, but not until 1933. An interesting side note to the times. Because Charles had no money, the local physician who delivered Nannette was promised free hair cuts for life, a promise faithfully honored.

All of the Moss children went to the neighborhood elementary and junior high Treadwell School. Highland Heights was still a relatively rural open country area, but had been peppered with small bungalow houses along with more stately residences of the well to do. Sons Carmane and Billy each finished high school at Messick and Tech respectively. The two oldest Moss daughters Thelma and Evelyn completed junior high and trained to become beauticians, their tuition paid by a local patrician lady in the Highland Heights community, **Mrs. Raymond Brattain**. Evelyn completed her training at Kastens School of Hair and Beauty Culture February 1, 1930 when she was 16 years old.

The four couples (Jimmy and Evelyn Radford, Neighbours and Thelma, Carmane and Virginia, MaiFare and Hugh Hogue) appear to have celebrated many occasions of fun and frolic during these difficult times. Photos of the period show these couples at various locales such as the Memphis Zoo, area picnic parks, and open country. There had been through the year's mention of visits to dances at such places as the Glass Slipper and dancing with big bands at the Fairgrounds or downtown hotels. Despite the hard times, Memphis in the mid 1930s was a place where enterprising and hardworking young people could find employment. No houses were purchased. But cars were obtained and there was enough consumable

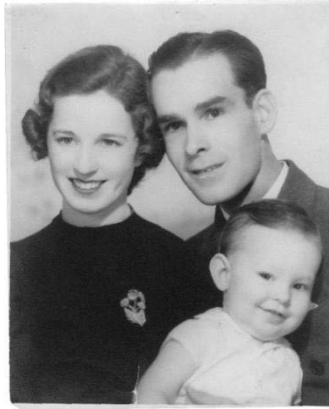
In The Beginning: Family Roots

income for a relatively pleasant life style compared to what they had known not a decade earlier when all had missed meals or gone without shoes. Remarkable as it seems, Hugh and MaiFare started his own business as she was able to swing a credit union loan for \$500 from Sears where she worked for Hugh to buy into a grocery store of his own in 1940.

Jimmy and Evelyn Wed - 1934

Jimmy and Evelyn became engaged and were married October 28, 1934 in Marion Arkansas. At this time he was selling shoe polish and encyclopedias with the Collier Company. He and Evelyn traveled with another couple, **Oma** and **Bill Ludwick**, across Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi during these lean depression years. **James Edward Jr.** was born the second year of the marriage, August 7, 1936 in Memphis. Nannette Moss was only four years older than Eddie and in many ways more like an older sister to Eddie than an aunt.

By the time of young Eddie's birth in 1936 nearly all the Moss children were married or at least spoke for. Carmane Moss married **Virginia Bigham** that same year. This was his second marriage. Sister MaiFare Moss married **Hugh Hogue** August 30, 1936. Thelma Moss would marry **William Radford Neighbours**, August 20, 1939. By 1940 all in the Moss clan were gainfully employed. Carmane Moss was working at a gas station on Summer Avenue near Holmes. Hugh Hogue purchased his own grocery business. MaiFare was working at Sears as was Radford Neighbours. Billy Moss had graduated from Tech High in 1938 and would enter Memphis State Teacher's College.



Evelyn, Jimmy and Eddie ca. 1937

The still young Morton family lived in Louisiana for a time in the late 1930s. A prescient photo of little Eddie was taken at the Barksdale US Air Base in Shreveport LA. Little Eddie is standing next to a trainer. Sensing the need for more stability and greater economic opportunity, the Mortons moved back to Memphis, residing in the Highland Heights area not far from the rest of the Moss family. I was born January 10, 1940 and named Freddie Clare. The inspiration for that has always been a puzzle to me. The most satisfactory explanation was it rhymed with Eddie. In any case nearing the United States' entry into the World War II there were two children in the Morton household. Whereas before Nannette and Eddie had been the darling of doting aunts and uncles, now there were three to share that affection and attention. The only notable event in those earliest years was the misfortune to be run over by my father as he was backing out of the driveway. It meant I had to re-learn to walk. But other than a terrific scar on my ankle I recovered completely.

In The Beginning: Family Roots



Jimmy & Eddie, Barksdale AFB

Eddie and Jimmy at Barksdale AFB 1937



Eddie & Freddie

Freddie and Eddie 1940

When war broke out at the end of 1941, all the able-bodied men of the entire clan would contribute to the war effort. To Jimmy and Carmane fell defense work at Fisher Aircraft. To the uncles came service in the Army, Navy and US Air Corps. All would support the effort on the home front with rationing food and fuel, tending victory gardens, and collecting war materials.

A War Economy and War Culture –1941

Military service had been a strong tradition in both families. On the Morton side, ancestors had fought in the Revolutionary War as well as with the Confederacy. On the Moss/Collins side one had served in the Confederate Cavalry and had been wounded at the battle of Murfreesboro.

The young Morton family had settled down into the Highland Heights community by the time the war broke out. As many young families during the war with housing shortages to the extreme they lived in several apartments on Galloway and then with various members of the Moss clan—at the barber shop apartment on Summer, with Carmane and Virginia on Rockwood and with the Thelma and Radford Neighbours of Powell.

In The Beginning: Family Roots



The whole Moss Clan ca.1943



Freddie, Nannette, and Eddie

It was an interesting setting for us young boys and Nannette. Eddie was in the first grade and Nannette in the fourth the first year the war broke out in 1941. I recall several Christmases at the barbershop apartment where we

had a large Christmas tree. We three speculated as to how Santa Claus would ever get in without a chimney to climb down. There were a few gifts for each. We were reminded time and again how we were more fortunate. They usually got only a piece of fruit and some nuts. We were never really impressed with these tales of great privation from an earlier era.

Waging the War in Highland Heights— School and Church - 1941-45

The Mosses had been Cumberland Presbyterians and Baptists in their prior home in Obion and Tremble Tennessee, when they moved to Memphis in the late 20s. But as there was no Cumberland Church in the area and the local Methodists seemed most congenial to their tastes in worship and theology, the Mosses joined the Highland Heights Methodist Church. Eddie and I were baptized and brought into church membership “On Profession of Faith”, Ed in 1945 under the **Rev. W. S. Evans**, and Freddie in 1950 under the **Rev. C. N. Jolly**. Most of the Mosses held membership at that church until the 1960s. The church school and youth programs would become the focal point of much of the social life for all of us. Eddie attended Vacation Bible School and participated in the Epworth League for youth on Sunday evenings. Aside from Scouting, this was the primary social basis for much of his early life. He along with nearly all the children of the Moss clan graduated from Treadwell High School. This was the hay day of neighborhood life in post war America. Everything you needed was within walking distance or a bike ride. And as was also customary for Memphis in this era it was virtually segregated. The only African Americans you came into contact with were domestics working in the

In The Beginning: Family Roots

homes or custodians or as in our case in the Moss clan, the shoe-shine John Bills, known as “**Sargome**”. His common law wife **Lyda** would become the regular domestic help at the Hogues’ house.



Eddie entered the first grade in 1942. He attended Treadwell walking from various home sites at the Neighbours’ on Powell, Carmane Moss’ on Rockwood, or the barbershop on Summer Avenue. As men in the clan joined the service and left for training and deployment abroad, the family pulled together for support and mutual encouragement. For Eddie and me it was an exciting time. There was an abundance of adventures on the back streets and alleys down off Summer Avenue. The Bristol theatre was just across the street and cost only 10c. And at the Mosses on Rockwood (then a semi-rural and heavily wooded area) there were lush trees and wooded area. Uncle Carmane was a gun enthusiast with always a ready cache of weapons to show. Carmane had his pilot’s license since before the War, and his wife Virginia also flew. In the

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family it had been alleged she actually had taken her ground training courses from Amelia Earhart and was due to get her license when the War interrupted. Daughter Virginia Ann said her dad used to take them flying regularly in the post war years. I have no recollection of Carmane taking Eddie or any of the family flying. But I do recall his talking about flying and how dangerous it was in that beautiful white thunderhead.

The excitement of the war was intense to us young lads. There were endless hours of fighting “japs” and Germans. There was never a lack for hand made weapons. And grand daddy Moss had made me a gun holster that I wore until the war was over. Probably the most vivid memory is when uncle Billy Moss, who dropped out of Memphis Teachers College his senior year to join the Air Corps, came home on leave sometime in the summer of 1944.. Bill was a dashing young man, tall handsome and well spoken, the only person we knew who had any college education in all our family or acquaintance. And he had just married a strikingly beautiful coed **Jeanette Sterrett**, from Memphis State Teachers College. Always the bearer of gifts, he left several of the black rubber airplane models used to teach plane identification for military personnel. Whereas Hugh Hogue and Radford Neighbours struck the pose of conventional draftees in the Army and Navy, Billy was movie screen caliber.



Lt. Moss Missing in Action

For the Moss family the last year of the war was disheartening. Bill Moss completed bombardier training the summer of 1944 and was stationed with the 15th Air Force in Italy. He was a bombardier in a B-24 Liberator. The 15th was bombing Germany and Poland and flew out of Italy. * On his 22nd mission (just three shy that would have sent him home) his plane was shot down. 2nd Lt. Billy Moss was listed as Missing in Action. He was taken prisoner October 7, 1944. He was considered MIA until the family received notice that he was a prisoner of war sometime

* Lt Billy Moss was rated Bombardier, completed 21 combat missions total flying time was 600 hours, 150 were combat. He was attached to the 15th Air Force. Our half-uncle Lt. Garrett Collins followed Billy by about two months as bombardier with the 15th and completed his tour without injury. He would however be a casualty in the Korean War later when his plane crashed on take off in Guam.

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around Christmas. I recall attending a family meeting held at First Methodist Church in Memphis. I had never seen such a large and so beautiful a church. The War Department provided information to families whose loved ones were held prisoners. I remember during the Christmas season of 1944 when the women of the family prepared fruit-cake to send to Bill. Uncle Bill was liberated by General George Patton in May 1945. That same recipe, which apparently appeared in the local newspaper, was faithfully prepared in the all the Moss household each Christmas season for decades after the war.



Second Lt. Billy Moss USAAC Europe

All the more distant uncles and cousins on both sides of the family (Mosses and Mortons) survived war service without serious injury and some even were decorated for bravery.

**Wagging the War in the Pacific, in Europe,
and at Home**

During those days Nannette, Eddie and I relished our status as the only children in the extended Moss clan. An addition to this privileged corps was **Bill Neighbours** who was born in January 1944. He was Thelma and Radford's first born and still too young to share in the older three's antics. He did his part however appearing in photos with one of his dad's sailor caps which were generously circulated among the family. We played "army" or "navy" navigating fighter-bombers over Germany or invading Japanese infested islands in the Pacific. Eddie was always the CO, and I the grunt. Nannette was the ever-present nurse to aid the wounded. Our wooden arsenal included a mounted machine gun, several Springfield rifles, pinecones serving as hand grenades, and an assortment of tommy guns or carbines. . We didn't know what an M-1 rifle was until years later when Eddie and I took ROTC at Treadwell. Somehow we managed to procure GI helmet covers to make the play more convincing. It was not unusual for Eddie to borrow Uncle Carmane's BB gun to fight off Zeros in the form of belligerent Mockingbirds making their attacks out of the heavily wooded area of Rockwood Street.



Sgt. Hugh Hogue US Army—the Pacific

Meanwhile Uncle Hugh Hogue was stationed in the Pacific serving as a mess sergeant in the Army. Uncle **Radford Neighbours** was coxswain on a landing craft (the LCVP Higgins Boat—made popular in “Saving Pvt. Ryan”) that was involved in campaigns in North Africa, Italy and Normandy. It was told in the Moss family that Radford actually carried one of the Moss soldiers (his nephew Eric Collins’ son Dick) in an assault in one of the European campaigns. Uncle Hugh Hogue had been drafted into the Army and was training at Ft Rucker in Alabama. Wife MaiFare moved there and worked while he finished his training before being shipped to the Pacific serving in Guam, Leyte and the Philippine Islands. After training for a mortar squad, he wound up as a mess sergeant. He was on Leyte Island involved in preparations for the invasion of the mainland of Japan when they received word that the atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima.

In The Beginning: Family Roots



Chief Petty Officer Radford Neighbors, North Africa and Europe

Celebrating on VJ Day

Two scenes of those years bear recalling. One was the day President Roosevelt died. Child wags on Powell Street that day said we would lose the war because Roosevelt had died. Our mother however assured Eddie and me that nothing would frustrate the Allies march to victory. Another scene was that of VJ Day—victory in the Pacific. I remember our riding in the Hogues' Buick automobile (two tone green four door) honking wildly (it was against the law in Memphis—reputed to be one of the nations' cleanest and quietest cities) and driving all over east Memphis, including Overton Park. The exact awareness of the dropping of the atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki are obscure at this point. It was only years later during the Cold War that the awesome reality of that devastation ever sank in on us. But that was a cold war worry. Then, we were simply glad it was over and we had

won without the colossal sacrifice an armed invasion would have required.

The closest that death from the war ever reached our awareness was when a B 25 flying out of the Memphis airport crashed close to Sears April 24, 1944.³ Three crewmen were killed as well as four persons in the house on North Claybrook. Other than Uncle Bill, no member of our family on either side was a casualty in the war. And we did not know of any in our neighborhood or school—at least the grown folks didn't say if there were any.

The only other death in this time period was that of Charles Estes the older son of the Estes family who lived next to the Neighbours on Powell. He was killed while delivering papers on his bike on Summer Avenue close to Graham. His younger brother Robert was a good friend and classmate of Nannette's.

This was the context in which Eddie was reared. The heroic experience of Uncle Bill was powerful if not fully divulged until many years later. The greatest excitement had to do with the air war. Our father Jimmy and Uncle Carmane Moss worked at Fisher Aircraft building B-25 "Billy Mitchell" bombers. We knew all the current aircraft, from P-51 to P-38 as well as the full arsenal of heavy bombers from B 17s to B 29s. The exploits of the Doolittle Raid, the Battle of Midway, the bombing of Ploesti oil fields in Romania were all a part of our collective memory. This would work its way out with the Morton boys as they would become highly proficient modelers of military aircraft. We became devotees of the flood of movies depicting the heroics of those who fought the "good war".

³ Memphis Flyer, October 16, 2008, p. 19.

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Top of the list would be “Flying Tigers” with John Wayne and “Task Force” with Gary Cooper, Col Robert Scott (an Eagle Scout from Georgia) in “God is My Co-Pilot”. Perhaps “30 Seconds over Tokyo” with Spencer Tracy was our favorite since it featured the prized B-25 that our dad helped build at Fisher—and it was Air Force as was our Uncle Bill. In today’s parlance he would have been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Injuries he sustained in the crash of his plane and the privations of a POW would constitute warrant for such. But back then, unless your mental condition was extreme to the point of disablement, you were considered “intact and good to go” no matter how shattered emotionally. It was short of miraculous how those men who returned from the war and its harrowing and horrifying experiences took up their places in family in work and in community, seemingly as if nothing had happened. That theme was most compellingly told in the award winning movie “The Best Years of Our Lives”

The Lingering Legacy of the War

The returning veterans in the family would be very reticent about their war experiences. This was customary for the time. Bill Moss was not of a mind to share his painful POW experiences until many years later. What few things he did share was to speak kindly of his captors, one of whom had given him a German officer’s cap. Radford Neighbours would speak little of his combat experiences but was generous with all the nautical skills he had acquired in the US Navy—later an invaluable resource on how to unravel the mysteries of rope splicing required in Boy Scout merit badges. He was also a ready source of

supply for military surplus-knit belts, packs, canteens, helmet covers.

While there was no lack of documentary television coverage of the war such as General Dwight Eisenhower's "Crusade in Europe", perhaps the most memorable was "Victory at Sea" which was broadcast in 1952-53 with rousing score by Richard Rogers and the timeless real time footage from all theaters of the conflict. It would etch in our collective psyches images and narratives of the immense struggle and sacrifice of this "greatest generation".

It was no surprise that Scouting would become the avenue for acting out many of the notions of war adventure which had taken hold those three and a half years from 1941 until 1945. But that would not take place for both Eddie and me until 1948 and 49. At the home church two Sunday School teachers had a profound impact on Eddie. Both had been naval officers. **Ford Boyd** was a naval officer ("90 Day Wonders") who did his V-12 training at Princeton. The other was **Preston McDaniel**. He was a navy pilot flying a PBY Catalina in the Pacific. These two men together with other veterans who were teachers in high school also had a positive impact on Eddie. Those who had borne the trials of war would be among the most powerful role models for Eddie in school, church and Scouting in those formative adolescent years. Though the war was over it would leave an indelible imprint especially upon Eddie and me. The lessons of patriotic and sacrificial service were deeply embedded.

Chapter Two

At Home in Highland Heights

Winding Down after the War – A Home on National 1945-48

Post War Prosperity

By the war's end Jimmy and Evelyn Morton were the only ones of the Moss clan without a home of their own. We lived in the barbershop apartment on Summer Avenue the closing months of the war. Meanwhile our grand parents Charles and Jesse Moss, their teenage daughters Nannette along with MaiFare and her husband Hugh Hogue moved to a house on Highland Street a block from Treadwell School.* Meanwhile our father had secured a job with the Diversey Chemical Corporation out of Chicago. It dealt with cleaning products for dairies and bottling plants. He trained for a month in Chicago while Eddie stayed with his grandmother Moss to continue school at Treadwell Elementary. Mom and I went with Dad to Chicago. Upon completing his training, he was assigned a sales territory in Chattanooga. The family moved there for only about a month. We lived at the foot of Look Out Mountain. But

* Charles Moss died in 1948.

At Home in Highland Heights

Dad got a transfer back to the Memphis and we returned to the barbershop apartment until we secured a home of our own at 992 National only two blocks from Treadwell School. This was in late in the Fall of 1946 or spring of 1947 when we moved in. I was in the first grade and Ed was in the fifth. His teacher was **Mrs. Lula Mae Wynn**, a stalwart reader who infused a love of the reading of good adventure stories and a fascination for the hunt as in Faulkner's "The Bear". Eddie would come home from school talking about her reading that story in class.

Life on National Street—ca. 1947

The move onto National was a new world to the Morton family. The old streetcar trolley line that ran down National from Broad Street to the South was being phased out. The rails were taken up and National turned into a broad divided boulevard. Before that however there were times, when our parents were not aware of it, that we played dare devil as the trolleys approached and ground pennies flat on the rails. In 1946 there were large undeveloped lands to the North at the site of the old Poor Farm and Insane Asylum, West of Holmes and South of Macon. Throughout this Northern boundary of Highland Heights small developments were emerging. But there was ample wooded land and inviting drainage ditches for make shift battlefields and replays of World War II. Our bicycles were invaluable to negotiate the considerable distances our play covered—from Summer Avenue to the South to Macon Road to the North.



Eddie and longtime pet dog Butch

At Home in Highland Heights



Eddie and Freddie during major snow 1948

Ours was one of the first houses built along National between Lamphier and Given. The large field to the South of our house made a great baseball field. Many a baseball game was played by the neighborhood kids there. Once we caught some wild rabbits. Dad built a pen for them and we kept them for about a year. One older boy who lived on Lamphier to the West of us was **Billy Branson**. He had joined Troop 35 in 1947 at the Presbyterian Church and his father was on the troop committee. On Christmas Day Billy had received a brand new Schwinn bicycle. He rode it to our house only to have it stolen out of our front yard. Memphis was not innocent of crime even in those days.

As the neighborhood around National and Macon developed with a cluster of stores, service stations etc, a cycle of pleasant pastimes emerged for the Morton boys. There were models that could be purchased at the variety stores. Milkshakes could be had at the drug store on the corner and the usual short list of groceries to pick up

between regular weekly shopping trips to Hogue and Knott stores in Hollywood.*

The rest of the Moss clan were experiencing relative post war prosperity unknown in the difficult days of the Depression. Hugh Hogue's* supermarkets were thriving with great success as he offered low cost groceries to working class families primarily in the Hollywood neighborhoods and later at Park and Highland. That same tradition continues in Highland Height with the successor Montesi Supermarket at the Summer Avenue location. **Uncle Bill Moss** would become one of his store managers and trusted lieutenant in the operation. Many in the Moss clan would find part time employment at the Hogue and Knott groceries including our mother, Eddie, and Nannette who met there her future husband **Wade Grantham**. **Radford Neighbours** returned to Sears and quickly was promoted to mid-level management. **Carmane** held a bookkeeping job with the Willis Jeep dealer in mid-town.

Charles Moss father of the clan and owner of Moss Barber Shop died October 2, 1948. After a short time, sister-in-law **Virginia Moss** then operated the Beauty Shop adjoining acquired the shop. This was reputed to be the first woman owned and operated beauty establishment in Memphis.

Sometime within the first year in our new house we took in Carmane and Virginia Moss reciprocating their hospitality as they awaited completion of their new home just East of Treadwell School and about the time of the

* The grocery was a joint venture shared by Mr. John Knott and Hugh Hogue. Hugh did the operational end of the business while Knott handled the accounting matters.

At Home in Highland Heights

birth of their first born **Charles Jr.** born September 1948. Second child **Virginia Ann** was born February 6, 1950. Carmane and Virginia were affectionately called “Bud and Junnie” within the family circle, at least at the nephew level.

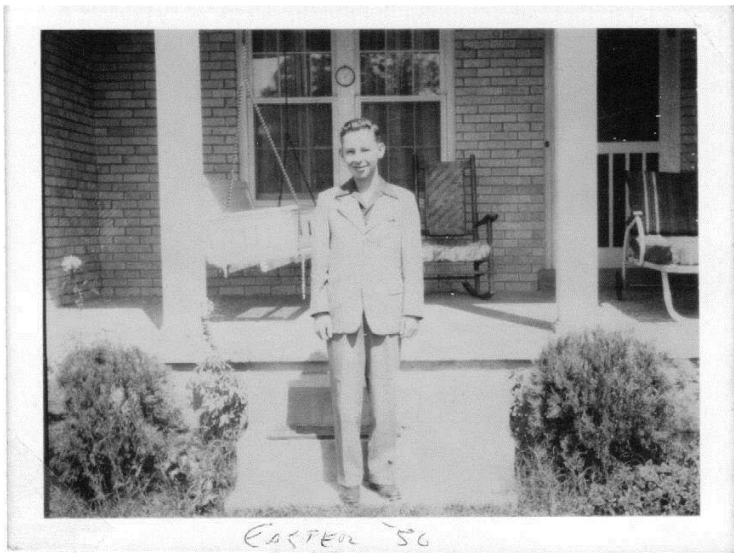
Perhaps during second year in the house (1948) Dad finished out the attic in our house as a bedroom and playroom. It was knotty pine and the envy of many of our friends. On one occasion I recall **Bill Young** and **Edmond Randolph**, both Eddie’s buddies at the time and outstanding athletes at Treadwell later in high school, who came over to play pool. We had a small pool table (used mostly for making models) and a large arena to display our handiwork—mostly hung from the ceiling. We started on Strombecker wooden models. But with developing synthetics technologies we eventually graduated to plastics. The most challenging were the hybrid “Monogram” semi-tissue and balsam flight models. Our favorites were the F-51 Mustang and the Steerman bi-plane. We had a few ship models. But they were primitive wood and hardly the challenge and pride as were the aircraft. Eddie did build and fly a gas powered model. As a Cub Scout I had a ready supply of finished models to bring to each Pack meeting where we received candy rewards for our work.

Ventures beyond Home— Swimming and the YMCA The Sixth Grade-- 1947-48

It was around 1947-48 during the summer that our parents had the notion of giving us swimming lessons at the downtown YMCA. This was where **Ralph Young** had been working while attending Memphis State and began

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working with Troop 35 at Highland Heights Presbyterian Church. Most of the time we took the bus, but occasionally our Dad would carry us. It also meant we were somewhat free to roam about downtown. The greatest mischief we could achieve was making stops at the premier hobby shop off an alley near Union. Sometimes we would stop off on the way home at the Cleveland Crosstown Hobby Shop. For the most part we were window shopping, aiming for a large purchase based on frugal savings into the future. I don't remember learning to swim in that endeavor. But Eddie and I logged lots of good time hobby shopping and learning to navigate the public transit system and generally feeling comfortable in an urban environment.



Eddie in front of Grandmother's house ca.1950

At Home in Highland Heights

During the summers, probably 1947-49, Eddie and I would often go swimming at public pools at the Fairgrounds and also sometimes at Rainbow on Lamar. Occasionally **Mike** and his little brother **Scott** (two years younger than me) went along. This was only after I had learned to swim. Mother was always absolutely serious in admonishing Eddie to look after little brother even though by now I knew how to swim. We also would take advantage of the opportunity to play on the Memphis Belle, the WWII B-17 that was placed on the National Guard Amory at the Fairgrounds. One of the things we remembered about that friendship with the **Moyers** boys was that they took violin lessons—a notion completely out of our sphere of understanding. But the Moyer boys were OK with us and that was OK too.

Meanwhile Eddie and **Albert Rushton** were cutting our yard and that of several of the neighbors to earn spending money and later for fees for summer camp. They split the princely sums of less than a dollar between them. Another occasional part time job in the neighborhood was distributing circulars for local merchants. The duplexes off Holmes and down National were quicker and easier work.

Eddie had known **Albert Rushton** from both church and school. They were class mates in Mrs. Walker's 6th grade when the Rushtons moved to Memphis. They had also gone to YMCA camp the summer of 1948. Although he went to camp with Albert, he stayed in a separate cabin and made friends quickly. To his good fortune his cabin counselor was also the rifle instructor which he used during his two weeks stay. His letters reported model building (a neat PBY seaplane) and a piper cub. His sparse correspondence was peppered with occasional literary gems; *"It has been raining all day, the river is flooded, and*

our cabin leaks like a sieve.” Concluding each epistle was the plaintive request “*May I stay another week or two?*”

The Rest of the Moss Clan

The Moss clan as a whole had matured considerably in the post war years. To each household of the Mosses (except Bill Moss) were born two children; first **Bill** Neighbours in 1944 and then Gail in 1946. To MaiFare and Hugh Hogue were born **Hank** and **Adair** in 1946 and 1948. Carmane and Virginia Moss had **Charlie and Virginia Ann** in 1948 and 1950. Bill Moss’ marriage ended in divorce, but he would continue to support his stepson **Charles Franklin**. Bill remarried in the mid-1950s. His second wife was **Sandy Gill**, a gracious and highly talented woman who had a flare for decorations and gourmet cooking.

Our First Real Vacation 1948

It was that summer of 1948 that we Mortons took our first real vacation. It had been our practice to make regular visits to Grandmother Morton in Morrilton Arkansas, with assorted side trips to the Ozarks and rivers in the area. But this summer we went to the Smoky Mountains. I can remember that Eddie and I got sling shots at a souvenir shop (why I don’t know because we always made them ourselves at home) and quite against the law we proceeded to shoot at mail boxes and highway signs out the car window. That remains a mystery as I recall Mom and Dad’s being particularly law abiding. This was the first time we actually saw real Native Americans selling their crafts at the Cherokee Reservation, thus beginning an enchantment with those people and their plight that

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persisted into adulthood. The next summer we took a vacation to Florida with Grandmother Moss and Nannette—the first time Eddie and I would see the ocean and the last time until we were out of high school.

Fun with the Rushton Gang

All the Rushtons (Albert, younger sister **Lynn**, and youngest brother **Wayne**) became our occasional play buddies. Eddie and I often visited what seemed to us a luxuriously large home. The Rushtons were the first genteel family we came to know. Mr. **P.A. Rushton** (affectionately called “Doc” by Mrs. Rushton) had been a graduate of Wofford College in South Carolina and an officer in the Infantry during the war. Mrs. **Virginia Rushton** was a refined lady, well educated who would brook no nonsense from her children or any of the rest of us. She became a grammar school teacher at the new Grahamwood School, East on Summer Avenue which opened around 1950. She was however always kind and encouraging us to be and become the very best we could be. She was one of the best Sunday School teachers we had at the church. One adventure we took was to go fishing in the small lake in Chickasaw Gardens. Eddie, Albert, Wayne and I rode our bikes, and sometimes our parents drove us there. We occasionally marveled at the splendid homes. Our usual take home catch was several crappie no bigger than our hands.

In the neighborhood we played sandlot baseball on the vacant lot next to our house. We saved our money to buy better quality baseball gloves but re-stitched the worn out baseballs. We also frequented the Treadwell playground during the summers that had supervised programs by the

Memphis Park and Recreation Department. There was paddle-ball, box hockey and various contests of one kind or another. But mostly we got to play a better quality of baseball when the organized teams weren't playing or practicing on the school diamonds.

It was also in this era that Eddie and I decided upon a business venture in the summer months by selling cold drinks in front of our home on National Street. We fashioned a stand with metal signs Dad procured from his cold drink customers (RC Cola and Nehi, as I recall). We purchased cartons of drinks for a quarter, cooled over ice and sold them for 10 cents each. The venture netted little profits and was abandoned after several sweltering days in the hot summer sun with few sales.

Beginning the Scouting Venture
Seventh Grade—1948-49
Age 12-13

Sometime during the year 1948-49 Albert Rushton joined Boy Scout Troop 35. The next year (1949-50) Eddie, by then in the seventh grade, would follow suit. There he would meet and become best friends with **Mike Moyers**. That class of Scouts in Troop 35 would boast some of the finest young men in the area—who distinguish themselves on the field of athletic contests as well as academics. Eddie's first trip to the Boy Scout Summer Camp Kia Kima, Hardy, Arkansas, was in 1949.* **Ralph Young** went

* Kia Kima Scout Camp was founded in the earliest years of Scouting in Memphis, 1916. It had been the training ground of many of scouting leaders and future leaders in Memphis up to World War II when it was closed. It was re-opened in 1948 and continued in that same site until 1963.

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and took **Mike, Rex Waddell** and Eddie. They returned to Kia Kima the next summer as well. Many of the boys Ed came to know in Scouting remained good friends throughout his years in high school and later. Among them was **William Lee Hartley** who later became a Marine officer who was KIA in Vietnam in 1968. Among the younger Scouts was **Carlisle Cook** whose younger sister Ann later became Eddie's bride.



Eddie Life Scout 1950-51

Whereas the defining experience for most young boys in this era was athletics—especially if you were gifted and of a good size--for Eddie Scouting seemed to be just the

ticket. He was short and lightly built. And he handled himself reasonably well. Albert meanwhile had dropped out of Scouting to pursue athletic interests in junior high school. **Mike Moyers** became his constant Scouting buddy through out high school. For Ed, Scouting and hunting seemed to be the challenges that stretched him and excited him. Ed advanced rather quickly. It was sometime in the mid-50s that Eddie would acquire his first firearm---a snappy Marlin 22 lever action rifle. Otherwise he would borrow shotguns from the family arsenals (mostly from Carmane “Bud” Moss).

A side note about our scouting and camping experience is that almost all our camping gear was GI surplus of one sort or another—packs, canteen, tents, even caps. And we mimicked the GIs, especially of flight service by donning “nose art” on as much olive drab as we could muster. Eddie and I both became pretty proficient in rending cartoon characters (Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck the favorites) on packs and caps.

Eddie and Mike Moyers were very intent on getting to Eagle. One of the most daunting merit badges was Camping which required “fifty days and nights, sleeping under canvas”. Mike Moyers recalls a couple of episodes.*

In His Own Words—from Mike Moyers

“Recalled another story... I was in your back yard actually. Eddie and I were trying to get camping nights in for our camping merit badge. So, Eddie had set up an army two man tent (no floor) in your back yard and phoned me to

* Email from Mike Moyers, dated April 10, 2009.

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come over and sleep overnight in the tent. It rained and thundered as only it can in the southeast... I mean poured buckets full. The rivulets ran hither and thither through the tent and we repositioned to try to stay dry. The tent leaked. We scooted deeper under ponchos (yes, inside the tent). I think your Dad came out about 2 or 3 in the morning and convinced a couple of soggy boy scouts to give it up and finish the night indoors (I'm sure to our relief...at least we didn't wimp out... Have to respect your friend's Dad and do what he says!!!)

AND, that brings up another camping disaster. Eddie had gotten a new army mountain tent from the surplus store and we were going to give it a test run on the next camping trip... which we did. What a cool tent... olive green on one side and snow white on the other (for mountain troops)...reversible. And best of all ... Mosquito netting everywhere. We were set. Well there were bazillion mosquitoes that first camping night. We snuggled inside that grand tent and tightly tied all the mosquito netting shut against that mosquito horde. Except that we had left the tent open for a couple of hours before bedding down and the mosquitoes had helped themselves to exploring the tent's interior while we were outside enjoying a campfire. After about an hour from first bedding down and nearly going crazy from battling the mosquitoes inside, we all moved outside where we were sure there were fewer mosquitos for the rest of the night. Never did get another chance to try that tent.”

In many ways those were the most fun filled and anxiety free years I remember in the Morton household. Except for Eddie's Scout campouts, our play was in the neighborhood nearby. I went on at least one campout with Mike and Eddie, in the Raleigh area where we were

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spooked by some ruffians—no doubt from the notorious National Cemetery gang. We hid in the woods until they were gone, wondering if we should have rushed them shouting and screaming to run them off. But on further consideration we came to the conclusion that stealth was more prudent than blunderbuss.

Chapter Three

Trooping to Kia Kima and Philmont

The Rites of Passage—Scouting in Earnest 1949-56

Eighth Grade and Ninth Grades—1949-52 Ages 13-15

The next year Ed was in the eighth grade. He went to Boy Scout camp at Kia Kima, Hardy, Arkansas, the summers of 1949 and 1950 with **Mike Moyers** and **Rex Waddell**. **Ralph Young** was Scoutmaster. This commenced the steady concentration of Boy Scouting experiences for both Morton boys over the next decade.

“The Silver Streak”

But a not insignificant event was my tenth birthday January 1950. Grandmother Moss had given us a snow sled (and by common consent to his brother, Eddie, also). It was a sleek five-foot “Silver Streak” with metal runners—a vast improvement over the rustic handmade wooden variety Dad had made for us in the past. The tradition of winter sledding in the Morton household continued through my senior year in 1958. The favorite sledding site was Chickasaw Country Club. It was just South of Summer and

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off Highland. The Derryberrys' house (Bill was a close friend of Eddie's and his sister Doris Ann a sometimes date for Eddie) adjoined the club grounds. It had perfect hills for great sledding. Bunches of us, especially from the Methodist Church, came through the Derryberrys' house to get onto the grounds. Once when Eddie was out sledding he came home late in the afternoon. The sled was hung over the front bumper of our old 1950s Plymouth. When he pulled into the drive, the sled was thrown off and the car ran over it. But the damage wasn't too severe. Dad took it to the welding shop down on Summer Avenue where it was repaired and returned without great interruption to its service.

On the Eagle Trail

By the next year January 1951, when Eddie was in the Ninth grade and then fourteen, I joined Troop 35. Earlier that fall of 1950 Ed had taken me (then Weblos Cub about to become Boy Scout) on a camping trip to Shelby Forest with the troop. Within a couple of months, Eddie himself already First Class, passed me on my Second Class and First Class requirements. By the summer when he attended Camp Kia Kima, Eddie was well on his way to Eagle. He went to camp the summer of 1951 as a lone scout assigned to what was called a Provisional Explorer unit under the leadership of camp counselor **Doris Goodman**. Specifically he was working on bird watching merit badge—one of the more challenging obstacles to Eagle. He was also working on life saving merit badge—a formidable task to pass at summer camp. It appears he must have passed both and several other badges that summer. Eddie also served as a Den Chief to a Cub Scout den as evidenced by the blue and gold roping on his Explorer uniform in a

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picture taken the fall of 1951. In addition Eddie held the position of senior crew chief in the Explorer Post 35, equivalent to senior patrol leader for Boy Scouts.



Scout Sunday ca. 1952 with Dr. Roddy and close friends Billy Derrberry and Joe Hardesty on both side and Mike Moyers and Rex Waddell behind

Eddie and Mike were presented their Eagle Awards at a Council Wide Court of Honor at the Peabody Hotel December 17. The write up in the Commercial Appeal (December 16, 1951) listed all recipients **. Along with

** The records in the Chickasaw Council list 22 Eagle in Troop and Post 35 from 1951 to 1973. This does not include at least another four from Post 35 from 1953-58. That year of 1951 was the largest number (50) of Eagle Scouts in the Council's 35 history. Among

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Eddie and **Mike Moyers** were **Carlisle Cook** and **Jack Liles** who were still Scouts in Troop 35. These four from 35 were the first of a long line of Eagles from Post and Troop 35, which later included **Rex Waddell, Warren Schmidt, Bobby Welch, Gordon Patterson, Larry Grant, David Fleming, John Hurt, Jim Marquis, Dick McMahon, Eugene Hastey**, and eventually **Freddie Morton**.

A Close Friend's Remembrance of Eddie in Ninth Grade

One of Eddie's closest friends through out grade school and into college was **Billy Derryberry**. In his own words this is what Billy had to say about Eddie:^{*1}

"I can't remember when I first met Eddie. It seems like I always knew him. We both went to Treadwell for 12 years...We really became close friends, through participation in the Boy Scouts and the Explorer Scouts. In fact Eddie became an Eagle, the highest achievement in Scouting. I did attain Life Scout, just under Eagle, but I did not have the perseverance of Eddie.

We did a lot of things together. Eddie was a great model plane builder. I would get him to dope my planes, since he was much better at doing it than me. Doping, was what we called painting the tissue covering of a model airplane to make it fit tight.

recipients were Frank Simonton, Harry Danciger, and Phillip Bowman, all later on staff at Camp Kia Kima.

^{*1} Letter dated May 8, 2009.

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I also knew Eddie's parents, Mr. & Mrs. Morton very well. I spent many days after school at the Morton's home...

*In the ninth grade we were in second year Latin under **Ms. Parks**. Eddie and I were doing okay grade wise, Eddie a little better than me. We both wanted an A, but were running in the B, C+ range. Miss Parks said that if anyone in the class turned in a special project depicting something we had studied in Latin, that individual would get a special grade added to their existing grade. Eddie and I asked Miss Parks if we could do a special project together. She said yes.*

*Eddie and I knew that she was especially fond of a chapter in our Latin textbook that described a Roman military encampment. Eddie and I decided to make a model of the encampment exactly as described in the textbook. We got the bottom of a box which was about two feet square and about four inches deep. We made the paper-maché base which depicted the hill beside a stream which was the Roman Legions favorite encampment site. We covered the maché base with a cloth and painted in the stream and green for land. We then made trees from pieces of sponge and painted them green. We also made replicas of the Roman Legion tents. We followed precisely the description in the Latin text. Eddie and I each got an A. My sister, **Doris Ann**, was a year behind me and also took Miss Park's Latin class. My sister told me how Miss Parks showed her class the Roman encampment and raved over it, telling the class who made it. Miss Parks displayed that encampment model year after year in the Latin display case. I suppose she displayed it years after Eddie and I graduated."*

Kia Kima and Scouting Shape Character

By summer of 1952, an already seasoned camper, Eddie was challenged by the 50 mile treks conducted for those preparing to go to Philmont Scout Ranch later in the summer. Eddie got to know a group of boys and men that had a great influence on him. Kia Kima was one of the best run Scout Camps in America during this era. It was staffed by veteran Scouts many of whom had hardened military experience and brought that no-nonsense mindset to the task of running a camp. Kia Kima had been shut down during the war. It had been the training ground of the first couple of generations of Boy Scouts in the 20s and 30s. This coupled with its new leadership made Kia Kima a testing ground for character building and skill making, on the water and on the trail. That new generation of young adult leaders would become legend in Scouting in the Chickasaw Council BSA (**Louis Pritchard, Doris Goodman, Frank Simonton, Phil Adams, and George Billingsley.**) In contrast to scout leaders from the pre-war era who were prone to come from more genteel backgrounds, this generation of leaders came from the poor sections of South Memphis or the public housing projects. They melded together with many of the World War II veterans (**Bill Dixon, Julian Perryman, Ed Thompson et. al.**) who were scoutmasters for many of the local troops to provide a steady focus for those under their care and guidance. And giving crucial iconic expression to these ideals and challenges was the Order of the Arrow. This was the Boy Scout's select organization for leaders both boys and adults. Its ethos was "the Brotherhood of Cheerful Service" and it took its mythical origins from James Fenimore Cooper's The Last of the Mohicans. The ties of this fraternity were nearly sacred among scouts then and

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still today. Membership was as treasured as that of Eagle. Eddie was probably inducted in the summer of 1952 prior to his Philmont Trek when he was again a solo camper at Kia Kima and virtually considered a junior staff member. This was also the occasion when he first experimented with bleaching his hair with peroxide.



Eddie and Mike Moyers Kia Kima summer 1952

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Eddie Eagle Scout 1952

**The Philmont Odyssey---August 1952
and 16th Birthday**

Five Explorers from Post 35 had committed to take the first organized trek from the Chickasaw Council that summer of 1952. Eddie would be joined by **Rex Waddell**, **Mike Moyers**, **Billy Derryberry** and **Sonny Phillips**. **Bill Hartley** also joined them. He had been in Troop 35, but as a good Catholic transferred into Troop 66 with Scout Master **Ed Thompson** at St. Michael Catholic Church the previous year. The bus trip swung down into Mexico where Eddie purchased some souvenirs and a leather jacket. The trek itself was a daunting experience covering about fifty miles. They witnessed snow atop the highest peak in mid

August as well as crystal clear streams and various desert critters, four footed and crawling species.



Rex and Eddie on Winter Camp Out

In His Own Words—Rex Waddell

“On the way home we stopped in El Paso, Texas. We crossed into Juarez, Mexico, in the morning. Of course Eddie and I had a bargaining strategy all figured out. It was considered a tourist thing to go for the first price, you were supposed to counter with a very low figure and go back and forth. It was essential not to show you were interested in whatever you were bargaining for. We were determined to go to all the shops then do our bargaining. So much for strategy, the first big shop we came to had the fancy fringed buckskin jacket, like all the story book frontiersman wore, it was really nice, and Eddie

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was smitten , Eddie did negotiate and soon the price was pretty attractive, within his budget, a lot cheaper than anything in the US and a deal was made. Well now he had a beautiful jacket, which Eddie put on and off we went. Well being August and being Mexico as the day went on Eddie got hotter and hotter, but the jacket never came off. He wasn't taking no chances on anything happening to it. Being in no big hurry, we then covered a lot of shops, lots of bargaining later, he found your hunting knife and something for your mom. Both our shopping budgets were gone. We crossed back over and Eddie was able to put his jacket and other things on the bus for safe keeping. We wandered around the El Paso downtown city park for a while, since we were now broke and couldn't do anything else, flirted with some local girls who thought we were cute in our cool scout shorts and neat Philmont neckerchiefs. After a while we got bored and thought we'd go back into Mexico, just to kill time, before the bus was to leave. We came up on another shop with the same jacket, so we went in to price it for fun. Well the price started about the same, but this time Eddie being broke his counter starts a lot lower and being broke Eddie couldn't buy it at any price so he hung tough. Well eventually the price went below what he'd paid earlier and even considerably lower. When Eddie couldn't buy it at the rock bottom price the store owner was quite upset. Eddie was also a little peeved, because he could have bought you a bigger hunting knife with the price difference. We figured we wouldn't do any more bargaining because we might not like the prices we'd find and the Mexicans may decide to get a couple cheap Gringos We never mentioned the jacket price again. He still enjoyed wearing the jacket all the way home, August heat and all. I

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think we both learned a little about shopping around a little before buying... ”²



Post 35 contingent to Philmont

(Front row) Bill Hartley (KIA Vietnam 1966) Eddie, Billy Derryberry (Back row) Sonny Phillips, Rex Waddell and Mike Moyers

The summer of 1952 was eventful for many reasons. Not only did Eddie go to Philmont, but I attempted little league baseball—the Texas Sprinklers. My coach was **Jettie Bowen**, Eddie’s good friend and classmate at Treadwell. But towards the middle of the summer I came down with what was probably scarlet fever. This kept me

² Email dated April 7, 2009.

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from going to summer camp as scheduled in August. And I would sour on playing organized baseball for at least another three years.

But by this time, the Hogues had begun using their Coro Lake property in South Shelby County on a regular basis. The Moss clan would gather there on weekends and for holidays. It became a favorite fishing spot for Eddie and for his grandmother **Jesse Moss**. She loved fishing. But she had made a covenant with the Lord during the war when her son Bill was missing. If the Lord would return Bill safely she would never fish on Sundays. As far as any one knew, she never broke that promise. All of us would log considerable time in Uncle Hugh's fishing boat. On a couple of occasions, friends such as Rex Waddell would bring their own boats and we would go water surfing.



Eddie with Hugh and Maifare at Coro Lake

This would have been the year that Nannette, now graduated from high school and working at Hogue and Knott supermarket at Park and Highland, got acquainted with another worker there **Wade Grantham**. The Hogue enterprises had flourished. MaiFare and Hugh boasted receiving the first color television set (a gift from the Pillsbury Co.) This was also the time that Nannette taught Eddie and Freddie how to dance, but separately. The Moss clan would gather regularly for the winter holidays, usually at Jesse Moss's place. The Fourth of July gatherings were typically at the Neighbours as the Fourth was Thelma Neighbour's birthday.

Eleventh Grade—1952-53

Age 16

I cannot recall whether Eddie was driving before his trek to Philmont. I do remember that by the fall and the start of school September 1952 he was driving. At that time we had a green and white Plymouth four door. A heart murmur kept me restricted from taking physical education in the 7th grade. Eddie, then a sophomore in high school, would look out for me. As a matter of fact we shared study hall while the rest of my classmates were in PE. While never one to indulge me, I always felt Eddie was close by, just as he had been the whole time growing up, in case I ever needed him.

The guys in Explorer Post 35 went on to other exploits that year. Some such as Rex Waddell made return treks to Philmont with the younger crew—**David Fleming, John Hurt, Warren Schmidt** and **Carlisle Cook**. The Explorers were then organized into an Emergence Service Unit. They

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took advanced First Aid, most were qualified lifeguards, and they had white overall uniforms.

Rex Waddell's Account of Emergency Service Unit of Post 35

“Our Emergency Service group was attached to the Red Cross, so we were under the Red Cross. Our uniform was white coveralls, with a red Emergency Service patch on the left sleeve and a Red Cross over the right pocket. We took lots and lots of First Aid training, crowd control, and search and rescue. Bring on the disasters! We were trained and thought we were pretty cool.

I think you [Fred] and I are the only two people still alive who even know there was an Emergency Service group. We were trained for Tornado Relief, major floods, major Search and Rescue, and we were ready. During its brief life none of these catastrophes happened, but I do remember at least three callouts.... The first was to help search for an eleven year old scout that got lost on a scout hike in Shelby Forest. We got all organized and were off to help find him. About two hours after, we were tramping our search area, it was beginning to get dark, and he was found by a local couple, who were just headed home, he was walking on a country road a couple miles from where we were. Didn't make the local news, so we were disappointed to not get any notice .The second callout was a lot more down our line. There was a major fire over by the old Sears store near Overton Park. It was a big super market and a couple of smaller stores. It was a multiple alarm fire, so there were fire trucks all over the place. We set up a First Aid Station (before the time of Paramedics), a Canteen with coffee and doughnuts and helped the police

with traffic control. Thank goodness the injuries were only cuts, scrapes, and minor burns. But we felt we were like a MASH unit. I think the fireman needed the coffee just as much as the first aid. It was really late when it wrapped. The Commercial Appeal the next day called us the Red Cross, but there was a picture where you could see us in the background, so the Emergency Service was still undiscovered. It gave us a war story for a long, long time. The third time was a boondoggle, during the Cotton Carnival, the mayor and Frank Lovejoy (movie actor) and a couple more "B movie stars" were making some presentations and appearances on a big barge moored on the Wolf River on Front Street. We got there a couple hours early, set up a triage area on the barge, practiced, and got in our chairs. We were to provide first aid support and help with emergencies, none of which happened. We sat on the barge with all the dignitaries and looked real important. We were introduced to the important people afterwards. It was fun, but a boondoggle."³

³ Email dated April 9, 2009.

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*Eddie in Emergency Service uniform BSA proto type
for EMS*

Otherwise a major endeavor had been the Boy Scout Exposition held each spring at the Fairgrounds. The Explorer post since about 1951 had operated the concession stands, using much of my father's contacts with the local cold drink distributors. Scouts like me from Troop 35 were recruited to assist when the Explorers were short handed. I went up into the Explorer Post on my 14th birthday in January 1954 at last in the same scout unit again with big brother.



The combined efforts of Troop and Post 35 at Scout Exposition: Ed and Warren Schmidt to far left, then Freddie. Post Advisor Bob Hurt to center.

Meanwhile, the Explorers were participating in various scheduled activities including camping events. Fall Hayrides became a favorite social event. Later in the spring of 1954, came the first co-ed camping ventures. **Robert Hurt** had become Post Advisor. It was one of his aims according to **David Fleming** for the Explorers in the Post to learn “the art of courtship and having us behave as gentlemen”. A member of Colonial Country Club, Post Advisor Hurt had the co-ed swim parties at the club pool during the summers.

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The Mortons at Xmas 1953

It was also about this time, probably the fall of 1955 that both Eddie and I had our first serious flying experience. Ed had gone up in a light Piper years before in Morrilton Arkansas. But this time the Explorer Scouts were in an encampment at Millington Naval Air Base outside Memphis. There were the usual unit competitions and education programs from the Navy. But the real prize was a ride in one of the Navy's four-engine transport, after a plethora of signed releases from parents. It was brief but memorable.

Fellow Explorer and friend **Billy Derryberry** relates some of their experiences navigating the muddy waters of tributaries to the Mississippi.⁴

"I remember one canoe trip the Explorer Post took. It was, I believe on a river in Arkansas. We put in at a bridge crossing the river and three or four days later exited at another bridge crossing down river. I remember that the water was muddy and huge gar fish would surface and dive along side the canoes. Eddie, Rex Waddell and I had newly acquired Army surplus "jungle hammocks." One night there was a tremendous thunder storm and rain. Those sleeping in the jungle hammocks remained dry. Unfortunately, Rex's hammock rope broke and his hammock dropped into a rivulet created by the rain. Not a fun night for Rex and most of those in tents. Eddie and I always made sure to double check our hammock support lines after that incident.

The Explorer Scouts that were going to Philmont took several prep hikes. One that I remember was in the area of Sardis Lake. The lake was created by a dam of some type and there was a huge marshy area around the lake. Our training hike took us through this marshy area. There was a winding stream that zigzagged through the marsh which had shoulder high grass which was dead. Thank goodness it was dead, if that marsh grass had been green, we could have not have seen but a few feet in any direction. As we made our way through the marsh and crossed the stream time after time, we saw huge water moccasins; some were several inches thick and six to eight feet long. We also saw the many trails these large snakes left in the mud as they trailed through the mud.

⁴ Letter May 8, 2009

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All were glad when we finally reached the dam and we had some great snake stories. Maybe the snakes got even larger each time we recounted that hike...

Eddie and I went with a group of senior scouts from Memphis to Philmont Ranch in New Mexico. There we hiked and camped through the mountains for a week. For one portion we rode horses. The rest of time we loaded our gear on the backs of donkeys and hiked to the next camp. It was a wonderful experience."

That particular canoe trip down the Black River May 1954 was the time when Mr. Hurt had **Carlisle Cook** ride in his motor boat as Carlisle had sustained a foot injury on **John Hurt's** car prior to the trip. He was on crutches and couldn't handle a canoe.

The summer of 1953 Eddie would take a job as camp counselor at YMCA Pickwick. **Billy Derryberry** and **Mike Moyers** were also on staff. He had charge of six campers about age 10. He and Billy developed a keen interest in fly-fishing that summer

That summer while all three were on break in Pickwick Village they had occasion to perform artificial respiration on a Sailor who drowned in the public swimming area. They worked as they had been taught in all their scout and Red Cross training for well over an hour. But to no avail—as is quite frequently the case.



Eddie with good catch at Pickwick 1953

In his own words, Billy Derryberry's extended account of that summer at Pickwick:⁵

“Eddie and I were counselors at the YMCA camp at Pickwick, Tennessee. I believe that it was the summer between 9th and 10th grades, but it may have been the 10th and 11th grades. Anyway, we each had a cabin with 7 boys. Eddie was really skillful at making and teaching all sorts of braiding to make lanyards, bracelets and other items from the plastic coated strips...Eddie taught canoeing and crafts.

We both liked fly-fish, so almost every morning we would get up around 4:30 AM, to get a canoe and go fly – fishing on Pickwick Lake. The Director of the camp told us

⁵ Letter dated May 8, 2009

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if we would bring the fish we caught to him, he would clean them, put them in the big freezer and at the end of the camp season, have a big fish fry. Originally, it was planned to have the fish fry for just the counselors. Eddie and I caught so many fish that the Director was able to include all the campers in the fish fry. We only fished a couple of hours each day that we fished. First we had to be back at our cabins for reveille.

Once, I put a banana in Eddie's shoe as a joke. He thought one of the campers had put something else in his shoe. He got even with me, although I cannot remember the specific gag.

At the end of the boy's portion of camp, the girls' camp started. The girls' camp counselors came in about five days after the boys departed. Eddie and I, along with a few other male counselors stayed to teach the girls counselors the routines. The second night the female counselors were there we paid a visit to their cabin. These cabins were stone on the bottom half of the walls and screened in on the top half. Two of the senior counselors who were in college put Eddie and me up on their shoulders and we then put on olive drab ponchos. The screened portion of the cabin in which the girls were staying was about eight feet off the ground since the cabin was on a small hillside. We were very quiet at first. Then one of the girls said, 'Did you hear something?' At some point one girl looked out of the screen and the screaming and yelling would have awakened the dead. We quickly calmed them down, since we were sure the camp Director must have heard and thought one of the girls was being murdered or something. Fortunately, he did not hear and we had a good laugh.

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Another night, the senior counselors, the college guys, took a couple of the girl counselors on a moonlight canoe ride. Eddie and I stuffed a pair of jeans and shirt to make a life size dummy with a hat. We then hung the dummy from a tree where the moonlight canoe riders could not miss it. Eddie and I silently watched from behind a large tree. One of the girls saw the hanging dummy first and screamed. We then heard the male counselors discussing the dummy. They were very cautious approaching the dummy, but within five feet, determined it was a joke. I don't know why, but they knew it was Eddie and me behind that little episode.

The summer after we were counselors Eddie and I borrowed our Scoutmaster's 14 ft. boat and motor (Mr. John Hurt Sr.). Mr. Morton towed the boat and took Eddie and me to Pickwick Lake. We put the boat in the water and off Eddie and I went for three or four days. Camping and fishing the coves of Pickwick Lake. We found the foundation and chimney of an old farm house that was probably torn down when Pickwick Dam was constructed and the entire area of woods and farmland flooded. We had a great time. Fortunately we brought our food, because had we relied on eating fish, we would have had to try our scout learned wilderness survival skills."

In August Ed would go to Kia Kima the weekend of my induction into the Order of the Arrow. I was back on track physically that summer and completed swimming merit badge which meant taking the mile swim down the Spring River with **John Hurt** (on the staff that summer) accompanying in a dingy.

Generally Eddie's years in senior high school were pretty fun filled even outside of his Scouting experiences.

Trooping to Kia Kima and Philmont

He had an assortment of jobs working stock at Hogue and Knott grocery and then his paper route with the Commercial Appeal. Highland Heights Methodist Church always served as an alternate home base for social activities as well as spiritual formation. The Epworth League (what became the Methodist Youth Fellowship of later years) was in full swing and gave ample occasions for socializing evenings after Sunday night church. Among the more heralded activities was that of some of the group (**Billy Derryberry and Doris Ann, Albert Rushton, Jettie Bowen and Glenda Bradford**) from Highland Heights attending gospel singings at the African American East Trigg Baptist Church in nearby Binghamton. This small group of Methodist youth had already broken the racial barrier in the church. Bill Derryberry relates that experience:

“The Sunday night services of East Trigg Baptist Church were broadcast on one of the local radio stations. I am not sure how it got started, but a group of us would go there after MYF and Sunday night services at Highland Heights Methodist Church. The East Trigg Baptist Church was open to the public on Sunday nights after its regular church service for the broadcast service. Open to the public really meant open to white people. Remember, segregation was still in effect in those years.

The Sunday service that we attended was really a gospel sing, and what great gospel singing it was. There was no piano or other musical accompaniment, but you wouldn't have known it. The harmonizing of the very large choir made it sound like there was musical accompaniment. The whole place would rock. It is hard to believe now that whites and blacks were sitting together among the pews. The pews actually moved, rocked. The

pews had been subjected to so much movement over time that the screws holding them to the floor were loose. So the pews rocked as the congregation rocked back and forth to the music. The monetary donations from the white attendees were most welcome. I also add that even though segregation was in effect in Memphis and the rest of the South, we were always made to feel very welcome. It was really a church gospel sing and everyone attending was welcomed. Almost like another world at that time.

The East Trigg choir must to have been one of the best gospel choirs of its time.”⁶

Senior Year 1953-54

Age 17

The Treadwell Eagle yearbook for 1954 lists Eddie’s major as science and minor as social sciences and Latin. His activities included homeroom vice-president his senior year, the Twelve Year Club and Science Club. He was inducted into the Key Club his senior year. In the spring of that year he was a finalist in the Civitan’s essay contest, placing fourth. He received a \$300 scholarship for his essay on “The Duties and Privileges of a Citizen”. I can distinctly recall his estimation of some of the superb Treadwell teachers; paramount were Ms. Parks in Latin, Mr. Redding in Physics, Mr. Horton in Civics and History.

Billy Derryberry comments on Eddie’s wheels senior year and beyond:^{*7}

⁶ Email dated May 13, 2009.

⁷ Letter dated May 8, 2009.

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“Eddie’s parents bought him a Willis Jeepster his senior year in high school. That was a great car. It was basically a small convertible body on a jeep chassis. It was yellow with a black top. No roll up window, just side curtains that you manually installed. It had a Bermuda Bell...It was a two tone bell mounted under the driver side of the car with a plunger activated by the driver’s right foot. It was a great attention getter for the girls”.

Doris Ann Derryberry, Billy’s sister and Eddie’s sometime date said that it was crazy what they did riding around in that Jeepster. Sometimes they would sit on the back, or ever stand up. *“How we survived without some kind of permanent injury, I will never know.”*

The spring of senior year was a full one for Eddie. First was the big co-ed Explorer Camping Trip at Pickwick Lake over Easter weekend. Explorers were a relatively new development in Scouting at the time. This branch of Scouting was experimenting with new ways of involving older Scouts beyond the traditional Sea and Air Scout units of the past. A major component was the social side, providing healthy and appropriate * settings for young men to interact with young ladies. It is unknown where the idea for a co-ed camping venture originated. But with full support of adult leadership and parents of all the Explorers, plans were cast for what was then billed as the “First ever Co-ed Scout Camping” trip. The guys would ask their dates. Then the mothers of the guys would call the girl’s parents to inform them and give all the necessary assurances of appropriate chaperonage. The occasion

* Its contemporary expression in Scouting today is the Venture and Ranger programs both co-ed and very popular among young people throughout the U.S.

From Memphis to DaNang

would be held at the Pickwick YMCA camp. Eddie and **Billy Derryberry** had been there as counselors the summer before and were familiar with the facility and no doubt helped secure it. Ed's date was **Marca Lee Douglas** whom he had also taken to the prom later that spring. The Douglas family was good members of Highland Heights Methodists and all parents knew each other well. Freddie as a new Explorer since January went also. His date was **Joyce Jacobson**. The entire group that weekend must have numbered over fifty with an almost equal number of adult chaperons. It was a tremendous success to be repeated at least one more time the following spring.



Dates for Co-ed Campout make ready to depart. Lynne Rushton, Dorris Ann Derryberry, and Ed's date Marca Lee Douglas

Trooping to Kia Kima and Philmont

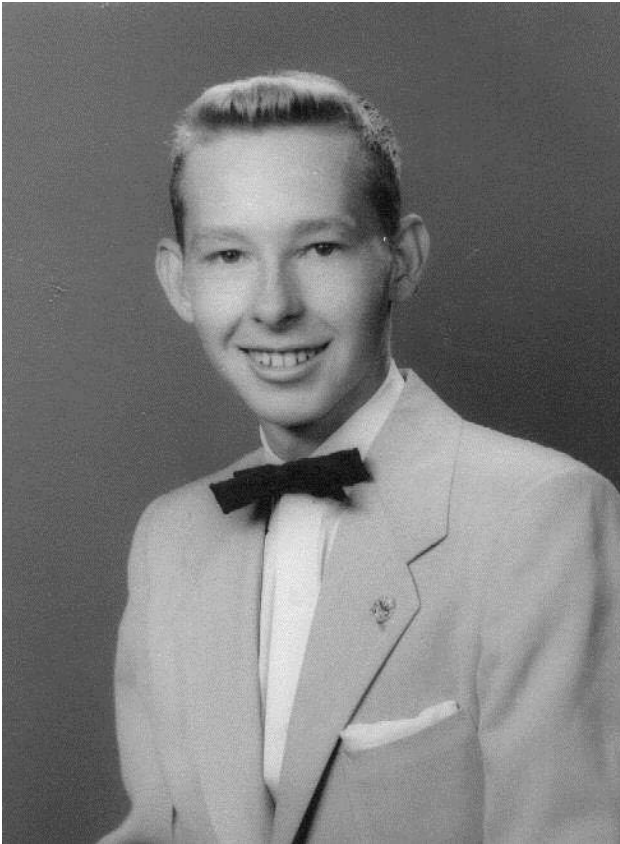
Cotton Carnival weekend—early May that same spring meant a one day school holiday. Explorer Post 35 took advantage of that for its first over-night canoe trip on the Black River in Arkansas. It was early May the weekend of the 1954 Cotton Carnival when we had a school holiday. Post Advisor then was **Bob Hurt**, father of **John Hurt**. Mr. Hurt shepherded the caravan of canoes down the river in his motorized aluminum fishing boat. **Julian Perryman** and **Frenchie Miranne** were also along as adult advisors. As explorer **Jim Marquis** has recalled, the advisors had miscalculated the length of the canoe trek, necessitating the entire group to drift tied together well into the early evening the last day in order to make the pick up rendezvous the next day. They embarked about fifty miles above Newport on a Friday evening and landed Sunday afternoon. About half had swamped their canoes. But there were no major casualties or losses. Eddie's canoe partner that trip was **Warren Schmidt**. My partner was **George Perryman**. Also on the trip was **James Bentley**. **Carlisle Cook** who had injured his foot riding with **John Hurt** had to ride in **Mr. Hurt's** motor boat as he was unable to canoe with his injury.



Eddie on Black River canoe trip in May 1954, his future brother-in-law in boat behind.

This was the first graduation experience for the Morton household. Junior high graduations were hardly noticed or observed. The house overflowed with gifts for Eddie as he prepared to leave high school and matriculate at Memphis Stat in the fall.

Trooping to Kia Kima and Philmont



*Eddie's graduation picture in Treadwell Eagle yearbook
1954*

That spring, along with all the other scouting events, plans had been laid for a number of the fellows in Post 35 to become counselors at Camp Kia Kima. Former scoutmaster and post advisor **Ralph Young** by now had become a professional Scout executive with the local council. He was to be the new camp director that summer. He conscripted a number of the old counselors who had

been so instrumental in resurrecting the camp in the late forties and early fifties among them **Roy Riddick, Phil Adams, Perry Gaither and Eddie Frieburg**. Ralph also recruited new blood, many were from Post 35. Among them was **Rex Waddell** to run the dining hall, Eddie to be first aid director/makeshift medic, **Mike Moyers, Warren Schmidt, David Fleming, John Hurt, Jim Lang** on waterfront, and myself in the handicraft shop. Ralph Young as part of new wave of leadership in scouting was implementing an approach to camping in many ways at variance with the traditional Kia Kima pattern. The major emphasis was on troop unit camping rather than as before where most individual scouts came to camp alone and were placed in “provisional units” with staff counselors as scout masters. Also there was a new sense of *esprit de corps*. All staff was expected to be in full dress uniform for each evening meal—including knee socks, ironically not far out of touch with the emerging Bermuda shorts in vogue among the young. It was a challenge for the “old guys” to make this reach. The distinctively new aspects were the water front director imported from West Virginia, and a new dining hall located on the Northern perimeter of camp—Rex Waddell’s domain. The old dining hall would become the handicraft and commissary center. Roy Riddick, a graduate of Messick and scholarship bound for Princeton in the fall, was the new Program Director. He combined the best of the old staff approach along with many new ideas. Assisting Ralph that summer was another new professional **Bill Springer**, who that summer brought along his new and very attractive new bride **Merle**. Ralph’s wife **Mary Jane** was also there with their twin boys, Larry and Terry. Mary Jane and Merle would be the de facto Den Mothers to the camp staff that summer. Many a staff had crushes on Merle.

Trooping to Kia Kima and Philmont

The work of setting up camp early June was grueling. By mid-June the first campers arrived on a Sunday and were situated in their camp-sites or cabins. Eddie's job as camp medic meant he had to assist the cursory physicals given by a visiting camp doctor to each camper upon arrival. After their physical, they would go down to the waterfront for swim test. If you were swimmer, you got to work toward aquatic merit badges. Lesser qualified were scheduled for lessons to acquire the essential skill. Qualifying for canoe ratings would take place on Monday. Water safety held the highest priority. An elaborate buddy and tagging system helped to monitor all swimmers. Scouting over the years has boasted an exemplary record of water safety.

And the buddy system rules were rigorously enforced.



Warren and Eddie at Kia Kima briefly 1954

Eddie's other responsibilities involved maintaining sanitary conditions on all the latrines throughout the camp. Aside from that he had to patch up bruises and scraps from falls, scorpion bites, sunburn and the rest. Eddie had become good friends with **Eddie Frieberg**. He and **Warren Schmidt** were already close and had frequently double dates as Warren had been dating Lynn Rushton. These three (Eddie, Warren and Eddie Frieberg) would do most of the off camp socializing. Early in the summer, either Warren or our parents brought **Lynne Rushton** and **Marca Lee Douglas** up to visit.

It was about the third week that misadventure caught up with Eddie. There had been several incidents in town where locals had mixed it up with scout staff from either Kia Kima or the Arkansas council Camp Cedar Falls further up the South Fork River. To maintain better relations with town authorities, Camp Director Young had laid down the law: all staff must wear staff t-shirts or uniforms when in town. Apparently, our Eddie and the Frieberg Eddie took exception to that rule and were caught out of uniform returning to camp late one evening by **Bill** and **Merle Springer**. They were summarily dismissed and sent home the following day. Needless to say, I was saddened that older brother would not be there to look out after me. But it was probably a good thing for me to learn to get along without my big brother. I was adopted by the waterfront gang from Post 35 and passed life saving merit badge as well as passed the Brotherhood in the Order in the Arrow. I began to assume some ritual duties with the OA tap out teams and Ordeal and ritual teams.

Meanwhile Eddie returned home, procured other work for the summer and made plans to matriculate at Memphis State in the fall. He, **Carlisle Cook**, and **Billy Derryberry**

Trooping to Kia Kima and Philmont

ferried leased car for Mr. Hurt who was a general manager for the Chevrolet dealership. They drove the cars to Arkansas, Louisiana, Alabama and Missouri. Eddie also did odd jobs for the Hogues and may have taken on some part time work as a stock boy at the Hogue and Knott Grocery as well. Eddie had acquired a yellow Jeepster which he used to deliver his Commercial Appeal paper route out in the Raleigh-- National Cemetery neighborhood. Our cousin **Adair Hogue** recalls that on her birthday there was reason to get her away from her house so preparations could be made for a surprise birthday party. One of the coolest things she remember growing up was Eddie's coming by to pick her up for a ride while those clandestine preparations were being made for her party. The somewhat apocryphal tale has been circulated in the family over the years that the reason Eddie had the "Bermuda Bell" on his jeep was due to tickets he had incurred for honking when passing family's or friends' houses.⁸

Billy Derryberry had this to say about his and Eddie's years at MSC:^{9*}

"Eddie and I started college at Memphis State College at the same time. We only had one or two classes together the first year. Eddie of course was striving to get into the Air Force Academy. For as long as I knew Eddie, he always said that he wanted to be a pilot. We saw each other some during those first two years at Memphis State and we still went to Highland Heights Methodist Church. We both lived at home while attending Memphis State those first two

⁸ Phone conversation May 7, 2009.

⁹ Letter May 8, 2009.

*

From Memphis to DaNang

years. I remember when Eddie told me he had been accepted at the Air Force Academy. Boy, was he happy and thrilled. We kept in touch for a couple of years and I saw Eddie when he came home for Christmas and during part of the summers. I graduated from Memphis State University in 1958 and in a few months went into the U.S. Navy. It became my career for the next 12 years. I had come back from two deployments off North Vietnam on the aircraft carrier USS ENTERPRISE and was at home on leave before departing for duty in the Philippines when I learned of Eddie's death. It was a very sad day for me. We were such good childhood friends. Even so, sometimes childhood friends lose contact over the years, but the fond and great memories are never lost. Eddie Morton was my dear friend...For Eddie's children... at one time you lived just a few houses down from my parents in Scenic Hills...My Dad occasionally saw Eddie's son and told me 'Bill, he looks just like Eddie'."

It was at the end of this summer of 1954 that the Morton family took its last in tact family vacation. We drove to Morrilton to visit Grandmother Morton then went on to Missouri to visit Uncle **Bruce Morton** and wife Theta, and cousins **Betty** and **Bob**. Betty was in nursing school by then and Bob, about the same age as Eddie, had also just graduated from high school. Bob had been an outstanding athlete in high school and we had some very good times with him and his buddies. We took a leisurely return trip through the Ozarks visiting some of Dad's favorite fishing spots, but never indulging in the kind of serious fishing and mom had been engaged with when we boys were too young to go along. Bob Morton would that fall enlist in the Army and serve in Europe before returning

Trooping to Kia Kima and Philmont

and taking a job in Memphis with Pepsi Cola (ca. 1956). Bob Morton stayed with us until he married.

That September 12, 1954 **Nannette and Wade Grantham** were married at Highland Heights Methodist Church after Wade returned from duty in the US Army in Greenland.

The last of the Moss girls was now married and they would set up house with her mother at Highland and Coleman.



Eddie AFROTC at Memphis State University 1954-56

For the next two years at Memphis State College Ed would be heavily involved in Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity. His big brother in the fraternity was **Walter Robbins** who later married **Doris Ann Derryberry**. **Carlisle Cook** matriculated at Memphis State in the fall of

1955 and pledge SPE fraternity as well. Eddie worked part time at various jobs while maintaining leadership role in Explorer Post 35 and participating in canoe trips and socials. During his first year at Memphis State he applied for admission to the Air Force Academy, but was denied. He applied again his sophomore year and was accepted. While at Memphis State Ed did work as manager of the track team while **Billy Derryberry** was on the team.

A colleague of mine in the Methodist ministry over the years the **Rev. A.C. Morrison** served as associate minister at Highland Heights Methodist Church during the time Eddie was in senior high and then in college. Archie told me on more than one occasion that one of the highlights of his work at the church was to write a letter of recommendation for Eddie's appointment to the Air Force Academy. This compliment was no small gesture as Archie had served as a seaman in the Pacific during World War II.

That brief summer before his departure for the Air Force Academy Eddie was in **Jettie** and **Glenda Bowen's** wedding June 8, along with others of his high school and church friends, **Albert Rushton**, **Robert Neal Templeton**, and **Bobby Woodside**. One of his last contacts with his scouting friends was in a late June visit to Kia Kima while I was on the staff. Eddie visited with some of the staff and went "out on the town" that Saturday evening as he had done many times two summers before—as usual on social occasions, without me.

Chapter Four

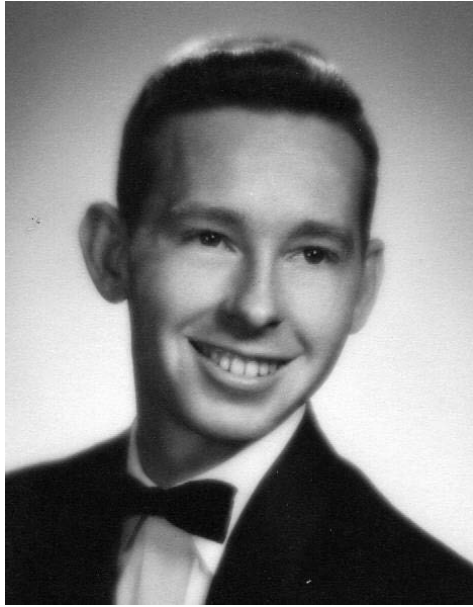
The Academy Beckons; Romance Blooms

Go West, Young Man! July 1956

Winding Down Two Years at Memphis State

Eddie was coming off a lack luster sophomore year at Memphis State College spring of 1956. His courses seemed to have been general in nature— sciences and English with also mechanical drawing class. He had considered engineering as a possible career. Air Force ROTC was required of all able bodied male students the first two years. Eddie had participated and had done reasonably well and would probably have elected to continue it his last two years. But, throughout school his primary objective had been to gain admission to the Air Force Academy. He had pledged Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity his freshman year. His big brother in the fraternity was **Walter Robins** who married **Doris Ann Derryberry**. The only notable things that spring were fraternity affairs and several dates with **Lynne Rushton**.

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Ed as sophomore at MS and brother in SPE fraternity

Sometime that spring of his sophomore year he took qualifying exams again for the Air Force Academy as he had done unsuccessfully the prior year. As it happened, the exams were held at Central High School in Memphis where **David Fleming** was taking scholarship exams for college. After the morning session David took Eddie to his house where his mother treated him to lunch. The announcement of his appointment came out in the Commercial Appeal later in the spring of 1956. It said he was appointed by then U.S. Senator from Tennessee **Albert Gore**. Also receiving an appointment from Memphis was **Thomas Seebode** who was a freshman at Memphis State. **David Fleming** probably was his canoe partner with Eddie's for his swan song excursion with Post 35 on their Black/Current River canoe trip in May. In mid-June while I was camp staff at

Kia Kima, Hardy Arkansas, Ed returned for a weekend visit with some of his buddies on staff, **Warren Schmidt**, **David Fleming**, and **Rex Waddell** among them. They left me at camp and went out partying Saturday night much as he had done two summers before. But this new venture seemed to carry with it a sense of destiny. The step he was about to take and the path he had chosen would carry him to untold adventures and fulfillment. He would take that step and not look back.

New Service Academy in the Rockies

Congress had authorized the establishment of an undergraduate service academy for the Air Force. The site chosen was in Colorado Springs Colorado. Its first class convened the summer of 1955. Officers, many not too recent graduates, from West Point, VMI, the Citadel and Annapolis, would provide the teacher corps along with many well qualified academics in the related fields of aeronautical and emerging space science. One of the Air Force's most respected officers **General Hubert R. Harmon** would be the head of this institution which would be charged with training officers to crew the conventional Air Force as well as manage critical nuclear weaponry and space ventures. Eddie entered the second class to graduate (the class of 1960). Their initial enrollment was 306 of whom 227 graduated four years later. His class' motto was "Nulli Secundus" meaning, "second to none". Both these classes more than fulfilled all expectations for outstanding performance within the Air Force in every area of service over the next several decades as the Air Force became an indispensable arm of US defense in the Cold War era.

Ed as a “Doolie”

This second class admitted to the newly established Air Force Academy was assigned living and training quarters at Lowry Air Force Base in Denver while the permanent site was under construction in Colorado Springs. A grainy news photo seems to capture Eddie in one of the initial formations of newly sworn in cadets. His first communiqué was an almost indecipherable post card. But it reflected recurrent themes of his fourth class year. *“I haven’t got much time and can’t say much. I (am) doing all right but it’s really hard.”* A week later he assures folks back home that he is making the adjustment: *“Well, I’m about to get used to this ungodly life. It’s been rougher than anything I’ve ever done or imagined”*.¹



Ed is Fourth Classman at USAFAcademy

¹ Letter dated July 14, 1956.

The initial routine for the summer consisted of crash courses in military protocol, honor code, indoctrination into military life (room inspections, spit and polish), PE, weapons training, and drill, drill, drill. Early on, the cadets were introduced to military traditions as the cadet wing performed parade review for retiring **General Harmon**.

“General Harmon’s retirement parade was in mid August and we made every effort to really look good. In the event, it POURED rain and everyone was absolutely soaked, but we looked so good that Col Eichelburger cooked a special steak dinner for us and we all got to sit “At Ease” for the first time (other than Sunday after chapel) since July. The steak I had that night still ranks in the top ten meals of my life.”²

Also Ed reported that attendance at Chapel was most meaningful. He gave high marks to both Protestant and Catholic chaplains. His first month’s anniversary was both celebratory and sad. The dining hall commandant presented him with a birthday cake. That same day one of their Air Training Officers, **Lt. George Frederick** was killed in a flame out landing his F-86*. Later that fall the cadet wing would march in review for presentation of Distinguished Flying Cross to Lt. Fredericks’ widow.

From the outset, Ed was consistent in maintaining contact with home, especially making various requests for money, food, and sundry items. A frequent request was his

² Letter dated July 28, 1956.

* The legendary F-86 Saber Jet was the premier fighter of the Korean War. Eddie and I had made many a model of the Saber mostly the hard wood Strombecker variety. However with the on set of new plastic models Eddie would give the devil his due by constructing the Saber’s prime nemesis in that conflict the Russian built MIG 15.

grandmother's fried pies. He persisted in pushing me to complete my Eagle Scout requirements before the Christmas holidays—otherwise he warned he would not come home to visit Christmas. Naturally he inquired about his friends and his former girl friends, some of whom such as **Marca Lee Douglas** were about to get married. **Billy Derryberry** kept in close touch and provided him with editions of the Memphis State newspaper. **Albert Rushton**, now a third classman at West Point, kept in touch as well. Albert sustained a sports related leg injury that fall.

The routines of drill and intermittent hazing by upperclassmen were occasionally interrupted with current movies in town or Air Force vintage films such as “12 O'clock High” or “Command Decision.” The cadets were audience to some of aviation's greats that year including Igor Sikorsky (pioneer in helicopter design and General Eddie Rickenbacker, World War I Ace). From time to time there were opportunities for dates. But as Ed had no local contacts, he chose not to socialize for the time being. Summer was rounded out with a bivouac exercise where the cadets had to pack all their gear, hike into the wild, pitch camp and take field exercises with light weapons. “*It was fun*”, said Ed. His scouting experience, especially Philmont, was paying great dividends.

Eddie's good friend and suite mate at the Academy, **Gordon Flygare**, commented on that summer's training experience:

“During the summer of '56, our “Upperclassmen “ were Air Force Officers or ATOs (Air Training Officers) grads of WP, Annapolis, VMI or the Citadel who were in their mid-twenties and were for the most part First Lieutenants. Now we did do a lot of running and even a bit

From Memphis to DaNang

*of remedial calisthenics but at least in my case there never was anything I'd class as hazing. Our week in the fields east of Denver was wonderful fun as it was my first exposure to the .30 cal machine gun, 60mm mortar and the most fun of all, the 57mm recoilless rifle. Each of us got one round to Training Practice for the 57, and while that contained no real explosive charge, it nonetheless could knock over 55 gal barrels that were our targets. But then I have to admit, I love to soldier."*³



Doubtless, Ed was in his element doing those things he loved so much in Scouting, camping, hunting and the like. He *must* have felt he had landed where he needed to be.

³. G. Flygare's email, dated May 7, 2009.

The Grind of Academics

By mid- September they had commenced regular classes and had been fully integrated into the cadet wing with the third classmen ahead of them. Ed's curriculum consisted, as he said, much of the same things he had taken in second year ROTC: chemistry, English, algebra, and military science. In PE he was taking gymnastics and doing things he never dreamed he could do, e.g. hand stands. All fourth classmen had been given a three hour flight in the summer in the T-29 (the twin engine Convair developed into flying navigation classrooms for Air Cadets). All cadets had been promised an individual orientation flight in a T-33 jet trainer to come later in the fall⁴.

⁴. The Convair had been a popular Strombecker model Eddie and I had constructed a number of times in the early 50s. It was marketed as an American Airlines passenger, the first attempted replacement of the old reliable DC-3s.



Off to Navigation School

Fall sports, football in particular became a part of the cadets' world. Each weekend featured a new opponent they hoped to defeat—but rarely did that second season. But the pep rallies and few away games provided much needed relief from the boredom of strict military life in cloistered barracks. Not far into the fall Ed would sign up for the ski club, intuitively believing it had to be far grander than water skiing. As the weather was still mild he embarked on intramural tennis also and dancing as well. *“About time I learn, don't you think?”*

On the Spiritual Side and the World Context

A chapel bulletin dated September 30, 1956 contains the Cadet Prayer that seems to capture much of the spirit and mindset of the time:

Lord God of Hosts, my life is a stewardship in Thy sight. Grant the light of Thy wisdom to the path of my cadetship. Instill within me an abiding awareness of my responsibility toward Thee, country and fellow-man.

I ask true humility that, knowing self, I may rise above human frailty. I ask courage that I may prove faithful to duty beyond self. I ask unfailing devotion to personal integrity that I may ever remain honorable without compromise.

Make me an effective instrument of Thy peace in the defense of the skies that canopy free nations. Thou hast charted the course of all heavenly bodies. So guide me daily in each thought, word, and deed that I may fulfill Thy will. May these graces abide with me, my loved ones and all who share my country's trust. Amen.”⁵

The fall of 1956 was an unsettling time in world affairs. The Hungarian uprising had been repressed by the Soviets with their typical brutality. And then there was the Suez Crisis when Egypt seized control of the Suez Canal prompting intervention by both France and Great Britain. A wider war was averted and Israel appeared to have strengthened its position as well. But all these developments elicited much interest among the young cadet corps at the Academy. Ed's comment about the matter:

“How do the folks at home feel about the world situation? I think some of our upper classmen would actually like to see us in a war just so they could start

⁵ While Ed never made specific reference to this prayer it seems to resonate in cadence and imagery with the fundamental spiritual and patriotic values he held the rest of his life.

*flying. It's kind of strange to think that someday I might be sitting in the cockpit of a fighter accomplishing a purpose which is noble and right. It's about the same feeling I had when Lt. Frederick was awarded the D.F.C., that idea of the worth of doing something entirely without the thought of selfishness."*⁶

Eddie's perennial sense of humor has always shown through. When mother wrote him to say that his old jeep had been wrecked by its new owner, his reply "*The cotton picking thing didn't know how to act with anyone else but me behind the wheel.*"

There were two more aircraft crashes near base that term. One was an ATO officer whose plane skidded on ice, crashed through a fence, hit an automobile and destroyed the porch on a nearby house. A B-36 bomber crashed on take-off. In neither crash were there any deaths. The hazards of flight were becoming increasingly apparent.

Christmas with Family in Denver

The cadets had a sumptuous Thanksgiving dinner—"as good as food at home, just without the folks", he said. Snow had fallen on campus canceling his T-33 orientation flight. As Christmas holidays approached his attention focused on seeing family again and getting off base for a time of rest and recreation. Mom, Dad, and I arrived around Dec. 21, making a long two day drive stopping over night

⁶ Letter dated November 6, 1956. This passage comes as close to Ed's perspective in 1969 as any words he had every written or spoken.

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in Dodge Kansas. We secured a motel in Denver and on the second day were able to retrieve Eddie through the Christmas holiday. The family of four holed up in the motel room, did some abbreviated Christmas shopping in downtown Denver. The new cadet uniforms—a splendid blue—caused a lot of turned heads. We even put up a small Christmas tree. The family attended chapel services with Eddie. Mom cooked a Christmas dinner there in the motel room. This was his first visit with anyone from home and his first ride in an automobile. I remarked in a letter to Shirley: *“If you could have seen his face when he saw us!”* In short order he was back to classes and we on our return drive some 1200 miles back to Memphis before New Years.



Ed and Mom during Christmas break

—the civvies felt real good!

Gordon's comment about the first year's privations:

*“Christmas was the first time since July that we were allowed any real chance to go off base from Lowry. Before that my recollection is that during the fall semester it was possible to have “An off Base Privilege” with a parent or family member on Sunday afternoon. I recall having dinner with my father and my roommate Jack Harris when dad was in Denver on some business trip.”^{*7}*

The 1957 Presidential Inaugural Parade

Headlining the new calendar year was the presidential inauguration January 21. All the cadets were to attend and march the inaugural parade for Eisenhower's second term. Ed had received word that Albert would not attend, presumably because of an injury. His Christmas gift must have been money to purchase a much-coveted camera which he had in hand before his trip to the inauguration. The brief visit to the nation's capitol—Eddie's first as far as I know—included a formal reception and walking tours of the usual sites. Though his later career would take him all the way around the globe, this was his first trip East of the Appalachian Mountains and first to the East Coast. The cadets had flown to DC in the gigantic C-124s. They

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⁷ Flygare's email, dated May 7, 2009.

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returned to begin final exams for the first term. It would not take long to learn he passed all his courses.

Down the Slopes and Backing the Runners

Skiing would become a really significant interest for Ed the remainder of his academy days. His first run down the mountain would end in a minor injury which took him out of drill and double timing for a couple of days. Then back, good as new. He was incurably hooked on this new sport. For the next three months he would go skiing at least once a week, sometimes twice, and loved every minute of it. **Rosie (Albert Joseph Cler, Jr.)**, his best friend in the cadet wing, became his close partner in crime. Once in a letter home he made another request; a ski sweater and knit cap: *“let Freddie pick it out. ‘Cause his taste runs about like mine.”* One of keenest compliments I ever got from Eddie! Requested items were forthcoming.





Eddie on the slopes

To get an idea of Ed's notions about how arduous the demands of the academy, here is a comment he made regarding an inquiry from a student at Treadwell who had expressed some interest in the new academy; *"tell him that if he doesn't want to be a career officer more than anything else in the world and if he doesn't want to lead a life that's so hard and different that it is impossible to describe, to forget about coming here. (It's not a simple way to get a free education.) Those are just a few words to the wise. Words if heeded by quite a few guys I know that would make life a lot simpler for them."*⁸

Gordon Flygare echoes Eddie's opinion:

"That's really true. I wanted to be a pilot and had not thought through the implications of being a commissioned officer first and having some post commissioning training second. However it is a wonderful place to get an education. I so envy the cadets now, as the courses are so much better and relevant."

⁸ Letter dated February 9, 1957.

The Founder's Passing

Another moving experience was the memorial service for General Harmon. He had retired only the past summer and died shortly thereafter. Protestant Chaplain **Colonel Bennett** conducted the services that Ed said was very moving and inspirational.⁹ General Harmon's influence on the Academy was extensive. A seasoned combat officer as well as the Air Force's first adjutant general, his imprint of a high quality fully professional training program for the Air Force officers was much in evidence. Gordon Flygare's comment about Chaplain Bennett is an indication of the caliber of leadership which the Academy provided for the cadets:

"My recollection is that Chaplain Bennett had been Chief of Chaplains in Washington and as such a General Officer, but became a Colonel just to minister to "these Wonderful Boys." That sort of ignored the facts that as we were 19 or 20 year old men and had all the foibles of 20 year olds and needed to be slapped around when we were out of line and not given too much slack as "Wonderful Boys."

That spring Ed acquired a project that endured his full four years at the academy—managing track. He had managed track at Memphis State when his good friend

⁹ Lt. General Hubert R. Harmon had been the first superintendent of the AFA in 1954. A West Point graduate in 1915 he had flight and command experience in World War I. He was heavily involved in aviation training. At the outbreak of WWII he was a general. He had commands in both the European and Pacific theaters. He had retired in 1953. But was brought out of retirement by the president to spear head establishment of the Air Force Academy.

Billy Derryberry was on the team. With that prior experience he quickly got the single slot as assistant to the third classman manager. It meant a couple of trips away from Denver. But most importantly it meant he could eat at the training table where the mood was more relaxed.

Summer plans were already emerging when course studies would be replaced with more practical field trips as well as navigation training. Best of all, there were no hassles from upperclassmen. With the passing of winter and end of skiing, Ed returned to more tennis and joined the fishing club, looking to do some serious fly fishing in the mountains come summer. Recognition Day was sometime around June 10. Officially his class was no longer “doolies”, but now third classmen, or upperclassmen. They would be dispensers rather than recipients of misery.

Summer Visit with the Hogues

In June 1957 he received a visit from Aunt **Mai Fare** and Uncle **Hugh Hogue** with their children **Hank** and **Adair** as well as his grandmother **Jesse Moss**. Ed commented on driving Hugh’s fancy new car—probably a 1956 Chrysler. It was on this visit that the Hogues took him to a fine restaurant. Always one to make the best out of an opportunity, when asked what he would have, Ed replied, “Can I have anything on the menu?” To which MaiFare and Hugh characteristically assented in the affirmative. This was Eddie’s first taste of lobster.



Ed with Maifare, Grandmother, Hank and Adair

Somewhat belatedly Ed sent Dad a father's day gift and note where he expressed his sentiments about his father: *"I want you to know that you are about the best daddy a guy could have. I owe a great deal of credit to my being here to both you and Mommy. A fact that I'll never forget."*

Field Visits to Air Force Bases West

Ed's first field visit was to Hamilton Air Force Base outside of San Francisco, an Air Defense operation. He also picked up a love for that city. Their next stop was March AFB, a Strategic Air Command Base. They were able to fly on a refueling mission and also ride in a T-33 for a simulated interceptor mission. He recalled, *"Really great Aerobatics and everything!"* Their most impressive visit however was at George AFB in Victorville. This was a

From Memphis to DaNang

Tactical Air Command. It included the latest, fastest, and meanest planes in the air force arsenal: F-100s, RF- 84s, B-57s, B-66s, F-102s, and modified assault craft such as the C-119s, 123s and 130s. After witnessing a dazzling display of firepower and flight power by commands from all over the US, he had this telling comment:

“... we’re all sold on fighter –day. These are the boys that flew the 86s in Korea and 100s now. Two of our instructors on Fighter Day tactics were jet aces”¹⁰. A comment Ed made about the trip was that it offered an opportunity for the cadets to see “the real Air Force”



Eddie spent lots of time in wide variety of aircraft that summer

As the trip wound down Ed was getting eager to complete the summer’s business and get back home for some R & R. Navigation commenced almost immediately upon their return. It started at 3 AM each morning. Their classroom was the T-29. The training included high altitude conditioning. They were also introduced to some of the more mundane aspects of Air Force operations such as

¹⁰ Letter dated June 29, 1957.

The Academy Beckons; Romance Blooms

supply, transport etc. They would also make regular visits to the firing range.



Back home for first visit

First year's end came with a picnic for the cadets up in the mountains. Some had dates, but, not Ed. He chose to savor the beautiful scenery and think about being home for a month. He already had reservations for a flight home July 27. The tentative plans were to fly to Little Rock, or get a military hop there. Mom and Dad would pick him up there, and then go by Hardy to get me at Scout Camp, then off for brief visit to Grandmother Morton in Morrilton, Arkansas.

Earlier that summer Bruce, Ed's uncle on the Morton side, died in Morrilton, Arkansas.

First Leave at Home

There is no documentation about events during that his leave July to August 1957. It was however during this visit that Eddie observed this 21st Birthday. Mom and I worked feverishly to complete a special scrapbook for Ed, entitle something like Ed and His First 21 Years. Regrettably we cannibalized the family albums to prepare that work. Although not all those early pictures of Eddie were dedicated to that endeavor. As I recall that summer was bitter sweet for Eddie. Most of his friends had married and graduated from college that June and were by now scattered to the four winds. As ordered by older brother, I had dutifully completed all requirements for my Eagle Scout award and had successfully passed the board of review. Much to Eddie's satisfaction I would be awarded it later in September. With his approval I decided not to go into advanced ROTC my senior year in high school even though it had great promise for me as I was already a commissioned officer. My career plans were more directed to the civilian than the military.

It was clear by the time Eddie returned to the Academy late the summer of 1957 that he was fully incorporated into the Academy and committed to the Air Force mission as his life's work. Now twenty-one years of age, he was on his own to find his own way. And as far as we at home were concerned, he would fare very, very well.

Chapter Five

Flying by the Seat of the Pants

Three Years to Finish-Drill, Drill, Drill

Third Class Year at Academy 1957-58

First Taste of Pilot Training

On the heels of his summer leave, Ed returned to the Academy at the end of August 1957, for a brief pilot training jaunt at Moore AFB in Mission Texas. It consisted of about ten hours of flying time in the T-34 trainer as well as the T-28 trainer.^{1*} This would be the most flying he would do as a pilot trainee until actual pilot training after graduation. His instructor was **Lt. Jim Bowell** who had over 8000 hours flying time. Ed's description of the experience: "*We learn to take off, land, do stalls, glide and aerobatics (which are the greatest)*". The remainder of Ed's flight time and training during the balance of academy studies was in navigation, which that year incorporated celestial day time and night exercises.

^{1*} Gordon Flygare's annotation on these trainers: "The T-34 is a militarized version of the Beech Debonair and was easy to fly for a beginner. The T-28 on the other hand was a real airplane and although the Air Force version had a 7 cylinder engine and sounded like a John Deere, the Navy version had a 14 cylinder engine and was a real fighter plane."

Third Class Academics

Studies that fall consisted of English, math, physics, psychology, flight studies, and history. With relaxed restrictions on room décor, he requested Mom send some of his Scout and ROTC stuff to dress out his room. He resumed participation with the hunting club and looked forward to some serious skiing once there was sufficient snow. Ed had begun to participate in intramural soccer and by spring had become pretty proficient. Ed's account of the enterprise: "*Our squadron (the 6th) are runts. We played 8th squadron who are giants. We tied 'em. I was leading scorer! Right now I am the leading scorer with two goals. (Believe me; scoring in soccer is harder than in most other sports). By the way I am not bragging or anything but my two goals saved two separate games for us.*"²

Esprit de corps for football had been building among the cadets that fall. They were shaping their traditions of pep rallies and the usual non-sense that accompanies such. With more experience, the Falcons were picking up a win here and there (Occidental College and Detroit University tied Wyoming.) One of the rallies involved the usual mischief of cadets' moving aircraft around on the base. Ed's party was involved in relocating an X-4 when interrupted by security people. Eddie's operative comment: "*Some got caught but not me.*"

One very personal note that fall was a hunting trip before Thanksgiving. One of the Air Training Officers, Captain Shaw, was driving the cadets. When the hunting party drew a blank that day, Captain Shaw invited the cadets to his home for dinner. Ed said it was very nice—

² Letters dated September 2 and November 7, 1957

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especially to see what an officer's home life was like. **Captain Shaw** was held in high esteem by the cadets. He had been a prisoner of war in Korea for 30 months.

In early December Ed was one of five cadets selected from his squadron to attend christening ceremonies for their sponsor, a SAC Wing. It received its first B-52s. They returned the same day to parade for ranking dignitaries—most notably **General Curtis LeMay**. Ed's squadron the 6th was the winning unit in the parade.

Ed's First Christmas Home

Christmas vacation was spent in Memphis that year, method of transport uncertain. Matters in the family at home were picking up as I, the little brother, was applying to college and winding down senior year—having received my Eagle Scout award earlier in September. As flight home military or commercial did not pan out, several cadets with homes Eastward rented a car. **Gordon Flygare** gives this account of the cadets who drove home that Christmas including Eddie:

“Actually there was a group of us who rented a brand new '58 Chevy to drive home for Christmas. That Chevy had the air suspension and was a real handful at speed. We did get stopped in Watonga, OK and the JP asked “Officer, how fast were they going?” The answer was, “90 mph, Your Honor .That’s all.” So, we bailed ourselves out and pressed on.

*We had **Dale Thompson** from Lawton, **Leon Goodson** from Muskogee, **Bert Croft** from Tulsa, and I think a couple of others besides Ed.*

During the Christmas trip home Ed said of his turn driving through the Oklahoma night, that he had seen a white object along the road, and thinking it was a mailbox aimed to miss it by a small amount. When we passed it, he saw that it really was a white face steer, loose on the road. Truly, God was our co-pilot.”³

The New Year 1958

January the New Year classes resumed in earnest as did Ed’s time on the slopes. His PE program that term was judo. He completed his exams successfully with good marks: 86 in calculus, 77 in physics, 82 in psychology, 88 in history and 80 or better in English. The next term he would take an additional English course in Contemporary Drama. His cadet class would begin celestial navigation the last week in January.

Note of Tragedy in the Class As Semester Grinds On

The second instance of tragedy to visit Ed’s class was the death of a classmate **Dick Davis**. He and another cadet had been in the crash of a private plane in late February. Ed’s somewhat fatalistic approach was captured in his comment that if it hadn’t been in an air crash our first class fatality would probably have been in a car wreck. His and his colleagues’ stance on death is at best a conjecture. But it appears that Ed’s view seemed to be shared by many in the Air Force Community then and now. It runs something like this: Death isn’t the ultimate enemy. One’s real nemesis isn’t death. You can’t avoid that. Death is moved by forces

³ Flygare’s email. May 8, 2009.

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over which you have little or no control. Your real enemy however is dishonor, craven selfishness, and cowardice. That code of selfless service—ingrained in the Order of the Arrow in Boy Scouts much earlier—would be Ed’s code to live by and die by.

Track activities were in high gear that spring with a meet at Boulder in early March and a trip planned for West Point in May. Mom, Dad, and I came up for a visit during Spring break, about March 21. We stayed in a motel in Denver and provided some respite off base for Eddie. During the few days Eddie took us to the slopes where he skied. The best trip was a visit to the permanent Academy site at Colorado Springs.

By early April Ed was doing night navigation, shooting the stars with a sextant. On one mission he got a 97 — the best he had ever done.

Ed continued to sample the best and latest of movies (“South Pacific”, “Damn Yankee”) while in drama course he was reading heavy-duty material e.g. “Madame Bovary” and “The Glass Menagerie”.

He did make the track meet at West Point. It is unclear whether he visited with **Albert Rushton**—but hard to imagine he didn’t. His comment on the Point: *“Good to see how the other half live. Personally I think we’ve got it rougher. Particularly, during the 4th class year.”*⁴

He successfully completed his courses that term and received room mate assignment for next year— a good friend **Art Lewis**. Ed was delighted to hear that I had accepted Princeton’s offer and would matriculate there in the fall. *“I think it is the best decision.”* Ed wrote. Without

⁴ Letter dated May 26, 1958.

Eddie's example of having gone far away for studies, I doubt I would have been very eager to go east. But I would go with big brother's full blessings.

Summer Trips-- USA and Abroad

The summer of 1958 included more field trips to military installations, including the Army and Navy. Ed's first trip was to Wright Patterson in AFB in Ohio where the cadets were treated with an air show by the Thunderbirds. They were also guests of the US Army Fort Benning, Georgia. But the real highlight was in Norfolk where they were given a cruise on the SS Ranger, largest aircraft carrier in the fleet. It was here when witnessing take offs and especially landings that Eddie was heard to say (remember this is guy who already had 11 hours flying time in small jet); *"These landings are nothing more than controlled crashes!"*⁵

Belated Father's Day Greeting

As he could not get to a phone on Father's Day and characteristic for Ed, he hadn't made earlier plans, he sent this belated greeting of appreciation to his father 30th of June:

"I know it's rather belated, but I seemed to always be in the wrong place at the right time, but Happy Father's Day, Daddy. I really thought about you on the 15th but I was at Norfolk at the time and couldn't even find a phone to call home. Anyway whether I show it or not or seem to appreciate it I realize all the things you've done. I think I'll

⁵ Letter dated June 18, 1958.

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go a step further. As I stay here longer and get to know more of the guys better & begin to see how lucky I really am in one particular respect, that of the home I was brought up in. I guess we all take things too much for granted and this is probably one of the first to be treated as such. It's hard to realize I'm almost 22. It still seems like I ought to be coming home from school talking about going to Currier for the weekend or that this is Tuesday night and I've got to go to frat meeting. It also seems awfully strange that Freddie is getting ready to go to college next fall. It seems like he should be upstairs working on a model or maybe some Indian costume. What I am trying to get at, is that we're both fast growing up. And I don't think that two guys have had a better start. Though I started this part of the letter on a Father's Day note that I mean everything I've said equally for you, Mommie...I'm thinking about home and you, all three of you."

Recap of Travels to the Continent— Summer of 1958

The cadets were flown to Wiesbaden Germany in Troop Carriers. But due to the crisis in Lebanon at the time, they had to make much of their itinerary by train. They were ushered to Paris, Brussels, Berlin (East and West), Madrid, and London. It included orientation lectures by military and diplomatic people at NATO. He was smitten by the enchanting and pristine beauty of the Bavarian Alps. No doubt he harbored plans to ski some of their slopes. The cadets also had opportunities to site see at the Worlds Fair in Brussels. Typical of our Eddie, was his comment about Paris: *"A place dedicated to separating you from*

your money. A city filled with beautiful women, dressed to kill for.”⁶



Brief Leave at Home end of Summer

The specific time of Ed's leave at home is uncertain. His last letter that August is some big brother advice to me as I was preparing to leave for Princeton later in September. Eddie returned to new quarters at the permanent site in Colorado Springs. Before the summer was over he would qualify as "sharpshooter" with a 38 pistol. All cadets were required to qualify.

⁶ Letter dated August 16, 1958

Ed's Second Class Year at AFA 1958-59

New Quarters in Colorado Springs

Arriving back to the Academy first of September following a very relaxing summer leave at home, Ed was now a second classman. He was in the middle of the spectacle of the news people who were taking pictures as they formed for their first parade with the newly arrived class of '62. The facility was breathtaking in many respects—like something out of Buck Rogers, Eddie said. This was in stark and intentional contrast to the gothic and backward looking architecture of West Point and Annapolis. There was still much work to do. The cadets' rooms were comfortable and classy. He could look out his window and see the Rocky Mountains—“and *believe me, they are beautiful from here*”.

That fall I entered Princeton and my successful acclimation there was a major concern for the big brother too far away to provide any comfort or advice. Ed's studies this term were somewhat the same as before with the addition of a fine arts course. One of his most tenacious courses was Electrical Engineering. Navigation flights resumed as usual. They had flown out of Lowry AFB. But after the move to the new site in Colorado Springs, their navigation flights were from Peterson Field in Colorado Springs.

For past time he took some hikes into nearby mountains with his camera and anticipated time for hunting once the season opened. Football season started in earnest and would turn out to be immensely successful that fall. In

October the cadets would be bussed to Iowa City for the game with Iowa. After beating Colorado State, **Coach Ben Martin** was named Coach of the Year. The Falcons were invited to the Cotton Bowl that year.

On September 26 there was a formal funeral service for **General Harmon**, the first superintendent of the Academy. His ashes were interred at the Academy, the first buried at the Academy Cemetery.

That fall Ed commenced hunting for deer as well as geese. It is unknown how successful were these hunts. But they did take him away from the regimentation of the academy. He loved the scenery and the wild. Skiing would have to wait until after the first of the year. Gordon's recall on the matter of weapon selection for Eddie: *"There was some discussion on what to buy as Ed was left-handed and didn't want a bolt action. Simpler days, we could buy guns as we pleased and load our own ammunition down in the hunting club facilities.*

And of course the M-1s we lived with were fully operational and no one thought the least thing about it." As I recall he settled on a 30-06, which his daughter Elaine still has now in her possession.⁷

Ed was fitted for his class ring that fall. He had much anticipation of the next and final year.

Christmas Holidays—1958

This was our first time together since I had gone off to Princeton. We had much catching up to do—between us as well as our stunted social life. **Rex Waddell** and **Barbara**

⁷ Flygare's email, May 8, 2009.

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Lou Smart were to be married Saturday December 18. Ed most likely was home in time, but weather and car trouble kept me from arriving until Monday. I renewed romantic ties to Shirley. This was when Eddie and **Ann Cook** would begin dating. Finessing transport for their dating that holiday was a real challenge in the Morton household.

Return to the Grind and a Budding Romance January 1959

The new term had become routine. Ed was taking American History in place of Standard English, and Military History in place of Military Science. Skiing had commenced in earnest. The one very distinctly new note was a comment Ed made to his parents about his new find in **Ann Cook**:

“You know. I ... think I have found me a girl. I never said much about Ann the last couple of days I was home—but I’ve found that she is a pretty wonderful girl. I never knew her except as Carlisle’s sister, but it might easily become Carlisle’s being Ann’s brother. Anyway, I just thought I’d let you know something about how things stand as far as I am concerned so if you should see Ann or her mother you won’t be completely in the dark. Maybe it was kind of sudden—but who knows?”¹⁰

The real irony of that relationship was that we had known the Cooks for years and years—at church and in Scouting. In Mom’s eye they were the model family, even if a bit large for typical Protestants—six children all told: **Carlisle**, a year younger than Eddie, and close friend throughout; then **Ann**, and **Barbara**, **Jeanie**, **Margaret**,

¹⁰ Letter to Ed’s parents, dated January 10, 1959.

and little brother **Billie**. Big brother Carlisle had the reputation as a bit of a clown, but was serious about his Scouting and his studies. He went on to Memphis State and was a fraternity brother with Eddie in SPE. Carlisle went on to serve as Air Traffic Controller in Air Force until 1960. He then served with distinction in the civilian agency FAA. Mr. **Cook** (“**Cookie**” as the CC. Sr.), father of the clan was a picture of serenity and hard work—a seasoned foreman at Firestone and steadfast volunteer in all Scouting activities and at church. **Patsy**, the mother, was also near sainthood as far as my mother was concerned. She held down a job as a social worker, and kept all her children in line. But they were always happy and successful. If mother could have picked a girl for her son to marry it would have been one of the Cook girls, especially Ann whom she regarded highly. Ann had actually been more in my social crowd, being only a year ahead of me and a close friend with good high school buddy **Dale McGee** who owned a nifty Chevy. We hung out a lot together at church parties and at school. It was a real surprise to learn she and Eddie had become an item.

Toward the end of the January Ed reported having received a letter from me. He reported to his parents that I had survived my first term exams and was taking respite at our uncle’s in Arlington, Virginia; outside D.C. **Captain Garrett Collins** was actually our half great uncle on Grandmother Moss’s side of the family. He had been a navigator/ bombardier in WW II right behind **Bill Moss**. Garrett had re-enlisted during the Korean War and was badly injured in a crash of his B-50 from Guam AB in about 1952. He returned to D.C. where he received regular medical treatment from Walter Reed Hospital. He offered regular hospitality to me those first two years at Princeton

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and also welcomed **Nannette** and **Wade Grantham** on several visits over the next few years.¹¹

The Second Classmen's field trip that year in early March consisted of a "third lieutenant assignment" which meant the cadets would spend several days on their own in an Air Force Base acting as second lieutenants (presumably the bottom of the heap). Ed's was to be at Chenault AFB in Lake Charles, LA. He made an early request for our parents to bring Ann along following his trip and during brief spring break. Rex Waddell having married off, as well as **Lynn Rushton**, Ed got news that **Mike Moyers** was engaged to a gal from Colorado State, and they would be married in June.

In a letter probably written in early February Ed makes these comments about little brother and his own situation:

"Got letter from Freddie. He sounds as if he's pretty well adjusted now—particularly since his grades turned out well. You know—I kind of think my little brother will do all right. Sometimes I wish I had some of his perseverance in academics—my grades could sure stand being a little better than they have for the last two years. I know they would if I were taking more things that interest me. I just can't seem to get excited about mechanics, thermodynamics, physics, EE etc."

While Eddie characterized his academic performance as somewhat mediocre, in actuality he was doing probably better than the rest of his class. It seems as though both of us did about the same for their undergraduate careers

¹¹ Capt. Collins would die from self-inflicted gun wound ca. 1965, a not untypical outcome for many paraplegics at the time and since.

respectively. Neither of us were honors. Each had shown well in particular areas. Ed's special niche seems to have been English where his marks were always bordering on or within the 90s. He seemed to apply himself vigorously in those areas of great import to his field of endeavor—navigation, flight training etc. But in those disciplines somewhat removed from immediate relevance, such as physics and electrical engineering, he struggled—but always passed. Or in cadet parlance, remained “pro”. ***

A letter to me in mid February did express for the first time some of Ed's reservations about the Air Force as an institution. Perhaps being more cognizant of much of the internal politics of its culture, and certainly of the Academy, he was becoming somewhat jaded in his opinion of the Air Force. Flying, however, continued to be his main passion and would be the reason he would persevere, despite his disappointments and reservations. The Air Force won its independence in 1947. Its sister services, the Army and Navy, had been around since the founding of the Republic a century and a half ago. Hardly a decade old, the Air Force was emerging as one of the major arms of

*** Gordon Flygare's explanation of the system operative at that time at the AFA.” Typical of the military and the Air Force, grades were figured out to the tenths of a percent. All subjects received a numerical grade, and 70.0 was passing and 69.9 was failing. Each evaluation received a grade and a number of “recitations.” One for a daily quiz , three or six for a review, and maybe 30 for the final, etc. Grades were posted weekly and were given as “82.6 for 14 recitations.” This enabled one to know exactly how good or poorly you could do as the total of recitations times the weekly grade showed exactly just how many pro points were available or needed to complete the course and be “proficient.” At some time since they have gone to a letter grading system.”

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national defense. But it had paper thin traditions and very awkward systems of bureaucratic operation. It was easy to discern its weaknesses and foibles, especially if you were, like the cadets at the Academy, on the inside of it.

Spring Break and Spring

Following what must have been a grand spring break that included time with **Ann Cook**, Ed had this to say in a letter to our parents dated March 23, about the budding romance between them:

“You asked in your last letter if I were happy about Ann and I am more than you can imagine. I know it must seem rather sudden to everyone, but it really isn’t. I feel we know each other pretty well. We’ve done a lot of writing since Christmas and that helps a lot. As I said before, she’s the one. I am sure of it.” (March 23)

For any who may have wondered about Ed’s spiritual life during this era of this life, there isn’t much to be said. Always quick to voice skepticism about traditional Christianity, he was not particularly antagonistic. But when home he would go to church. It is not clear what obligations for chapel etc. that cadets, especially upper class would have had at this time. As good an indication as any of his spiritual temper was revealed in his cryptic comment from his letter dated March 30(Easter): *“I spent Easter skiing”*.*

* Flygare’s account of spiritual duties of cadets: Chapel was a mandatory formation for second, third and fourth class cadets. Breakfast was after chapel. Both chapel and Sunday breakfast were optional for first classmen. Generally there were enough first classmen attending to march the other cadets to chapel and breakfast. Since first

Word was received that **Billy Derryberry** was now a commissioned officer in the US Navy. Three months after graduating that June he joined up as an officer to serve for 12 years. Billy liked it just fine. **Joe Weeks** was commissioned an officer in the Air Force and married in June—headed for a SAC base in Kansas.

The track team was doing well that spring and it offered Ed several opportunities for trips away from Colorado Springs. He resumed some serious leisure reading, e.g. “The Big War” and “The Ugly American”.

Summer of His First Class Year 1959

By June 8 exams were over. He had passed and received his class ring—with the class motto etched on it “Nulli Secundus”—second to none. They would brook no grief from the first graduating upper class of ’59. The class of ’59 was gone and he was officially a first classman! Before the new fourth class arrived they had a relaxed schedule: two hours’ navigation training in the AM and two hours water survival in the afternoon.

Apparently with first class rank, and the onslaught of the new fourth class, this was Ed’s first opportunity for real command duties. There were 16 cadets in his element and he took his duties with the utmost seriousness:

“Biggest job I have ever handled. It’s big but I believe that it’s also worthwhile...spent most of the day teaching my element some of the fundamentals of drill and how to

classmen were permitted to be away from the cadet area more than the underclassmen, it was always necessary to ensure that there were enough in the area to conduct the chapel and breakfast formation.

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get their room “squared’ away. They seem like a pretty good bunch of boys. They’ve got a long way to go, but they’re trying and that’s all I can ask.”(Letter dated probably mid-July)

Reflecting the belated policy of inclusiveness in the military establishment as well as higher education in America generally the Air Force Academy admitted its first African Americans in the class of 1963.

“We’ve got three colored boys in the Wing now...One of them is 6’4”. He just came here from Aviation Cadets and from what I hear about him he is going to make a real fine cadet. All of my classmates have a great deal of respect for him”.¹²

Looking to summer leave in August Ed wrote home to me about his recent reading as well as his expectations for the summer:

July 20, Sunday---to Freddie

“Has been really busy ridding herd over new cadets in our unit. Some first classman has to be here all the time. It has been busy but it has also been tremendously interesting. I won’t kid you into thinking that I’m not looking forward to the 30th. I can honestly say I’m looking forward to this leave more than any I’ve had since I came here more than 3 years ago.”

Just finished reading ‘Brave Bull’ by Tom Len. You’re right about the Russian novelists. Dostoyevsky, in my opinion is one of the greatest of all time. Pasternak reminds me of him considerably. They seem awfully heavy

¹² 1960 *Polaris* shows three African Americans in 4th class:, C.V. Bush, W.L. Ebert, and W. H. Sampson.

for the idea of absolution or salvation through suffering. This gets rather morbid and quite dreary, but, still provides tremendously interesting reading and subject for thought.”

“Convey my best to Lynne and Ernest. Do you know when Albert has to report to Ft. Monmouth?

“Hope you have thought of lots of things for us to do while I’m home. See if you can scrounge up a boat and motor and some skis (Look hard). I also like the idea of such things as picnics, swimming, dancing and tennis.”

Tell the folks this letter is for them too.

Still don’t know how am getting home”.

Summer Leave in August

I was working at Light Gas and Water during the week just as Eddie had done his first year at college. Toward the end of summer we did secure the Hogues’ spare automobile and boat with trailer and made our way to Pickwick for a final summer camp out. Ed from his days at the YMCA Camp knew an island where we pitched camp and hung out for several days. We did some fly-fishing, swimming and just boating around enjoying our care-free status as two single guys for one last time. In some ways it was reminiscent of our first campout at Shelby Forrest nine years earlier.

Final Year at AFA 1959-60

As his Academy career was coming to some closure Ed's correspondences that last year were concerned about the matters of procuring an automobile and making arrangement for the wedding to take place June 19. He was winding up his college degree program that would also commission him an officer in the United States Air Force. His academy course will also include completion as a rated navigator. It was understood that all graduates physically qualified would go to primary pilot training for six months. Throughout his four-year program Ed had done more than adequately well. He barely missed the Superintendent's list final semester of his third year. But he chose to take an English Major and conversational German in addition to his regular studies. His last semesters included taking over 21 semester hours, not counting PE. It is no stretch to say Ed was not exactly the usual profile of an academy graduate and professional officer in the US Air Force. Yes, he was fun loving and adventure seeking. He loved sport and the chase of the hunt: firing weapons, driving fast cars, speeding down the slops. All those things he loved. And flying, he loved it even though his taste of it even three years into the academy was relatively slight. But also he was a man of letters--after a sort. He took a major in English. Read avidly. How many graduates of a military academy in 1960 had read and enjoyed Jack Kerouac? He had his doubts about institutions in general and the US Air Force in particular. But he was committed. He would honor that commitment without sacrificing his intelligence and integrity. It would after all be the venue to do what he

cherished most—to fly. He could see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Situation on the Morton Family that Year

As Ed began his senior year, I was starting my sophomore year at Princeton and gradually solidify plans to enter the ministry. Dad seemed to be doing fairly well in his sales job with Diversey Chemicals. To pick up the slack for ever-mounting financial demands from two sons now in college, Mother took on a job as a sales clerk at Goldsmiths in the fall. Later she worked demonstrating for Kraft Foods in Hogue and Knott Supermarket. Finally she took a job as a census worker and television surveyor. Dad's aging aunt **Lois Cooper** in Texarkana, Arkansas, required his attention as her legal guardian. Mom and Dad celebrated their 25 Anniversary on October 28. Typically it would be Ann and Shirley who observed it with gifts in Ed's and Fred's behalf.

Ed had pinned **Ann Cook** in April 1959 and the formal engagement announcement came early in the fall. Ann was now a junior at Memphis State University and had taken a job in a local bakery where she would acquire skill at wedding cake making she used in the family and church down to the present. **Shirley Nolen**, my girlfriend and future wife, worked there with her at the bakery for only a couple of days, but did not acquire Ann's skill for cake making.

The Rest of the Gang

Rex and Barbara Lou Waddell had their first child **Denise** in September 1959 just about the same time Rex

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started a masters in aeronautical engineering at Princeton. They lived in Heightstown, NJ while Rex worked at RCA on weather satellites. **Lynne Rushton** married **Ernest Oust** that July. **Jettie** and **Glenda Bowen** had married the previous summer. **Joe Weeks** had also been married and was commissioned in the Air Force. **Billy Derryberry** was already a naval officer. In June of 1959, **Mike Moyers** married a girl from Colorado State whom he met while doing his masters. **Carlisle** and **Sharon Cook** were married in November 1960 after he had already gone to work with the FAA as an air traffic controller.

It is of interest to note that among our close friends from high school, many had pursued careers in the military: **Albert Rushton** the Army, **Billy Derryberry** and **Robert Templeton** the Navy, **Joe Weeks** and **Carlisle Cook** the Air Force, and **Fred Smith** in the US Marines. Former scout buddy of Ed's were **William Hartley**, 1st Lt. USMC, who was KIA Vietnam 1968. Among those several years younger were **Jim Marquis** a pilot in the Air Force (1963-68) and **Eugene Hastey** who was career Air Force as a navigator; **Wayne Rushton**, Lt. U.S. Army who would be KIA Vietnam 1967; **James Bentley** U.S. Army, KIA Vietnam 1968; and **Gary Williams** who was a jet mechanic with USAF, and **George Perryman** who would be ground officer with USAF in England. **David Fleming**, like Hastey had been a graduate of University of Tennessee AFROTC program and was commissioned a ground officer serving from 1961-63. **Jim Moffat** in my class and Troop/Post 35 served both in the US Marines as well as the US Army in Desert Storm.

Concluding Semesters Senior Year

This was perhaps as demanding as any academic semester Ed had. He was taking conversation German five hours a week as well as a directed study in English literature--21 hours, plus several extra in PE (handball). His required courses included American Government and Foreign Policy, Astronautics, and Law. Navigation training persisted and was demanding if not really very exciting. Some of it was night navigation, involving radar.

Gordon Flygare comments on the place of navigator training in his class at the Academy, next to the last to receive it:

*“We were most fortunate to get the navigation training which greatly broadened our outlook. The Academy is the only place where the government is interested in educating and not just training. In the “Real World” Uncle Sugar wants his pound of flesh for every dollar he spends and except at the academies, things like parachuting or glider flying are quickly cut unless the accountants can be convinced of its necessity. Thus the class of '61 was the last to be graduated as navigators. But now the navigator has been changed into a systems operator and stationed in the back seat of a fighter rather than navigating as Columbus or Magellan did”.*¹³

Although the grind of navigation training sometimes got boring, Ed persisted knowing it was intrinsic to his training. He had no way of knowing at this stage how crucial it would be for his eventual career later on.

¹³ Flygare's email May 8, 2009.

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“I fly tomorrow...I’ve even gotten so that I don’t mind navigation. I guess it’s because I at least know what I am doing when I get into a T-29(trainer)”.¹⁴

In his law course on personal finances he learned that his pay as 2nd Lt. would be around \$412 a month. Later he figured his flight pay of \$100 a month could take care of his car note. His assessment of the pay situation was:

“...on average it’s better than most guys get right out of college”. Total pay per month will be \$455.68 less tax and soc sec of \$43.85 = take home \$412.

“Sell my 22(rifle) for \$45. “As long as I have my .308, I can manage”.

As his mother was want to say about Eddie and his finances: *“Always flying by the seat of his pants”*. Times hadn’t changed much for Eddie.

The Air Force West Point Game October 31

Aside from graduation in June, probably the biggest event in Ed’s academy experience was attending the Air Force West Point game October 31. The highly anticipated match was to take place at Yankee Stadium in New York City. Ed had schemed for much of the fall to arrange a meeting there with me as well as **Albert** and **Charlene Rushton**. **Rex Waddell** showed up too—bringing me to the game that Halloween Saturday. Both teams played to a fierce tie, 13 to 13. Albert and Charlene were not able to visit long following the game. Ed had to report in at 2:30 AM. So Rex, Eddie and I had a somewhat subdued evening

¹⁴ November 17, 1959.

on the town. The “Great White Way” was less than Ed had expected it to be.

That fall at Princeton I by chance ran into **Gerald Garvey**. Garvey was an Academy graduate '59 who was in graduate school at Princeton in the Political Science Department. Ed had given me several books to return to Gerald. Over the next couple of years I had occasional contact with Garvey. He remained at Princeton on the faculty in the Political Science Department.* Ed had a deep respect and admiration of Jerry and hoped we would somehow connect on campus at Princeton.

Christmas Leave 1959

This was my first commercial flight ever, coming home from school Christmas holidays 1959. Ed most likely managed to get a military flight. We shared and competed again for the single family vehicle. Ann and Ed were erstwhile making plans for a wedding in early June—the date as yet to be set.

* Flygare’s comment about Gerald Garvey: “Jerry was a wonderful person and as intelligent as anyone I ever met. He had several years of college before coming to the Academy and was always a role model that I had great respect for. Although graduating “only” 22 of 207, he was one who I thought would go a lot farther than just the Princeton faculty. As a former Honor Representative as a cadet, Jerry was the Board Recorder for the hearings after the first big cheating scandal in the early '60s. I thought that kind of broke his heart as he then left the AF in '64.” Jerry died in April of 2000 after a distinguished career on the Princeton faculty.

The Final Semester and Last Hurrah at AFA

Eddie's course demands this semester were even more daunting than the prior. He had 24 semester hours plus a month's more of navigation. Courses included 19th English Literature, Fine Arts, German, Nuclear Physics, as well as the usual air science courses.

By February 19, he had completed training to be officially a "rated navigator"

"Now am officially rated a navigator—for whatever that's worth. The only thing I feel is relief at having it behind me".¹⁵

As things turned out for Eddie, this would be a somewhat a prophetic comment. Much of his eight years flying in the Air Force was, in effect, primarily that of a navigator.

There would be little skiing and hunting his final semester. He did do both, but not the intensity of prior years. He still loved it. There just wasn't the time. He did follow the track team that season and his picture appears with the team in the yearbook.

The wedding date had been set for June 19, a Sunday afternoon at their home Highland Heights Methodist Church. After very little consideration, the decision was made for an informal wedding. The financial pressures were immense that spring. Ed had already ordered his car—"a black Healy with red interior—real cool" from a dealer in Boulder. He and Ann set about conscripting attendants and groomsmen. But it was hard for Ed since most of his closest friends were by now scattered far and wide.

¹⁵ Letter dated Feb. 19, 1960.

I was issued a command invitation to be at graduation June 9—a sticky wicket since Shirley’s graduation was first of June and my exams were not due to end until some time after the first of June. Over the years it has been a sore point with Shirley that Ed’s graduation took precedence over her graduation. In point of fact, I could not have attended her graduation since my last exam was two days after her graduation. To compensate Mom and Dad had attended her baccalaureate services, and Dad attended her graduation ceremony. Mom purchased a string of pearls for her as a graduation gift (peace offering) from Fred. As the glad day approached Fred managed to parlay a ride from another student and fellow club mate, Wiley Sheldon, who lived in Denver, to arrive one day before Ed’s graduation.

Dad had purchased a new 1960 model Dodge Dart. It had Ed’s approval especially since it came with air conditioning and the latest dash-board transmission. Mom and Dad brought Ann so she could accompany Eddie to the graduation ball and be present for his graduation and commissioning.

Gordon recalled the incident where Ed busted the oil pan on his new Healey. Dad used his persuasive powers to get the dealer to make the necessary repairs without cost:

“The great trauma just then was the engine failure of the Healey. Ed had driven over a lane marker in Denver and realized too late that the oil pan had been holed.”

Wording on Ed’s diploma would include the caption “the second graduating class” and specify his degree as that of Bachelor of Science, conferred by the Superintendent of the Academy **General W. L. Stone**. Characteristic of the newborn institution these diplomas were not sheepskin but rather engraved metallic mounted on sturdy hard wood.

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Ed's standing in class of 156 of 227 was very respectable. His time at Memphis State stood him in good stead, enabled him to skip the Basic English courses and take the advanced English courses.

With degree in hand, 2nd lieutenant bars on his shoulder, orders to report to Spence AB for flight training, and a fetching fiancé on his arm, Ed would hop in his new Healy for the cross country drive back to the Memphis nuptials hardly a fortnight away.

The Wedding

The wedding was held at the Methodist Church Sunday afternoon June 19 around 2:00. Preliminaries were somewhat rushed as there was hardly more than a week from the time the family arrived home until the wedding. Several teas had already been given and the standard groom's dinner for wedding party was held as a cook out at the Mortons'. Even though the wedding was informal, Ann had a full gown. Ed wore his uniform. Ann had a full complement of attendants whereas Ed had to depend on Dad and Fred as most of his friends had scattered far and wide. **Lt. George Perryman** USAF also stood as the only uniformed groomsman with Eddie. The **Rev. Robert H. Horton** officiated at the services. Dad and I stood with Eddie. A reception was held in the church fellowship hall. The couple took a brief honeymoon trip and returned to Memphis to await his assignment to flight training September 1.

From Memphis to DaNang



The wedding party Ed and Ann flanked by Lt. George Perryman, Jettie Bowen, and Fred on right and to left pastor Ed Horton, Billy Derryberry and Wayne Rushton



Flying by the Seat of the Pants



From Memphis to DaNang



Ed and Ann on Honeymoon in Smoky Mountains 1960

Chapter Six

Around the World in a C-130

From Georgia to Evreux Summer of 1960

For the six week respite between the wedding and the move to Moultrie, Georgia, Eddie and Ann remained in Memphis. One weekend the newly married couple took Shirley and me camping to Hardy, Arkansas, where both young ladies were appropriately horrified by water moccasins at the Spring River near their campsite. By end of summer Eddie and Ann had moved to the sultry clime of Southern Georgia for his initial flight training.

Pilot Training and Selection in the Air Services in the 1960s - A Mini-Tutorial

The conventional wisdom emanating from the World War II era was that a young man (no women until the 1980s) who was physically able and visually equipped could make it through pilot training and get his wings. The “right stuff” of fighter pilots however involved a special moxie, combative spirit, and the right physical gifts and attributes. It was on the heels of such notions that countless young men volunteered for flight training in both the U.S. Navy and U.S. Air Force during the post war years.

The cold realities of modern warfare imposed a system of rigorous selection and qualification. **Robert**

McNamara in “The Fog of War” (PBS television) explains that as a systems analyst for **General Curtis LeMay** during World War II, he and other bright brains brought to the enterprise of strategic daylight bombing the hard scrutiny of statistical examination. Much to the chagrin of flight crews, they changed longstanding patterns of crews’ opting out of missions with lame excuses. A more vivid example was seen in the PBS Masterpiece film series “A Piece of Cake” about the RAF flyers in World War II. The over-counting of enemy kills was brought to light under the scrutiny of the squadron’s Oxford educated intelligence officer. He found upon examination of gun cameras and comparative kill results from other squadrons that the pilots’ reports were vastly overestimated, duplicated, and in fact involved fatal firing upon friendly aircraft. In consequence the flyers’ morale was unquestionably dampened, but the squadron’s killing efficiency for the epic Battle of Britain vastly improved. These dynamics of the use of rigorous statistical analysis had a great impact on the conduct of the air war. The conventional wisdom is that such improved air combat methods gave a speedier end to the war against the Nazis as the Reich’s war machine was crippled beyond repair compounded by its own miscalculations and poor strategic planning.

The effects of such analysis and planning worked its way into the post war Air Force and its policies and practices of pilot selection and training. The biblical maxim is relevant: “*Many are called but few are chosen.*”^{*} Eddie’s correspondence his first year at the Academy when the cadets visited Tactical Air Command’s George AFB expressed a prevalent attitude: “...we’re all sold on fighter-

^{*} Matthew 22:14. The words of Jesus about the Parable of the Wedding Banquet.

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day. These are the boys that flew the 86s in Korea and the 100s now. Two of our instructors in Fighter Day tactics were jet aces". This was probably the mindset of most cadets. Realistically each had about as much a chance of becoming fighter pilots as the high school basketball letterman does of getting into the NBA. Pilots, yes. Nearly all the graduates of the first class at the Air Force Academy among those who took pilot training got their wings. The cold reality of the Air Force's pilot requirements began to sink in for Eddie's and subsequent classes from the Academy. Those cold realities, incorporating rigorous behavior principles, meant that only the most talented and skilled got wings to pilot the Air Force's dazzlingly new and fantastically expensive fighters. In a recent conversation with Ann, she did reveal that Ed told her that it had become apparent he would not qualify as a fighter pilot and he had no desire to fly multi-engine planes. This was the basis for his "Self-Initiated Elimination". That would have been consistent with comments he had made earlier on several occasions to his aunt Nannette. He told her he didn't want the safety and welfare of people on a larger plane to be his responsibility.

In this flight program you had "only one shot at pilot training". If you failed to complete flight training successfully, there was no re-do. A candidate could opt for "Self -Initiated Elimination". This meant one could withdraw voluntarily from flight training based on very specific criteria (academic performance, anxiety, flight skills, and medical deficiencies.)¹ Candidates presumably could withdraw without prejudice to their careers as ground officers or flight officers in others skill areas, e.g. navigation.

Gordon Flygare was a roommate of Eddie's the last two years at the Academy. He successfully completed pilot training, flew mostly multi-engine craft and became a pilot instructor for an extended period of time. His assessment of the process was that it was designed to get the most skilled and effective pilots out of the candidate pool on hand. Those who passed depended on the caprices of instructors on the one hand and the personal readiness of the candidates on the other—all factors aside from basic flying skills and readiness to operate these highly sophisticated, swift flying machines. Gordon said somewhat later in his career as a pilot instructor he came to understand that his job was basically that of a purchasing agent for the Air Force—as for a professional ball team. He had limited resources (number of pilot slots and aircraft) and a limited pool of candidates. His job was to get the best deal with the limited resources at hand. The bottom line was not to give wings to a guy who couldn't really fly the aircraft or would be a hazard to himself and others. It made no sense to qualify someone, and then not allow him to fly.

That was the ever-changing calculus of the US Air Force pilot training and selection in the 1960s. It was a fast changing scene in all respects. Technologically the aircraft were evolving rapidly. Pilot training was fast moving to nearly all jet training. During Eddie's tenure at flight school the Air Force phased out civilian contract instruction in favor of all military instructors. It combined basic and primary into one single unit, now called undergraduate pilot training (UPT). The aircraft themselves were changing in terms of weapons sophistication and instrument flight controls. Gordon Flygare's intuitive guess was that pilot training required more than ever the visceral talents of the

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natural athlete—quick reaction time, skilled hand eye coordination, and overall situational awareness.

It was into this caldron that Eddie was cast fresh out of the Academy. He had in his corner a number of hours of preliminary flight time. He was already a rated navigator. He was fully oriented to the culture of the Air Force. He just had to meet those daunting, ever changing, and sometimes capricious demands of pilot training. He was taking a new bride into a strange place, living on a shoestring budget.

Flight Training Commences

By the first of August Ed and Ann were secured in base housing at Spence Air Base in Southern Georgia. Their accommodations were modest at best. But they had good neighbors, another Air Force couple (**Steve and Necia Darick**) who shared their duplex. They outfitted their apartment with furniture borrowed from folks back in Memphis, or otherwise procured from the local economy. The base was clean and well kept. Ann's characteristically lyrical description of the place: "*Spence is a pretty nice base. It's very well kept with a lot of pines and palm trees. All the buildings are white frame and rather military looking. It would be beautiful without the buildings and the bright orange planes*". Both Ed and Ann went through mild culture shock with its deep Southern customs and stringent prejudices all still firmly in place in that Deep South culture.

They were able to make it back home to Memphis before summer's end to see me off to college.



Ed with flight instructors and another student

This phase of pilot training was roughly a four-month program of fundamental flight instruction. The instructors were by-and-large civilian but with ample military flight experience. Ed's class was one of the first to receive almost exclusive training in the jet T-37. Previous classes had been trained in the prop T-28 then transitioned to jets. Ed had some experience in both before arriving at Spence.

Flight training was a demanding proposition. Each day was about twelve hours or longer. Up at 6AM and on the flight line early. Then he had classes in the afternoon on into the early evening. Ed's comment about his experience: *"All I can say about flying is that it is hard work and lots of it, but I'm going to make it, no sweat"*.

Their initial training was done in T-34 which was a light single engine prop with tricycle landing gear. After 27

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hours he would move up to the T-37 jet trainer. He anticipated soloing in the T-34 in mid- September: *“The program is moving along hot and heavy. If all goes well I should solo tomorrow. Keep your fingers crossed. I believe that my instructor is one of the best so if anyone can teach me to how to fly he can”*. The last Friday of October, he had his first flight in the jet T-37. *“It’s quite a change from the 34. It’s much faster and is air-conditioned to boot. It has two engines which makes it safe because you can fly with one engine. There’s one bad feature though. You have to report to the flight line 30 minutes earlier starting tomorrow. That means we must get up at 0515. It’s worse than being a cadet”*. After an initially bad first week, Ed managed to improve toward the end of the week and score “Excellent”. He comments, *“Flying is great. It’s more work than anything I’ve ever before attempted—also more challenging.”*

By the last Friday in October he had soloed in the T-37.* *“It’s a great feeling to be up there alone”*. Into November they began flying at night, which made for an incredibly long workday.

Meanwhile the young couple had acquired a bird—Cicero. This was a real measure of Ed’s devotion to Ann to tolerate a pet other than a dog in their household. For Thanksgiving the Mortons (Mom and Dad) had planned to visit. Ed’s standard 72-hour leaves just didn’t allow enough time for the trip all the way to Memphis.

* Flygare explains: The T-34 is a wonderful little airplane that is similar to the Beechcraft Bonanza or Debonair. It has a tandem “greenhouse” cockpit so you could crank the cockpit open and fly along with the wind rushing by, inches away. The T-37 was the Air Force’s hope to start training in the “All Jet Air Force.”

For me at Princeton that first semester junior year was especially stressful. The long separations from Shirley seemed to cast some doubt as to whether I would complete my degree at Princeton. Even as Ed was thoroughly involved in his own courses of study, on several occasions he wrote me counseling perseverance.

Home for the Holidays 1960

Ed had completed the first phase of flight training by Christmas and he had orders to Texas for Basic Flight Training. Ed and Ann most probably stayed at the Hogues' house over the holidays. This was the Christmas when Fred's British Methodist seminary friends from Princeton Theological Seminary came out to the house for dinner and a visit.

A Brief Stint in Texas Jan.-Feb 1961

Ed's orders were for Basic Flight Training in Texas after the first of the year 1961. Presumably this would have been exclusive training in the jet twin engine T-37. There is not any correspondence in this time period—only references in my letters to Shirley about Ed's resignation from Flight Training in early February. The word was passed on to me from mother. It did not elaborate on the reasons for this decision and subsequent to that time little if any was ever said about it. But privately all in the family and all who had known Ed over the years were troubled at what this must have meant to him to lose the opportunity of what he had dreamt of for years.

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Gordon Flygare went through Basic the same time as Eddie comments on what transpired for their classes that January 1961:

“Due to the closing of the Contract Primary bases in December, our class was shorted about 20 hours in the T-37 and instead given about 50 extra hours in the T-33, which was what was flown in the Basic Flight Course. The T-33 is a real airplane, carrying as much as 813 gallons of fuel and needing a ladder to enter the cockpit. Our class at Webb AFB, Big Spring, Texas was divided into two flights, Green and Jaguar. One flight flew mornings and the other afternoons and then switched the following week. So we saw little of our comrades in the other flight except on the weekend. My flight, Jaguar, was staffed by a bunch of older pilots from the F-86 school at Moody AFB, Georgia that had recently closed. They were a lot more laid back than the younger group of instructors in Green, and for whatever reason, morale in Green ran south and there were several SIEs (Self- Initiated Eliminations) in Green Flight. Over at Jaguar we were all plodding happily along, but before long the rumor was that Green had used up all the attrition planned for 62B. Any further elimination would have to be only after pretty thorough review.

Years later, as an instructor myself, I came to realize that the Instructor Pilot was really the purchasing agent for Air Force pilots. As a T-37 IP, if I soloed a student, chances are he'd go on through the program and spend the rest of his twenties and the start of his thirties flying airplanes and if it wasn't something he could do well, he would waste a large portion of his life. One classmate failed his Captain Check with TWA and spent his airline career as a First Officer and was never in command. A sad situation.”

Eddie had been in Green which experienced the large Self-Initiated Elimination rate.

More than a year later just before my own graduation in late May 1962, I would fortuitously meet up with one of Ed's flight instructors at the Officers' Club at Fort Dix when I met with my good friend **Lt. George Perryman** about to ship out to England.² When introduced to each other as sitting side by side in the bar, I asked if they had known my brother. One was quick to say yes, he had known him. My next question was what happened in his failure to get his wings. The instructor said the reason Ed did not succeed were two fold. In the first place he was among that group of trainees using nearly all jet trainers. Reaction timing was much more exacting than had been the case in prop trainers. Ed's reaction timing was simply not adequate for the challenge. The second reason had to do with the politics of the Air Force command regarding Academy graduates. In the first graduating class, nearly all were given a pass and wings. But the higher echelons of the Force saw this was no longer a prudent policy and imposed as rigorous standards on Academy graduates as all others. Ed got caught in these bureaucratic maneuvers and as a result did not qualify.

My mother made only one comment as I can recall. That was to stress Ed had resigned. He had not "washed out". My university chaplain friend and Air Force Reserve Chaplain at Princeton **Dick Thomas** told me that this made a difference in his long term career for the Air Force—to

² As far as I can recollect, no mention was made of this incident until after Eddie's death in August 1969. While George Perryman was privy to this conversation, I am not aware of his having told anyone about it.

resign on his own rather than reach the point where he was declined qualification. Dick did much to reassure me at the time that the Air Force needed officers of Eddie's caliber even if they weren't qualified to be pilots. With his background as an Academy graduate Eddie would do well and find much fulfillment in it. That was the way I left it, assuming that was indeed Eddie's take on the matter. But deep down I knew somehow his heart was profoundly broken to know he would not pilot one of those fast and sexy jet fighters.

In a conversation with Ann about the matter of Ed's withdrawal from pilot training she said he came home from training one day and said it appeared he would not get to fly fighters. And he would prefer not to fly multi-engine planes, as in the "hauling service".

She told him that was OK with her as long as he was happy.

Orders to France

Ed's orders soon arrived that he would be assigned navigator duty with the 40th Troop Carrier Squadron stationed at Evreux France. They were due to depart for France on Friday April 21. Ed and Ann made a visit home to the folks in Memphis. Then they drove up to New Jersey and stopped in at Princeton to visit Fred for a couple of days before departure. This gave them a chance to visit with **Rex and Barbara Lou Waddell** (also **Denise**). While at Princeton, I treated them to an impressive production of "Dr. Faustus" in the University Chapel. Their visit was tinged with considerable sorrow however as we learned in a phone conversation with my mother that Ann's grandfather William Walter McCarty had passed away April 20. It was

a cold reality of the times and stressed financial circumstances that Ann was unable to return home for the funeral. For many reasons we were troubled and saddened by Ed and Ann's departure for Europe, knowing it would be many months until we saw them again. But they seemed to go with their heads held high. Ed was looking forward to his first real assignment as a flight officer. And Ann was doubtlessly looking forward to the challenges of living in another country and imbibing another language and culture.

Base Evreux 1961-64

Evreux-Fauville Air Base was a major staging area for United States Air Force in Europe during the cold war era. Evreux was a small Normandy French village situated half way between Le Havre and Paris. It had been a popular airstrip in the 30s and became a military base used by the French Air Force, then by the Luftwaffe during World War II. During the Cold War the 322nd Air Division (Combat Cargo) unit of the Air Force was installed at Evreux from 1955 until 1964. Ed was assigned a navigator in the 40th Troop Carrier Squadron which flew the Lockheed C-130 Hercules.

A Primer on the World of the Navigator

It was the policy and practice during Eddie's tenure at the Academy for all graduates to complete Navigator training. That training commenced their first semester and his was completed by his last semester. It involved all aspects of navigation including night navigation. A fellow

navigator, **Lloyd Bryant**, and later ‘backseater’ with Eddie in Vietnam comments on the work of the navigator:

“As for Navigation, it's a very interesting world, and has been both science and art since humans first tried to get from where they were to someplace else they wanted to be (and even before that, our neighbors in the animal world have used their own mysterious and widely varied methods of navigation whether it be birds migrating South and back, to fish returning to spawning grounds, to whales traveling thousands of miles across oceans).

The most basic type of navigation for us humans is called Dead Reckoning (DR) and simply means that when you move in a specific direction at a specific speed for a specific time, you can predict with good accuracy where and when you will reach a destination compared to where and when you started (and it's much more effective if one has an accurate map). It would be nice if real life were that simple, but for those of us who navigate through the air, our life-saving and -sustaining atmosphere throws monkey wrenches into the calculation because it contains wind and weather (obviously the seagoing folks have similar problems, in fact more so, because they have to deal with wind, weather, AND currents, but the idea is the same--there are forces of nature that must be compensated for).

Navigation is immensely more sophisticated today for every human being because of the introduction of the 24-satellite Global Positioning System (GPS) which can tell us via a small and quite inexpensive receiver where we are anywhere in the world within a few feet. When Ed and I studied navigation we learned the centuries-old concepts of celestial navigation (using astronomically predicted

locations of stars, sun, and moon to calculate distance from our own positions (fixes) obtained through observations with a sextant (more sophisticated than those used aboard the Nina and the Pinta and the Santa Maria, but the same concept) and map reading; along with more modern aids such as forward-looking radar (acronym for radio detection and ranging) to look at land features through clouds and darkness, Doppler radar using the concept of Doppler shift to provide accurate speed and heading information over the earth's surface, loran (long-range navigation) signal transmissions to triangulate radio signals received from widely separated known geographic locations, and other radio transmitted information such as Tacan (tactical air navigation) to receive heading and distance information from fixed sites.

These are all generally referred to as "aids to Dead Reckoning" because they provide refinement and confidence in the basic location information and prediction by helping to overcome the problems caused by wind and other atmospheric impediments. The head-in-the-scope and slide rule view you mentioned is not far from the truth. We depended heavily on radar (the scope) and all our manual mathematical calculations were done with a circular slide rule developed specifically for air navigation. I still have mine. All the work was done with pencil and paper (point-to-point flight logs and detailed aerial maps).

Greater accuracy came with the invention of astro-trackers, devices that could lock onto, and provide more accurate and continuously updated info from stars, sun, and moon. As the navigation equipment became more sophisticated and operationally reliable, the job of the navigator became less critical to mission success (I still

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recall when overseas commercial flights carried two navigators), to the point that I'm not sure how much navigator training is offered by the Air Force today. I hope they don't do away with it entirely because the bad guys could do us a lot of damage if they managed to destroy part or all of the GPS satellite grid and we had no one who knew how to accomplish basic self-contained navigation.”⁴

Mission of the 40th Troop Carrier Squadron

Over the next eight years Eddie accumulated 2932 hours of flight time and attained the rating of a senior navigator.⁵ His assignments included three distinctly different but representative craft for the Air Force in the Twentieth Century. His first was the proverbial workhorse Lockheed C-130 Hercules, then the old reliable C-47 (militarized version of Douglas DC-3) twin engine, and finally the F-4 Phantom II jet fighter. His beginning assignment with troop carrier involved ever-changing missions throughout the globe. And in those days maps were not the most reliable and the role of navigator absolutely crucial for success and survival. By the end of his tour with the troop carrier wing, Eddie would be in the more technologically advanced C-130E

Gordon Flygare comments on the capabilities of the Hercules C-130:

“The C-130 is just a wonderful airplane and of course remains in production to this day although there are a lot of changes in details. But the size and performance

⁴ Email from Lloyd Bryant June 28, 2009.

⁵ Officer Career Brief for James Edward Morton , dated September 20, 1969.

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*parameters are just right so it can go most places including some which prudence would avoid. The main feature of the C-130 which endears it to command although not necessarily the crews is its reliability. The piston engine C-124 that I flew could only stay a few days away from professional maintenance, while the C-130 was reliable enough that 30 day, 60 day, 90 day expeditions were possible. These were often places where “engines running offloads” were the prudent choice. I flew the C-130P in Viet Nam with the Air Rescue Service. The P model had new engines like the ones Ed flew and were equipped for air refueling of the Jolly Green Air Rescue”.*⁶*



Eddie on the India Frontier during operations assisting India against China

Their primary mission was to provide carrier and cargo support to NATO forces in Europe. They were also

⁶ Email from Flygare May 8, 2009.

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involved in other humanitarian and United Nations efforts as well in Europe, Africa and India.

Eddie and Ann took accommodations in the local economy. This provided Ann an ideal opportunity to acquire effective use of French, which later she taught back in the States. There were opportunities for travel as well as chances to connect with friends who were also traveling or serving abroad. In August of 1963 they gave **Mr. and Mrs. Rushton** a first class tour of all the major sights in Paris and environs, including the Louvre, Montmartre, Fontainebleau, and many out of the out-of-the-way places ordinary tourists would miss, thanks to Ann's increasing acquisition of the language and culture of the French.

That August after Eddie and Ann had already arrived in France, Shirley and I were married. Ann and Eddie later that fall sent a beautiful wedding present—a painting of Monmartre and Sacre Coeur. It was a magnificent impressionist rendering. The only problem, it arrived with a tear across the center, which we had quickly repaired by a print and paint store in Princeton.

An episode which still remains vivid to this day is late spring of 1962. Ed's squadron had been running re-supply and /or support missions to the NASA tracking teams in Africa for Astronaut Scott Carpenter's second orbital mission. As I was studying for my senior departmental finals, I read a very brief account in the New York Times of several C-130s which had crashed in Africa. I had no way of knowing if it were Eddie or not. Several vain attempts to call the Times proved fruitless. I was hesitant to call home knowing how fragile Mother's health and frame of mind were. I did not want her to know what I knew or feared—or didn't know at that point. For several days, as I

sweated out my finals, I waited, worried, and prayed. Finally after about a week, and having heard nothing, I called home to find out Mother had heard from Eddie and he was fine. However nothing was said about the crash in their squadron.⁷ I never mentioned this to the rest of the family for many years. But it struck me at the time how hazardous these routine missions were and how brave the men who flew them.

General Hansford Johnson, academy graduate of 1959, was a pilot in the 41st Squadron of the same wing at Evreux. In his memoirs he gives vivid accounts of the adventures and misadventures of Eddie's wing as it carried out missions all over the globe. He does provide an account of the incident related above regarding the fatal crash in the spring of 1962:

"I remember the story about the C-130 being lost in Kenya. As I remember the story: on the approach to the Nairobi, Kenya there is a mountain ridge. Apparently, the tower operators thought the C-130 was east on the airfield side of the ridgeline and cleared it to descend into the airfield. Unfortunately the C-130 was west of the ridgeline and flew into it. Although we were in the 41st Squadron, we all felt the great loss."

Only recently did I hear from Gen. Johnson that the fatalities of the 13 crew had been honored as among the first

⁷ Lt.Col. Charles Pisoni, father of a student of mine at Murray State.(Ky.) and assigned to 40th TCS from Evreux told me when we visited him at Eglin AFB some time in the late 70s that in fact two C130s had crashed because of inaccurate topographical maps—they flew into mountains higher than expected.

General Hansford Johnson pilot in the 41st Squadron remembers the incident a bit differently (email August 24, 2009).

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associated with the NASA program. A special plaque bearing the names of all 13 crew was unveiled at Cape Canaveral Air Station in Florida, Oct. 23, 2009.

The June 30, 1963 issue of the Memphis Commercial Appeal featured a special report on Eddie's work. Written by Ruth Field, its headline read "*Memphis Navigator Flies One of Most Dangerous Missions*". This was a Sunday edition, section 4. But it probably got a fairly wide reading. The article included photos of both Eddie and Ann as well as a very picturesque shot of Eddie standing beside two Indian Soldiers and two Himalayan natives. The feature was one of the better articles written about the work of a navigator on such missions. This was during the Indian China War and Ed's unit was part of the aid the US government sent to India on their request. As of the writing of this article Ed had been engaged in three missions bringing supplies to this distant outpost in the Himalayas. He was one of the first to arrive in India with his unit.

“ Morton's job as navigator of the stubby C-130 transports is guiding the cargo laden planes over 23,000 foot peaks of the Himalayan Mountains to Indian border posts facing Red Chinese Troops...the young lieutenant charts the way when the C-130 lifts off the runway at Palam Airfield and heads for the border. As navigator, Morton must guide the plane through the rows of jagged Himalayan peaks, then pinpoint a midget make-shift runway tucked between the snow capped mountains. Danger is everywhere. Morton's slightest miscalculation could bring collision with a jutting summit. Packed full of supplies, the C-130s carry minimum gas loads, so that for Morton to miss the tiny landing strip could mean disaster. Emergency landing strips are non-existent in the desolate region.”

The article also mentioned the role of the 322nd in ferrying emergency supplies to Stanleyville during the troubles in the Congo. It also made reference to their role in supporting tracking and recovery operations for the Mercury NASA project. Ed's unit backstopped **Astronaut Gordon Cooper** in May at an airfield in Nigeria.

A letter from Ann during this time mentions various relief missions such as to Yugoslavia after an earthquake that summer. One mission was to transport a Special Services Unit to Crete in September.

Eddie and Ann took leave in September and traveled to Italy, Austria and eventually to London where they picked up their new car, a Jaguar XKE.

In early November Ann wrote that Ed was flying all over the European continent to Italy and Germany. At one point she did mention he had been home more than usual, which was nice to have him around "*except for the mustache that he has decided to grow which sticks*". Ann mentioned that they were expecting—sometime in April or May about time for them to rotate back to the States.

President Kennedy's assassination November 22, commanded most everyone's attention for several weeks toward the end of the November. Back in the States our mother was in a state of deep grief and conflict. An avid supporter of Kennedy from the outset, she was distraught and disgusted with much of what she saw as disingenuous expressions of loss: "*Most of the people around here hated him so it seems almost hypocrisy to hear them now*". Fred had a somewhat different but also conflicted situation. As student pastor of a rural church in North Carolina, his youth group--with full support from all parents--persisted in having a party the evening of Kennedy's death. Ed's terse

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comment was: “*It’s been a pretty terrible week-end, hasn’t it. I won’t elaborate except to say that I go along with the concerns of opinion that Everyone has suffered a tremendous loss*”.



Ann with beautiful French Alps mountain backdrop

Return to the States March 1964

Ed and Ann left Paris for home on March 3. Their new car was awaiting them in Philadelphia. They drove to Henderson, North Carolina, staying overnight with Shirley and me at our small parsonage there on US Highway One. They met for the first time our son, Gregory now just over a year old. This was perhaps my only time to drive one of Eddie’s cars since the old Jeepster days. I will ever remember the sensation of throttling that Jaguar XKE North of Henderson on US Highway One. The 322nd was rotated to Lockbourne AFB in Columbus Ohio where they reported March 15 after a brief visit with folks back in Memphis.

Elaine, their first child, was born May 30, 1964 in Columbus. Because Ed was away or subject to duty missions that took him from home, Mother and **Adair**

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Hogue (just turned 16) caught their first plane rides each to go to Columbus to be there when Elaine was born. Adair never saw neither Ann nor Elaine while there, but remained in the apartment until returning to Memphis. Mother however stayed there for several weeks assisting Ann and newborn.



*Eddie and Ann make a stop off in North Carolina and visit.
The little one is Greg*

In July 1964 Ed made at least one flight to Pope Air Base/Fort Bragg North Carolina. We all three, Shirley,

Around the World in a C-130

Greg and I drove down for the day to visit and picked up the old stereo Ed was giving us. Eddie provided Greg and me with run through of his C-130. They had been on a mission to Jamaica or Puerto Rico.

Gordon comments that this was probably the last time he had seen Ed when both wound up at Pope AFB about the same time that summer:

“This must have been when I last saw Ed. I was flying the C-124 out of Hunter AFB at Savannah, and we generally had a few airplanes at Pope to jump the paratroopers out of Ft Bragg. Ed was pleased that he had gotten the E-Type before President de Gaulle threw us out of France.”⁸

Mother’s Death November 15, 1964

It was later that summer that mother and dad made their last trip to visit us in North Carolina. Into the fall Mother’s health began to deteriorate so by the first of November she was hospitalized with severe heart failure and not expected to survive. For the first two weeks in November, both Ed and I were there at her bedside until she died on November 15 at age 51. She had been born on March 7, 1913. She was laid to rest in the Moss burial site at Memorial Park near the graves of her father, **Charles Moss**, and her nephew, **Bill Neighbours**, who had died from an accidental gunshot the prior December.

As Ed was unable to get leave to come home Christmas, Dad spent the holidays with us in North Carolina. Because Shirley had a bout with pneumonia, we

⁸ Flygare’s email May 8, 2009.

were unable to make the trip back to Memphis for Christmas.

The next six months was a chaotic readjustment for Dad. Still in deep grief and thoroughly disoriented to handle life without mother, he fell into a whirlwind romantic relationship with a widow in the church, **Valerie McDaniel**. Dad sustained a serious heart attack in February 1965 and made recovery at **Aunt Mai Fare Hogue's** home for the next month. In less than a year since mother had died Dad and Valerie were married. As it happened, Ed was on leave in Memphis and had the unhappy task of moving both households into their new home in Raleigh. Eddie would comment characteristically, *"I never saw so many glass jelly jars in my whole life as what Valerie had"*. I was still in seminary in North Carolina and missed all the fun.

Chapter Seven

Daddy's in Korea

Captain Morton—Assignments Korea and Texas 1965-68

Ed's subsequent postings are uncertain. It appears he completed Squadron Officer School sometime in 1965. He was then assigned the 314th Air Division Recon Branch in Korea for 12 months remote tour (without family from approximately Jan 1, 1966 to Dec. same year). Ann and by then Jamey (born August 3, 1965) remained in Memphis living in a duplex on Highland close to Memphis State where Ann completed her degree in French with teaching certificate.

With Elaine a toddler (a year-and-a-half old) and Ann in school, this was a time they got much closer to **Nannette Grantham** and her girls. **Lanita** was a year-and-a-half—about the same age as Elaine. **Laura** was nine, and **Lisa** was six. Ann was pregnant with first-born boy due in August later that year. Shirley and I were still in North Carolina, making a hard push to complete seminary work by end of summer of 1966 as Grandmother Moss's health was failing.

Meanwhile Ann's family had their own concerns. Her father **Carlisle Sr.** had a stroke and was making slow

recovery with major disabilities incurred. **Carlisle Jr.** had left the Air Force and commenced a career as an air traffic controller working in Oklahoma. Ann's younger sister **Barbara** had married a rising attorney **Jeb Blount**. **Jeannie** and **Margaret** were in college at MSU and little brother **Billy** was pursuing a career as a naturalist working in the Smoky Mountains.

Ed was promoted to Captain prior to his deployment to Korea.¹ His unit was the 314th Air Division (Recon Branch). Not much information is readily available about the unit's mission. It operated out of Osan Air Base close to Seoul and the Northern-most air base. He was flying in a C-47 prop engine—the old Douglas DC-3 outfitted with reconnaissance equipment. From his correspondence it appears that their missions were both intelligence gathering and routine photography for engineering units. A navy reconnaissance plane was shot down by the North Korea in April 1969 and the USS Pueblo was captured by the North Koreans in 1968.

“Flying is interesting as is my job in general.” was his comment about the work at hand. To supplement income and pass the time he had begun teaching courses in the education center (for Airmen wishing to complete their GED). He was teaching American History as well as High School English and Composition. He took up golf while there and continued with his tennis. More than a year ahead he received word that he had been selected for graduate school in Electronic Data Processing. But no word what he would do between the end of his current assignment and beginning of grad school.

¹ Letter postmarked April 7, 1966 has his return address as Captain J.E. Morton, Jr.

Daddy's in Korea

Ed did mention that he sensed from Dad that things were not going well in his new marriage to Valerie. Dad had resigned from Diversey Chemical Corporation and taken a job with the State of Tennessee as a food inspector. There had been much conflict in their new household with Valerie's mother Mrs. Fugua living in.

In order to finish seminary, I had left my student appointment in Henderson N.C. in June. Shirley and I borrowed another student's trailer near the Duke campus and lived as full time students for the summer sessions. Toward the end of the session I learned that my closest friend from high school, **Dan Bowen**, had been killed in a car crash in Mississippi on August 6, 1966. He had completed a two year's service with the Peace Corps in Nyasaland and was in graduate school at UCLA. With the loss of friends and family to violent and untimely death as with **Bill Neighbours** and now Dan Bowen it was sinking in slowly that the world was not an altogether safe place for the young. Less than a year away we would lose Wayne Rushton, the first war casualty among our circle of friends.

Jamey (James Edward III) was born August 3 that year (1965) and from his letter dated September 27 it seems he must have been at home on leave for his son's birth, which would probably have been at the Naval Hospital in Millington. He had been home just about the time I had returned to Memphis to take my first appointment as Associate Pastor at Whitehaven Methodist Church. In the same letter he did make a request that Shirley and I be legal guardians of their two children. *"It is very important that they be raised in a 'Christian' atmosphere. By that I mean the real sense of the word. I want my children to be intellectually sophisticated and at the same time have a true appreciation for the dignity of people. Ann and I both*

feel that you and Shirley are our first choice.” Shirley and I readily agreed but with the hope and prayer that it would never become necessary.

Christmas Homecoming 1966

Ed’s tour ended in December and by all accounts he returned to Memphis to be with the family over the holidays and prior to his next assignment until graduate school at Texas A. & M. in February. It was awkward at best to negotiate the melding of all the families especially with Dad and his situation. It was a somewhat odd situation with both Valerie’s married children (whom Eddie, Ann, Shirley and I had known well growing up) and ours.

Carolyn McDaniel, an aspiring actress, had married a dentist from New York, and **Jimmy McDaniel** married a sweet girl (**Becky**) from college. We all tried to make the best of what was an awkward situation.

College Station and A&M 1967-68

Ed and Ann had a comfortable house with large yard and nice neighbors in College Station TX. Texas A. & M. had an excellent reputation as a university, especially for its military related studies. In some respects it reminded one of VMI or the Citadel—all male with ROTC mandatory. A. & M. had developed extensive courses of study and research programs for the military. Ed had to take some pre-requisite courses in accounting and data processing. The degree program was in the School of Business Administration that had an excellent reputation for its

Daddy's in Korea

computer sciences programs. His degree would be a “Masters of Business Arts with a Computer Science Major”. He anticipated completing the program by June 1968. As the situation in Vietnam was worsening by the day, we were relieved that for a time Ed was out of harm’s way--at least for a year.



The whole family at College Station 1967



Ed at College Station 1967

From Memphis to DaNang

It was the summer of 1967 that we felt the full force of the war as **Captain Wayne Rushton** was killed in Vietnam (Pleiku) July 12, 1967. The younger brother of Albert Rushton, Wayne had gone to the University of the South on scholarship. He played varsity football, and then joined the army as an officer. He trained at Ft. Knox. He had been a company commander and “in country” a relatively brief time before he was killed in combat on July 12. **Captain Charles Springer** US Army was a 1955 Treadwell High graduate killed in Vietnam on November 12, 1967. Also during this time, two of Eddie’s fellow scouts would fall; **Lt. William Hartley**, USMC, August 23, 1966 and **PFC James F. Bentley Jr.**, US Army, February 25, 1968. We would not become aware of these deaths until years later.



James Bentley is third from right seated on front row

Daddy's in Korea



Wayne Rushton



Bill Hartley is first left front row

The next September (1967) when studies were in full swing for Ed, Shirley, Greg and I took our first real vacation, a road trip to Texas that included a visit with Eddie and Ann and their two children Elaine and Jamey. The kids had a grand time together and the whole gang mounted an assault on Six Flags over Texas.

Meanwhile others of Ed's friends were headed down different paths. **Billy Derryberry** was mid-career in the Navy, with postings in the Mediterranean and on the USS Enterprise. **Albert Rushton** was doing staff work at the Pentagon. **Rex Waddell** had left space/satellite development for work with electronic warfare contractor in California. Their second child, **Rex Lee, Jr.**, was born followed by a third, **Michelle**.

Mike Moyers was working with the US Forest Service, living in California. **David Fleming** had completed his reserve officer duty with Air Force and settled down in California. **Warren Schmidt** continued as an airman in the Air Force. **Eugene Hastey** stayed with the Air Force, flying with SAC then highly sensitive reconnaissance in the Blackbird. **Jim Marquis** would fly with the 352nd Tactical Fighter Wing of the Air Force (1963-68) and find his way into flight development for the Navy, then fly as pilot for several airlines.

I received my ordination as a Methodist Minister in September 1967 at Whitehaven Methodist Church. About the same time Eddie completed his degree program at A&M that spring. We had our second child **Dana Cole** born June 24, 1968 in Memphis, (same hospital and doctors as Lisa Marie Presley). Greg went into kindergarten the fall of 1968.

Eddie was looking for his next assignment—SE Asia.

Chapter Eight

Final Tour—DaNang S.E. Asia

1968-69

Upon completion of his Masters at Texas A. & M. the spring of 1968, Ed was assigned training to fly as a navigator, specifically a Weapon Systems Officer in the F-4 Phantom, most probably to go to Southeast Asia. It was a year-long program that included assignments at Homestead AFB Florida for sea survival, Fairchild AFB Spokane, Washington for survival; Davis Montham AFB Tucson, Arizona for 3 months aircraft training; George AFB Victorville, California. 6 months F4-E training, and the Philippines for jungle survival. Ed would be attached to the 4th Tactical Fighter Squadron of the 366th Tactical Fighter Wing, Seventh Air Force, Southeast Asia.

The World of the Weapon Systems Officer

The job of the Weapon Systems Officer who flew backseat in the Phantom was a highly complex and exacting role. Training was rigorous and comparable in many ways to flight training. In the Air Force version of the Phantom the aircraft was dual control for both pilot and navigator to fly the plane. In effect the navigator would fly the plane as if a co-pilot. Originally the backseaters were rated pilots. Ed was among the first generation of navigators trained for the backseat position.

According to one backseater who served with Ed at DaNang the prior arrangement of having rated pilots in the back seat had not gone well for performance in combat situations. The Air Force version of the Phantom was designed for high functioning back seat navigator or Weapon Systems Officer (also called “WSOs, Wiz-ohs and guy-n-back (GIB) ”), a complex orchestration of both front seat pilot and back seat navigator. Highly skilled navigators worked much better on the whole than frustrated pilots riding in the back seat. Navigators were schooled not only in the weapons and radar systems on the craft but maneuver tactics as well. From a layman’s perspective, it was about as close as you could come to being the pilot without being a pilot. Eddie’s experience flying high performance fighters in his earlier training, such as the T-37, proved invaluable in this role. Eddie may have been in a select group of navigators with some prior pilot training recruited by the Air Force for these backseater positions. The Air Force would eventually require all backseaters to log at least ten minutes of “stick time” (at flight controls) per month. Backseaters could fly the craft in formation, even land. But they did not have dual controls for landing gear. They did however have bomb drop controls but not trigger for the nose gun.

Lloyd Bryant, one of the few WSOs like Eddie in the 366th to fly backseat in the F-4Es, comments on “flying the aircraft”. **Jim White** was the pilot who taught Bryant to fly the aircraft and also was the pilot flying with Eddie when he crashed.

“This is when I really got to know Jim White. Most of the frontseaters were good about letting the backseaters fly the aircraft because many of them had been backseat pilots and they knew how important it was for the new

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backseaters to get stick time. My problem was that I was the only navigator in the squadron, so letting me fly was a different ballgame at first. Jim was the first person who really let me fly the aircraft and put up with all the clumsiness of a totally inexperienced person learning to handle the controls of a high performance fighter...We would move out to a loose formation (about 1,500 feet or so) and Jim would let me take the stick. At first I was all over the sky until I could feel how little movement of the stick would cause major changes in altitude, heading, etc. He was very patient, and a good instructor, to the point that I quickly became very comfortable handling the aircraft. As a result of his early efforts on my behalf, I became an excellent "pilot" and eventually flew everything from extremely close formation in bad weather to standard landings and even a formation landing on the wing while I was in Germany. The other frontseaters at DaNang routinely let me fly the aircraft in all situations and trusted me as they trusted backseaters who were rated pilots...The upshot of all this is that although I wasn't selected for pilot training because an optometrist said my left eye was 0.25 diopter from perfect, I was able to fly the Air Force's hottest fighter of the time and became extremely good at it. When I was later reassigned from the squadron I flew with in Germany (the 525th TFS at Bitburg), at my going-away dinner the squadron commander began his remarks about me by saying, 'Tonight we are losing one of our best fighter pilots.' That meant an enormous amount to me, and it all began with Jim White's patient encouragement of my floundering efforts at the controls of the F-4 over South Korea".¹

¹ Lloyd Bryant email dated May 11, 2009.

Final Tour – DaNang S.E.Asia

Every communication received from Eddie during his training for the F-4 gave a similar ring—he loved what he was doing and was absolutely committed to doing it well. In some ways it was redeeming some of his original dreams of flying the fast, furious and sexy fighters he talked about his first year at the academy. In some respects it was liberation from what many a cadet considered the “hauling service” in the Air Force—the multi-engine, slow moving trucks.² But, as he would tell you in a heartbeat, that was the “real Air Force too.” Theirs had been the tireless and often underappreciated hazards of delivering supplies to beleaguered outposts or those suffering from disasters manmade and otherwise.

The role was ideal for Ed given his training, his interests, and his experience. He had primary navigational duties as Weapon Systems Officer on board. His Uncle Bill Moss and step-uncle Garrett Collins had been bombardiers in World War II. The distinctive thing about the Air Force version of the Phantom was it had a second stick for the “backseat driver” who could actually fly the craft. The Navy version had no back seat flight controls. The Phantom was the state of the art craft for fighter-bombers in the Air Force in the late 60s and early 70s. It had distinguished itself as a MIG killer over the skies of Vietnam. Originating with the Navy and solely equipped with missiles (both heat seeking and radar guided) it evolved to one that now boasted internal cannon as well.

For their odyssey in training, Ed and Ann still had their XKE Jaguar. Ann’s mother Patsy Cook accompanied them on their trip west. Their pet cat, Katz, went along and got

² Lt. Col. Grant Wade did relate later classes at the AFA (,1970) would moderate to make their first choice the C-141 transport.

From Memphis to DaNang

pregnant in Washington. Their Weimaraner, Bismarck, was purchased in California. Off went the six of them across country. They visited **Rex** and **Barbara Lou Waddell** at George AFB in Victorville CA.



Ed in XKE about 1968 training for VN

By February of 1969 he had received tentative assignment to DaNang in South Vietnam. He said their training flights were on weekdays, beginning with briefings at 0450. *“It’s pretty interesting from a sporting, if not a human point of view.”* The guy with a heart for the chase loved it!

Brief Respite before Deployment to SEA

By early spring he had completed his training and brought Ann and the children back to Memphis. By Adair’s account Eddie and Ann had asked if they might stay at the **Hogues’** place as they shopped for a house. **MaiFare** and **Hugh** thought they meant their cottage on Coro Lake in

Final Tour – DaNang S.E.Asia

South Shelby County. “No,” Eddie said. “*We want to stay in your upstairs room. This would keep us close to the center of things and family*”. MaiFare and Hugh readily agreed, even though they had never had pets in their house. So the young aviator and family moved with two small children, a cat, and a dog. Both animals and both children would have run of the house. But Bismarck had to be put out on the carport at night. They did purchase a house in Raleigh not far from Dad and Valerie. They were close to the naval base at Millington with PX and hospital services. As it turned out Ed would attend church at Whitehaven the only Sunday I led service and preached just before leaving to take an appointment in June as campus minister at Murray State University (Kentucky).



Ed would arrive at DaNang May 22, 1969. Elaine was almost five years of age and Jamey would be four in August.

Engagement in a Controversial War Vietnam 1964-75

It had hardly ten years before, that the United States concluded the Korean conflict with less than satisfactory results. By that war's end the public had become weary and wary of the value and cost to the effort, the fact of Communist aggression halted at the border of Korea notwithstanding. The seeming drift into another quagmire war in Southeast Asia was not inevitable, but vastly more catastrophic than Korea. It was one of the concluding chapters in the Cold War struggles. But it had its own unique wrinkles and special dynamics. H. R. McMaster's Dereliction of Duty (1997) offers the most compelling account of how we entered this tragic episode in our nation's history while Frankum's Like Rolling Thunder: The Air War in Vietnam, 1964-75, (2005) gives an overview and assessment of the air war. Frankum's appraisal of the air war there and the men who flew missions reveals convincingly that those missions from all air services, Air Force, Navy and United States Marine Corps, were carried out with effectiveness and honor.³

Following World War II the peoples of Indochina in Vietnam sought to win independence from colonial French rule. When the French efforts to maintain their hold failed in 1954 the country of Vietnam was divided along the 17th Parallel into two entities—the North under **Ho Chi Minh** and the Viet Minh insurgency forces and the South under

³ H.R. McMaster, Dereliction of Duty, Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies That Led to Vietnam, 1997, pp. 323-334. Ronald B. Frankum Jr. Like Rolling Thunder: The Air War in Vietnam, 1964-75, 2005, pp.1-66.

the Nguyen emperor of Vietnam, **Bao Dai**. It became the policy of the American government to support the Republic of South Vietnam to resist the threat from the Communist Viet Minh to the North. The Geneva Agreements limited however the type of involvement which the U.S. could render.

It was in the Kennedy administration that a concerted policy of counter -insurgency would be mounted to resist Communist aggression in Southeast Asia—Vietnam being the primary proving ground. The major flaws in this approach were that top military counsel and advice (through the Joint Chiefs of Staff) were by-passed in favor of a small select group close to the president, most notably Secretary of Defense **Robert McNamara**. He was convinced that a new strategy of quantitative analysis and measured conventional military responses (as opposed to massive retaliation or nuclear deterrence) would meet and contain emboldened Soviet threats through-out the globe, as they had done in Cuba. Kennedy had fostered development of counterinsurgency forces. But these forces and the necessary tactics to employ them effectively had not as yet been formed. The instability of the government of South Vietnam and mounting assertiveness of Viet Cong insurgency led the way to clandestine increased military assistance as well as collusion in the murder and replacement of its leader **Diem** during the waning days of Kennedy's administration. By the end of the Kennedy administration, there were nearly 16,000 American military personnel in Vietnam and over a fourth was Air Force personnel.

President Kennedy's assassination left his successor, **Lyndon Johnson**, to resume much the same posture to the situation in Vietnam. He too had been suspicious and

distrustful of military leadership and relied increasingly upon McNamara to contain the growing threat of a communist takeover of South Vietnam. The deteriorating conditions on the ground there prompted Johnson to increase military activity including covert operations into North Vietnam. But neither Congress nor the public were made aware of this gradual escalation of involvement. When he claimed that US naval vessels had been attacked as they patrolled in the waters off North Vietnam (Gulf of Tonkin), President Johnson secured congressional authority to use military force to send reprisal air strikes against North Vietnam. Air Strikes were ordered carried out by Navy jets from US carriers. As the internal situation in South Vietnam deteriorated with multiple coups and the inept waging of the war by the South Vietnamese, the need for greater direct US support became evident if South Vietnam were not to fail and fall into the hands of the Communist North.

By 1965 President Johnson, now elected in his own right, was determined to pass significant legislation (The Great Society) and was concerned that the deteriorating situation in Vietnam would put that legislation in jeopardy. Johnson was concerned about the situation in Vietnam but also about the larger global picture, not the least of which was maintaining the US leadership and prestige in the world without provoking a wider war with China or the Soviet Union. In this complex situation, management of military involvement fell primarily to Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. Relying primarily on non-military leadership and using systems analysis methods, McNamara bypassed regular military leadership in the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Using the method of “graded response” believing the threat of force was preferable to the execution of force, and

vastly underestimating North Vietnam's commitment to wage war and continue insurgency in the South, the President and his key advisors saw the situation worsen through the spring of 1965. As the Viet Cong became more brazen in its attacks in South Vietnam, specifically against US forces, bombing missions (Rolling Thunder) were increased and a keener appreciation emerged as to the vital role of lines of access of personnel and resources through neighboring Cambodia and Laos. However, fear of widening the war by involving Red China restricted actions against the North. These operations were designed to put pressure on the Democratic Republic of Vietnam to stop its infiltrations into the South and its support of the Viet Cong insurgency there. While the missions were militarily successful they did not have the desired political effect of reducing the will of the Viet Cong nor North Vietnam from supporting the insurgency. Certain limits were placed on bombing in North Vietnam such as high-density population centers, neutral shipping, and proximity to the China border. By July 1965 it had become apparent that direct military support in terms of large-scale ground forces (Army and Marines) would be required to forestall disaster in Vietnam. Troop level of US forces grew to 100,000. Both ground and air force units were dispatched to Vietnam and the scale of conflict would escalate over the next eight years. Initial public support would erode as the situation on the ground worsened the next two years. It was in the early stages of the war, 1965 and 1966 that the 366th Tactical Fighter Wing was deployed to Vietnam and Thailand to be used primarily in ground support operations in the South and interdiction operations along Cambodia and Laos.

President Johnson's closest advisors had been convinced that this war would not succeed given the

considerable constraints of the time, and ultimately the best that could be hoped for was to check Communist takeover beyond Vietnam in the rest of Southeast Asia—principally Malaysia and Thailand.

The balance of the Johnson administration would see efforts to win the ground war with larger numbers of ground troops and fierce, though limited, air strikes against North Vietnam and access routes in Cambodia and Laos. But none of these efforts were successful. The Tet Offensive in February of 1968 was effectively repelled by US forces, but the great casualty losses and devastation together with negative US press reporting critically weakened public support for the war. With Johnson's decision not to run for re-election in 1968 and a country less inclined to continue supporting the war, the final and fateful policies were put into place under newly-elected **President Richard Nixon**. This process of gradual but eventual withdrawal was called "Vietnamization". For the period from 1969 to 1973 there would be a gradual withdrawal of ground forces and often increased air activity to compensate for lessened US firepower on the ground.

While the Vietnam air and ground forces were assuming greater self-sufficiency, these were not adequate to meet the increasingly emboldened forces of the North Vietnam and the Viet Cong. The Paris cease-fire in January 1973 effectively ended all US military operations in Vietnam. Two years later in April 1975 the forces of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam would occupy Saigon, ending the war in triumph for North Vietnam.⁴

⁴ Ibid. pp. 149-166.

**The 366th Tactical Fighter Wing
DaNang, Republic of Vietnam**

The 366th Tactical Fighter Wing had been deployed to France in 1962 but then was moved back to the United States. By 1965 it was being outfitted with the new F-4C Phantom II fighter. The 390th Squadron was assigned to DaNang that year and the 391st Squadron to Cam Ranh and Phan Rang air bases in RVN in 1966. Their missions included protective cover flights for bombing raids over North Vietnam as well as ground support of friendly forces. It was in late 1966 that the F-4s, which originally had only missiles, were outfitted with external 20 millimeter Gatlin gun pods. This was due in part to the poor performance of the onboard missiles as well as backseater's lack of familiarity with weapon systems. Rules of Engagement, especially restrictions on hot pursuit, also hampered the kill rate against the North Vietnamese MiGs. The first month the 366th pilots had downed 4 MiGs and within three months a total of 11 were downed—earning a Presidential Unit Citation. In 1969 two squadrons of the more advanced F-4Es were added whose primary duties were aircraft escort and ground attack.³ During the entire conflict the North Vietnamese imported 179 aircraft from China. Among them 137 were downed by the US Air Force and of that number 107.5 were downed by F-4s (including 18 MiGs). During this time the 366th lost 180 killed in action (versus 108 in World War II). Atypical of this war, the 366th in the main had been deployed as an intact unit and functioned that way for several years. Its high performance rating and morale may in no small part be due to the fact of this unit cohesiveness. These men served together for a

longer period of time than the typical combat unit in Vietnam.⁵

Situation on the Ground and in the Air 1969

The Republic of Vietnam was divided into four zones for military and political planning and operations. I Corps was the northern most. It included DaNang and several provinces to the South. It butted up next to Laos to the West. In 1969 there were an estimated total of 78,000 enemy forces including North Vietnamese Regulars and Vietcong insurgency units.⁶ Early in 1969 at the inception of Richard Nixon's presidency, the military's program of Accelerated Pacification Campaign was meeting with significant success.⁷ As the Republic of Vietnam forces, both air and ground were becoming more proficient, American ground troops were being withdrawn steadily that year. However it was primarily the US Marines who backstopped the RVN forces. And US Air Force continued interdiction of supplies via Laos as well as close air support to friendly forces within the area. Much of the conflict in I Corps was sporadic hit-and-run attacks by scattered and vastly under equipped and poorly fed enemy units. It is estimated that of all air combat in the Southeast Asian theater seventy-five percent were ground support, interdiction or search and rescue in South Vietnam.

⁵ 366th Fighter Group Association, History Vietnam, the 366th Tactical Fighter Wing 1962-72.

⁶ I Corps Operations USMC, 2nd Battalion 9th Marines 1969-70; internet web site.

⁷ Frankum, pp. 74-79.

Ed's Assessment of the Struggle

Having been in country nearly six weeks and flown over 40 missions, Ed commented that the war seemed to be winding down.

“It seems as if the pace of the war is slowing down. Of course it may only be another phase”.⁸

“I do think this war is definitely beginning to slow down. We are not flying nearly as much the last month, and I am even caught up pretty well with my extra duties. In fact things are getting so slow that concentrated efforts are being made to get the guys out of here on boondoggle to the Philippines and Thailand. I hope to get to Bangkok next month.”⁹

While the tempo of the war appeared to slow, the march of death and destruction continued and by Ed's assessment the struggle was anything but over. As he had written July 5:

“I'm really pretty fortunate when I consider how the ground troops have it.

*Although the war seems to be slowing, they continue to live with the heat and dust and death. I don't believe that most Americans realize how fortunate they really are, not unless they've been through something like it. I'm sure Hugh (Hogue) and Bill (Moss) and Radford (Neighbours) understood and I'm sure the family who worry and fear for them have understood.** But there are so many others*

⁸ Letter dated July 5, 1969.

⁹ Letter dated July 20, 1969.

** Three uncles in the family served in the Army, Air Force and Navy in WWII.

completely oblivious to the realities of war. We have a flight surgeon that stands duty with us each day, when the med-evac helicopters bring in the wounded Marines and soldiers endlessly—some maimed for life from stepping on a land mine or shot unseen by a sniper a half-a-mile away—or a Vietnamese farmer whose land and crops are burned out by a ‘friendly’ air strike.”

Eddie and I had several intense discussions about the war during his training the previous year. Our brief correspondence that June and July revisited those discussions, especially in light of the fact that I was by this time a United Methodist Campus Minister at Murray State (KY) University where part of my duties included counseling for those seeking conscientious objector status.^{***9} While he had reservations about how poorly the war had been conducted, especially from the diplomatic and political perspectives, there was no doubt as to Eddie’s commitment to its overall purpose. Part of that was his presumption of the “domino theory” regarding Communist Domination in Southeast Asia. The other was his perception of how categorically different the regime to the North was from that of the Republic of Vietnam. The South Vietnam government represented a more principled humane and democratic way of life. He too shared the view of most military professionals of that era that the intricate dance of diplomacy ill-served the overall strategy of

^{***9} I was also involved in ministering to military personnel who staffed the Army ROTC program as well as returning veterans who were students and students enrolled in the ROTC program. The town of Murray was a microcosm of the country as a whole and especially the South in particular—most were in favor of the war effort while a small group of liberal leaning faculty and students were opposed.

winning independence and freedom for South Vietnam. Many of the restrictions and limitations served to give respite to an enemy who had no desire to make peace—only to win at any cost. And it also put military service people at graver risk.

“It is easy to pronounce moral platitudes from an office in Washington or to condemn the war from the steps of a university—but it is something else to be immersed in the filth & horror of war itself. The Viet Cong are ruthless dedicated enemies—and they are committed to their cause at any price—the end justifies the means, which I believe is the real difference between the ‘Good Guys’ & the ‘Bad Guys’. I know I am not making much sense—but neither does this war.”¹⁰

“I have to agree about the futility of war and its mindlessness. The tragedy is that everyone doesn’t recognize this and some people feel that any means justifies the pursuit of their ends. Of course, communism is the prime example today—in this part of the world. I think we have bungled this war terribly and it is almost criminal the way restraints have been placed upon those charged with fighting it—but the reasons for fighting this thing are good. If you accept the premise that communist domination of all Southeast Asia is not a good thing. Of course everyone doesn’t accept this idea, but then maybe they don’t understand exactly what life under an oriental communist regime is likely to be like. Those fighting the ‘establishment’ don’t even know the meaning of the word.”

“I agree that there are tremendously serious problems afflicting our country today, but in spite of everything there

¹⁰ Letter dated July 5, 1969.

is a hell of a lot more right with it than wrong—and there isn't a country around that I have seen during my travels that can hold a candle to it—even as much as I enjoyed Europe, it's not as good.”¹¹

This was no perfect war. Not even a “good war” perhaps. But this was not the time to be debating it, but to pursue it with vigor and courage. That was Eddie’s mindset. One shared by most all of his comrades in the Air Service in those days—and even now among those surviving.

Flygare-- On Flying Combat Missions in SEA

Ed’s roommate from the Academy and by the mid 60’s a seasoned pilot in multi-engine craft had this to say about combat missions of his colleagues who flew as did he in the early years of the air war in Vietnam (email—May 8, 2009) :

“I spent the year of '67 in Thailand and Vietnam. I have been fortunate to have had great supervision and luck in my life and while I’ve volunteered for a lot of foolish things, I was never selected. The C-130 qualification effectively eliminated my chance of getting any other major weapons system qualification as the C-130 was needed everywhere and being already qualified; Uncle Sugar was not disposed to spend money just so I could broaden my resume.

It was hard to tell what is fun and what is dangerous in war. Throughout '67, jet aircraft were pretty well safe in the South, while flying out of Thailand to the north and

¹¹ Ibid.

Final Tour – DaNang S.E.Asia

even in Laos was very dangerous. The foolish targeting rules mandated by Washington enabled enemy gunners to get well stocked up without worrying about being targeted.

The Johnson bombing pauses and lack of interdiction in Laos and Cambodia enabled radar controlled 57mm, the Russian ZPU 23mm and the Strella missile to start showing up in the South by 1968. With ranges of a mile or two, this made it a dangerous environment even for the fast movers.

I spent the first part of '67 at Udorn AB, Thailand. There we covered the strikes going into Laos and North Viet Nam, either in the Hanoi –Haiphong area or down in the panhandle of Vinh or the Mughia Pass. The US never showed much creativity, sending in about 30 aircraft at 9 AM and another 30 at about 2 PM. Since there was such a big logistics tail, the strikes had to be so coordinated that few timing options were available. The Navy was much better situated as they would send in a nibble, nibble, nibble, of a few airplanes at a time all day long. The aircraft carrier was better set up to maintain a constant flow of aircraft all day long.

In the spring of '67 we moved the squadron to Tuy Hoa AB in the East Coast of Vietnam. From then on we ran one mission out over the Gulf of Tonkin and the other up over south central Laos. Our job was only to listen to the strikes and then coordinate rescue forces if and when needed. We would generate tankers, fighters with ordnance and finally the Jolly Green helicopters and the Sandy A-1s that would provide protection for the helicopters.

Finally, I have to admit that the closest I ever got to combat was getting an Air Medal on the back of (his decorated but highly controversial commander) Col Jack Broughton's Silver Star orders."

Daily Operations for the 366th

Fellow navigator, then Captain, **Grant Wade** has provided a most vivid description of the tempo and missions of the 366th Fighter Wing at DaNang.¹² The Wing was equipped with the older model F-4s but when Ed arrived he was assigned the new F-4Es which had ‘factory equipped’ cannon as well as more advanced electronic gadgetry—the ones the brass wanted to fly to get their hours. The missions were primarily ground support for friendly forces in I Corps as well as those interdiction runs into nearby Laos. They also flew escort or cover for reconnaissance missions.

Lt. Col. Grant Wade describes the overall operations of the 4thTFS of the 366th:

“The squadrons flew an intense schedule every day. These missions were part of the daily 7th Air Force plan. Targets were assigned by the 7th and tasked daily via our wing operations and intelligence shops. These were assigned as flights usually of two but sometimes four aircraft. These missions were briefed by the intelligence team and planned by the aircrew leading the mission.

Then the lead crew gave its own briefing on how they expected the mission to be conducted. Each flight was assigned a call-sign some of which I recall were, Sullivan, Manner, Stinger(later co-opted by a newly arrived AC-119K unit), Dacron, etc. cetera. Each flight started engines

¹² Lt. Col. Grant Wade USAF retired. Unpublished Memoirs of his 20 Years in the USAF. Part III, Here There Are Tigers, Chapter Five, “A Trusty Chum”, pp. 244-51.

Final Tour – DaNang S.E.Asia

and took off according to the 7th Air Force schedule worked out the previous day

“Also each squadron was tasked to provide crews to sit air-to-ground alert. Three flights of two during the day and two flights of two at night. Each squadron had its own alert shack near its aircraft parking area. The alert crews had no time for all that pre-flight planning and briefing; they had to be off the ground within fifteen minutes of being told to fly. That’s why new guys were not immediately assigned to the alert shack. They usually lacked experience in both carrying and delivering full loads of ordnance in the procedures unique to our operations, and to the geography and weather of Indo-China.

“These alert flights always carried the call-sign “Gunfighter” followed by the numbers assigned. Day alerts were the more intense of the two shifts. The limit of three scrambles/sorties and the standby crews were called up. The targets were usually enemy forces in contact with “friendlies”. On alert missions, often there was an added sense of urgency. This was especially heightened if the mission was either a SAR (trying to rescue a downed crew) or a Prairies Fire Emergency (a covert in deep trouble in the land where there was no war and there was no peace [Laos] or some remote hilltop surrounded and outnumbered). In these cases we frequently disregarded our standard operating procedure minimum release above the ground and attacked in weather that most would refuse to attempt an instrument approach to their home base. To our usual Forward Air Controllers (FAC), the 366th alert force was known simply as “Gunfighters”.

“Because of the experience and competence demanded of the crews allowed to sit alert [not all were so allowed]

From Memphis to DaNang

and because of the extent to which they were willing to press their attack, the Gunfighters were held in high regard by experienced FACs who were not loose with their praise and quick to criticize.”



Ed at Squadron Ops

Wade goes on to relate a letter in his possession from a Marine FAC, Captain J.R. Morgan who wrote praising the high performance of Gunfighter crews on missions May 20 who delivery on target in support of the Ninth Marine Regiment on Operation Apache Snow. Even though there were Marine flights of A-6s, as a follow-up, the FAC reported unequivocally: *“Gunfighters 1 and 2 professional and expert ordnance delivery completely destroyed the entire target...Neither of the other flights attained the*

accuracy with their ordnance that the Gunfighters displayed.”¹³

They worked in concert with Forward Air Controllers flying light aircraft that coordinated strikes with friendly forces on the ground—mostly US Marines and South Vietnamese Army (ARVN). Gunfighter Alert duty meant standing ready to fly on request for ground support of friendly forces, three missions a day, seven days a week. Crew assignments were based on fitting the more experienced with less experienced. According to all accounts flight crews were highly motivated to do these missions as they were “*saving lives of our guys on the ground*”. According to both Bryant and Wade the concluding scenes of the movie “Platoon” is fairly accurate in depicting how these close air support missions saved friendly troops who were being overrun.

General Hansford Johnson, USAF retired, was a graduate of the first class at the Air Force Academy and its first to make General. He was a pilot both at Evreux with Eddie and also a Forward Air Controller in Vietnam about a year prior to Ed’s assignment there. This is his comment about that hazardous but essential duty that made close air support effective.

“I was a Forward Air Controller (FAC), flew a small Cessna (the O-2A), and directed artillery and fighters in the DMZ and Southern Laos in 1967-68. Our headquarters for the 20th Tactical Air Support Squadron was at DaNang, but I did not spend much time there. I was

¹³ Letter from Lt. Col Grant Wade dated June 19, 2009. Statement from Capt. J.R. Morgan, USMC, Seaworthy 98-9, concerning events of 20 May 1969.

very fortunate to never lose a fighter. Many were hit, including me, but we never lost any flyer."¹⁴

In a chance meeting of a US Marine at Wal-Mart the week before Easter 2009, I asked the Marine (whose bumper sticker attested to his being a USMC Vietnam vet) if he happened to serve in 1969 and near DaNang. He replied quickly that he had served from January until about March 1969 in Quang Nam Province. He was wounded while interrogating a villager in the pacification program in I Corps. I told him about Eddie flying ground support for Marines there. He remarked: *"Those guys were a godsend! They'd come in over the three tops, drop their napalm and 500 lbs bombs, then do a victory roll afterward"*.¹⁵ Fellow navigator **Lloyd Bryant** echoed that saying; *"In the ensuing years I have met any number of ground troops who expressed these same sentiments and wanted to thank me on behalf of those of us who saved their lives"*.

Lloyd Bryant makes this comment on the inherent hazards of combat flying;

"An unavoidable factor in everything that happens to us is 'chance' or 'luck' or 'fortune,' however one wants to describe it. Even the most highly skilled, most aggressive, most determined flyer can't avoid the kind of random events that can and do occur--engine failure, a mid-air collision, a bird strike. Flying airplanes is a dangerous profession, especially in combat...Once when a group of us were visiting another base and having dinner at the Officers Club, we met some Army tank drivers and were talking

¹⁴ Email from Gen. Hansford Johnson USAF retired, April 26, 2009.

¹⁵ Lt Col Wade says these victory rolls were few and far between and only when requested by ground forces and authorized by the FAC.

about what we do as flyers. One of them said at some point, 'I wouldn't do what you guys do for anything in the world.' I asked why. He said, 'Because when you are up there, everyone on the ground can see you and take a shot at you and you can't hide.' He said he would much rather have the safety of his tank or even get behind a tree. I reminded him that although they can see us, we are moving about 500 miles per hour, so it's pretty hard to hit us because one would have to lead the aircraft quite a bit, and the way we move the aircraft around (it's called 'jinking') it is extremely difficult to determine an aim point. I include all this to illustrate the role played by 'chance' anytime an aircraft is hit when flying so low and so fast.... What people in general don't understand is the complexity of the aircraft and weapon systems, and especially the confusion and rapid pace, of airborne combat. There are so many critical things to think about all at once. As a superbly trained flight crew flying the Air Force's hottest fighter, their strongest motivation is to take the battle to the enemy."

"Being aggressively on the offense is the way you win wars. Delivering weapons on target has to take precedence over one's concern for one's own safety, or a lot of lives and perhaps the war could be lost. I've had people ask me about concern for ground fire or missiles or whatever when one is in combat, and I simply tell them that you can't dwell on those sorts of things or you will be useless to the effort. You want to be aware of it and take whatever precautions you can, but those are limited when you are trying to put a bomb on a target... Gunfighter Alert was our way of providing rapid-response air strikes when our troops were

pinned down and we had to get in there to save them. To me, it was our most important mission”¹⁶



Duties Other Than Flight for Ed

It was expected that all aircrews, certainly the more senior captains like Ed, would assume administrative duties within the squadron organization. Grant Wade gently led him, because Ed enjoyed the challenges of writing, to accept the position as Squadron Awards and Decorations Officer. Grant’s description of the task: “Submission of recommendations for a decoration was the sole responsibility of the squadron Awards & Decorations Officer who prepared the papers, secured the approval of

¹⁶ Email from Lloyd Bryant May 11, 2009.

the Squadron Commander and then started the papers up the chain of command. Most awards resulted from recommendations sent to the squadron by forward air controllers or troops on the ground. However, this was not foolproof. All aircrew were required to file an after action report in the squadron if anything unusual or unusually hairy transpired on a mission. A few officers (and everyone knew who) were always trying to get awards written up for their missions. However most of the aircrew had to be driven to file their reports and the man who badgered them was the A & D officer who read all the post mission intelligence reports. Doing so required a daily visit to the intelligence shop and sifting through thousands of words.” Grant said Ed “*liked the job and was not only conscientious but also aggressive in making crews fill in the reports... Ed’s files looked like a textbook from the IG (inspector general)*”. The memo mentioned previously by Marine Capt. Morgan appears to have been one of the first such reports Ed actually processed—and who in short time would emulate.

Otherwise the routine was on and off alert status with 12-hours shifts. Only six crews were on day alert duty. The rest of the squadron flew scheduled missions. During that time crews were subject to be scrambled for missions. When not on alert there were the administrative duties and then what relaxing one could do at the China Beach Resort called DaNang. Occasionally maintenance flights would take crews to the US air bases in Thailand where there were real restaurants and actual places to shop. But as yet Ed had not been there. The base theater featured the latest and some of the best old movies. He said he had seen “Gone with the Wind” for the fourth time. And he had revisited a favorite from his youth, “High Noon”. He read everything

he could get his hands on as was his custom, and preferably fiction. Just the week before, I had mailed him a paperback copy of Nikos Kazantzakis' Report to Greco. Briefly he roomed with a classmate from the academy, Captain **John Michael Loh**, who was a pilot and later Wing Weapons Officer.

Final Mission August 3, 1969

Gunfighter crews had been on regular call for support activity in the DMZ to the North of DaNang as well as to other areas in I Corps. Since the beginning of the year, 18 personnel from all units of the 366th had been lost in action, but so far none from Ed's Fourth Squadron. Since Ed's arrival at the Wing there had been five airmen and four officers lost. Most prescient of Ed's final flight was the fateful flight of two Gunfighters from the 421st Squadron, **Lt. Douglas Burk** and **Capt. Tommie Callies**.¹⁶ Callies was a '65 graduate of the AFA. He had already completed 100 missions over North Vietnam as a backseater in 1967 and had been upgraded to Aircraft Commander.

Lt. Col. Grant Wade described the situation in his memoirs. Gunfighters Seven and Eight were flying close air support of Marines on August 2. The FAC warned of lethal ground fire. Typically that was from the light 23 mm Anti Air Artillery pieces. The most vicious was the 17 mm ZPU known, unaffectionately, as 'Zeep'. They were easily portable and often carried explosive shells. Flying low Gunfighter Eight released its second load of napalm when hit by enemy ground fire. *"They went straight into the*

¹⁶ Grant pp. 245 ff.

ground. No chutes-no beepers. The ground wins every time” This was Callies’ and Burk’s plane.

As Ed was by now an experienced crew member, he was assigned to fly with **Captain James White**, newly assigned to the Fourth Squadron. He had been a backseater in the F-4 two years earlier flying in Vietnam and had completed training as Aircraft Commander. This was his first time on Alert status and probably the first time to fly with Ed.

The next day August 3 was a fatal replay and similar situation for Ed Morton and Jim White. They had been scrambled to support US Marines engaged with about two companies of the North Vietnamese Army in Quang Nam Province about 50 miles South of DaNang. He and his pilot were in Gunfighter Four with Gunfighter Three as lead. When Three made his first pass, the forward air controller observed he was taking ground fire. Four rolled in to attack with their napalm and were hit after successfully releasing their ordnance on target. The aircraft lost control and crashed into the ground just beyond the target before either Ed or his pilot could eject. Both were killed instantly.¹⁷ The plane still had on board two canisters of napalm and eight 500 lbs bombs that exploded instantly.

Friendly forces were able to recover the bodies within hours after the crash.

Grant’s succinct comment was *“Jim White was one of our better pilots; I liked flying with him. Ed Morton was a*

¹⁷. Letter from Brig. General John Roberts, USAF Commander, dated 4 August 1969 to James E. Morton Sr.

*Zoomie**. He was a good navigator and popular with the pilots. We were friends”.

Corroborating that assessment is **Gen. Mike Loh** who at that time was an experienced fighter pilot and later a four star general, who had this to say about Eddie:

“I do recall classmate Eddie Morton at DaNang. I was finishing up my tour there in 1969 when he was assigned... We roomed together for a short period. I was the Wing weapons and tactics officer at the time of his death, and he was assigned to the 4th Tactical Fighter Squadron... As a navigator, he was a backseater in the F-4E Phantom. He was flying a close air support mission in South Vietnam about 50 nautical miles south of DaNang, supporting our Army that was engaged in close combat... They were both killed on that sortie by enemy fire while they were dropping bombs at very low altitude on enemy positions. The airplane hit the ground shortly after they were hit and both were killed instantly. There was no time to eject. The wing lost several aircraft during similar close air support missions in this area during that time... Eddie was a great guy who was a dedicated backseater. Although new to the F-4, he learned his duties fast and was a great asset to the front-seat pilot.”¹⁸

The following day, August 4, Wade returned from a flight to Thailand he received word that the Wing had lost two more, Vice Wing Commander **Colonel George Dorman** and navigator **Lt. Roy Bratten**.

* An AFA graduate..

¹⁸ Email for Gen. Michael Loh, USAF retired, April 25, 2009.

Fly Over Farewell to the Fallen

At the base chapel a memorial service was held for the six officers from the Squadron lost that week and one forward air controller. The Wing Commander General Roberts since ordered higher releases for bomb drops (from 400 to 700 ft) and authorized a fly over “missing man” formation. General Roberts was at the service along with most of the Wing brass. Lt Lloyd Bryant missed the service as he was on a mission at the time. According to Grant the formation was good as it flew over. The chaplain led the men singing the Air Force Hymn “Lord, Guard and Guide the Men Who Fly”.

**Lord, guard and guide the men who fly
Through the great spaces of the sky;
Be with them traversing through the air
In darkening storms or sunshine fair**

**Thou, who dost keep with tender might
The balanced birds in all their flight
Thou of the tempered winds be near
That, having thee, they know no fear**

**Control their minds with instinct fit
What time, adventuring, they quit
That firm security of land;
Grant steadfast eye and skillful hand**

**Aloft in solitude of space,
Uphold them with Thy saving grace.
O God, protect the men who fly
Through lonely ways beneath the sky**

No greater praise of Ed's extraordinary performance and sacrifice than those which come from fellow navigator **Grant Wade**:

"It is high enough praise for Ed Morton that this (Gunfighter Alert) was the sort of mission he was flying when he died. His grandchildren can deservedly be proud of Ed not only for who he was but also for how well he did it. Ed was a Gunfighter".¹⁹

Notification to Family of Fallen Flyer

It was Sunday afternoon Memphis time around 5:00 PM that I received a call from the **Rev. Jack Henton**, that Eddie had been killed. Jack Henton was pastor at the nearby United Methodist Church in Bartlett and also a reserve Army Chaplain. As such he participated in notification teams for casualties in the Memphis area. My father was most likely notified by his pastor from the Raleigh Methodist Church. As Ed had requested he be buried at the Academy cemetery, arrangements were made accordingly. That service would take place ten days later August 13, 1000 hours in the Chapel. Presiding over the service would be USAF Chaplain **Major Alston R. Chace**. A fly-over with missing man formation would take place at the burial site. It was a typical Methodist service led by **Chaplain Chace** an Episcopalian conversant with our ways. The most memorable part of the service apart from the breathtaking esthetics of the new chapel was the recitation of the most familiar poem "High Flight" which had been much publicized on television by the Air Force.

¹⁹ Letter dated June 19, 2009.

This immortal poem, written by young RAF John Gillespie Magee, Jr. pilot in 1941 reads,

**Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds—and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of—wheeled and soared and
swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung
My eager craft through the footless halls of air.
Up, up the long, delirious, burning blue
I've topped the windswept heights with easy grace
Where never lark, or even eagle flew.
And while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.**

A memorial service was held in Memphis at Ed's home church Highland Heights Methodist simultaneous with the services in Colorado Springs. The **Rev. Charles Stewart**, pastor of the home church conducted the services in Memphis.

A reception was held for friends and family who had been in attendance. Major **Albert Rushton**, US Army, escorted the body from Dover to the Academy for the services. Ed's widow **Ann Morton** was there as well as both children, **Elaine** age 5 and **James Edward III** (Jamey) who observed his fourth birthday the day of Ed's death. Also in attendance were his father **James Sr.**, my wife **Shirley**, myself, **Mr. & Mrs. Carlisle Cook Sr.** and **Jeannie Cook, Barbara Cook Blount**, aunt **Nannette**

Grantham; and **MaiFare and Hugh Hogue, Hank & Judy Hogue**, Ann's cousin **Mrs. Mary (Charles) Springer**. Long time friends **Barbara Lou and Rex Waddell** also attended. Several of Ed's classmates from the Academy served as pall bearers. Among them were **Cpts. Anthony Long, Sid Newcomb, Don Stevens, Neil Defisanti, Charles Hart, and Maj. Anthony Bursnich**.

It was in March the following year that decorations were presented to Ed's widow Ann at the Blytheville AFB, Arkansas. Those included the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal (Third thru the Fifth Oak Leaf Cluster), and the Purple Heart.

Postscript to Casualties in Vietnam- Ed and Others

Eddie was the third known graduate from Treadwell High School in Memphis to have been a casualty in Vietnam and the third of his scouting associates to have fallen in that struggle. The first from Treadwell had been **Capt. Wayne Rushton**, US Army. He had been killed July 12, 1967 in Pleiku. Wayne had been an acting company commander whose unit was on reconnaissance mission when overrun by North Vietnamese Forces. Wayne was a graduate of the class of 1959 THS. He was little brother to Albert Rushton, Ed's life-long friend. The second was **Capt. Charles Springer**, U.S. Army, who was KIA November 12, 1967. He was THS class of 1955. His wife **Mary Springer** was Ann's cousin and THS class of 1956. **Captain William Lee Hartley**, U.S. Marine Corps was killed in Action, Thua Thien RVN August 23, 1966. Bill was an Eagle Scout in Troop 35 with Eddie and had been at Scout summer camp on several summers as well as

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on summer camp staff briefly with him in 1954. **PFC James E. Bentley Jr.**, US Army, was killed in action, Gia Dinh RVN February 25, 1968 (Tet Offensive). James had been in Troop 35 and Post 35 with Eddie and on at least one canoe trip down the Black River in 1954 or '55. A Life Scout, he transferred from Treadwell High School his sophomore year to Overton High School and into Troop 53. Another loss in this era was that of **Captain George Donald Henry, Jr.** He was younger brother of dear friends Melissa and Sid Easley in Murray, KY. He was '65 AFA graduate and on board a CH-3 helicopter which crashed from enemy fire in Ubon, Thailand August 13, 1970.

Lloyd Bryant has this to say about **Captain James White**, the pilot who died with Ed:

“He was serving his second combat tour in the F-4. He had served a tour as a backseater in the 1967 timeframe also at DaNang, had gone through the upgrade training for the front seat, and had to serve a second tour as a result. It was the normal path for most of the backseat pilots until the Air Force decided to put navs in the backseat. A number of our front seat pilots on this assignment had gone through the same process.”

“After we arrived at DaNang, Jim and I didn't fly together as much at first because... the new people were scheduled right away to fly with people who had already flown combat until we completed the 366 TFW check-out requirements. I'm sure that's why Ed and Jim were scheduled together for Jim's first Gunfighter Alert. I had already flown it a couple of times, but I was still a "new guy" when it came to that particular mission.

”Here is some other info about Jim that you may not know. After we got to DaNang, he told me this story. As

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an F-4 backseat pilot he had been assigned to DaNang in the 1967-68 timeframe and had been involved in an incident where his flight of four aircraft had been directed by ground control against a village that turned out to be friendly, and a number of South Vietnamese had been killed. The mistake was totally the fault of the controllers who guided the aircraft to the target, and Jim's flight leader had no way to know ahead of time they were being misdirected.

"There was a lot of upset and bad information afterward; and although it was determined that they weren't responsible, in typical bureaucratic style all eight of the flyers involved were assigned to ground duties for the rest of their time at DaNang. Jim was assigned as the Club Officer at the DaNang Officers' Open Mess (there was an earlier book titled "Doom Pussy"--I guess the title came from using the name of the club as an acronym--about the people flying B-57 Canberras out of DaNang in the 1965 time frame).

"It was so cute when we first arrived and walked into the club. Many of the waitresses who had worked with him were still there, and they all came running up to greet him with "Captain Jeem, Captain Jeem."

"This is interesting. As I write this, I am experiencing a very clear recollection of the night he told me about the accidental bombing. We were walking across an open field area on our way to the dining hall, and the sky was beautifully clear with stars everywhere (he was on my left--I can almost see him). I could hear in his voice the pain that he still carried about the deaths of those villagers, and although it may not have been his fault, he felt a strong

personal responsibility for what happened. That's the kind of person he was.

"He seemed to have a strong affinity for the Vietnamese people and all they had suffered and were suffering. I believe that in a different time and place he might have been the kind of person to do missionary work with disadvantaged people."¹⁹

Eddie's name is on the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington D.C., Panel 20W Line Number: 092. His name is on the virtual wall web site which you can access at www.thevirtualwall.org.

Ed's roommate **A.J. Cler** from the Academy and class secretary provides this information about seven other fallen classmates:

"...those in our Class who were killed in the Vietnam War: Val Bourque in a C-123 crash; Bob Davis in an A-26 crash in Laos; Mike Hyde in F-100 crash; Jabbo McCain in a helicopter crash on Okinawa; Jim Mills in an A-4 crash; your brother in the F4E; Sam Waters in an F-105; Reed Waugh in a C-123."²⁰

This war had taken a toll on the family and all our friends as no prior war had ever done. Our experience from World War II was to have had only one casualty, that of Uncle **Billy Moss** whose plane was shot down over Austria and who was a prisoner of war for eight months until his release in May 1945. The losses in Vietnam seemed harder to take than those of earlier wars—at least for this family.

¹⁹ Email from Lloyd Bryant, June 7, 2009.

²⁰ Email from A.J. Cler, AFA 1960 Class Secretary, May 12, 2009.

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And we would nurture our grief in a strange and hostile land which little prized or appreciated the extraordinary sacrifice of Eddie and some fifty thousand other young men and women in that distant and mysterious place called Vietnam. Ann would courageously commit herself to the task of raising young Elaine and Jamey as she taught French which she had learned with fluency while they served at Evreux France. Few if any of the rest of the family would serve in the armed forces. Bill Moss died age 74 in 1995. And as his ashes were interred in a brief graveside service which I conducted, it was mentioned that three from the Moss clan had served as Air Force navigator/bombardier—Bill Moss, Garrett Collin, and Ed Morton. And all three had been casualties of their respective conflicts, in Europe, in Korea, and in Vietnam. Each had born a great sacrifice. And so we continue to grieve their loss and give thanks for their noble service.

Chapter Nine

Final Tribute to Major James Edward Morton

Statistics and awards are a poor summary of one's life accomplishments. But not to mention them is unforgivable in this setting. In his eight years as an officer in the US Air Force Ed logged 2932 hours of flight time. Of that 136 were in an F-4 Phantom. He had a total of 146 jet hours and was rated a senior navigator. By the time he had been at DaNang for six weeks he had already completed 43 missions over South Vietnam and 4 over North Vietnam. In his career up to that point he had been awarded six Air Medals: three for classified reconnaissance missions in South Korea and three Air Force Expeditionary Force Medals for the Berlin Airlift and the Congo Airlift. Even though a highly competent navigator in his own right, Eddie would have cherished no accolade more than that of those of the pilots who flew with him in the 366th that considered backseaters as "fighter pilots" and a "Gunfighter".

With all my years in ministry and after preparing countless funeral and memorial homilies stand me in poor stead for this task. To capture in a few words the spirit, character and sacrifice of a beloved brother's all too brief thirty-three years is most daunting. In recalling so many memories from childhood what stands out are those times

when Eddie embodied such a spirit of adventure, playfulness, and protection. Always ready for a good time, he could shift gears and get serious when circumstances warranted. I remember an instance when we were very young. I must have been about eight and Eddie eleven. Somehow we became entangled in a dispute with some locals at the Treadwell playground during the summer. The dispute escalated to throwing rocks at each other. Not the biggest, fastest or strongest but always at the ready, Eddie took the fight to our opponents, routing them into retreat but sustaining a slight cut to his forehead--to him a badge of honor and courage. I will always remember him in that vein--deftly taking me on my first scout overnight camp out. Still etched in my memory is the smell of the bacon and eggs he cooked over a campfire for our breakfast that weekend at Shelby Forest.

Eddie was never one to engage religion in a conventional way. He tolerated our traditional form of Christianity. His second year at the Academy he spent Easter Sunday (April 1, 1959) on the slopes skiing. His own true religion was as yet unfound. He followed the spiritual guide of our mother whose credo was to seek out your own path to truth. Eddie's penchant for values and principles followed the more robust of the Boy Scouts and especially the Order of the Arrow and its mythical code based on James Fennimore Cooper's Last of the Mohicans. The credo of the Order of the Arrow was "the brotherhood of cheerful service" and to be "unselfish in service and devotion to the welfare of others". It emulated the heroic example of courageous sacrifice of the Lenapi warriors chronicled in Cooper's epic novel. Perhaps the best statement of Ed's spiritual and character loyalties were expressed in the Cadet Prayer from the Academy:

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Lord God of Hosts, my life is a stewardship in Thy sight. Grant the light of thy wisdom to the path of my cadetship. Instill within me an abiding awareness of my responsibility toward Thee, country and fellow man. I ask true humility that, knowing myself, I may rise above human frailty. I ask courage that I may prove faithful to duty beyond self. I ask unfailing devotion to personal integrity that I may ever remain honorable without compromise.

Make me an effective instrument of Thy peace in the defense of the skies that canopy free nations. Thou hast charted the course of all the heavenly bodies. So guide me daily in each thought, word and deed that I may fulfill Thy will. May these graces abide with me, my loved ones and all who share my country's trust. Amen.

That prayer comes as close as any to understanding Eddie's spirituality. I have no worries whatever about his eternal resting-place. Though obviously on the periphery of the community of saints, I believe, he is clearly to be included. He is to be counted among the many dedicated men and women who served in that era and since to protect the "skies that canopy free nations". As many in the Air Force in that era, his duties covered a wide spectrum—the exacting hazards of Troop Carriers to the far reaches of the globe to the humdrum of surveillance and reconnaissance over the troubled borders of the Koreas. Eventually he was called upon for the fast and furious demands of tactical fighters in Vietnam. It was not exactly the dream he had as a beginning cadet at the Academy ten years earlier. Who of us achieves those pristine dreams unaltered by circumstances? But it was not far off either. There he was, a member of a highly functioning combat team, flying in

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effect co-pilot in one of the world's fastest most lethal fighters. And he was doing a noble and good work—much the big brother protecting the younger and more vulnerable. He was absolutely committed to the mission. He was thoroughly competent and respected among his peers. Eddie would have asked for nothing more. He gave his full measure of devotion doing what he always wanted to do and for a cause as noble as is possible to find in this world. And this world is a better place because of the way Eddie spent his span of nearly thirty-three years among us.

Fred Morton,
Bartlett TN.
August 19, 2009

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Fred Morton