

PAT CALL'S MEMORIES

(These are the memories of Mary Marjorie Hiller Call, known as "Pat.")

I began writing this memoir before my daughter Cindi's first trip to Italy in 1993. At that time I looked through (my husband) Jerry's old letters to find out where he was in Italy during World War II. I decided to use them to try to provide a story of our lives during the war. I'm now trying to incorporate information from them into this story and, occasionally, quote from them. As I worked, I found I also needed to give you a little background from my early years—but it is sketchy.

My paternal grandfather, Charles Hiller, was an extremely intelligent man—a lawyer, a landowner, and a banker in northeast Missouri in the late 1800's. He had three brothers. Each one built a home in Kahoka. My grandfather's house was two stories plus a wrap-around screened porch as well as a full sized attic—a beautiful home. He also built a stable for his horse, and a woodshed. Each home occupied one-quarter of a city block. Three were on the same block and the fourth a block south—possibly to be a little farther from the stable? The stable disappeared in the 1920's when cars replaced the horses, but none of those houses ever had a garage. The woodshed survived for years—when my cousins, Hiram and Chuck, my sister Helen, my brother Pete and I were little, we used it for a playhouse and spent hours "building things" with the wood.

My grandfather's brothers soon moved away. Great Uncle Hiram became a world traveler, so Uncle Stuart moved into his house with his wife, Osee, and two sons, Hiram and Chuck. Great Uncle Sam sold his house and moved to Keokuk. Great Uncle George died in his thirties so Uncle Bob bought the house he built.

Grandfather had six sons. His eldest child, Harrod Hiller (my father) was a very smart, quiet, hardworking man. He went to Beloit, Wisconsin, for his college years and met Sarah Nelle Tower there. They were married in December, 1914. I think they must have graduated in 1913. Mother taught in a country school outside Beloit for a year after she graduated, "commuting" by horse and buggy or sleigh, depending on the weather. Daddy returned to Kahoka to work in the Exchange Bank that his father and Uncle Sam had organized. He was the cashier when I was a child and the President at the time of his death. He built a home kitty-corner from Grandfather's house. It had four bedrooms, two baths, a large screened-in sleeping porch, a full basement with a shower (we moved down there when it got hot before school let out), a screened-in front porch AND a garage, although he didn't yet own a car.

Like Jerry, he loved his wife and children above all else and tried all his life to give his wife whatever she wanted. What my mother wanted was "the best" for her children. They had a baby boy in 1916 who only lived for a week, then Helen in 1917, me in 1919 and, six years later, the long-awaited boy that they named Harrod Tower Hiller. However, my Grandfather Hiller named him "Pete" and, in spite of Mother's wish that he be called "Tower," his nickname stuck. (Hmmm! No wonder she would never call me Pat.)

Mother “home-schooled” Helen and me. Helen started public school in fourth grade at the age of 6. I started in second grade at the age of six, the year Pete was born.

I was a skinny kid (imagine it!) and I worried about my baby brother whenever he cried. This was hard on Mother, so the following year (1926) she sent me to Arizona for the winter. Hiram’s dad (my Uncle Stuart) was an invalid. He had severe arthritis, supposedly caused by a football injury in college. He and his family plus Grandmother Hiller spent their winters in Tucson. I went with them that year. When I came home in the spring, I brought Helen a horned toad. I thought it was a great souvenir but she didn’t like it at all! She told me so for years!

The bank and the farms were very successful and, until the depression years, we were a wealthy family. My Grandmother Hiller died in 1930 and my Grandfather soon moved in with Uncle Bob. Uncle Stuart died in 1933 and Aunt Osee changed her house into two apartments. She lived in one and rented the other. Uncle Bob also divided his, so his sister-in-law could live in the upstairs apartment. Grandfather’s home was also made into two apartments. Uncle Craig and wife lived upstairs and when Daddy had his first stroke in 1942, he and Mother sold their home and moved into the downstairs. Pete was home then, too, a junior in high school.

Since Missouri is hot and humid in the summer, Daddy would move us all to the nicest farm—called the “home farm”—as soon as school was out. It was more “primitive” than our house in town. It did have indoor plumbing but no electricity—we used gas lamps and kerosene stoves. We had a kerosene stove in town, too, but electric lights. Mother must have enjoyed it though. I know she loved the garden.

I had two jobs at the farm. One was OK: I helped Mother in the garden. The other was to care for the chickens. I didn’t like it because the hens always pecked at me when I tried to gather the eggs. I wasn’t too comfortable around the livestock, either. Helen took to horses “like a duck to water.” Her summer job (which she loved) was to ride her pony, usually bareback, to carry water to the farm and harvest workers. For some reason, neither of us ever helped around the house—in town or on the farm. Mother always had a “hired girl” so all we were expected to do was keep our rooms “tidy.”

In addition to the heat in Missouri, Mother suffered with asthma, beginning in August, so she and us “kids” spent that month in northern Wisconsin or Washington. Daddy rarely went with us, although he sometimes joined us for a few days in Wisconsin. I think all three of us learned to drive on the trips across country in the ’30s.

Mother was very talented, musically. She played piano and organ and also had a lovely alto voice. She taught Helen piano and I took lessons for a little while from “Aunt Letha,” a friend who lived next door.

The man who was the high school music teacher when I started school played a xylophone. Since I could read music, Mother talked him into teaching me to play it. Although I had to stand on a box to reach the keys, I thought that was much more interesting than piano. At the age of seven I was playing bells with the high school band in the summer in a weekly concert in the city park and, in August, at the County Fair. When I was 9 or 10, the music teacher “moved on.” Mother then found a music professor at Beloit College and started taking me to Beloit (about 300 miles away) for

marimba lessons once a month. This continued until 1933 when—at fourteen—I was part of a 100-piece marimba band playing at the Chicago World's Fair. Along the way, I also learned to play all the instruments in the percussion section.

In 1932, Helen went to Beloit College after her graduation from high school (as valedictorian at age 15). Although Mother's parents still lived in Beloit, Helen had a very difficult time, socially, because she was so much younger than the other students. She joined a sorority but then dropped out of school halfway through her second year because she was so homesick.

The same year, Mother grew concerned about a relationship I was developing with a local boy, Jim. He wasn't especially "cute" but he was a good dancer. About the only recreation available in town was to meet your friends at the only restaurant—also the high school hangout—which had a small dance floor and jukebox in the back. I went with my girl friends but danced with Jim and he often walked me home. Some of the kids in my class who had large enough living rooms would occasionally have a party with a phonograph supplying music and the rugs rolled back for dancing. That was fine with my folks, but Mother didn't like me to invite Jim. She didn't approve of him because he was from a poor family and his father had an alcohol problem.

In 1934, at the depth of the depression, Mother chose to solve her problems by enrolling Helen and I in Stephens College. It was a private girls' school that offered two years of high school and two years of college. (I acquired my nickname at Stephens. For some unknown reason, I and my two closest friends there all had nicknames: Geraldine became Dodi; Ethel became Peanut; and I became Pat.) I graduated from high school there, attended the University of Wisconsin, Madison, for one year, and then transferred to the University of Washington for three years, getting a BA degree in Sociology in June, 1940. (I had developed my interest in Sociology while at Stephens, so transferred to Washington when the Sociology Department at Wisconsin lost their National Accreditation.) Helen, meanwhile, attended Stephens one year and then transferred to the University of Missouri for a year. Both schools were located in Columbia—about 150 miles from home. When I finished at Stephens, Helen moved to St. Louis and went to work.

In the fall of my senior year at Washington, a Civilian Flight Training Course was offered to 40 students—four (10%) of whom would be women. The total cost was \$8—for insurance! On a dare, I applied and was accepted! I had never been *near* an airplane so it was quite a challenge. We attended ground school at night for six weeks and finally started flying the end of November. The class was split among four instructors, with one girl in each group. Two groups learned to fly at Boeing Field and the other two—including me—at Lake Union. By the end of May, I had logged 23 hours and passed the test for a Private Pilot's license. (It rained in Seattle then, too — always, it seemed, on the days I was scheduled to fly!) I didn't learn to land the plane on land, only water.

My closest friend at the University was Polly Carskadden from Oak Harbor, then a community of about 300 people on Whidbey Island. She dropped out at the end of the year (1938) but I often spent weekends at her home, dating her double cousin, Sterling ("Mike") Kennedy, and Polly dated my cousin, Hiram, who was working as an auto mechanic in Olympia at that time. (Sterling's and Polly's mothers were sisters; their fathers were brothers = "double cousins".)

Once I moved to Washington to go to school in 1937, I didn't return to Missouri except for Christmas vacations. I did see family every summer, though, when Mother and Pete came to visit her sister, Ruth Yantis, and family in Olympia.

I worked as a clerk in the Secretary of State's office in Olympia the first summer. The next two summers I worked at Paradise Inn at Mount Rainier, waiting tables in the dining room days and playing my marimba with a small "combo" evenings in the Inn. I earned the magnificent sum of \$14 a month, plus tips, uniforms, room and board!! But it was a great way to spend the summer months of 1939 and 1940. I worked weekends in the winter, also, and did a little skiing.

After my graduation in June, I returned to Mount Rainier. Mother and Pete came out for my graduation and stayed the summer in a rental cabin at Paradise.

Olympia was always my home base in Washington because my mother's sister and her family lived there. We had visited so many summers during my growing-up years that I had many friends there. For that reason, I stayed in Olympia when Mother went home that year. I found a room in a rooming house on Capitol Way and attended business school to gain secretarial skills. (My long-time friend) Bill Bannister lived in that same rooming house. He was fresh out of law school and working in the Attorney General's office. I went to Mount Rainier skiing with him a few times that winter.

After an abbreviated job search, I had found I could make more money as a secretary than I could in the social work field without a master's degree, so I started working at the State Tax Commission about the first of January, 1941.

Shortly after I started work, I met "Tommy" Thompson, who was a file clerk there. She lived in Twining's boardinghouse on Water Street. Her roommate had recently moved away so she suggested I move in with her. I took her up on it. She was a giddy, fun-loving blonde and we got along very well. We lived together nearly a year after I moved there around the first of March.

As part of the buildup of Armed Forces in 1940, President Roosevelt called up the National Guard in September for one year of active duty. That included Jerry, who had joined the Idaho National Guard when he moved to Pocatello in 1938 to attend college. They were sent to Camp Murray, a permanent National Guard camp across the highway from Fort Lewis, about 15 miles from Olympia.

We met in April of 1941. He was 20; I was 21. At the end of March, Tommy and another girl from our boarding house, Lou Workosky, met Jerry and his buddy, Pat Gordon, outside a store in Olympia. They made a date for two weeks later—the four of them. In the interim, Lou had second thoughts. She was engaged to a fellow in her hometown and decided she should not go. Tommy, however, was determined to go out with this fun-loving Irishman, so she talked me into going in Lou's place. She did not inform Pat and Jerry of the change in plans, however. When they arrived at the boardinghouse, Tommy and I came down to the living room and her explanation/introduction consisted of eight words: "Pat, this is Jerry....Jerry, this is Pat." She and Pat Gordon went out the door. Jerry and I followed them, Jerry wondering who I was and where Lou was???

Sometime in the next week or two, we did get that sorted out. But, even that first evening, we discovered how much we enjoyed each other's company. He didn't learn much else about me, though. He didn't know where I lived or what I did or anything, really, except my first name. The next day he wrote a letter, addressed to "Pat, c/o Tommy Thompson" and asked for another date. I immediately responded, telling him I lived in Olympia, was Tommy's roommate, and would be happy to go out with him, Tommy, and Pat on May 10—which was nearly a month away. (It must have been after their next payday or their next available eight-hour pass.)

When he got my letter, he called me and made a date for the following evening, probably on a 3- or 4-hour pass, which was a lot easier to come by. This was the first of many dates I remember. It didn't allow us much time together though, by the time he rode a bus in to Olympia and walked up to Twining's. Sometimes we could catch a movie. Most evenings we just went to a tavern for a glass of wine and dancing. (Historical note: In those days, there were no cocktail lounges or nightclubs or USOs where we could go dancing. Mixed drinks could not be legally served to the public in Washington. The only alcohol served in the state was 3.2% beer and wine in taverns.)

Twining's was a unique boardinghouse—more like a college dorm—three floors—and the top two were occupied by about 8 to 10 women in their early twenties. On the first floor was a large living room, dining room and kitchen. Behind that was a long one-story wing where Mr. and Mrs. Twining lived, plus rooms for 4 or 5 young men. A few men lived elsewhere and boarded there—and everybody worked at the Statehouse. One of the boarders had been a pianist in a band. He could play *anything* by ear, as could I, so soon after I moved there, I brought my marimba in from Yantis's so he and I could play after dinner several evenings a week. That developed into a Saturday night party where people brought their friends, rolled back the rug, and danced or sang to our music. Mr. and Mrs. T. encouraged all this—they were really special landlord/chaperones.

In order to avoid riding the bus, Jerry and Pat often brought along a third fellow who had a car. Tommy and I would provide a date for that person from the large supply of single girls there at Twinings or our office. Sometimes this worked out really well and good friendships would develop; other times—it didn't. Also, occasionally, Hiram would provide transportation back to camp. If he did, I usually rode along. I'd rather have Hiram providing transportation than try to find a date for some of the fellows that they brought in!

What we did on our dates was pretty much determined by where we were in the month — how close it was to payday. At this time, a Private in the Army made \$21 a month. Pat Gordon was a Corporal; Jerry just a Sergeant at this point. They couldn't either of them have been making more than \$40 a month. (The enlisted ranks at that time were Private, Private First Class, Corporal, Sergeant, Staff Sergeant, Tech Sergeant, Master Sergeant.)

Jerry quickly moved ahead of me into a serious, caring relationship and I remember being quite relieved when he left for six weeks of Army maneuvers in California toward the end of May. I needed some time to sort things out, date some other people, and do other things.

The night before he left we were together and he asked to take my wings (some little ones I had been given when I got my private pilot's license the year before). Also, he overstayed his pass—was

AWOL for three hours. As a result, he was confined to camp the entire six weeks they were in California! That wasn't the only low blow the army dealt him that month. President Roosevelt declared a national emergency. That meant that the National Guardsmen who had been activated in September for ONE YEAR would be on active duty until the emergency was over. To Jerry at the time, it meant he would not be able to go back to school, but no one realized how long a sentence it was! That September, when he was trying to decide whether or not to enlist in the Air Force, in his mind the main drawback was that he would have to sign up for three years. As things turned out, the Army took five years of his life and he had no choice.

Our separation by the California maneuvers was a learning experience for both of us. Jerry, judging by his letters, learned how much he missed me. I learned that I could not forget him. From the time I was 15, on through college, physical separation equaled the end of my relationships, particularly if my time was filled by someone else. I fully expected and intended that to happen that summer. I dated other people, primarily Dave Shanahan, (a fellow who boarded at Twinings,) whenever Jerry's finances or Army duties restricted his time with me to about two dates a week. Dave was in a position to know when I was free. He was from Seattle and was working in public relations in the Governor's office. But, back to what I learned that June: there was something about Jerry. He had found his way to a special place in my heart and I could not make him leave. He never did. In the war years, no one could get that spot—and it is still his today.

While he was gone, I went to a reunion of the pilots I had learned to fly with at the UW and made a trip up over Mt. Rainier with one of them. Well, actually, we were in a Piper Cub—50 horses—so we didn't fly OVER Mt. Rainier. Above Longmire was about as high as we got! I had let my license lapse because I really couldn't afford to fly but, after that flight, I decided to join a Flying Club at the Olympia Airport. This made airplane rental and instruction much cheaper. I then gave the time and the money to brush up on my figures, and take the test for a Private certificate again, qualifying in both land and seaplanes. Good thing! Otherwise I'd have had even more trouble in the WASP Primary training a couple of years later.

Jerry did get out of confinement in California to see his parents one weekend—but his confinement was then extended through the weekend after they returned to Washington. Somehow, though, he came in to see me the night BEFORE the convoy reached Fort Lewis. I suspect Pat Gordon (who was the Company Clerk) forged a pass!

His enforced purity in California had temporarily improved his financial condition so we really had fun that summer. It was the era when the Big Bands were touring the country and many of them played at ballrooms in either Tacoma or Olympia because of the number of servicemen stationed in the area. We went to hear all of them: Tommy Dorsey, Benny Goodman, Duke Ellington, Freddie Martin, Gene Krupa and others. We sang a lot of their songs to each other as we danced. (Some of them he sang to me for many years after we were married!) It's no wonder I still enjoy the Big Band tapes today!

The one song that was our all-time favorite was the Freddy Martin arrangement of Tchaikovsky's "Tonight We Love." Whenever we heard the distinctive eight notes at the beginning of that song we were on our feet on our way to the dance floor before those two measures were finished. If I happened to be dancing with someone else, Jerry would cut in, saying "Excuse me, but I always

dance this one with Pat!" (Years later, while sitting in a bar in Italy, he wrote me a sad V-mail as he was listening to someone play it on a piano.)

Late in June, Hiram returned to Missouri to help his mother run a restaurant for six months. After war was declared, he joined the Air Corps as a mechanic in the motor pool.

In July, Mother and Pete came west and rented a cottage on the bay, a little ways out of Olympia. It quickly became a favorite spot for Jerry and Ed Lance. Lance was four or five years older than Pat and Jerry. He was an early draftee into their company in 1941. He was from southern Missouri and, because of his drawl and his habit of telling them what they should or shouldn't do, they dubbed him "The Deacon." Polly moved to Olympia about that time to live at Twinings. She and Lance dated for 3 or 4 months, until shortly before war was declared. Pat Gordon went home on leave and Tommy started dating Johnny Jepson, who lived at Twinings. They were married six months later. Johnny was never in service because of a physical disability—he had a slight limp. Dave was also classified 4F by the Draft Board—a congenital heart problem.

Anyway, Jerry and Lance were out at the cottage just about every daylight hour they could get out of camp. Their company sign shop made them a sign "The Hiller Homestead" that they installed at the head of the driveway. They did all sorts of odd jobs for Mother. She thought Jerry was great. He got along well with Pete, too, who was about his brother Norman's age.

One weekend Jerry got an overnight pass so he and I, Mother and Pete went to Long Beach. Later he got his only three-day pass of the year (!) and the four of us went to Mt. Rainier for the weekend. He and Pete climbed Pinnacle Peak in the Tatoosh Range one day. All in all, we had a delightful summer. We were building a rock-solid friendship based on honesty, integrity, kindness, consideration, and trust. He became my "#1 guy." Without that base, I know our friendship would never have survived five years of separation, denial, and the dehumanizing effects of war. But when we met again in February of 1946, it was there ... just as warm, bright and full of joy as it was that summer.

At the end of September, Jerry went home to Pocatello and Ogden on leave. (It was four years before he would get there again!) Pete and Mother closed up the beach cottage and went home to Missouri. I started going out with Dave again. Jerry was still ahead of me in our relationship. He was calling me his "One and Only" early in the spring and didn't date anyone else. While he was #1 in my life at the same time, he was never my "One and Only." I always saved a date for him if he asked me to hold it open until he was sure he could get out of camp. But if he could not come to a party or wedding or dance that I really wanted to attend, I went with someone else.

When he returned from leave he was broke, so I didn't see him as often as I had in the summer. Two events were important in November: Jerry made Staff Sergeant which increased his pay and his responsibilities. Polly met Bob Wilson and broke up with Lance. Bob was a big, blonde, handsome Lieutenant—very impressed with himself—and he badmouthed enlisted men at every opportunity. He was never a friend of mine. What with my dislike of Bob, it's a wonder Polly and I remained friends, as we did until she died about ten years ago.

In December the world we knew changed—sort of like 9-11-2001. The whole country convulsed emotionally. To realize that our country, our naval base, our airfields, our servicemen, had been attacked was devastating. Every American adult responded emotionally—first with shock and then anger. Every adult felt a personal challenge. The result was some major life-changing event in many cases. Many people joined a military service, others moved to a different part of the country seeking war-related jobs. Many, many servicemen were married in the final weeks of 1941; many children were born in the fall of 1942.

Anyone who lived at that time can tell you where he was that day and what he was doing when he heard the news. I came home from church that Sunday morning to find the Twining clan huddled around the radio in the living room. Tommy looked up and said, “Jerry called. He’s on his way in.” Then the radio told me why—and he arrived a few minutes later.

We didn’t do anything spectacular. We were just together—I remember he had hold of my hand all afternoon. We finally walked downtown and went to a movie, but it had barely started when the house lights came on, an officer walked on stage and ordered all servicemen present to return to their units immediately. We walked back up to Twinings and he left.

He wrote me on Monday morning from Rainier, Oregon, (across the river from Longview). I got the letter after work Wednesday at the same time a friend of Polly’s and mine (Donnie Wade) from Oak Harbor showed up to visit for an hour or so on his way to who knows where. Between Polly and I, we convinced him that he was on his way to Rainier, Oregon. What a dumb thing to do!

The west coast, by that time, was totally blacked out and we went down the old two-lane highway 99 from Olympia to Longview (100 miles) in the middle of the night without lights. Whenever we made out the shape of a car coming towards us, both cars following the white center line so we could stay on the road, both cars would head for the ditch. (This is one of many wartime details I didn’t share with my family!) Donnie and I did arrive in Rainier in one piece, sometime around three in the morning. We found a hotel room with two beds and collapsed in them until daylight. Around 7 o’clock we started checking around to see if anybody knew where there was a company of engineers. We found them! It WAS fun to blow Jerry away by showing up just as he and Lance were returning from breakfast but, of course, they could only spend a few minutes with us. We spent most of the time trying to explain who Donnie was and how we had managed to arrive in Rainier at that hour of the morning. They went on their way and we returned to Olympia—I was at work in the afternoon!

I remember later that week going down the highway to Montesano from Olympia (only about 25 miles) with Polly, following a convoy that contained Bob Wilson—also at night in a blackout. We found him in that mess—so that he could sign their marriage license application. They were married that weekend.

Jerry returned to the Fort that same weekend and managed to get free for a couple of hours in Olympia. While we were together I told him I was going home for Christmas. My folks had been on the phone all week, very uneasy about my being on the west coast. There was concern about an imminent Japanese invasion and they wanted me home. I did not intend to stay in Missouri for the duration—but Jerry didn’t think I’d come back.

The next move for his company was up to the Allen Grange Hall, outside of Burlington. They were there several weeks building road "through a swamp," he reported in disgust. He also spent a day crawling around on the framework of the Deception Pass bridge to develop a plan for blowing it up in case it became necessary.

When I returned from Missouri on New Year's Eve I went up to Allen determined to see Jerry. Upon arrival, I saw there was some sort of party in the Hall. Pat Gordon was standing on the steps. When he saw me, he said, "Pat! What a surprise! Let me find Jerry for you. Wait here." (I thought that was odd as I could see couples dancing inside.) Jerry immediately appeared, apparently delighted to see me. But—he escorted me to the car where we talked a few minutes and I figured out he had a date inside, me outside, and was quite nervous. I only stayed there a few minutes! Later I learned he had started dating a friend of the Seattle girl Lance was dating.

A couple of weeks after that, the company moved again down to the coast near what is now Ocean Shores. He sent me a map of how to find them and was disappointed when I didn't come down for the weekend. The end of January they moved up near Copalis and he called asking me and Kathy (Haslam) Goodland to come down for a date with him and Lance. (I met Kathy at the University in the fall of 1938. She was also a Stephens graduate and had a room next to mine in Austin Hall.) We did go but the date was a fiasco! Kathy and Lance had serious relationships with other people, so were not interested in each other. There's not a whole lot to do on a rainy January night in Copalis! We had dinner and then returned to the hotel room Kathy and I had rented. (It was nearly four years before I saw him again!)

Jerry had received an appointment to Officer Candidate School in Fort Belvoir, Virginia. In a later letter from Ft. Belvoir, he mentioned my wings (the ones he took to California the year before) saying perhaps they were what was keeping him from "washing out" of the school. He took them overseas and I thought he had lost them when the Germans overran his position in Tunisia but, late in 1944, he wrote from Northern Italy: "I still have the little wings but you can't have them back unless you want them very much, 'cause I think they are my luck. I've had them with me constantly for a long time now." However, I'm sure those "lucky wings" weren't the Power that brought us safely through those years and back together again!

At the beginning of 1942, Dave moved back to Seattle to become the Administrative Assistant to the new Mayor. His parents had a home in the Madison Park area with a complete apartment in the daylight basement. Dave lived there. He urged me to come to Seattle weekends and he moved upstairs so that I could have the apartment. It was a neat arrangement! When Jerry went to Virginia, Dave really thought he would be able to "make time" with me but—he couldn't.

But—I needed the stability that Dave offered in my life at that point. Jerry was gone. Tommy was planning to quit and marry Johnny, so I moved to a new rooming house on Capitol Way. I really wanted to quit my job and get into some war-related occupation. I had been at the Tax Commission for almost a year and a half. I had started as a stenographer and relief switchboard operator and

progressed through a secretarial position to that of registration clerk in charge of new businesses. I enjoyed the work and was pretty good at it, I guess, but it wasn't what I wanted to do any more.

Dave understood my need for a change of scene and, because of his position, he knew a lot of influential businessmen in Seattle. He was the one who suggested I should look for a job with an airline because of my pilot's rating and interest in that field. He arranged an interview for me with United Air Lines. I'm sure he was the reason I got the job.

When Jerry graduated from O.C.S. the end of May, he was disappointed with his assignment. He wanted Combat Engineers and got a Light Pontoon Company. He wanted the west and got Georgia. His company did not have a full complement of men. They waited two months, at least, with nothing to do until they got draftees. His only consolation was that Lance (who had followed him to O.C.S. a few weeks later) had also gotten the east coast—North Carolina—so he could get up there on leave. Speaking of that, my cousin (Junie) had been drafted into an engineer outfit. Jerry thought he could get an appointment to O.C.S., also, because he had a college degree, and he was right. Junie arrived there right after Jerry left—he and Betty were married in Washington, D.C. when he graduated 90 days later.

When Mother came out to Olympia that August, we rented an apartment in town, near the capitol grounds. Pete did not come and she was only there a month. Jerry and I were both missing the carefree days on the Bay we had enjoyed the year before.

In the middle of August Jerry was transferred, finally, to the 36th Combat Engineer Regiment at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, and, for the first time, his letters started to sound like he might be shipped out. He was more than ready! His original division had been sent to the South Pacific from Fort Lewis soon after he left for Virginia and OCS. After his unproductive summer, he was eager to contribute to the war effort.

When Mother went home I quit my job in Olympia and moved to Dave's apartment in Seattle. The new job with United provided me with a pass good to fly to any airport they served in the U.S. I decided to use it to go to North Carolina! I called to tell Jerry this happy news and, at that time, I think he was still assigned to the Headquarters Company, having just been transferred to the regiment.

The night I was to leave Seattle, Dave took me to dinner at the Olympic Hotel. Before we left there for the airport I tried to call Jerry to tell him what flight I would be on. When I reached the operator at Ft. Bragg, I was told that Jerry was not there—and that was all the information I could get. Dave immediately called again and wangled the information that Company C, at least, was at Norfolk. Dave then called United and changed my itinerary, took me to the plane, called my folks to tell them of my change in plans, and then took care of shipping all my stuff from Seattle to Oakland—which is where I was to report to work for my first assignment with United. (I am sorry to say that I don't remember anything about Dave Shanahan after that. I did find some snapshots recently that show me with him with me in uniform—probably in 1944. When I returned to Seattle in 1945, he was dead.)

The trip to Norfolk was total frustration, from start to finish. I was even airsick (for the first time in my life) from the time we left Seattle, all the way to Denver. When I got to Washington, D.C., I took a train, I think, to Norfolk and then a taxi to the base where I asked the guard at the gate for Jerry. The officer who appeared in response was not Jerry. He was a very nice, understanding Lt. Strong from C Company, which turned out to be the only company from the regiment that had been sent to Norfolk. Although I am certain that it was against regulations, he told me that the rest of the regiment was in Fort Dix, New Jersey (a Port of Embarkation) and they were to ship out immediately. He also said that he expected to rejoin the regiment in the next few weeks and would tell Jerry that I had been there. That didn't happen. Months later, in his letters, Jerry was still wondering why I was in Norfolk. The only other things I know about Lt. Strong are that his was one of three weddings Jerry was in during the first week in September at Fort Bragg and...he was killed in action in Tunisia that winter.

Well, next, I went to the train station and sent Jerry a telegram and then took a train back to Washington, D.C. where I bought a ticket to Chicago with very close to my last dollar. I also sent a wire to Hiram, who was stationed at Fort Dix, and he connected with Jerry for a few minutes before he boarded the ship. Hiram didn't know anything about where I was or why, so Jerry called my Dad—but all he knew was that I had left Seattle for “the east coast.”

Anyway, when I got to Chicago I called Daddy and he wired me money to buy a train ticket to get the rest of the way home. I had a paycheck with me when I left Seattle, intending to cash it at Fort Bragg, but since I didn't find Jerry, I had no one to ID me and so – no cash!

After a short visit in Kahoka I went to Oakland, Calif., for training as a communications operator for United Air Lines (teletype and radio operator). I was there six weeks, living in an apartment-hotel in Alameda with three other girls. In November, I was sent to Cleveland, Ohio, as a Wire Operator.

That was a miserable winter! When I got to Cleveland, I had not had any word from Jerry since a letter he wrote on the ship in New York Harbor and sent ashore with the pilot boat—in September. All the news from the war zones was bad—nothing went well for the Allies in the early stages of the war. I didn't know where he was or even if he was still alive! There was certainly no way I'd find out if something happened to him, unless someone like Pat or Lance heard and then thought to let me know. Cleveland, in fact the whole East, leaves a lot to be desired in my mind. It was cold—snow came in November and, as far as I know, it's still there—I left before it did! It was windy—the wind off of Lake Erie in winter is about as cold as any I've ever experienced. I had a room near the trolley line that I rode to work. I ate all my meals out. I worked shifts—2 weeks on days, 2 weeks on swing, then 2 weeks on graveyard—so I had no social life.

Since I was low on the “totem pole,” I had to work both Christmas and New Year's. One bright spot was a wire from my Dad the day before Christmas saying he had received and forwarded a letter from Jerry. It was headed “Somewhere, Someplace, October 20, 1942” so it had taken two months to reach Missouri! Much, much later I learned that he went from New Jersey to a staging area in Scotland and then to North Africa in November as part of a Battle Group.

Jerry remembered writing five or six letters from Scotland but this was the only one I received. It contained the good news that he had been promoted to First Lieutenant—and the bad news that he was not receiving any mail either. At least, I knew he was still alive although I still didn't know what War Theater he was in. And I learned he was in Company D—not C. (He stayed with that Regiment for two years, serving in all five companies—even Company C for awhile in 1943.)

In mid-January I received a cable from him—just a Christmas greeting. Over the next couple of months I received three letters from him from Algeria, each one more frustrated than the preceding because they were so totally out of touch with home. In six months, he received one letter from me although I must have written at least fifty.

His first impression of Africa was positive. His company was among the first troops ashore in a very successful landing—no casualties at all in his company. The first five nights they were without blankets but no one even caught a cold—“a rugged bunch,” he said.

Weather was a lot like Washington only not quite so much rain. Although they were eating dehydrated food, he felt, compared to British field rations, they were eating like kings. The population was composed of about equal parts of Arabs, French and Italians. Along the coast, at least, living conditions, transportation and other things were quite modern. Lots of beautiful women but they spoke only French and he, only English!

By December, the officers were living in a French home and being treated really well by the owners. They brought them fresh fruit, bread, marmalade, confections, etc. He, too, received one letter from me before Christmas (but it didn't tell him why I had gone to Norfolk).

He moved, finally, into combat on December 13, was wounded four days later in an area known as Stuka Alley. (Stuka was the nickname of a German dive bomber.) He had dug a slit trench — but not deep enough — the bullet split a book in his hip pocket and wounded him in the “buttocks.” His company operated in Tunisia throughout the winter, spending a long period building roads, most of which were used by the Germans under Rommel, after the Allies suffered defeats at Faid and Kasserine Passes. (Did you know that Kasserine Pass was the first battle between the American Army and the Germans in WWII—and the only one they lost??) They were the first troops back in to build road for retaking lost territory — and were pinned down in a wadi for 17 days by artillery fire from the hills. When they got back through Faid Pass, they went north toward Tunis to construct and maintain four bridges, under artillery fire, so the attack could continue.

Here is an excerpt from one of his letters from North Africa during that winter of 1943:

“We are told that we can now tell of our experiences ... this should give you a pretty good idea of what this little one has been doing: Dec. 13, left for the front. Dec. 17, five miles east of Soukel Komis, affectionately known as Stuka Valley, Herman shot at me and didn't miss. Jan. 20, first trip to Gafsa; long period of road building, most of which was used by Germans for on came Faid Pass, Sbeitla, Thala, Kasserine Pass, defeats. First troops in Feriana, first troops back in Sbeitla. Built the road for retaking Gafsa. First troops in Sened. With the

forces that took Mcnassy. Pinned down in a wadi by artillery fire from the hills north of Mcnassy for 17 days. Pretty rough.

"Yours truly was the allied force that crashed through Faid Pass, then up north to the Beja area, through the Mouse Trap to Mateur. Constructed four bridges under artillery fire so the attack could go on, then maintained them, still under fire until Tunis and Bizerta had fallen. End of campaign.

"Have tried to beat the darkness, hope you can read this, didn't quite make it."

He often said he was writing my letter by the light of a candle, sitting in the back of a truck and blowing on his hands to keep warm! One letter spoke of six inches of snow in the campsite — and I always thought it was warm in Africa! In another letter, he apologized for disconnected thoughts because "every thought has been interrupted by a sudden dive into a slit trench." In April he reported he had finally received some mail — 50 letters — 13 were from me. I numbered my letters after he left the States so he knew I had written 66 — almost three a week! I wonder what ever happened to the other 50???

After nearly five months in combat in Tunisia, the end — in April — came suddenly: "One day three flights of 13 FW-109's bomb a bridge we had just built and include our bivouac area ... then the next day it is all over." By the end of May his regiment had moved back to Rabat, Morocco — clear out on the west coast of Africa. He was hospitalized for a couple of weeks in June. Although he didn't say why, I suspect it was due to a condition called Combat Fatigue (stress brought on by long periods of danger/fear and/or gruesome images of people being blown apart that they can't forget.) After months under fire, they had a chance to unwind while they waited for replacements of men, supplies and equipment.

He enjoyed "rest and recreation" all summer. The officers rented a casino on the beach, complete with a dance floor — even a bar! He met a beautiful French girl and had a great time — while I was eating Texas dust learning to fly the Army way in Sweetwater! I believe she thought they would be married — she even sent an engagement announcement to the Ogden newspaper! I suspect that brought an abrupt end to their relationship!

Although I knew about the girl at the time, I didn't know their relationship had progressed that far. This part of the story I learned after Jerry passed away when Mom Call and I were going through his footlocker and found the clipping from the Ogden paper. What he had written to me was that "she was the most beautiful girl he'd ever known — but looks weren't enough."

Well, to go back to the cheery tale of life in Cleveland — in February, I had a phone call from my brother that our Dad had had a stroke, from which he never completely recovered — although he lived another four years.

Toward the end of February, I received a letter from Barbara Erickson — one of the girls I learned to fly with in Seattle in 1940. She had continued flying so had enough hours for an Instructor's rating and a Commercial License and was eligible for the WAFS when it was organized in late 1942. We

had kept in touch and she had been writing me about the organization of the WASP and their changing requirements for training. (See p.18) Now she was telling me I should apply because I had nearly enough hours to be eligible. As you can imagine, I wasted no time getting myself out of Cleveland!

I went to an Army Base in Dayton, Ohio, for a physical — barely met the height and weight requirements — I was nearly too short and too chubby! (That was where I met “Sterk,” one of the girls I shared quarters with in Sweetwater.) The last requirement I had to meet to get into the WASP was a personal interview with Ethel Sheehy — a member of Jacqueline Cochran’s staff — in Cleveland early in March. I did pass but she was concerned about my emotional state. In addition to my other problems that winter, at the time of the interview my most recent letter from Jerry (written two days after Christmas) said that he was in a new division, he still had had only one letter from me, had been wounded, and had spent a miserable Christmas in the rain.

I am not surprised at my mental state, but I am still surprised that Mrs. Sheehy took it upon herself to contact the Red Cross in an effort to track down Jerry’s mail. Although the Air Force was desperate for experienced pilots at that time and she was approving my application, I was supposed to be “mentally tough.”

The first week in April, he got 85 letters (not all from me!) dating back to Sept. 15. By the way, none of his men received any mail during this period either. It’s hard to imagine this total lack of contact in these days of instant messaging!

Sweetwater was to me what Ft. Belvoir had been to him. I lived and breathed flying. We barely had time to eat and sleep—but I still wrote to Jerry! I wrote to him two—or three—times a week for the duration of the war. During Primary Training, it was easy. I wrote while waiting for my turn to fly. I was on the flight line four hours a day, but in the air only one hour. But during the next 18 months, letter writing was a constant challenge. At Sweetwater, I wrote in bits and pieces: after breakfast, between classes, waiting on the weather, or late at night. In the Ferry Command, I wrote in factories or hangars while waiting for good weather, on trains or planes on my way back to Romulus, in the Alert Room while awaiting orders, or again, late at night. But I did not miss. No matter how tired or frustrated or lonely I was, I knew he had it worse. By then, from newspapers more than from his letters, I knew a little about what he was going through and letters were the only way I could help him.

As much of a challenge as writing was for me, it was lots easier than for him. I could write from a safe, warm, comfortable place. He didn’t like to write letters. When he wasn’t getting any mail, it was even harder. He couldn’t talk about what he was doing or the people he was with — and one could only talk about the weather for so long! Almost every letter, he’d apologize for not writing sooner.

To go back to the subject of joining the WASP: United gave me a leave of absence early in March, promising me a job when I got out of service. I spent a few days at home and then reported to

Avenger Field, Sweetwater, Texas, as a member of class 43-W-5. (The W stood for Women. Since all the classes at Sweetwater after mid-April 1943 were women, we also shortened the title to 43-5.)

You all have asked me about the WASP (Women Air Service Pilots), so here goes: First of all, the contrast between the two women who managed to get women pilots involved in the war effort: The 25 original WAFS (Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron) were recruited by Nancy Love only to ferry planes in 1942. She had originally suggested the idea of using women pilots to the Army in May 1940. Nancy was from a wealthy family and, at that time, she and her husband were running an air service in Boston. After war was declared, her husband was called to Washington, D.C., to be Deputy Chief of Staff of the American Ferry Command. Nancy took a civilian administration job in the Air Transport Command ferrying division operations office in Baltimore.

The original requirements for the WAFS were to have a high school degree (average grade completed by American men and women in 1940 was 10th grade), be between 21 and 35, have 500 hours logged and a 200 hp rating — all this to fly only liaison (Piper Cubs) and primary trainers! There would be one squadron, based in Delaware, in Civil Service under supervision of the WAAC (Women's Auxiliary Army Corp). However, the WAAC had no provision for flying officers or flight pay. Women civilian pilots were paid \$250 a month; male pilots \$380. Lower pay, higher requirements!

At the same time, Jacqueline Cochran also proposed using women pilots to the Army Air Force but when she received no positive response from the Army Air Force, she had organized a squadron of 25-30 women (with 300 hours logged) to sign 18-month contracts with the British Air Transport Auxiliary to ferry planes in England.

She had quite a different background than Nancy Love. She was an orphan in North Florida, placed in a foster home. At age 8, she worked 12-hour night shifts in a Georgia cotton mill. At age 13, she was a full-fledged beauty operator (with only a second grade education!) She was street-smart, brash and pushy. Ten years later she married a Wall Street millionaire, trained as a pilot and, by 1942, had set many aviation records.

When Cochran heard about the WAFS organization she returned to the States with a plan to provide Air Force Training to women pilots with less experience. She wanted it to be a separate organization, a new military program that she would command. This was OK with Nancy. She was not interested in recruiting or administrative duties. Her goal was only to fly for the Air Transport Command. Cochran was authorized to start the training program in November, 1942. In 1943, she demanded and got the directorship (is that a word?) of all women pilots, in training and on duty.

I appreciate what Miss Cochran did for American women pilots in 1943 and '44. Without her, there would have been no Army flight training available for us, but she always wanted to organize things so she could run them her way. She didn't want to cooperate or negotiate with Nancy, the WAAC, or Congress and this attitude led, finally, to the deactivation of the WASP months before the end of the war. It also encouraged the chauvinist attitude prevalent in the military at the time.

Anyway, the 25 WAFS, like Nancy Love, were wealthy, pampered, capable, experienced pilots. Requirements for the WASP were equally high, in the beginning, but were gradually lowered so

more women could qualify. By the time I arrived the experience requirement had dropped to 75 hours (and part of that was waived to fill my class) so a totally different type of person made up classes 43W3 to about 43W6. There were still some rich, experienced pilots — one woman in my class, Helen Richey, had a commercial and an instructor's rating, had been the first woman pilot for an airline, copiloted for Amelia Earhart, ferried Spitfires in England, won meets and set records. She had over 1000 hours in the air — but she still had to go through WASP training because no other flight training was as specialized or as thorough.

However, the majority of us were less experienced but extremely patriotic women who were there because we felt we could do something that assisted the men in combat. No fighter planes were flying cover for the bombers over Europe at that time and they were shot down at an alarming rate. Many of these women had relatives (husbands, brothers, fathers) who were prisoners, missing in action, or in combat overseas — many of them in the Air Force.

Requirements were then lowered again — all you needed was 35 hours (minimum for a private rating) and to be at least 18-½ years old. So classes from 43-W7 on, especially the '44 classes, were mostly made up of novices looking for adventure. The training at Sweetwater was lengthened to teach them the basics of navigation. But in spite of these diverse backgrounds, all those who graduated from that training had developed the traits of intelligence, endurance, courage and self-reliance. My months in the WASP were a small part of my life, but it developed many qualities that have been useful ever since.

43-W-5 was the first class to take all their training at Sweetwater. When we arrived, a class of male cadets was just finishing their primary training there. Two weeks later, the cadets were gone and the WASP classes ahead of us transferred from Houston, bringing Basic and Advanced trainers with them.

25,000 women applied to the WASP for training. 1830 were accepted. 1074 graduated. Our class started with 125 and 85 graduated. Of the 40 who did not finish, two were killed on a night cross-country flight in an AT-17, just 10 days before graduation. The rest “washed out” early, mostly in Primary. I am sure I would have been one of them, had I not drawn the instructor I did. He was about my age, very patient, with a tremendous sense of humor. Without him those first few weeks, I'm sure I would never have even found the airport, let alone landed one of those PT's! I'd had so little instruction on land, and these planes were more than twice as powerful as any I'd ever flown. Also, in Washington I had navigated by the mountains in the east and the water in the west. I couldn't find landmarks in flat, dry Texas.

Basic training was a whole new ballgame. The plane was twice as powerful as the primary trainers but the cockpit was enclosed — YAY! — warmer, no wind in your face and hair, no goggles, no sheepskin-lined leather jackets and pants, and we had radio contact with tower operators and Air Traffic Control. Another difference was that we flew a lot of instrument time, both in Link Trainers and in the airplane under a “hood” with the instructor, or another student, acting as “lookout,” in order to practice flying on instruments without running into another plane. Our four hours a day on the flight line were now filled with flying. The other half of the day, we were in Ground School studying map reading, meteorology, radio codes, aerodynamics, engines — all subjects totally foreign to us — so we spent the evening hours studying.

Social life almost didn't exist. The place was called Cochran's Convent for good reason. Gone was the world of dating, movies, dresses — even skirts. We were a sad-looking bunch! On arrival we were all issued Army coveralls, men's size 42-44 — we called them "zootsuits." Those and winter flight gear (for Primary Training) were all the uniform we had. We marched in formations everywhere we went, although few of us knew anything about close order drill — so we usually arrived at the flight line, mess hall or wherever, out of step and out of sorts — or laughing hysterically. When we started having monthly graduation ceremonies that summer, which Cochran plus an Army general or two attended, we were given tan slacks and white blouses to wear for "dress." (Actually, they weren't "given" to us. The price was deducted from our pay — along with \$1.65 a day for board and room!) Also, the base officers (Air Force) spent some hours with us then, trying to teach us HOW to march.

We lived in long one-story barracks — each divided into eight rooms called "bays" — six girls to a bay; 12 to a bathroom with two mirrors and two showers! Each bay was furnished with six lockers, six footlockers, six army cots, six desks and six chairs — concrete floors and unpainted walls. I think the Spartan living conditions were the primary cause of our one baymate's (Nedra Something — a long Greek name) washout early in April. She had been a model and just couldn't handle them — plus the wind and constantly blowing dust — and the zootsuits!

It was very clear that we were there to learn to fly the way the Army flies, to be where we were supposed to be and do what we were told to do. We could wash out if we couldn't pass the Army flight check rides, if we couldn't do the ground schoolwork or, if we had a "bad attitude" (which covered a multitude of "sins"!) We got "demerits" which added up to a "bad attitude" for failing barracks inspection (because an officer with white gloves discovered dirt on the furniture surfaces in dusty old Texas!) or for being late to formation, or for "mouthing off" or ... whatever.

Our non-flying administrative personnel (at the end of Primary and at the end of Basic) organized a barbecue at a lake somewhere near Sweetwater. But that's about the only time I remember getting off the base the entire five months I was down there. We even flew on Sundays, if the weather was bad during the week. During Primary I do remember going to my instructor's home for Sunday dinner — he was married and had a little boy — so it was a nice break.

Well, after two months of Basic, we finally made it to the beautiful advanced trainer — the AT-6 single engine was really the nicest airplane that I ever got to fly, I think. We only had two weeks in it and spent most of it on cross-country trips, including a few night flights. Then we had two weeks in the AT-17, which was a twin engine, grossly underpowered plane. Our time in it was also spent on cross-countries and night cross-countries. That was the same type plane I flew a year later, the last three months I was in service.

I was now flying in the west Texas summer, with the temperature around 100 degrees. I was a brown-skinned, windblown, zootsuited girl with a sunburned face and continually peeling nose — but I did help prove that women could fly the Army's planes to the Army's satisfaction.

(Here's a breakdown of the training: Primary — 48 hrs./2 months; Basic — 50 hrs. plus about 20 hours in Link trainers/ 2 months; Advanced (Single Engine) — 35 hrs./2 weeks; Advanced (Twin Engine) —

28 hrs. 2 weeks. I had 56 hours when I went to Sweetwater — 4 hours of it dual (instruction) time in landplane and a 25-minute landplane checkflight.)

Note: I thought I had explained a Link Trainer but I can't find it now — maybe I forgot to click "save" sometime. Anyway, it was a pedestal about 3 or 4 feet high with a cup on top holding a metal ball that could be made to move freely in any direction. On top of that was a wooden "box" that contained a mock-up of an aircraft cockpit — complete with all the flight instruments and a pilot's seat. When a pilot gets in and pulls the hatch down, it's like being in a real cockpit at night. The Link operator has controls that simulate flight. It's a way to learn to fly by instruments without "crashing." A pilot has to learn to trust his/her instruments completely, not her instincts. And it was really a "down" day when you "crashed" in the Link trainer — I assure you.

Avenger Field presented another challenge that gave me excellent training for future landings at strange airports on ferry trips — but was hairy, all the same. Training fields for male cadets were separated by type of plane. They moved from one base to another as they progressed from Primary to Basic to Advanced and, finally, to twin-engine planes. There was only the one base training women pilots so we had everything from slow primary trainers to speedy AT-6s in the same traffic pattern, all trying to get on and off the same runways. By August there were about 400 student pilots at Sweetwater. The PTs didn't have radios, so the tower operator had to control them with red or green lights. I don't see how those traffic controllers kept their cool but they did a magnificent job. (Not always, though: One day when a plane looked like it was headed for a disastrous landing, I overheard the tower operator say, "God! Don't do that!" Back came the cool response, "God speaking. I won't!") But we learned to fly with our heads "on swivel" whenever and wherever we entered a traffic pattern for landing.

Graduation Day came, finally, in early September. (My brother) Pete came down for the ceremony and pinned my wings on. I hadn't been able to attend his high school graduation in June but he came to Sweetwater to listen to Cochran and the generals tell us how great we were and watch us "pass in review." (We finally were pretty good at marching — for civilian volunteers! And, by the way, for the luxurious life of a trainee, we were paid \$150 a month, minus deductions for board and room, "uniforms," etc.)

Following graduation, WASP were assigned to either the Ferrying Division of the Air Transport Command or the Army Air Training Command. My two tall baymates went to the Training Command for B-17 training and then flew simulated combat missions, towing targets so combat pilots, antiaircraft or aircraft gunnery students could practice shooting at flying targets. Some others who went to the Training Command worked as instructors of male pilots in radar tracking or in Link trainers for instrument training, or flew to train male bombardiers and navigators. Others were engineering test pilots on trainers that had been repaired or overhauled, or transported cargo and non-flying personnel. At any rate, in the Training Command you pretty much flew only one type of plane in one part of the country, but you logged a lot more hours. Ferry pilots had to fly by Contact Flight Rules — in daylight and good weather.

In the Ferry Command, WASP flew just about every kind of plane the Army had in WWII. We did not fly them in combat. We were recruited to free male pilots for overseas duty — and they were desperately needed. We had the same training as the cadets, except for formation flying and gunnery

training. We were not allowed to deliver aircraft overseas, but delivered to army air bases or ports of embarkation in the U.S. and Canada. (Note: I learned, recently, that Alaska was a "combat area." WASP could ferry P-64s to Great Falls, Montana, but then Air Force pilots flew them to Alaska for Russian pilots to fly to Siberia — under the lend-lease program.)

Sterk and I received orders to the Ferry Command at Romulus Army Air Base, outside of Detroit. We'd hoped for one of the WASP Squadrons at Long Beach, CA, or Dallas, where there were factories turning out a wide variety of aircraft — and the weather was better. Factories near Romulus only made primary trainers, liaisons and B-24s, which the CO wouldn't let us fly, even as copilots. It was one of the ATC bases where women were not welcome. When we arrived the CO said he didn't know we were coming. It was at least three weeks before we got checked out so we could start ferrying anything! In the interim, Sterk's "honey" arrived from England, having completed his tour of duty, so she resigned to get married and travel to his next base (which happened to be in Florida!) with him. After several months ferrying various liaison and training planes, I did get clearance for B-24's, but never as first pilot. In his infinite wisdom, the CO said I was too short!

After nearly a year of a monastic existence at Sweetwater, I was more than ready for some social life again — and an airbase in wartime is a great place to be — there were very few women and many young men. We all ate at the same Officers' Mess so we quickly got acquainted during our three weeks of inactivity. Later, there was an arrangement that made it easy to contact each other. When a pilot returned to base and completed his/her paperwork, he/she signed in on the Duty Roster as "available." The male pilots quickly learned to scan the list to see which WASP were "available."

During those first weeks, I met a very nice pilot from Georgia: Ricky Moran. He was on the B-24 run (which meant he was on the base two or three nights a week) so we had the opportunity to go out often enough to get acquainted. We were soon good friends and the time passed quickly.

After I started flying, it was a different story. I was never sure whether I'd be on the base, waiting at a factory, sweating out the weather, flying, or trying to get back to base after a delivery. Transportation was tight — the type of plane I delivered determined my priority class for return to base: plane, train, or bus. Often, of necessity, I used all three because of the isolation of the training fields — especially in the west. When on the base I was on call wherever I was — in a class, the barracks, alert room, officers' mess, etc. On short notice I would pack a bag, pick up orders, a map, weather info and take off for a factory. Sometimes, there would be four or five WASP together — usually only one or two.

I was delighted to be flying again but it was a challenging lifestyle. I usually found no accommodations for women on the airbases so each night I had to find a hotel in a strange town. I was at the airport early, hoping to fly all the daylight hours. The next night, I found another place to eat, sleep, do laundry, wash hair, file reports (we had to let our home base know every night where their valuable airplane was) and then, hopefully, write a letter or two.

My first ferry trip was quite an introduction. I was to deliver the Canadian version of the PT19 from a factory in Ft. Erie, Ontario, (across the river from Buffalo) to a training field in Manitoba. It took me two weeks! I had to fly contact flight rules, which requires good weather. In November, good weather is rare around those Great Lakes. The open cockpit PTs present their own special problems,

too. For one thing, I had to strap my maps to my legs to keep them from blowing out of the cockpit! Another was the wintry weather. I can remember being in Minneapolis one morning digging ice and snow out of the cockpit. Then I went inside to get warm, came back out to sweep the snow off the wings, back in to file a flight plan, out to finally get the engine started just as it started to snow again. So-o-o – I got to do it all over again the next day.

I spent a lot of days in Buffalo that winter waiting for it to quit snowing so that I could fly PTs from that Fort Erie factory to Fort Dix and Newark, N.J. and also Roosevelt Field, Long Island, for shipment by sea to England, where the RAF used them. I also delivered several types of liaison planes that the Army used as spotters for artillery or reconnaissance. They flew low and slow! The orders I disliked the most, though, was delivering one of those from a factory on one side of Detroit to an Airbase on the other side where they were crated and shipped overseas. I couldn't understand why they couldn't crate those things at the factory. We spent days waiting for weather to clear so that we could make that little 20-minute flight! (I suppose our 20 minutes qualified as a test flight to prove the thing was airworthy.)

The WASP on ferry duty averaged 33 hours of flight time each month. During my 12 months on operational duty, I averaged 32.2—not bad for Romulus!

I spent a few days at home at Christmas time but, otherwise, I spent the winter delivering planes to nearly every state from Colorado, Kansas, and Texas east. I hit most of the states from there to the Atlantic. In April when I got a few days' leave, I hitchhiked to Seattle (on a B-17) to visit friends in Olympia — a most welcome change of scenery. I also was home for a few days.

Once I started getting Jerry's letters in 1943, I believe I got about 75 percent of them for the duration. But both his letters and mine routinely had to be forwarded as we moved from one assignment to another. If they didn't have to be forwarded, letters in 1943 took about three weeks enroute so, if I asked him a question, I could expect an answer in 6 to 8 weeks (or more if he was in combat). V-mail was about a week faster each way but neither of us liked it very well because it was so small. (V-mail was an 8-1/2 by 11" sheet of paper, with the top 2-3 inches taken up with the censor's stamp, the address and the return address. Before it was transported it was usually photographed and "shrunk" to a sheet about 4 x 5".) All he really wrote on them was "I'm still here. I'm still thinking of you. I'm healthy (or not)." One of his duties, as company commander, was censoring his men's outgoing mail so he was overly conscious of what he could or could not say. I never heard anything about what he was doing, who his fellow officers were or what they were like or any specifics about where he was — other than the country he was in. Once in awhile he'd tell me about a campaign after it was over. Then, if I found a similar account in a newspaper, I'd have a pretty good idea of where he had been.

A few times I tried sending two V-mails to make up one letter but they never seemed to get delivered at the same time — sometimes, he never did get the other half — so I gave up that idea. I did send him "CARE" packages quite regularly. He often asked for Hershey Almond Bars. I was probably one of his few sources so I tried to send them as often as I could. Sugar was rationed here and in very short supply but I could, occasionally, find some at an Air Base PX. The Army usually kept them

supplied with 15 packs of cigarettes every two weeks but, once in awhile, due to their combat location, they wouldn't receive them and he'd ask for some — also for flints for his lighter.

In September, he reported he was in the hospital again — but no clue as to why or for how long. He was back with his company soon after and, in November, they finally sailed for Italy, landing at Salerno, I think, moving on to Naples, and then to Cassino for the winter. He told of his third miserable holiday season but he couldn't tell me how badly the campaign was going. I have a book, *The Battle of Cassino*, which describes it thus: "It took eight divisions six weeks to advance seven miles at a cost of 16,000 casualties." And this was just the beginning.

In mid-January they pulled back from the front lines to regroup and he got a week at rest camp. They went back then for, at least, another month that included three weeks of nonstop rain. It was a futile operation. The Germans sat on the slopes of Monte Cassino and the Allies sat in the valley and they killed each other. During those weeks he made arrangements for someone in the company to write to me if anything happened to him. He also told me I could write his C.O. if I ever worried too much. (How much is "too much"? I worried — but I never wrote his C.O.!) The only time he ever mentioned a specific person was a close friend, Walter, who "turned up missing" at this time.

When they finally pulled back the end of March, he wrote that he was out of artillery range for the first time in four months. He soon went into the hospital, again, with foot drop — a neurological problem brought on by the prolonged exposure to the cold, damp conditions at Cassino. A short time later (May/June, I think) he was in the hospital for six weeks, at least, when he had his first heart "incident" — the beginning of the tachycardia that plagued him the rest his life. (I also wonder if this wasn't when he suffered kidney damage??)

Anyway, he was terribly homesick during those weeks in the hospital. Unless wounds required six months' hospitalization, men were not sent home for treatment. But, at age 23, Cassino left its permanent mark on his life. Even so, he was upset when he heard that his company was in combat and he wasn't with them. He did get out in time to rejoin them and "get revenge for the long hard weary months we spent at Cassino" as they chased the Germans up past Rome.

Back in February of that year, Ricky and I happened to be at Romulus on the same day and I learned he'd been transferred to the Foreign Operations Section of the Ferry Command and was flying 24s to Italy. We knew Jerry was not far from the transport fields at the time, so he suggested taking something to Jerry, since it would get there faster and wouldn't have to go through censors. Unfortunately, by the time I saw Ricky again he was involved with the buildup of supplies and personnel in England prior to D-Day and then I went to Florida for a month — so it was a long time before we got together to arrange the delivery. By then, Jerry was a long way from Foggia and we knew he'd have to rely on the Army postal service in Italy. The Canadian Club finally went out of Romulus in August, not long before I left for the Training Command. At about the same time, Jerry was transferred to a new company and got a new APO number. By the time it got to him in September his mail was being forwarded three times. (It's really amazing that he got it — but he was delighted!) His thank you letter to me was also forwarded three times!

It was while he was in the hospital (in May/June) that I was sent to Florida for a month-long course at the Army Air Force School of Applied Tactics. It was intended to familiarize the WASP with military customs and procedures prior to our commissioning as officers. I was once again attending classes six days a week, this time studying military discipline, courtesy, customs and some other equally dull stuff. (However, the bill to commission us stalled in Congress, so it was a total waste of time.)

Since I was not flying and didn't have to study after class, it was a nice vacation. A few days after I arrived I met a non-flying officer, Paul Buzzell, from the Air Force Supply Section. He was a totally different type fellow than I had ever dated before, perhaps because he was from the east coast?? He was much more ... is the word "urbane"? He loved being with people, discussing all sorts of facets of the war in such a detached way that it seemed like he wasn't even a part of it. The base offered every kind of recreation imaginable — hiking, swimming, boating, dancing, movies — so we spent all our free time there. I was usually with Paul and several other couples. The Officers' Club was similar to an extravagant country club, the most luxurious one I experienced and we had a great month.

When I returned to Romulus, I found the WASP there had finally been cleared to copilot B-24 Liberator Bombers. I spent most of my time that summer in them. Those four-engine giants were new and very interesting to fly. I hadn't flown anything that big and powerful before. Of course, it was quite a contrast to go out in them for awhile and then come back to fly a little 65 horsepower liaison! I didn't mind, though. It was fun to fly in the summertime and actually complete a mission in a day instead of a week or two!

We took the B-24s from the factory outside Detroit down to Birmingham, Alabama, where modification (which is the addition of armament) was done. From there we'd take a completed one up to Mitchell Field, Long Island, where an all-male crew took it overseas. We, meanwhile, went back to Detroit to start the same run again.

On one such trip, I got my first gray hair! Metal filings had been left in one of the engines at the factory. We got as far as Tennessee before the engine caught fire so we landed in Nashville. As I was finishing the airplane log entries, the pilot looked over and said, "Hey, look! A gray hair!" and pulled it out! (We left the plane there for repairs.)

The only other mission I didn't complete was in a "war-weary" B-24. The combat crew had brought it home and left it in Charleston, South Carolina. They went on leave, so a ferry crew got orders to take the plane to Hill Field, near Salt Lake City, to be "parted out." The pilot of our crew was from Charlotte, N.C., so — guess what? — we made a very short hop the first day and stopped there overnight. The next day we took off, got up to about 3000 feet, and the #4 engine cut out. We returned to Charlotte, mechanics worked on it, we made a test flight, and it seemed to be fine. But — the next day at the same altitude, we had the same problem and returned to Charlotte again. We decided to go AROUND the Allegheny Mountains and headed for Atlanta. As long as we stayed below 3000 feet, the engine ran rough, but it ran. But, the next day as we headed for Memphis, the same engine started overheating, caught fire and quit. Then the other engine — same side — started cutting out and we landed in Memphis! While mechanics worked on the plane, we thought about how long it had taken us to get from Charleston to Memphis, how much farther we had to go, and

how high the Rockies were that we were supposed to fly over to get there. We told Operations if they wanted that plane in Hill Field, they'd better "drive" it there! We went back to Romulus.

During the summer, male flight crews were being rotated home from the war theaters and they wanted the Ferry Command (or any other "plum" jobs they could get). To make room for them, many women with over 500 hours were sent to Pursuit Transition, but I was about 40 hours short. 132 WASP ultimately ferried pursuits – among them were my Washington state friends, Cece Hunter and Ginny Hill Wood. The rest of us were transferred to the Training Command, along with the later graduates from Sweetwater. The middle of August, I delivered my last airplane and went home on leave before reporting to Randolph Field, San Antonio, Texas.

Somehow, Paul also managed to wangle a leave at the same time, so he came to Kahoka to meet my family. I don't remember where he was stationed that summer and I know we were only in Kahoka a few days – but I was glad my folks had a chance to meet him. At that time, he meant a great deal to me. His eventual overseas duty was on the China end of the supply route over the Hump from India. Reading his letters from China was like going on a people-to-people tour or some sort of cultural exchange. There wasn't the undercurrent of tension there always was in Jerry's letters – because he was never in combat. He was quite a contrast.

There was no way I could compare them and, fortunately, I had sense enough to know that. When I was home on leave that fall Mother asked me which one I liked the best. I remember telling her, "Honestly, I don't know. I'll have to wait until they both come home. Then I will know." (At that time, it had been three years since I'd *seen* Jerry.)

The brass at Randolph looked at my multi-engine time and, within a week, transferred me to an Advanced Training School at Altus, Oklahoma, as an Engineering Test Pilot. My months in the Ferry Command spoiled me because we flew (most of the time) new aircraft. The AT-17s/UC-78s at Altus – even when new – were not very good airplanes. There was always something going wrong with these: instruments didn't work, the landing gear wouldn't come down, props would surge, one time I blew a cylinder head, flat tires were common occurrences. If they put a new engine in a plane, we took it up to "slowtime" it – flying at a very low speed for an hour or so to break in the new engine — BORING! And the cadets were forever dinging wing tips or wiping out a landing gear. Every time one went into Engineering for repair, we had to test hop it before it could go back on the flight line. Occasionally, we got a change of pace and took cargo or non-flying personnel to some other base in Oklahoma, or to Kansas, Texas or New Mexico.

One weekend in November Ruth Hageman and I got an airplane and permission to fly it to Cincinnati to see Pete, who was attending college there. We only got as far as Tulsa, where one of the engines developed electrical problems. By the time we got it fixed, the weather had closed in and we never did get to Cincinnati!

Ruth was another 43-W5 WASP who was stationed at Altus — I think there were about eight of us. Our Quarters were the former Psychiatric Ward. We never could decide whether the bars on the windows and the barbed wire around the place were to keep us in or the cadets out — but we certainly heard a lot of bad jokes about our quarters.

Shortly after I got to Altus, Paul was transferred to Ardmore, Okla., about 100 miles away. I think he got to Altus a few times but it didn't offer much in the way of recreation. More often, we met in Dallas. Ruth's home was there and she was engaged to a man who lived there. We often spent weekends at her home and Paul would come down there.

I had some hairy experiences in the Ferry Command involving weather — blizzards and thunderstorms — and mechanical problems in the B-24s. But the only time I ever really scared myself was on a flight in one of those AT-17s. I had taken some passengers to Waco, Texas. The weather closed in while I was on the ground. I did not want to spend the weekend in Waco since we had planned a trip to Dallas. As soon as Operations would give me an instrument clearance I took off, alone, for Altus. The ceiling was lower than Operations had quoted me and I had zero visibility almost as soon as I was off the ground. I was in a climbing turn when I went on instruments and couldn't get my airspeed under control. My compass was spinning and I couldn't get my wings level. Then the Tower Operator radioed me wanting to know what the ceiling actually was, because he'd seen me disappear. He also asked for my altitude and compass heading. Ha! But just then I broke out between cloud layers. I came so close to losing it that day that I was still shaking when I landed at Altus two hours later! Otherwise, I was always confident in my ability to bring the plane down right side up.

Ruth and I did get to Dallas the next day for what turned out to be my last date with Paul for over a year. He was transferred overseas at that point.

Well ... the first of October, General Arnold wrote us a letter saying that the WASP program would be deactivated and all WASP released on the 20th of December. That was OK, but this Press Release from the War Department at about the same time really ticked us off!

"The decision to release volunteer women pilots from further service with the Army Air Force was based on present indications that by mid-December there will be sufficient male pilots available to fill all flying assignments in the United States and overseas. Reduction in training has also made several thousand male civilian flyers available to be trained and assigned to the routine service pilot jobs now being done by the WASP."

We *knew* that those "male civilian flyers" had clung to those instructor jobs for three years in order to *avoid* combat duty! Also, notice that they were releasing trained female pilots and training male pilots to replace them.

We were to receive a Certificate of Honorable Service (which made us eligible for a Commercial Pilot's License) if we remained on duty until Nov. 20. I was one of about 150 who resigned during the last month before the WASP were deactivated. (And yes, I did get my Honorable Discharge. I could, even, be buried at Arlington National Cemetery — but don't you dare!) My last flight as a WASP was a routine four-hour business trip down to Lubbock, Texas, and back with a couple of passengers on Nov. 29. I resigned Dec. 1, 1944, so that I had some time at home before I returned to work for United in their Seattle office on the first of January.

Following deactivation, WASP reports were filed in government archives as classified information ... something to be kept secret. The Army Air Force completely "forgot" that women had ever been in the cockpit of a military plane...had ever flown hot pursuits and heavy bombers...for 30 years. Not until 1977 did a bill finally pass Congress granting us veterans' status.

Switching back to Italy now: In late July, 1944, Jerry got to Rome on R&R, had a photograph taken and sent one to me and one to Mom Call. Ellen told me later that Mom cried all day when she got it. It showed clearly how the Italian winter had aged him. His letter was upbeat, though. He was enjoying a few tourist sights and wishing he had time to see more. He went to the Sistine Chapel and pronounced it "all it's cracked up to be but certainly not worth a trip from the U.S. to see it." He was hoping, eventually, to see Florence and Pisa but "the Germans have them off limits." He did get there later. (In fact, he was stationed at Montecatini just a few miles outside of Florence for some time after the European war was over. He toured most of northern Italy up to the Swiss border.)

In August he was in a new company building bridges but, due to a shortage of officers, was both the Executive Officer and Supply Officer—and was complaining about how the transfer had fouled up his mail—again. The new company meant better quarters, more leave and (three-fourths of the time) operating beyond German observation. The other fourth, though, they were working beyond the front line so that it could be advanced, working in the rain (again) and at night. He thought he should be either an owl or a duck—or a combination of both. Even so, he thought he had a much better chance of getting home some day.

During his years overseas he learned to bury all the horrible things he endured so deep they never surfaced. He also tried to deny the bitterness and anguish resulting from being gone for so long. Only occasionally did these feelings surface—when he was in a hospital—or (in November) when (his brother) Norm was rotated home from England after "only one year." Norm volunteered for the Air Force when he turned 18. He washed out of pilot training but trained as a gunner on a B-24 and completed his overseas duty, went home and was married—and Jerry was slogging through the mud of another Italian winter. It probably didn't help much, either, to know that I was being deactivated and would be home for Christmas.

Spending a third Christmas overseas was really hard. He wrote often during the holidays. Another officer from the company was leaving around the first of the year, leaving them, again, with only two instead of four. They were seriously busy throughout December and it rained incessantly. On Christmas Day he wrote the rain had turned to snow but he'd had the best Christmas dinner of the three he'd had overseas. A dance was planned for that night "if nothing happens to interrupt it." Something did — Christmas Day to New Year's Eve was the week he earned the Bronze Star for delivering 10 bridges (that had been threatened with capture by the enemy) plus fortification materials to prepare defensive positions to receive an enemy counterattack.

Things had improved by the time he wrote next on New Year's Day. One of the sergeants in the company was being commissioned by direct appointment, so they would have three officers again. He finished the letter Jan. 6 after being "constantly on the go" all week. A week later they were

down to two officers once more. At the end of January he was made company commander but didn't get his promotion to Captain until almost April.

For nearly a month he didn't receive any mail and he seemed to become withdrawn and distant. He wondered if the war was going to end in time for him to ever become a dentist. There was so much he didn't want to think about that he was almost like a machine—doing his job very well and not thinking of anything else.

Men of our generation forged their characters during WWII and, for Jerry, there were emotional scars that never healed. Nowadays, if a policeman shoots someone in line of duty he receives psychiatric counseling. If someone witnesses a shooting or other tragedy where many people are shot or killed – like a plane crash—they, too, are treated for emotional problems. Not so in the 1940's, although I understand things are different in Iraq. By the time servicemen got treatment then it was generally too late to prevent emotional damage. No wonder he needed months after he got home to readjust!

His mood brightened in March with better weather and a three-day leave in Florence (even though he was only able to use one and a half). AND they got their full complement of officers again. Right after he finally made Captain in April, though, an officer went home on temporary duty.

In May they were moving into north Italy. He was one of the first Americans in several of the larger towns. He said, "it was quite a sensation to have people of all ages wanting to shake your hand, kiss you, offer wine, eggs, bread, or anything they have that they think you might want. All this may be very lovely but ... I would much prefer to drive down the street of some American town and get a ticket for running a red light!"

As before in Africa, when he started finishing up a campaign letters were very few and far between – and they certainly were in 1945. I couldn't complain, though. In one letter, he said he hadn't written anyone but his Mom and me since November – six months!

The war in Europe was over on May 6 but, two weeks later, he wrote:

"The war may be over for some people but for this unit there is still as much to be done as ever. About the only difference is that now we don't have to worry about someone being trapped or going without something they need if we aren't there right on the tick. There is bridge scattered all over the northern half of Italy and it is our job to get it all gathered together in one or two spots.

"For awhile I had hoped that, with the termination of hostilities here in Italy, I might be able to at least come home and, perhaps, get out of the army. Now it doesn't look too good for getting home, let alone getting out. I guess a trip to the South Pacific will be my reward for doing the best I know how for five years. Pardon me if I seem to be bitching. I'm browned off ... You'd better write your mother and tell her not to make any plans until she sees me coming up the front walk ... I guess all that a guy can do is hope for the best."

In June he reported that he had requested a transfer in the hopes that he would get back to the States sooner. They finally got orders home on July 29 and, early in September, I received the long-awaited telegraph message: "I'm home!" (It was sent from Pocatello and Kathy forwarded it to me as I had just moved to Oak Harbor.)

I guess it's time to talk about what I did in 1945. I returned to Seattle and moved in with Kathy Haslam (Goodland), who had an apartment at the foot of Queen Anne. I went to work for United at Boeing Field. It was a much smaller operation than Cleveland and I liked it better. Communications was right next to Operations so I worked both radio and teletype — but still in shifts, which I did not like.

When I could, I did some volunteer work with the Red Cross at Pier 91, hung out with some of the ex-WASP who were in Seattle, with Tommy and John Jepson and with Kathy. Mostly, especially after VE Day in May, everyone was kind of waiting for the end of the war and the chance to return to normal living.

About a week before VJ Day (August 10) when I was coming home from swing shift, I was followed from the bus stop by two men. They didn't grab me until I started to turn into the courtyard of our apartment. I had on wooden clogs and I remember kicking and screaming. As my screams echoed off the walls of the apartment building, lights started coming on and they fled. But I had had it!

Polly and her two-year-old son, Greg, were living with her folks in Oak Harbor because Bob was overseas. She had been urging me to come live with them and go to work at the Naval Base. Suddenly, that looked like a real good idea. About the time Jerry was leaving Italy, I moved to Oak Harbor and went to work in the Supply Department at the Seaplane Base.

Shortly before Jerry arrived in Washington in October I moved to poorly built housing, called "Victory Homes," up on the hill above the Base with a girl (Mildred) who worked in my office. Somehow, probably through Kathy, Jerry sent a message asking me to meet him at Lance's in Edmonds the first Sunday in October. I got there late in the afternoon and spent the evening with Jerry, Ed and Norma, Lance, another pre-war friend, Glenn Taylor, along with Mrs. Taylor. It was really a difficult evening for me. I soon asked Lance to take me to Kathy's where I was spending the night. While we waited for him to find Norma, Jerry started making plans for us to meet the next day after he finished his separation process at Ft. Lewis.

When we said goodnight, Jerry said he'd call around one the next afternoon when he expected to be through at Ft. Lewis. He did not, and I took the next bus back to Whidbey. When he did finish at Ft. Lewis, about 4:30, and called Kathy's, no one answered. He then sent me a telegram to tell me he was meeting Lance in Edmonds and asking me to call their phone number in Edmonds — but I didn't get it. I bet it was sent to Kathy's because he had no other address for me. He sent another later in the week and Kathy got that one. She called then to tell me that he was trying to find me, but I didn't know how to contact him. I did write him after I returned to Whidbey — but the only address I knew for him was Ogden — and he went to Pocatello.

When he got back to Idaho, he wrote saying the rest of his time in Washington had been one big party. (Perhaps it was just as well we didn't spend any more time together that fall. He was in such a mood to celebrate. I think he needed time to readjust and change his attitude before we could renew our relationship.) At any rate, the "reunion" in October was a great disappointment!

He returned to Pocatello, enrolled at Idaho State and still hoped for dental school the next year. In December I changed jobs, transferring to the Operations Department at Ault Field. A few months later, I became the Executive Secretary there, replacing a woman who resigned when her husband returned from sea duty. For a change, Christmas found Jerry at home and me, not.

In contrast to Jerry's, Paul's homecoming was a joyful one. He had written telling me the name of the transport he would return on and that it would arrive at a west coast port. Kathy worked for the Port of Seattle in Army Liaison at that time so she had no trouble learning the place and time of arrival — Tacoma on Jan. 3, 1946. One of the pilots from Whidbey, Lt. Lotzgesell, drove me down there that evening, stopping in Seattle to pick up Kathy. About 9 o'clock we were standing on the dock watching that transport being nosed into its berth by tugboats, while the men on board crowded the railing for their first glimpse of home. The whole thing was lighted by floodlights.

Suddenly, I spotted Paul. Lotz began yelling and the three of us started jumping up and down. At first, Paul could not believe what he was seeing. When he did, he tried to make his way toward the gangplank but he could make no headway through that tightly packed crowd of men. So he returned to the railing and jumped to the dock! What a great way to come home!!! Lotz took the three of us back to Kathy's and we had a week there before he went east.

The prediction I had made to Mother the year before proved accurate. Although Jerry was still a big question mark in my mind, after a week with Paul I knew he was not the one I wanted to spend the rest of my life with. Typical of Paul, when I told him "No" there was no argument. We parted on very friendly terms, planning to see each other again in the fall.

Shortly after he left, Lance called trying to interest me in going to Missouri with him. I told him I couldn't possibly get time off. I had just moved to the new job in December and had just had a week off. However, when I wrote and told Mother about his invitation she urged me to come. Daddy was not well and I hadn't been home for over a year. To me, it also looked like a good way to get out of living with Mildred. (She and I never did have much in common.) A couple of weeks later, Lance called again. I still don't know why he was persistent — whether he wanted someone along for company, or to share expenses, or if he still wanted to be a matchmaker!

Because of my Dad, I was able to get a month's leave, and Lance picked me up in Olympia at the end of February. We only went as far as Portland the first day and to Bend, the next. Both days, all of our waking hours, Lance worked on me, trying to persuade me to agree to stop in Pocatello to see Jerry. I *wasn't* interested but, again, Lance got his way. In retrospect, I'm glad he was so persistent but, at the time, I can remember being *really* annoyed with him. Anyway, he called Jerry the second night.

The next day, Lance's birthday, we drove to Pocatello. We picked up Jerry for dinner at a club and then went back to my hotel room. Lance soon left but Jerry did not. I can vividly recall him sitting in a big overstuffed chair in a corner of that room while I lay on my stomach, kitty-corner on the bed, facing him — and we talked all night long. When he left at 6:15 in the morning, his goodbye kiss was the first time he had touched me in four years — but we had caught up on those years we had been separated.

It turned out that Lance's wife had relatives in Pocatello, so he stayed with them. (I bet he planned the whole thing before he ever left home!) I slept all morning. Jerry went to class. In the afternoon, his Uncle Phil loaned us his car so we visited the college campus, the Naval Ordnance plant and the Air Base — and we discovered again how content we were just to be together. He also persuaded me to stop over in Pocatello on my return trip (by train) to Washington in March. We went to Phil and Eulalia's for dinner and the evening. They were the aunt and uncle he lived with while he was going to college, both before and after his years in service.

The next morning, Lance and I left Pocatello on our way to Missouri but, a couple of hours later, we were stopped by a blizzard in the little town of Montpelier, Idaho. I was thoroughly disgusted that we had to spend the whole afternoon and evening there when we could just as well have spent another day in Pocatello. And 48 hours earlier I had been angry with Lance for forcing me to stop in Pocatello!!

The next day we were stopped again, in Wyoming, by blowing snow. From Olympia to Kansas City, that trip took a week! Fortunately, Lance and I were good friends! In Kansas City, we found Pat Gordon and got acquainted with his wife, Susan, before I caught a train home to Kahoka.

Much to my surprise, (my cousin) Hiram met me, along with my folks. He was home on leave because his mother was in the hospital. His brother, Chuck, had also gotten home, discharged after his years in the South Pacific. We three had a great reunion.

I had two weeks with the folks and relatives and friends in Kahoka. We also took trips to St. Louis, Rockford, Illinois, and Beloit, visiting Pete and Rosalie (who married in 1945), Helen, Ed and family, and my grandparents. I've always been glad I had that time with my Dad.

I remember a conversation I had with my Aunt Ginny while I was there. She wanted to know, now that Jerry and Paul had both come home, which one I was going to marry. I told her, very emphatically, that I didn't plan to marry either one, that I was very happy with my life the way it was, thank you very much!

When I stopped in Pocatello later that week, Jerry changed my mind! I got there Thursday afternoon and left Sunday afternoon — one day late. We had a wonderful weekend. I met many of his friends and we went dancing each night. We spent some time with Phil and Eulalia and their two children. (They loaned us their car again.) By the time I left, I knew I was in love with Jerry Call whether I wanted to be or not.

I got back to Seattle on Monday, March 25. Had dinner with Kathy and then went on up to Mount Vernon that night. Spent the next morning looking for a place to live and found a room with Merrill and Ann Iverson on Evergreen St. I had to get out to NAS Whidbey to work that same afternoon. The secretary was taking the next two days off because her husband was home, and she quit the following week.

The Operations Officer had certainly been kind to give me that month off. He apparently thought I'd have no trouble taking over for Sue because I had been a pilot. However, he expected me to take dictation. I hadn't done that in almost four years so, in April, I went back to business school nights for a month to study shorthand. I commuted to work at Ault Field (carpool) for the next six months, and usually spent weekends at Kathy's in Seattle.

Jerry wrote about the difficulties he was facing trying to get into dental school in the fall. Dental schools had more applicants than space due to the influx of veterans. His grade point average was lousy. He had done well enough that year but, the year and a half before he went into service, he had not studied. In fact he had dropped out in the middle of his sophomore year and worked as an assistant in Phil's dental practice until the National Guard was called up.

The first week in June I ran into my free-spirited friend, Donnie Wade, after work one day in Oak Harbor — the first time I'd seen him since our 1941 trip to Oregon. He was just home after spending the war years in the Navy. He gave me a big hug and then asked how "that engineer" was doing. I said Jerry was still #1 in my life, and he responded, "That's great! There's a dance in Anacortes tonight. Why don't we go to dinner and then dancing?" He loved to dance just as much as I did, so we went out quite a bit that summer—usually off the Island—Anacortes, Seattle or Vancouver.

Jerry spent the summer in Ogden helping his Dad and younger brothers build their house in Pleasant View. I had hoped he would come to Washington when school let out in June. I wrote urging him to come before he went to school in the fall. In response, he wrote, again trying to figure out how we could have gotten married or could get married.

I went to Olympia to celebrate the 4th of July and then Kathy, "Pete" Peterson (the lady I commuted with) and Marge Weidenbach (who worked in the Supply Department with Pete) picked me up to go to Long Beach for my birthday weekend. When I returned I found lots of birthday letters, cards and telegrams, including a letter from Paul saying he had to come to L.A. on business in September and was coming up to see me on his way back to New Jersey. At work the next day I learned that the Navy brass had decided to eliminate the civilian personnel in the Operations Office—and when I got home that a night I learned my Dad had had another stroke.

The next day my boss convinced the Navy that Operations could never function without me – and saved my job! He was a neat fellow; one of the best administrative flying officers I ever knew — Army or Navy. From then on, I was probably the most visible secretary on the Base. He had me at his elbow everywhere he went.

Through the summer, Jerry quit hoping for dental school and decided to go back to Pocatello in September to get a degree in pharmacy. He dropped this plan later when he found it would require an extra semester. He did not want to postpone dental school any longer than he had to!

The end of July he sent a telegram saying that he would be in Washington the following Sunday. I took the week off and met him in Olympia. We stayed at Yantis's and spent the first couple days visiting my relatives and old friends there. On Wednesday, Junie loaned us his car and we went to the beach. We had a delightful, beautiful, sunny day.

The next day we went to Kathy's apartment in Seattle — and Jerry asked me to marry him! I finally knew, without a doubt, that my answer was yes. He said later that he couldn't believe I'd say yes when he still had such an uncertain future. That never did worry me. I'd taken care of myself for years. I was sure we could handle anything that came along, if we could be together.

We spent the rest of the week at Kathy's, returning to Mount Vernon on Sunday. When I went to work Monday, Jerry stayed at Iversons' and completely won over Ann. She had three little ones, and he was always really good with kids.

The rest of the week he was on the Base, around Operations. He went flying with two or three of the pilots—one even took him *under* the Deception Pass bridge. One evening we went to a dinner/dance at the Officers' Club and Saturday night we went dancing at the Olympic Hotel in Seattle. He caught a bus back to Ogden Sunday.

Early in September Jerry made a prophecy that came true: "We'll have some bad times the next five or six years but I really think it will be so much fun being together that we won't mind the tough spots."

I wrote Paul a "Dear John" letter on Labor Day weekend but, apparently, he didn't receive it before he left for Los Angeles — or else he ignored it. He wired me from L.A. telling me he would arrive in Seattle on Friday the 13th! Fortunately for me, I was busy all weekend. I stayed on the Island Wednesday night for a farewell party for my boss, then flew to Seattle after work Thursday for the weekend at Kathy's. I had an appointment with the CAA to renew my pilot's license Friday so couldn't meet Paul's flight.

When Jerry learned that Paul was coming he had told me to ask his ally, Ann, to look out for his interests during Paul's visit. She was w-a-a-y ahead of him. She forwarded letters from Jerry that week to me at Kathy's but, when Paul called her after no one met him, she told him I'd been out of town for several days and she wasn't sure where he could reach me! He finally got Kathy's phone number somewhere and we did get together Sunday afternoon, shortly before I returned to Mount Vernon. I was sorry there wasn't a more graceful way to handle that weekend. He deserved better—but I wish he hadn't come to Washington at all.

It's a good thing I enjoyed my job because that's about all I did from the end of August until I quit in mid-November. It was interesting. I liked the people I worked with. I got to fly (unofficially, as pilot) quite regularly — which was a welcome change from secretarial duties! When civilian personnel were eliminated in July, I lost my typist. However, she was replaced in September with a Yeoman—Dean Davis. When the Operations Officer learned that I was leaving in November, my friend, Marge, was transferred in to replace me so they were both trained before I left. They later became Mr. and Mrs. Dean Davis.

My cousin Hiram offered to come to Washington to get me and all of the gear I had to move to Pocatello or Missouri that winter. I thought it was a wonderful idea. Jerry wasn't so sure because he wanted me to stop for several days in Pocatello at a time when we could get down to Ogden for me to meet his family. He was hoping for Thanksgiving weekend and he knew, if Hi was driving to the west coast and back, he would not want to do it that far into the winter. A lot of letters that fall were taken up with trying to plan a wedding with me in Washington, him in Idaho, and Mother in Missouri. Mother was the main reason we waited until December to be married. She really wanted me to have a "proper wedding"!

Finally, in early November Hi headed for the west coast. He always owned "vintage" cars. He was a good mechanic but the cars just weren't up to 2000-mile journeys. This time he broke down in Wyoming on his way west. He hadn't been to Olympia since before the war. I knew whatever spare days he might have, he would rather spend there than in Pocatello. Jerry and I decided (on the phone that weekend) that, when Hi arrived in Mount Vernon and loaded my "stuff," I would fly to Pocatello.

That way I had a day in Ogden to meet his family and two days in Pocatello before Hiram got back there. We checked out apartments Jerry had located for us and, also, chose our wedding rings. Even so, it wasn't long enough. We stayed up almost all night each night and I'd sleep mornings while he went to class. We were both really frustrated with the thought of being separated AGAIN for a month!

After I left, he spent a lot of time refinishing floors, painting and hanging wallpaper in the apartment we had decided to rent. Somehow, in just a few weeks, he managed to completely redecorate and furnish it while keeping up with his studies—and dealing with frustrated plans. At one point, he learned that all the hotels in New Orleans (where we'd planned to honeymoon) were full due to the Sugar Bowl game. Then the railroad unions went on strike so he had no way to get to Missouri for the wedding. He wondered how long we'd have to live 1000 miles apart! Meanwhile, I was visiting relatives around the Midwest, trousseau shopping—and marking time.

The railroad strike was settled in early December and he finally arrived on Dec. 20. We were married Dec. 23 with Helen and Hiram as attendants—Pete and Chuck were ushers. Pete also walked me down the aisle because Daddy was unable to do it. (In fact, at my wedding I saw my Dad cry, the first time ever.) Jerry's Mother and Dad were there. I wonder what they thought about a Mormon son marrying a Christian Scientist in a Presbyterian church with a Baptist minister???

We had a reception at home immediately following the wedding and then Pete and Rosalie drove us to St. Louis. We had our first meal as a married couple with them, in a restaurant in Hannibal. We spent the night in a St. Louis hotel and then flew to Chicago (in a snowstorm) on Christmas Eve. We stayed at the Palmer House there for a week, going to the theater and dancing. On New Year's Eve, we went out to Helen and Ed's in Rockford. The next day we took a train to Pocatello and Jerry went back to school.

Loving this man who loved me was fulfillment. When God made us one, I found out how incomplete my life had been. Jerry was my lover and husband—but so much more! He was my

caregiver, teacher, counselor, my strength and security—always my best friend—and greatest joy. God has blessed my entire life, but his greatest gift has been the love I knew as Jerry Call's wife. I only wish we could have had more than our 30 years together but—even since his death, my life has been greatly enriched by the legacy of his love.

Originally, I ended this document here, but my children asked for information about the first few years of our marriage, so:

In Pocatello, I first found a job with a Freight Line as a keypunch operator—boring! I soon found a better-paying one as a secretary at the Union Pacific Railroad Station. The downside of that one was it was on swing shift so my supervisor and I were the only people working in this huge room—and he was a creepy old guy. However, it was only three blocks from our apartment and Jerry always met me when I got off work at midnight.

I went home in July when my Dad had another stroke. He passed away the day after I arrived and I stayed until after his funeral. When I returned to Idaho a day shift secretarial position in the Union Railroad Freight Yard office was open so I worked there until we moved to Chicago in September for Jerry to attend the Loyola School of Dentistry, a part of Loyola University. The main university was in a wealthy area in north Chicago but the dental school was located in a very rundown section on the west side of downtown (to provide them with plenty of low income people for the students to “practice” on).

A cousin of Mother's — son of Samuel Eugene Hill (one of the founders of The Gideons) — lived in Oak Park, a suburb west of Chicago and an easy commute for Jerry. We stayed with them until we could find an apartment. The “apartment” we found was one large room in an old three-story house. There was a hot plate and washbowl in one corner near a closet that we used as a pantry. A bathroom and refrigerator—that we shared with several other families—were located down at the end of a dark hall. I don't know how many other families there were, but there was never any room in the fridge!

We only stayed there a couple of months, then moved to another apartment way out on the south side of Chicago. It was on the second floor of a house—the owners lived downstairs, but we had a separate entrance. (We seemed to always live on the second floor the whole time we were in Chicago and Pocatello.) This apartment had three tiny rooms and an even tinier bath—but it was all ours.

We lived there all winter. I had a job as a secretary to the public relations officer of the Chicago Council of Social Agencies that was located in downtown Chicago, so was easily accessible no matter where we lived. My commute was about an hour long but Jerry's was nearly two hours each way. He had to change trains in downtown Chicago—standing on the elevated train platform in the viciously cold Chicago winter—but he never once complained!

The following summer he worked as a glazier for a company that built greenhouses. He'd never done anything like that. Soon after he started, he fell through the roof of one and cut his wrist badly. He got it stitched up and went back to work the same day!

Later that summer we found another apartment in Oak Park that was much nicer — half of the second floor of a house. We shared the bath but only with one other couple, and Jerry's commute was only about 20 minutes! We lived there for a year, until I went to work for Mr. Bedell, a board member of the Council of Social Agencies. He was an advertising executive in Park Ridge—a nicer suburb quite far out northwest of Chicago. He found an apartment for us just 3-4 blocks from his office.

It was a lovely apartment with a large screened-in porch — wonderful for Illinois summers! We also had use of the laundry facilities in the basement—no more laundromats! Jerry, again, had a long commute and he now was going to school year round — seeing patients at the college's clinic during the summers. Again, he never complained once!

My job was very enjoyable. There were only three of us in the office: Mr. Bedell, Lou Oliver—a girl about my age who was a copywriter—and myself. He had hired me in order to write a course for the advertising staff of newspapers. It was titled "How to Write Advertising That Sells." It was several months "in production" but when it was finished, was an immediate success. Mr. Bedell then traveled a great deal, teaching it. This left Lou and I to handle his other clients, which he gradually phased out.

In the summer of 1950, he and his family made a three-month trip around the world. (He had a client in Australia.) He asked Jerry and I to move into their beautiful home while they were gone. What a treat! We even had a car!

Jerry got one week off school in August and we took our first real vacation since our honeymoon. What a lovely time we had! Pete and Rosalie lived in Iowa at that time so we rented a cabin with them at a lake in northern Wisconsin. On the way—sort of—back to Chicago, Jerry and I visited Polly and family in Minneapolis.

In the winter of 1950-51 I was pregnant with Dan and had a bad bout with the flu. I lost quite a bit of weight. I had dieted and lost 25 pounds the year before so I was really skinny—the only time in my adult life. When I went to the hospital to deliver Dan I weighed less than I did when I got pregnant! I finally quit work in May. Jerry's parents drove east for his graduation in June. After visiting Quinn who was on a mission in Michigan, they took a train back to Ogden and left their truck for Jerry to drive west with our stuff. I flew. We spent the summer at Jerry's parents' home—bed and bath in the basement—much cooler than second floor apartments! Jerry worked as a fruit picker—picking apricots. I bet he was the only fruit picker in the country with a doctor's degree!

(I was very fortunate to bring my first baby to my mother-in-law's house. She was experienced—but soft-spoken—I watched and listened, and learned a lot about mothering! I had never been around a baby before so I had a LOT to learn.)

After Dan was born, Jerry went to Boise and Seattle to take the State Board Exams for a license to practice. He passed both of them but we chose Washington. When Dan was three weeks old, the three of us left (in Dad's truck again) for Olympia. (No seat belts in those days. Dan was in a "car bed" on the seat between us.)

By then my Dad, my Grandfather Tower, and mother's sister Ruth's husband had all passed away. The three widows were living in a large house in Olympia. Mother and Auntie Ruth both worked for the state — Mother in the Dept. of Labor and Industries days, and Auntie Ruth in the Dept. of Licensing nights. Dan and I stayed with them for about a week while Jerry looked at different places to start his practice.

He decided on half of the clinic Dr. H.J. Greer had just built in Mount Vernon. He also found us a first floor apartment on 10th Street, across from the Lincoln School. We moved in early in August. Terry and Nilo came up on the train to retrieve (finally) Dad's truck! Then, just a few weeks later, Helen finally gave up on her marriage and moved to a house on 12th Street in M.V. She wanted her children to have a "father figure" in their lives—but she was a very good mother!

Jerry found a job working evenings and weekends at Al Higgins's gas station on 2nd Street to provide us with cash while he built shelves and counters and ordered equipment and supplies for his office. He finally opened his practice in September. He was immediately very busy so quit his night-and-weekend job, but he and Al were always good friends. They enjoyed many years hunting duck and pheasant together. Dr. Greer and, later, Johnny Jepson often joined them.

Dr. Greer was always a good friend of Jerry's also. He often told me that they had "worked in the same building for 25 years and never had a cross word." A year or so after Jerry started his practice, he, Dr. Greer and Dr. Wright started playing golf one afternoon a week. He also joined the Kiwanis Club Dr. Greer was in.

I was soon invited to visit Chapter H, PEO. Other than that, I didn't have much in the way of social activities that first year.

Before Sally was born a year later, Mother loaned us a down payment and we moved into a new 3-bedroom house on 14th Street. It cost us \$13,000. We had a 15-year mortgage at 3% interest! In 1957, we added a fourth bedroom and a second bath and—two years later—a family room. Helen moved to a house in the next block north on 15th and a couple of years later, built a house on the corner of 15th and Hillcrest. Mother built on the corner of 14th and Hillcrest when she retired in 1956. Grammie Tower moved to Mount Vernon with her.

A few days after Sally was born, Doreen Pratt appeared at the door inviting me over for coffee to meet my neighbors. The next year we enrolled Dan in the Sunday School at the Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church, so I was a member of that church for over 50 years. Over the years I was a Sunday School secretary and treasurer, a deacon, a choir member, an elder and a Stephens Minister.

We were invited to join a dance club, and loved to play bridge and golf. Ed Hartley invited Jerry to join the Barbershop Chorus he directed in Anacortes.

When Mary Pat entered kindergarten, I started working outside my home again—part time at the Washington State Department of Employment Security. When I was asked to take a full-time position there a couple of years later, I decided, instead, to get a teaching certificate.

I enrolled at Western Washington University in Bellingham for a year and then taught fourth grade in Stanwood for a year. I took the next year off because we had three kids in high school (BUSY!) Next, I taught fourth grade in Mount Vernon while I studied for a Master's Degree in Education. I taught children with Specific Language Disabilities (dyslexia) until I retired in 1980.
