



Three Lives, One Lifetime: The Story of a Soldier, Salesman, and Old Man

By

Dan Mills

The Life and Times at the Turn of the
21st Century

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OVERVIEW: THE DECADES

1950 - 1959

Later in the decade, the nation was in the “Golden Age” after the Korean war.

Life in America was idyllic.

I remember Mom came to school when I was in first grade and helped me learn to write. You see I had followed the teachers (Ms. Mears) instructions literally and was mirror writing (I am left handed). I have been told there was some discussion of whether to force me to learn to write with my right hand. In the end I figured out how to get it done. Perhaps one reason my penmanship is not as neat as other left handed people has to do with my perception that everyone was waiting on me because the teacher taught the right handed folks then came back and taught me separately. Who knows what the impact was - perhaps it drove me to learn more or faster than my classmates!

My siblings started their own families during this decade.

1960 - 1969

In the early 1960s, the Clarendon School District integrated.

I remember learning in the 6th or 7th grade that the attitude and perspective that most of my classmates had about minorities (blacks and Hispanics in Clarendon at the time) was fueled mainly by ignorance.

When I graduated from Junior High, I was honored with the 1926 Book Club award. I remember at the time wondering what it was for, and I still don't really know, but it did require I walk up on stage and receive the award.

I struggled in my “coming of age” period and for a couple of years in the late 60's I was very troubled. My lack of self-discipline became so bad I was asked to leave school.

When I was a freshman in high school, we had a brand new teacher who taught English and Spanish. One of my classmates and I became her tormentor where we were constantly making stupid remarks, acting like the class clown.

For that year, my grades in her class sloped downward, and in Spanish, I determined sometime during the year to try and fail. Deliberately failing, how stupid! I wound up with a grade point average of 49 for the year (I recall I had a 78 after the first grading period).

At the end of the year, her contract was not renewed and I felt some responsibility for that (and regret later, but not then) – we were prideful in our stupid, self-serving, destructive way.

About that same time, I developed a taste for beer and decided that my station in life (middle class in Clarendon) was invalid and I started acting like a spoiled brat. I and several of my friends at the time decided that driving all over the Panhandle and putting our parents through living hell when we would disappear to go to school on Friday and not get back home until Sunday evening!

What were they thinking; letting me get my driver's license at such a young age? And then to give me a car on top of that? Of course they were trying to make my life "better" than theirs had been!

My parents asked me if I wanted to finish school and I said yes, so they arranged for me to live with my sister Pauline and her family in Lefors while I finished the last year and a half of school.

I had gotten to know some of my black classmates in Clarendon and determined that the prevailing attitude among the white population of the town was just wrong. Later, after I had moved to Lefors, I was driving between Clarendon and Pampa, south of Lefors and came across this schoolmate on the side of the road with a flat and no spare. Stupid me thought I would just load them (there were 3 kids I think) up in my car and take the flat into Lefors to the gas station and get the tire repaired. I didn't think a thing about Lefors being all white and perhaps I was taking them into the frying pan!

Turns out it was pretty much a confrontation between me and the white guy, who was essentially refusing to do anything to help a black kid, where I eventually wore down and admitted that it was my tire, and that I would get them out of town just as soon as he fixed it! And damned if I didn't high tail it back to their car as quickly as I could, apologizing all the while for taking them there. I had simply thought nothing of it, when obviously I should have either left them at the side of the road and taken the tire myself (alone) or gone on in to Pampa to get the flat fixed.

I had clearly formed my own opinion as to whether I should despise someone based solely on the color of their skin and just could not fathom that others could be so convinced without any evidence.

1970 - 1979

I graduated from Lefors High School in May 1970.

After a quick introduction to college (back in Clarendon) during the summer where the mathematics class I tried to complete was canceled due to lack of sufficient enrollment, I went to Texas City for a month or so where my parents had moved to, then back to Lefors where I got a job with an electrical company for a few months. When the project we were working finished, I joined the Army. As this section is titled an overview, I will provide just that – with details of this and the next decade of my life in “the Soldier” section.

In 1972, I met Dorothy Elaine Pratt and we were married on September 30th of that year.

In 1973, I reenlisted and asked to be sent to Europe. During the next 3 and 1/2 years, Amy and Gabriel were born.

June of 1976 had the family returning to the United States (there was a “reunion” party in Mangum at the time) and my assignment to the US Army Criminal Investigation Command headquarters in Washington DC where I worked in the Investigative Concepts and Doctrine Directorate for 3 years before moving to the Command Group as the Secretary, General Staff Administrative NCO.

1980 - 1989

In 1981, Elaine and I divorced. Very soon thereafter (circumstances were I was divorced two days before I left for Hawaii – alone). I married Carmen Boyer and was reassigned to United States Commander-In-Chief, Pacific headquarters. I worked in the Logistics and Security Assistance Directorate as an Administrative NCO. My marriage to Carmen ended in divorce later that year as well. Carmen and I never lived together again after I left for Hawaii.

In 1983 I returned to the United States where I was assigned to the US Army Command and General Staff College. I was part of the faculty and staff that started the School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS).

I remarried Elaine and we lived together through the end of the decade.

1990 - 1999

I retired from the Army in January 1991 (my last duty day was November 23 (the day before Thanksgiving) 1990.

Immediately after retirement, I worked as a contractor conducting war games for the Army for a short time. Ultimately I took a permanent job with Armed Forces Insurance for several months as a computer technician / business analyst.

A friend offered me an opportunity to become a salesman in his store, Computers ASP. I accepted the opportunity and was relatively successful. When I was approached by another friend to open our own business (I contributed technical talent and ideas, he contributed the money and drive); I accepted. We were not successful with Buffalo Books and Services for a multitude of reasons, not the least of which one of our income streams that we anticipated providing up to 50% of our income (the services part) never materialized. We sold in the time I was directly involved, very little of the "Services" part of our name. As with the 1970s decade entry, see "the Salesman" section for more details.

In 1993, shortly before Gabriel left school, Elaine moved to North Carolina to be near her family and she and I divorced a few months later..

I returned to Armed Forces Insurance as a business analyst and remained there for 5 years. I met and married Carol Ann Ramsey in 1995. We were married on the Army birthday (Flag Day) June 14th.

I joined Computer Sciences Corporation late in the decade as a Business Analyst working on the "Y2K" problem.

Because of my project work, I spent the Turn of the Century on the top floor of a downtown Kansas City office building watching the fireworks though the window.

2000 - 2010

After the Turn of the Century fireworks, we returned to work and made sure the system we had put in place to deal with the year being 2000 and not 1999.

As a result of the upgrades companies put in place to deal with Y2K, their systems were quite fresh and the need for continued upgrades and changes in the new century became unneeded. In early 2003, I became unemployed and remained so for 9 months.

I returned to work at CSC in the fall in the role of administrative support.

In 2006, I left CSC to work as a Business Analyst at Forrest T Jones & Co

2010 - PRESENT

In 2010 we were in the midst of transforming Forrest T Jones and Co. We added an imaging system, with the concomitant process and workflow refinements (you know, the efficiency thing where jobs go away) and a modern policy administration system. We did NOT let anyone go because of these changes, rather natural attrition occurred, and the vacant jobs were then not filled. These innovations positioned the company for the future and provided the means to become the best in class company for our market.

In about 2008, the executive management at FTJ decided that they needed a strategic directive when it came to technology that would allow the Company to remain relevant and competitive. There were several initiatives proposed and by the turn of the decade we were in the depths of implementing them. Although I was not deeply involved in selecting the specific products, I certainly was instrumental in getting the systems installed and working.

I retired on August 31, 2018 from the position of Director, Business System Support where I supervised sixteen people and oversaw 8 business systems. Carol and I began our “traveling road show” which continues to this day – we are making all the trips we always intended to do during our working lifetime but never found time to do.

We seem to be able and willing to travel frequently, usually going somewhere every month or so.

LIFE # 1 – THE SOLDIER

Everyone in small town America dreams of “getting out of town.” Sometimes that is just over to the next, bigger town where you are not known all over town for what you did when you were 5 years old! Sometimes that is “to the big city,” like Amarillo, a whopping 60 miles away where you can “blend in” and become totally anonymous. And then, when we do manage to “get away” we find that, as the saying goes “the grass isn’t always greener on the other side!”

My travels away (just had to get away from the seemingly “predetermined” future that provided nothing but “same old, same old” life we could see of the townspeople) led me in a big adventure that I compare to the vagabond existence of a circus performer – you know, the old cliché that kids always want to “run away to the circus?”

Even when we were still in school, David Earles and I cooked up a scheme to get away by joining the Army. The Army provided opportunities beyond the simple, uncomplicated (and presumably uninteresting) life we saw around us becoming a roustabout or other “dead end” job – remember from the perspective of the teen who had been the wildest kid in West Texas not 18 months before – “settling down” meant sacrificing your future for something stale, dried up, and dull. Just didn’t fit!

On the other hand, the Army offered everything we were interested in. We could “travel the world” and wake up in Singapore or some other exotic locale.

I did try and go to college directly out of high school. I even signed up for summer school at Clarendon College – there just weren’t enough students for the courses I wanted, so I withdrew and tried to find a job. I did manage to get a job as an electrician apprentice that took me through the winter and to the spring. After that, I went to Texas City where Mom and Dad had migrated in search of a future, but decided after a short time that there wasn’t anything there for me either, so I came back to Lefors. Then the desperation of no job began to set in. What was I going to do? Joining the Army made all kinds of sense – it was for a definite period of time – and I could decide later what I really wanted to do.

And so the beginning of the adventure:

David joined the Army about 5 days before I did. He signed up to be an engineer and wound up in a different Brigade than me. I signed up to be in the Army Security Agency and left Amarillo for Fort Leonard Wood on 26 January 1971. Sometime during in-processing at the Reception Station, I

was offered the opportunity to change my enlistment selection – and Explosive Ordinance Disposal seemed to be a challenging opportunity. After all, the whole point of joining the Army was to prove to someone (myself I suppose) that I had the courage to achieve something “brave.”

Like almost every other soldier in my basic training company, I survived the ordeal and we graduated. Unlike most of them however, I had signed up for a specialty that required a top secret security clearance and the necessary background check was not complete. I could not be reassigned on to Advanced Individual Training (AIT) until I had been granted the clearance.

I became what is known in Army circles as a “holdover.” Someone who is held over at one station in anticipation of some event that will then allow them to proceed. The alternative situation is a “snow bird” who lands at an installation before his or her scheduled time. In each case, the unit in question has to find something for the holdover or snowbird to do!

I became the truck driver for the Battalion. I would go to the motor pool each morning, check out a “5 ton” “Stake and Platform” commercial truck and then visit the 5 Company supply rooms where I would load up soiled laundry and take it to the post laundry – picking up the clean laundry from the day before for the previous Company.

Most of my days were spent during this time with about 2 hours of worthwhile effort in the mornings – the laundry runs – followed by long gaps where I was either wandering around the various Company headquarters visiting with the Cadre or sitting in the Battalion Operations section waiting on my next assignment.

Eventually, the Companies reached the stage of training where the activity was not in classrooms and instead required they march long distances to rifle ranges or other distant training areas. I often would be assigned to trail them out to the training area and in from the training area acting as the transportation means for the soldiers that the Drill Sergeants determined were legitimately requiring exemptions from the marching (blisters, turned ankles, other minor injuries not requiring immediate medical attention).

There was also a “buck sergeant” meaning a Sergeant (E-5) assigned to Battalion Operations that, looking back, must have been a bust as a Drill Sergeant but at the time he and I were basically in the same boat – not much to do but “hang out” most days. We developed a habit of disappearing in the early afternoon for a few hours. Of course, we were up to no good!

We would visit the on-post convenience store and pick up a six pack and drive out to a deserted training area where we would proceed to consume the beer! We never got caught (at least that we know of – perhaps the Sergeant Major wasn't as dumb as we thought) and never did anything “bad” or otherwise that would wind us up in front of the Battalion Commander.

After a few months, my security clearance came through and I was assigned to Fort McClellan, AL to partake in the Explosive Ordinance Disposal program – at Fort McClellan they taught the chemical weapons phase. As you might imagine, not having taken chemistry in high school, I was at a very distinct disadvantage. I could take the suit – dressing up in a rubber suit and breathing through a gas mask was tough, but I could get through that. I just didn't know chemistry at all and when they started talking about having to know all the reactions and how to do all that sort of thing, I was miserable at it, couldn't keep up and finally dropped out before they decided that I was not fit (I was only a few days ahead of them).

I was assigned then “for the good of the service” meaning any contractual obligation the Army had to send me anywhere or for any particular training was out the window! They decided that I should become a 71B10 or Clerk/Typist. I went to Fort Jackson, SC for training. Here I knew a little about what I was doing and sailed through the self-paced course in record time (literally faster than anyone had done before). I quickly learned the main regulation for personnel management (AR 600-200) and simply had retention skills that allowed me to quote “chapter and verse” on demand. Because I was so far ahead of the rest of my class, I could become an “Acting Sergeant” and teach. Of course, the acting part was just that, I had no real authority except what the students thought I had – which in the classroom was knowledge and I was pretty powerful compared to them!

After a few weeks, as an instructor, the battalion up the street needed a S1 clerk so I was assigned there. I learned even more about the personnel regulations while I was there and became quite competent at the clerk and Personnel Services NCO (PSNCO) job.

Again, after a few months the Army decided that their investment in my security clearance required a “utilization tour” where they recoup the benefit of the investment so I was reassigned to the 6th Region, Criminal Investigation Command at the Presidio of San Francisco, CA. Here I am, a 19-year-old kid who has now been away from Texas to Missouri, Alabama, South Carolina and now off the California! I might not be a world traveler yet, but I sure had “run away to the circus” and become a cross country traveler.

In San Francisco, I was assigned to the Operations Division where my job was to essentially read, review and bring to the attention of my bosses any criminal intelligence reports that had been filed – their “intelligence” role was in its infancy. Of course I also was the “file clerk” for those reports that were “close hold,” meaning not classified in the technical sense, but still, I was not to talk about them with anyone outside official channels.

I met, dated and married Dorothy Elaine Pratt while in San Francisco. We first lived in a South San Francisco “apartment” complex that was a converted drive in motel dating from the 1950s. We stayed there only a few weeks before moving to a regular apartment in San Francisco. We regularly visited Jack in the Box and IHOP. We also learned to appreciate the delicate aroma of Boone’s Farm Strawberry wine.

Elaine became pregnant and we decided that we needed a monetary boost. I decided that I should reenlist and get the large bonus! The whole \$2,000 would give us a very good start! Of course with the reenlistment I could choose “for the good of the service” or a geographic area. We were adventurous so I chose Europe.

I had not planned that Elaine would not be “command sponsored” and so I went alone for a while. Elaine had been discharged because of pregnancy and wound up staying with her parents in Los Angeles for a few weeks (we had planned on it being months, but John (Elaine’s step dad paid for the plane ticket so she could come to Germany).

I arrived in Germany at Rheine Mein and went to the Replacement Station for a day or two before they decided that I should be assigned to 7th Corp. I then went to the Corp Replacement Station and was further assigned to the 1st Armored Division where I was then assigned to the DISCOM who eventually assigned me the 501ST Supply and Transport Battalion where I was in the Headquarters and Headquarters Company (meaning the soldiers who worked in the battalion headquarters also had a company). I took care of the cooks and overhead folks for the battalion headquarters in the staff sections. As I recall there were mechanics and drivers also assigned to our company.

I remember well that I was very proficient at my job and within a few weeks was moved from the Company headquarters up to Battalion headquarters where I transitioned from completing Morning Reports (the accounting daily of everyone in the Company) to being responsible for reviewing them and making sure all the Battalion people were properly accounted for. I remember that our Legal Clerk was reassigned without an immediate replacement so I took over those responsibilities for a

few weeks, then the PSNCO left without replacement and I took over those duties as well. Pretty soon, I felt like I was there all alone doing the work of 3 people. Eventually the replacements came and I was back to a one-person job and bored. I then decided to send a letter to the local Criminal Investigation Command office asking if they needed any help! They said come on over and let's talk after which I applied for a transfer and it was approved! I spent the next 3 years (I extended 6 months so I was with CID for a full 3 years) working at the Nuremberg Field Office, 2nd Region, United States Army Criminal Investigation Command (USACIDC) or "CID" for short. I worked in the Criminal Intelligence / Drug Investigations office in a non-sworn capacity where I once again was tasked with "analysis" services and filing.

Among the many memories from those years, I recall the year our annual inspection from Headquarters in Washington DC was occurring and I managed, in my role as the Administrative NCO (the top enlisted man – non-sworn, on the staff), to get in a major disagreement with the inspector concerning our forms management. Apparently, I was being accused of inappropriately disposing of outdated forms (in fact I had been following instructions to destroy them) because I ordered the correct forms but the forms supplier continued to send the outdated ones. In any event, I lost the battle (the "gig" stood), but won the battle. The inspector was recalled to headquarters and reassigned.

Another time, my boss had managed to get himself in some trouble about mismanagement and another IG investigation was going to happen in a few months. I happened to be at Region Headquarters and was asked to visit with the Operations Officer (who later became a BG). He advised me that my Criminal Intelligence section could use some benefit of improvement and told me about the Army Intelligence field manuals that likely would make my section "shine." I took the guidance to heart, read the field manuals and applied their principals to our Field Office and Resident Agencies. During the Inspector General's visit I was told that the Criminal Intelligence section (the last area to be examined) would be the "make or break" for my Commander's career – if we did not do "very well" he would likely be relieved of command and "drummed out of the Army" short of attaining retirement eligibility. Turns out my section came through the inspection with "commendable – no deficiencies noted" which turned the inspection into a cause for celebration (the root cause of the Commander's problems – too much celebration).

Both Amy and Dee (now Gabriel) were born in Germany. We lived at first in a small, upstairs apartment (the stairs were outside) on the local economy just outside Montieith Barracks in Furth, Germany where the 1st Armored Division, Division Support Command was stationed. We had three

rooms (bedroom, living room and kitchen) with a shared bathroom. We had diesel heat and on demand electric water heaters. If you wanted to take a bath, you had to heat the water (and the room) before you began. We had a subsistence existence and ate “beans and fried potatoes” way more often than either of us liked. Amy had diapers and milk though!

We had a 1957 Volkswagen Beetle that barely ran and had rust through the passenger floor boards. As was usually the case, the vehicle would not normally pass inspection but with a little discussion the inspector (a German civilian) could be persuaded to cut soldiers a break, with the appropriate face saving “contribution” of alcohol. [What a lousy job that must have been – having to deal with dirt poor soldiers who had desperation in their eyes with vehicles that most likely should not be driven at all – but also realizing that there were young wives and children depending on these rust buckets – compassion rather than logic had to rule the day – and supervisors who didn’t ask too many questions]

It didn’t take long before we became “command sponsored” and were allowed to move into Army housing and what mostly went away – the absolute dependency on that car – the commissary and PX were within walking distance now!

When we returned to the United States, we spent 45 days on leave. We stayed for a time at Mom and Dad’s but mostly camped out at Lake Altus. We had a little blow up dingy and a tent. The family held a welcome back weekend at the lake and the family came out and we had a “jolly good time.”

My assignment was to the headquarters of the Criminal Investigation Command at Falls Church, VA where I was assigned to the Investigative Concepts and Doctrine Directorate where I helped modernize the reporting scheme from formal reports every 30 days to a more informal system where reports were sent electronically (via the existing messaging system). After about 3 years I was moved to the Command Group where I was the Administrative Sergeant for the Secretary to the General Staff (SGS). I worked in that position with a view of making the interpersonal relationships between the command group and staff Directories. I think I was successful in changing a contentious atmosphere into a cooperative one to a great extent, hopefully improving effectiveness and efficiency.

Then I met someone that changed my life and career in a very dramatic and negative way. I want to make this perfectly clear, what happened was MY fault, and although Carmen was involved, she was not the real source of my mistakes. She and I became involved in an “affair” that eventually

wound up ruining any chance I had for another promotion (the truth is, my lack of a college degree was the real reason). I divorced Elaine and she took Amy and Dee to North Carolina. The Army decided I need to be reassigned very quickly and I was transferred to Hawaii. That was an interesting choice I was offered in 1981 – do you want to go to Turkey or Hawaii? My choice was obvious to everyone!

In Hawaii, I was assigned to US Army Element, United States Pacific Command at Camp H. M. Smith on Oahu. I was initially placed in the J3, Operations Directorate, but after a short time it was determined that my security clearance situation would not allow that. I was then moved to the J4, Logistics and Security Assistance Directorate administrative staff. While there, I did a great deal of alcohol consumption and contributed to the effectiveness and efficiency by designing and implementing the first automated travel expense planning and management system (they were using ledger books when I arrived). Essentially my application was the initial “spreadsheet” usage in the accounting functions of CINCPAC using an administrative system (word processing). It was so beneficial, they thought I was a genius!

Army Rank	Date of Rank
Pvt (E-1)	27 Jan 1971
PV2 (E-2)	27 May 1971
PFC (E-3)	27 Jul 1971
SPC (E-4)	17 May 1972
SP5 (E-5)	7 May 1973
SSG (E-6)	18 Aug 1976
SFC (E-7)	10 Mar 1981

LIFE # 2 – THE SALESMAN

Of course, my planning for military retirement had been so efficient and effective (not) that I just assumed I would find a job, probably in November and be able to collect a paycheck while still technically on active duty. It didn't work out that way.

I did spend a few weeks in March 1991 working as a contractor on post working as an OPFOR guy, but that played out pretty quickly.

I then went to work at Armed Forces Insurance as a Management Information Systems specialist (I was hired as a PC troubleshooter mainly) but wound up learning their system and became what is commonly referred to today in IT circles as a Business Analyst.

After a few months, I left to work with a friend I had met shopping for computers. Jessie Jones (LTC, USA, Retired) was part owner in Computers ASP in downtown Leavenworth and asked me to help as a salesman / office manager.

I did that for several months, then left to join George Knapp (Major, Retired) as a partner in an endeavor called Buffalo Books and Services, Inc. We tried to create a bookstore and services company (services being creating slides and such for CAS3 students). George felt strongly that the AAFES bookstore in Bell Hall should offer used books, but the leadership of the College would not allow it. Each officer student was forced to purchase new books, with no market to allow transfer from the current class to the next – forcing an expense on some officers, such as doctors and nurses, for Clausewitz "On War" that they would never refer to again in their lifetime. Although we were not successful as a bookstore, we were successful in getting the College leadership to change the policy – and put another nail in our coffin as an enterprise. We were not successful as a corporation, but I can also not blame the policy of used books at the AAFES bookstore as being the culprit – we did not have a good business plan – we did not cover the contingencies appropriately and we went broke – simple as that.

During this period, Amy was married and had a baby (Alex).

Dee followed Amy's example and dropped out of high school.

Elaine reached her limit with me and decided to return to North Carolina. We were later divorced. Dee later went to North Carolina to live with her.

LIFE # 3 – LIFE AFTER THE BUSINESS FAILURE

I asked and was allowed to return to Armed Forces Insurance into the same position I had left. After a few years, they made a decision to disband the MIS positions and I was moved to Marketing. After a couple of weeks it became clear that the arrangement would not be a good long term fit and I left.

From AFI, I went to Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC) as a business analyst working on a Variable Annuities System. I helped with the conversion of this system from 2 digit year calculations dealing with Y2K issues. During this time I also was asked to write a plan for the night of December 31, 1999. I was able to produce a detailed plan that included an hour by hour event list stretching from the start of normal batch processing at around 6:00 PM all the way through year end processing on January 1st. This 100 page tomb was presented to the senior management of the Financial Services Group of CSC (our headquarters in Austin) and adopted as the model for other client support teams to use. Since my system was unique, while they shared a different system, they had an easier time and their plans were less bulky, generally ranging in the 30 page category.

I was next presented with the opportunity to move the VAS system from the CSC mainframe to our client's machine in Hartford, CT. The mainframe environment at Hartford was different than the CSC environment and therefore many adjustments were needed, it was not a drag and drop proposition by any means. It took a year to make the move, but eventually it was done. As you might imagine, moving the system to their environment was "working myself out of a job." After the move, I was given an opportunity to work on a different team, but that client very quickly also severed the relationship with CSC and I became expendable.

I spent 9 months without work and eventually was hired back at CSC as an administrative assistant – working for a supervisor who I did not get along with very well. Marti Pickner was quite a bit of an overbearing control freak. I eventually reached a compromise with Marti and she relaxed somewhat in her desire to control my every move. I was allowed to train as a Six Sigma Green Belt and participated in several projects – including several for the Global Infrastructure Services department, where I obviously made a reputation as being helpful since they requested my assistance on several occasions.

After a few years, Marti was let go and I reported to another manager who asked me to take a new position. I agreed to take this position with the stipulation that I be returned to my salary from when I was a project manager – a raise of almost \$9,000. Steve Sohl agreed and obtained management approval (but not HR approval I discovered). During this period I had interviewed with Forrest T Jones and Co about a business analyst / project manager position. While waiting for approval of the raise, I received a verbal offer from FTJ for a salary representing \$3,000 more than my agreement with Steve. In speaking with Steve, I took the position that he and I had a handshake agreement, and as long as he came through, I would stay. The HR folks dragged their feet, and demanded that I provide written proof of the offer from FTJ. I took the position that the agreement I made with Steve was prior to the FTJ offer, and the FTJ offer was irrelevant. After about 10 days of listening to various excuses, I determined that Steve's bosses would not be able get the necessary approvals and I concluded that Steve's immediate boss was passive at best about the move. I walked out in the middle of the day in a fit of anger and accepted the offer of FTJ.

My responsibilities at FTJ were different than at CSC in that I did not have any strings on resources – my projects were simply one of many tasks on the plates of developers and often project work was set aside while other, seemingly more urgent tasks were attended to. The result was that project success was largely a matter of personal intervention on my part to cajole resources into performing project related tasks.

While at FTJ I was promoted to Manager and subsequently to Director, eventually retiring in August 2018, under one of those situations like Daddy – it was a “principled decision.” Was it the best for Carol and I – yes. Could I have worked several more years and acquired more “wealth?” Probably.

I do not regret retiring when I did, and Carol certainly doesn't regret retiring at 60!

PLACES I'VE LIVED

Places I've Lived	From	To
Childress, TX	6/12/1952	Circa Jan 1953
Clarendon, TX	Circa Jan 1953	Circa December 1968
Lefors, TX	Circa December 1968	November 1970
Texas City, TX	November 1970	December 1970
Lefors, TX	December 1970	January 1971
Fort Leonard Wood, MO	January 1971	June 1971
Fort McClellan, AL	June 1971	July 1971
Fort Jackson, SC	July 1971	January 1972
Presidio of San Francisco, CA	January 1972	December 1972
Nuremberg, Federal Republic of Germany	January 1973	June 1976
Falls Church, VA	August 1976	June 1981
Fort Shafter, HI	June 1981	April 1983
Fort Leavenworth / Leavenworth, KS	April 1983	Present

ADDENDUMS:

CHAPTER ONE – THE BEGINNING

Marie Lowe © 2016

Ethyl's moans could be heard from behind the flimsy curtain that separated the bed from the kitchen. Ten year old Golden, the oldest Mills girl, was helping her mama birth another baby. Lola and Beatrice went on peeling on their pile of turnips while J. W. and Thomas played toy soldiers in the dirt floor. Bev kicked up the dirt while he paced the floor! "God damn it!" he bellowed, "when is that woman gonna have that kid and get back to cookin my supper? You'd think by now she'd have enough practice with birthin babies to get it over with quick!"

Golden wiped her mother's damp brow. She remembered the last time – when J. W. was born – "Mama." she thought, "didn't moan as much, or sweat as much then either." Another groan rose from Ethyl's throat and when Golden checked under the bloody sheet all she could see was a black, hairy head sticking out of her mother's privates. Golden cupped the baby's head in her hands – soon a shoulder spurt out. She knew from before that you couldn't rush this part. The baby was in a hurry, though, and just squirted right out into her hands. "It's a boy, Mama! It's another boy!" bubbled a delighted Golden. Golden did what her mama said; she tied two pieces of string around the cord and cut the cord into with a paring knife. Then, she handed the tiny baby boy to her mother and whispered, "Mama, he's so tiny!"

Ethyl held her newborn son to her breast and urged him to suck. He didn't cry much – just a pitiful little cry like a kitten's meow. "I'll call this one Guy – Guy Lee – Guy after Daddy and Lee for General Robert E. Lee. He was a fighter – maybe the name will give this tiny boy of mine a fightin chance," murmured a hopeful Ethyl. Thus, Guy Lee Mills entered this impoverished family on July 18, 1915. The tiny Guy's crib was a shoebox – General Robert E. Lee's namesake slept in a shoe box – and sometimes a dresser drawer.

I AM A MAN OF MY WORD

Guy worked building shelter belts across Oklahoma and Texas, he and Nina married, had children, he worked as a lineman for West Texas Utilities for 15 years and then took a transfer from Childress to Clarendon to be one of two servicemen (master of all tasks from taking care of the sub-station; to replacing blown fuses in transformers throughout the immediate area; to repairing appliances; selling appliances even; and the most difficult and emotionally difficult job of all: turning off people's lights when they had not paid).

If you think about that particular task, taking away basic services that everyone had come to rely on, when they apparently are at their most financially trying state, listening to all the "hate and bile" coming from their mouths, yes directed at you, but really meant for their situation; it changes you in ways you can't explain – makes you a little "callous," "uncaring," "closed off to emotions," but mostly "angry at the world!"

He did that job a number of years before his partner retired. They lived just a couple of blocks from our house. Within a month of retirement, he had a stroke and dropped dead in his back yard!

Everyone has heard about "the company" and the dispassionate "corporate mentality" that sometimes makes decisions "cold and calculating."

The Company decided to hire a recent college graduate that knew nothing about "the job" and expected Guy to teach him. Guy saw the handwriting on the wall and told the local boss (Mr. Pitts), "I'll train him, but if you expect him to become my boss when you retire, I'll quit."

And so it came to pass that the trainee was appointed as Guy's boss shortly before Mr. Pitts retirement. True to his word, Guy, with more than 25 years service to West Texas Utilities quit his job. And oh, by the way, his spoiled youngest son was just "coming of age" and was an undisciplined terror!

He tried starting his own business and decided to sell his home and move to Texas City, where Donald had joined a business that he would eventually buy and pass on to Marty and Greg.

That didn't exactly work out either and he eventually took a job as the electrical superintendent for the City of Mangum, Oklahoma where he finished out his career.

DISTURBING THE PEACE

The tightness and burning in my throat produced that same old feeling of an inability to breathe. Finally, the sobs came and the tears flowed. It was a couple of moments before I could speak; the burning was so intense. Charlene had just told me Stephen was going to be okay. The heart catheterization revealed blockage of the LAD coronary artery and some blockage to the circumflex, but he should be fine with medication. The doctor said Stephen might be moved out of the ICU tonight to a room and that he would need to forgo any golf tournaments for about three weeks.

Just yesterday, I thought about my father and how unhappy and miserable he was all his life. Stephen had Guy Mills' characteristics – angry all the time, always felt he knew more than his bosses, and was generally a grumpy old man before his time. Guy's countless episodes of rage expressed by, "God damn, son-of-a-bitch," echoed in my ears. Guy was not a violent man; on the contrary, he was a quite, sentimental, loving father who had trouble dealing with anger. Anger management classes might have made it a little easier for him, had that been in vogue or available during the depression when his anger turned inward and left him powerless over it. When he would go into his rages, Nina Faye would say, "Now, Guy . . ." She was not exactly afraid of him, but the anger he directed toward her left Nina unwilling to discuss unpleasant issues and to avoid any situation where he might get upset. Now, that I think about it, he was controlling and manipulative with these outbursts . . . "I'm frightened! Don't anybody upset me! I might fly off the handle . . ." Everybody in the family did not want to "get Daddy upset." If Daddy got upset, then we all paid the price. Like the time Robert and Donald were adolescents and got into a pillow fight. Pauline and I hid under our covers upon hearing all the screaming and yelling. Daddy whipped both of them with his belt. I remember hearing my mother cry, "Guy, if you don't stop you are going to kill them." He stopped, both parents cried. Robert and Donald took all the blame, . . . "We shouldn't have made Daddy so mad." So, the family learned feelings got buried . . . Mother always pretended everything was okay, and we all learned to hide our emotions and suppress our anger. Only when a near miss or a tragedy occurs do we allow the tears to flow. After all, we are the product Guy and Nina Mills!

I realize today, we all suffered! I knew it before today, but today I can say it out loud. I used to think it was only I, but now I know it affected each one of my siblings in a different way. Pauline opted out with a bipolar disorder. Sometimes she escapes reality by going crazy, which gives her a short respite from the meaningless day-to-day existence she experiences. Robert's three failed marriages are testament to how he fails to communicate with loved ones. His anger and rage expressed itself in violence toward his daughter's boyfriend whom he nearly killed. Didn't Robert know he was the one being hurt? Donald. Mother's precious Donald was always the second in line only to Robert. They were

best buddies growing up and throughout their lifetime have been the best of friends. But now, Robert says Diana, Donald's second wife "Took him away from me and moved him to Tyler." After all, King Robert, held court and Donald was his court jester. Now, Robert has no one to hold court for. Now, he is as insignificant as the rest of us! Stephen. If one ever knew a child who was a mama's boy, Stephen would be recognized as a daddy's boy. He loved Daddy and for many years worked side-by-side with him as an electrician. I suppose he was always looking for Daddy's approval. When we were kids, Stephen and baby brother Danny got to both sit next to Daddy at the dinner table. It was an honor and family ritual! They sat next to Daddy – across from each other . . . the one on the right was left-handed Danny, and the one on the left was right-handed Stephen. Danny. I remember taking care of Danny as a baby. Pauline and I played with him as if he was our very own live doll. We dressed him up in doll clothes and even applied make-up and lipstick. He was such a darling baby! I don't know why Daddy's rage turned toward Danny – it was so intense. I remember Daddy was very hard on him for reasons I cannot explain. Once, Pauline and I witnessed Daddy's rage toward Danny with a willow-switch spanking. I remember hearing Pauline scream, "Daddy, stop! Can't you see you are killing him?" This could account for Danny's moving in with Pauline and her family for his last year of high school. Of course, Danny was spoiled – he was the baby of the family! Danny could have material possessions because he was the last child at home. Mother and Daddy had more money to dole out to him. They had learned the lessons of child rearing with the rest of us. As each of us matured, the rules stretched because our parents learned from their previous mistakes. These were Mother's statements when the rest of the kids complained about how easy they were on Danny or each kid left at home when the others married.

Finally, here Marie sits uncomfortable with the emotion of crying. I hear Charlene's words, "I still remember when you ran away." And my response, "Yes. And it hasn't gotten better after all these years. I recalled just yesterday how miserable Daddy must have been all his life. It's extremely sad to go through life so miserable!" That's when the tears started, . . . I wasn't sure why I was crying. Stephen was okay! I think I was feeling the lifetime of misery and it hurts too badly! The burning throat and inability to swallow or catch my breath feels like I'm trying to swallow a rock that got stuck. Once the rock passes, the tears and sobs come out from hiding. It's like today we played hide-and-seek and I'm the one who got caught. Now, it's my turn to feel miserable for the rest of the day, or until I can take a nap so these awful emotions go back into hiding. Only then, can I face the world without tears. Only then, can I pretend to be confident, smart, self-assured, intelligent, knowledgeable, and an expert on my unit. Only then, can I feel at peace!

Marie Lowe July 19, 2004

WINTER

Winter teases us with her coy, moist, cool breath

Inviting us to frolic in her snowy flakes and dunes;

We are captured by her freezing, icy grip

While confined to the dark dungeon of her season.

Suddenly, she mischievously sends a warm sultry kiss

Thawing our hearts and melting the frigid arms engulfing us all;

She awakens us with her warm, gloriously sunny, blustery play

All while reminding us of her past – forbidding and icy cold days.

Tiring of our happy, playful ways, she blows her frigid breath

Cloaking us under the darkened days of a white-out-storm;

On, and on, and on it goes until her season nears its end

Then with one last heavy, deep breath she slowly fades away.

Marie Lowe ©

January 12, 2017

THE PASSING

I'd like to tell you a story that is uncomfortable for me to write and, I'm sure will be uncomfortable for you to read, but write it I must. The story is the story of my Mother's death.

My mother died after suffering for years from the disease of emphysema, a disease that robs your body of breath very slowly and painfully. She died on July 29, 1994 at 4:00 PM in the Saint Anthony's Hospice, Amarillo, TX. Those are the facts.

My Mother entered the hospital in mid-July suffering not only from advanced emphysema, but also with a blockage of her bowels. The blockage required surgery to correct, but due to the advanced condition of her lung disease, the prognosis for surviving the surgery itself was marginal at best.

Anyone who knows my Mother, knows one thing. If force of will is involved, she will win. With the knowledge that the Texas Iron Lady was involved, my Mother decided to undergo the surgery. I and my brother from South Texas were called to Mother's death bed on July 20, 1994. We arrived later that day to find that true to form, Mother's will had served her well. She had survived the surgery and appeared to be recovering well. Relief! Once again, Mother's will has won out over the Angels. We both stayed a couple of more days to make sure she was recovering, then on July 24, we both went back to our families and work, believing the worst was over, at least for a few months.

On July 27 we both received the chilling phone call we all wish we never have to receive. "Mother is dying," my sister, Marie (the Registered Nurse in the Air Force) said through the tears. I listened intently as she said, yes, Mother had taken a turn for the worst and her survival was to be measured in hours, not days. Could I come back soon? Yes, I'll be there as quickly as I can. Yes, boss lady, I have to leave again. Take all the time you need, the job will be here when you get back, Let us know how things go. OK. Wild trip across Kansas and to Amarillo. Speeding ticket. Intense anxiety. I arrive.

She's alive! Force of will. Yes, that is what it was. Pure willpower.

My brother, Robert, the oldest of six children, the man we all expect to "stand up" for us all and to keep up the fire, turns to me with tearful eyes and says "I can't understand how anyone who sees this and smokes can continue to do so!" Such suffering my Mother endured. And he had to watch. You see, Mom and Dad moved to the same town as my brother five years ago. They wanted to settle in and get ready for that awful day. Robert, as the oldest, was trusted with all the details. The will, the funeral fund, the insurance, the Medicare, the bills, the everyday problems. Robert, bless his heart, managed to keep his head up and his eyes dry though it all except for the one moment.

She stays in the Critical Care Unit a few hours, then the Doctor recommends she be moved to the Intensive Care Unit (two rooms down), as she is no longer critical because of the surgery. She stays in the ICU for awhile (time is now a blur, we know it is passing but we are oblivious to it) before the medical staff tell us what we really didn't want to hear, but knew was true. She was dying. Marie, who we had been relying on for months for her medical expertise, becomes the one we all turn to and ask "Is that right? Tell us it isn't so, PLEASE!"

Yes, she could choose the ventilator and delay meeting her Mother and Father in Heaven, or she could not. She chose not.

The Doctor tells us about an alternative to the ICU which might make Mother's remaining hours more comfortable and allow the family better access to her. He recommends we move Mother to the Hospice run by the Hospital. It's a separate building from the hospital. No, it's not a place where people go to die.

It's a place where people who have reached the limits of medical technology go to either get better or not. In the beginning the distinction seems nebulous and callous. My God in Heaven, how wrong we were!

Physically the Hospice is not much different than an ordinary hospital wing. Emotionally the Hospice is filled with feelings that hospitals are not. The sterile atmosphere ends somewhere in the hallway between the Hospital and Hospice, my guess is about one inch from the Hospital end.

My Mother and Father were blessed with six children, four boys and two girls. First came three boys, Robert, Donald and Stephen; then two girls Pauline and Marie, then I came along last. At the hospice we could all be in Mother's room at once. In fact, they put her in a double room to accommodate our family. We were all there, my Father, Mother's brothers and sisters, my brothers and sisters, their children and their children's children. After all, love can make sick people well, can't it?

Mother was one of six herself. She had three sisters and two brothers. The three who were not too sick or caring for intensely sick spouses came to help my Mother. Love could make her better! We had faith. She had demonstrated such force of will before, we all believed she would will herself back to us. All we had to do was be there and let her know we were there. My brother from south Texas and I knew it was true. She had done it all too often before. We arrive and she gets better.

We all do what we can for each other. Sleep is something nobody gets much of. Thursday night is not too tough. Mother seems to fall into a less painful sleep than during the day Thursday. Friday goes by in stages. They remove the only remaining tube from Mother's body. A few hours later they change the oxygen from her nose to a mask. Later they remove the mask and oxygen altogether.

They had told us that there will be several instances where her breathing will appear to stop, only to start again. Her shallow, painful breaths get more and more shallow, less and less frequent. Finally the end. Peacefulness. Sobs. I hear myself, although I'm not there saying it, "Oh my God!"

Moments later, after we have called the medical staff in, we all, husband, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, grandchildren and great-grandchildren move out into the courtyard adjoining the hospice.

It had been a partly cloudy day. Just a few clouds overhead at various times throughout the day.

As the last of the family enters the courtyard, tears falling from all our cheeks, it begins to rain from a sky that was sunny not a minute before. The rain lasts only a minute or two.

Do you believe in God?

Dan Mills

August 1994

By Dan Mills

Intro: Edward de Bono authored a book, “Six Thinking Hats” in which he lays out six ways of thinking about things¹. My approach to this writing will be similar to his pattern and will be written from a “white hat” perspective [just the facts] (my preferred style most people agree). Hopefully none of the work will contain “yellow hat” or creatively contrived material.

My early childhood was spent in the utopian atmosphere known as middle class America. I was the sixth of six children. My oldest sibling is 14 years older than I am. The result was my childhood was protected and watched over quite closely by family members.

When I started school (first grade – we didn’t have kindergarten) I misunderstood the teachers instructions about how to write and was “mirror writing.” Being left-handed, when I followed the teacher’s (Mrs. Mears) instructions to the letter, I wound up doing things exactly backwards.

I somehow was awarded a citizenship award in the 8th grade from the 1926 Book Club. I never really understood what the rules were, but hey, they gave me a pin.

My freshman and sophomore years in high school were marked with a rebellious, drunken rampage that culminated with being asked to leave school.

I then decided that I wanted to finish school, so my parents arranged for me to live with my sister in another town while I did that. My years in Lefors provided me with a second chance that I took advantage of and completed my high school education.

After graduating in 1970, I joined the Army in January 1971 a week after my best friend from high school, David Estes joined. David and I were in different parts of the Fort during the next few months while we went through basic training and David completed engineer branch AIT. I had signed up for explosive ordinance disposal (bomb squad) training which required a Top Secret security clearance. It took 9 months for the clearance to come through, during which I was a holdover, meaning I could not go to AIT until it came through. I spent the time driving a truck for the

¹ http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTED_07.htm

various supply sergeants in the battalion. I made friends with the company clerk during this period. Smitty was married, but his wife stayed in Pennsylvania while he completed his 2 years of service.

The Army I joined was in disarray. The Vietnam war had caught the Army off guard, and the political turmoil at home did not provide much help. For whatever reasons, many of the seasoned NCOs that were in the Army at the start of the war either got out of the Army, retired, or became casualties. Manpower issues were so impacted by the long war and draftee quality that in many cases, college students (not graduates necessarily) were drafted, promoted to positions of authority in a very short time period, and put in leadership positions over new recruits. The result was many times, these 19 year old sergeants were unseasoned and unable to fulfill the needs of the Army. Officers were ill equipped to require that these “shake and bake” sergeants live up to the responsibilities. The result of all these events turned out where the Sergeants and Staff Sergeants who were the first line supervisors, failed to supervise their subordinates. As a result, misbehavior of various forms became tolerated – or worse yet – ignored. Officers tried to deal with this problem by taking over many of the traditional responsibilities of the NCO Corps. That became a drag on the things young officers should otherwise be doing and perpetuated a feeling of distrust between the NCOs and young officers.

When my security clearance came through, I went to Ft McClellan, Alabama for EOD training. The course work started with a chemical phase, which I had been warned would be difficult for me since I had not taken chemistry or physics in high school. After a few weeks of instruction (where I did miserably academically) I dropped out before they forced me out. The Army decided I would make a good clerk, so I was sent to Fort Jackson, SC to become a clerk-typist (Military Occupational Specialty 71B). I finished the self-paced course designed to take between 6 and 8 weeks in 4 weeks. The school asked that I be allowed to stay at the school as an instructor and the Army allowed that. I became, not a shake and bake, but an Acting Sergeant – the same effect – while really remaining as a PFC.

A few weeks later, I was moved to another battalion within the same brigade to fill a vacancy they had for a clerk-typist. After a few weeks in that position, I was given a special assignment by Army headquarters to the US Army Criminal Investigation Command (USACIDC) Region Headquarters in San Francisco, CA.

In San Francisco, I worked in the Operations Section and handled criminal intelligence reports. I met and married my first wife, Dorothy Elaine Pratt while stationed in San Francisco.

I reenlisted and received a \$2000 bonus and was allowed to choose a duty assignment. I chose Europe and was assigned to the 1st Armored Division, Division Support Command, 501st Supply and Transport Battalion. I was a company clerk in the Headquarters Company for several months until I was asked to move up to Battalion headquarters. After a few weeks, the Personnel Services NCO was reassigned and I performed in that position for several weeks until a replacement arrived. In each of these positions I performed well above average and was appreciated greatly by my superiors. I sent a letter to the local CID office when the new PSNCO arrived asking if they had a vacancy. Fortunately for me, they did and I was allowed to transfer to the Nuremberg Field Office, Second Region, USACIDC. As my three year tour was ending, I was approached by the Field Office Commander and asked to extend my tour by 6 months, which I did. My two natural children were born in Germany. Amy and Dee were both born in Nuremberg at the 130th General Hospital.

When we left Germany, I asked to continue my affiliation with the CID and was assigned to the headquarters in Washington, DC. I became a member of the Investigative Concepts and Doctrine Directorate and helped in the modernization of the reporting system and new investigative tools and equipment such as camera sets. I was instrumental in many decisions, not the least of which was that formal status reports were replaced with informal messages, allowing investigators to spend much more time investigating and less time writing formal perfectly spelled reports.

After three years working in the ICD directorate, I was asked to become the Admin NCO for the Secretary of the General Staff at USACIDC. There were organizational challenges in the Command Group in that the various staff departments felt that the SGS and Chief of Staff were “nit picking” everything they did and the relationship had become adversarial over time. I accepted the challenge to improve the relationship and began by simply propping the door to my office open and placing my desk directly behind the entry. Nobody could get in to the Command Group – of course there was another entry that could be used (but not usually). I put a chair right by the door and encouraged visitors to sit and talk with me about what they were delivering and what was happening in their Departments. Some of the information I gathered in this way I presented to the SGS (my boss), but mostly I just listened. The SGS and I also took to hand delivering documents that had been rejected by reviewers to either the principals or their administrative staff with a personal explanation of why the documents were being returned for additional action.

I became romantically involved with a female NCO and was relieved of my position. My punishment was to be sent to Hawaii. Elaine and I were divorced and I married Carmen.

In Hawaii, I was initially assigned to the Tank with a temporary Special Compartmented Information security clearance. My final security clearance was not granted because of my financial difficulties and I went to the Logistics and Security Assistance Directorate (retaining my Top Secret clearance). While there, I developed a Planning and Budgeting Authorization Committee (PBAC) and Working PBAC where, rather than each travel request being considered in isolation, plans for the entire budget period were considered initially in total, and the execution of the approved list of travel did not require special approval. The system required that each of the 8 Colonels or Navy Captains look at their annual travel requests and put them into 3 categories – “must do”, “should do”, and “would like to do.” The group would then meet and review the available funding against the category 1, 2 and 3 planned events. When shortfalls were observed, the group decided which of the trips would not be approved. They met quarterly and reviewed the next quarter. A management reserve of 20% of the remaining unspent funds was retained and allocated by executive management as needed during the year for unplanned trips or released for allocation by the PBAC each quarter. During this time, Carmen and I were divorced.

In April 1983 I was assigned to Fort Leavenworth. I don't understand why, but when I received orders to leave Hawaii, Commodore “Smoke” Wilson determined that he was obligated to write a letter to my new commander outlining how great an asset I had been to his office. Never before in my career had such an event occurred and I attempted to discourage it. In any event, the letter was written and BG Crosbie Saint (later to become 4 star NATO commander) received the letter prior to my arrival. When I arrived, there were already plans in the works for how to utilize my ingenuity. When I left Hawaii, I visited Elaine, Amy and Dee in North Carolina. I was not happy with the life I had forced on them and asked Elaine to come to Fort Leavenworth. She did and we were remarried.

I was assigned to the Department of Academic Operations along with LTC Hal Winton and LTC Doug Johnson to put together what later became known as the Advanced Military Studies Program. While LTCs Winton and Johnson worked with LTC (P) Huba Wass de Czege (later BG) on the curriculum, I worked to get copywrite approval for the published materials, copies of the materials, facilities and all the logistical and administrative steps needed to present instruction.

There were two principle obstacles that we (BG Wass de Czege and I) overcame early in this process. I went to the CGSC Resource Management Office (the supply sergeant worked in this environment) and obtained permission to have a separate hand receipt from the post Property Book Office. This allowed me to work directly with the warehouse on post. I then went to Post Headquarters and spoke with the Property Book Officer [PBO] (a civilian) who said skeptically, "OK, I'll check." Obviously, someone had said something to someone in power (I suppose it was then LTG Carl Vuono [later General and Chief of Staff of the Army]). A few days later the PBO called and told me everything was a go and that I could order whatever I wanted – there was no statement to the effect "within reason." She had been told to give me "whatever he wants."

The second obstacle to our success, which we had to deal with for the entire 1st year of instruction, was not having a dedicated place to hold class. I had recalled that class was held in various rooms throughout the building, but I recently was reminded by retired BG Dave Gross (a student in that first class) that they also met in the SCIF (Secure Compartmented Information Facility) where all the Specially Compartmented Information [signature level (a signature is kept of everyone who has had access to a particular piece of information)] is kept. I remember class happening in the cafeteria a couple of times.

The Department of Tactics was under then Colonel (later BG) Stan Cherry and he had a facility in the south side of Flint Gym where he had mock ups of Armored Personnel Carriers arranged to represent a brigade Tactical Operations Center (TOC). The facility was used periodically during the year, but mostly sat unused. He determined that there was more space in the facility than he needed, and agreed to find somewhere else to conduct his TOC exercises. BG Huba Wass de Czege approached General Vuono about renovating the south side of the gym building to support our instruction. General Vuono approved the initial work – create two seminar rooms, administrative space, and a larger room where both seminars could receive combined instruction – guest speakers and such. BG Wass de Czege and I met with the engineers and gave a broad brush of our vision and the relative size of the rooms. The engineers did their magic and our problem of where to meet each day was solved prior to the second year start.

During the second year, a decision was made to expand the class size to 4 seminars, which mean we needed to expand. We had additional space to the east within the south side of the facility so we received approval to renovate that space as well. We later took over the north side (the gym) and the building was renamed from Flint Gym to Flint Hall. BG Wass de Czege had a vision to put an upper level mezzanine around the edge of the gym floor, but for the first time I ever recall,

General Vuono said he didn't have enough money to get it done. That was the only time I recall BG Wass de Czege asking General Vuono for anything that was not approved.

There were other changes to the School during this period that is documented elsewhere and I need not go into them here.

In late 1989 I was put on notice that I would be assigned to Korea for a one year tour. This notice came just outside the 13 month window before my 20 years of service would be completed, during which I could decline the assignment and retire – I had no choice but to take the assignment – not that I wanted to decline anyway. I looked forward to going to Korea for a year and returning to Fort Leavenworth for another 3 years before reaching the mandatory retirement length of 24 years.

The College could not find a replacement for me, and Colonel Bill Janes asked me if I would stay. I reminded him that I had been there almost 7 years already and it would probably be good for the School if I left – new blood and all. Anyway, he was able to convince me that I should stay, but I only acquiesced to his trying to get my reassignment cancelled – I did not want to appear to be trying to “get out of my fair share.” He was successful (I thought) and I was off the hook.

A Sergeant Major at MILPERCEN (Military Personnel Center – precursor to HRC) took exception to officers being involved and put me back on levy for Korea (with a reporting date only 3 weeks from the day I was notified) - this time within the 13 month window. I chose to retire rather than allow the School to be put in such a position and submitted my retirement papers exactly 13 months prior to my planned retirement. I was a blackbird (known loss) for a long time. During this time period, the College was able to obtain a replacement NCO and the Director of Exercises (Lieutenant Colonel position) was reassigned. I was asked to fill in during the critical tactical exercises phase of instruction (4 weeks) and worked closely with Colonel Janes in scheduling and overseeing the various exercises and war games.

I went on terminal leave from the Army at Thanksgiving 1990, the day before stop loss went into effect in response to the Kuwait invasion by Iraq. Although I was not formally impacted, I asked the personnel office to ask whether I was needed. Having spent 20 years in the Army and never any time in a combat zone of any sort, I knew I had an obligation to at least free up a spot for someone else if need be, but the decision was made that I was not impacted (they had to follow the rules you know) and I was the last person to retire from Fort Leavenworth for a while.

Of course, my planning for retirement had been so efficient and effective (not) that I just assumed I would find a job, probably in November and be able to collect a paycheck while still technically on active duty. It didn't work out that way.

I did spend a few weeks in March 1991 working as a contractor on post working as an OPFOR guy, but that played out pretty quickly.

I then went to work at Armed Forces Insurance as a Management Information Systems specialist (I was hired as a PC troubleshooter mainly) but wound up learning their system and became what is commonly referred to today in IT circles as a Business Analyst.

After a few months, I left to work with a friend I had met shopping for computers. Jessie Jones (LTC, USA, Retired) was part owner in Computers ASP in downtown Leavenworth and asked me to help as a salesman / office manager.

I did that for several months, then left to join George Knapp (Major, Retired) as a partner in an endeavor called Buffalo Books and Services, Inc. We tried to create a bookstore and services company (services being creating slides and such for CAS3 students). George felt strongly that the AAFES bookstore in Bell Hall should offer used books, but the leadership of the College would not allow it. Each officer student was forced to purchase new books, with no market to allow transfer from the current class to the next – forcing an expense on some officers, such as doctors and nurses, for Clausewitz "On War" that they would never refer to again in their lifetime. Although we were not successful as a bookstore, we were successful in getting the College leadership to change the policy – and put another nail in our coffin as an enterprise. We were not successful as a corporation, but I can also not blame the policy of used books at the AAFES bookstore as being the culprit – we did not have a good business plan – we did not cover the contingencies appropriately and we went broke – simple as that.

During this period, Amy was married and had a baby (Alex).

Dee followed Amy's example and dropped out of high school.

Elaine reached her limit with me and decided to return to North Carolina. We were later divorced. Dee later went to North Carolina to live with her.

I asked and was allowed to return to Armed Forces Insurance into the same position I had left. After a few years, they made a decision to disband the MIS positions and I was moved to Marketing. After a couple of weeks it became clear that the arrangement would not be a good long term fit and I left.

From AFI, I went to Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC) as a business analyst working on a Variable Annuities System. I helped with the conversion of this system from 2 digit year calculations dealing with Y2K issues. During this time I also was asked to write a plan for the night of December 31, 1999. I was able to produce a detailed plan that included an hour by hour event list stretching from the start of normal batch processing at around 6:00 PM all the way through year end processing on January 1st. This 100 page tomb was presented to the senior management of the Financial Services Group of CSC (our headquarters in Austin) and adopted as the model for other client support teams to use. Since my system was unique, while they shared a different system, they had an easier time and their plans were less bulky, generally ranging in the 30 page category.

I was next presented with the opportunity to move the VAS system from the CSC mainframe to our client's machine in Hartford, CT. The mainframe environment at Hartford was different than the CSC environment and therefore many adjustments were needed, it was not a drag and drop proposition by any means. It took a year to make the move, but eventually it was done. As you might imagine, moving the system to their environment was "working myself out of a job." After the move, I was given an opportunity to work on a different team, but that client very quickly also severed the relationship with CSC and I became expendable.

I spent 9 months without work and eventually was hired back at CSC as an administrative assistant – working for a supervisor who I did not get along with very well. Marti Pickner was quite a bit of an overbearing control freak. I eventually reached a compromise with Marti and she relaxed somewhat in her desire to control my every move. I was allowed to train as a Six Sigma Green Belt and participated in several projects – including several for the Global Infrastructure Services department, where I obviously made a reputation as being helpful since they requested my assistance on several occasions.

After a few years, Marti was let go and I reported to another manager who asked me to take a new position. I agreed to take this position with the stipulation that I be returned to my salary from when I was a project manager – a raise of almost \$9,000. Steve Sohl agreed and obtained management

approval (but not HR approval I discovered). During this period I had interviewed with Forrest T Jones and Co about a business analyst / project manager position. While waiting for approval of the raise, I received a verbal offer from FTJ for a salary representing \$3,000 more than my agreement with Steve. In speaking with Steve, I took the position that he and I had a handshake agreement, and as long as he came through, I would stay. The HR folks dragged their feet, and demanded that I provide written proof of the offer from FTJ. I took the position that the agreement I made with Steve was prior to the FTJ offer, and the FTJ offer was irrelevant. After about 10 days of listening to various excuses, I determined that Steve's bosses would not be able get the necessary approvals and I concluded that Steve's immediate boss was passive at best about the move. I walked out in the middle of the day in a fit of anger and accepted the offer of FTJ.

My responsibilities at FTJ were different than at CSC in that I did not have any strings on resources – my projects were simply one of many tasks on the plates of developers and often project work was sat aside while other, seeming more urgent tasks were attended to. The result was that project success was largely a matter of personal intervention on my part to cajole resources into performing project related tasks.

After a few years, I was moved from the IT Dept to a new Business Systems Support Directorate where I was a Senior Business Analyst, then a Manager and finally as Director. I retired in August 2018 and since then Carol and I have enjoyed our retirement by traveling and finding ways to occupy our time without worry about work!

THE INSPECTION

The year was 1975. Early that year, while I was visiting our headquarters in Heidelberg, the Second Region, USACIDC operations officer brought up to me in an informal setting that there was a Military Intelligence field manual (more of a how to than a specific instruction) about “collecting intelligence” and suggested that I read it.

I managed to get myself a copy of said manual and read about how intelligence was supposed to be collected. I used the ideas from the Manual in revisiting how I, and our subordinate Resident Agencies went about collecting and analyzing criminal intelligence information. Now the reality is that although we did make some significant changes to how we analyzed what we collected, we did little to change the actual collection of information.

But now, I realize I need to clarify exactly what my role in this whole process was. You see, I was an E-5 non-sworn administrative type whose official duties were to make sure all the personnel and administrative functions of the Field Office (about 25 people) and 9 subordinate Resident Agencies (a few folks each scattered across Bavaria). For a total of about 75 souls I kept administrative and personnel actions up to date. I had no operational control or constructive supervision over anyone. There were two people in our Field Office who regularly and routinely traveled to Region headquarters for paperwork and supplies, the supply sergeant and me. In addition to the administrative duties, I also helped the formally assigned Special Agent (Chief Warrant Officer 3) with criminal intelligence organization and interpretation. He (the CW3) was also responsible for conducting investigations regarding illicit drugs – which he was quite good at doing.

So, as you probably know, each year back then we had a formal thing where people from Headquarters in DC would come around and conduct an IG Inspection. Failure of an IG Inspection literally meant an end to Commander’s assignment and usually was a career ender.

So, our inspection date came around and we were under the gun. Our operations were marginal, according to the inspectors; the inspector for Administration and I got into a heated argument about why I ordered thousands of forms – Headquarters had mandated we begin using a new form before the logistics of getting them printed in Europe had caught up. Our Resident Agency CW3 in Ansbach (where a US Army Division Printing Office existed) was able to get approval to have the new forms printed “in the field,” which was quite unusual in peacetime. Anyway, the whole Region was able to get the correct forms from us and everything seemed fine.

My argument with the inspector was that I ordered the correct forms but received the old forms. When I returned the old forms, the forms management facility in the States kept sending them back. Finally, I disposed of the old forms into the trash. The inspector kept saying that I should have done something else with the forms, like send them back to the sender – which I had done 4 times. Anyway, eventually I got too loud or something and the chief inspector came from another room and intervened. The inspector (a Major) that I had argued with was sent back to the States (eventually reassigned from USACIDC – I never heard exactly what happened to him) and the administrative evaluation was assigned a “gig.” Everyone in the chain of command understood exactly what had happened though and I was verbally warned about raising my voice but formally excused for my behavior, embarrassing as it was. I suffered no repercussions.

So, back to the main story: As the inspection continued, the findings continued to be marginal. The Criminal Intelligence inspection was the last area to be evaluated. I was told by the Region Deputy Commander that if I did not pass, my boss (the Field Office Commander) who was a former enlisted man who had about 15 years’ service, would be relieved and likely forced to resign before qualifying for retirement.

Because of the field manual reading and our implementation, we received a commendable evaluation, and the Commander retained his job, but he was not able to extend his assignment as he had wanted to do.

Years later, the Region Operations Officer had progressed through the ranks and became the Provost Marshal for the Army (then a Brigadier General). I encountered him in passing through the halls of the Command and General Staff College, where he immediately remembered me and asked what I was up to! I’m sorry to report that a few months later he was killed in a plane crash.

MAJOR PROJECTS I WAS A PART OF

When I was assigned to Headquarters, USACIDC in Falls Church, VA, I joined what was called the Investigative Concepts and Doctrine Directorate. The history of the organization was a “Bunch of Guys Sitting Around Talking or BOGSAT” study which was created to review methods and procedures with an intent of “process improvement” and making the organization more effective, if not more efficient. The reason I was picked for that department was simple: They wanted someone with a field experience from the administrative viewpoint. They had commanders, investigators, technicians and photographer perspectives, but no “day to day” making it all come together viewpoint. I spent 3 years helping with the innovative ideas and improvements leading up to the re-writing of the Department of the Army regulation regarding criminal investigations. I influenced several administrative processes that were dictated from “on high” with little or no logical foundation, such as the Criminal Records Repository controlled the number of criminal investigation sequence numbers that could be used by each Field Office – if you had more than the allotted number of investigations, you had to seek approval to use extra numbers! I also helped with reporting, where the initial report that something had happened was by what was then an “electronic message” and subsequent status updates were via a formal report that often contained significant bits of data that were irrelevant to the receiver with the actual relevant status being “investigation continues.” We were able to change that so that status was also reported via “electronic message,” subsequently evolving to email! There were several similar process improvements during that time.

At CINCPAC in Hawaii, I had the idea that the travel planning and budgeting process was inefficient and very much subject to human error, requiring frequent face to face meetings and reconciliations with paper (manual entry and math) bookkeeping ledgers. I asked our word processing supervisor if the word processing system (a centralized client-server setup) could do columns and rows? Answer yes; does it do simple math – add columns within the row? Can it subtotal columns? All the answers were yes – so I designed a spreadsheet using a word processor. We were able, with a lot of word processing support, to build a basic spreadsheet to control our travel budget. The spreadsheet was integral, but the real effort after the initial time and difficulty getting all the data entered was to create a Program Budget Advisory Board (PBAC) where all the Colonels get together and agree on what goes in the three categories we set up: Must Do; Should Do; Would Like to Do. The other significant concept was the allocation of 80% of the budget among those

categories with 20% (reduced to actual 20% of remaining at each meeting) commander's reserve. The point was the commander always had discretion of allocate from his reserve for unexpected, or unplanned travel. There were columns for estimated and actual expenses (air, rental car, food, miscellaneous). Since a great majority of our travel was recurring (Security Assistance inspections) after the first year, the entire process was very simple and extremely effective. Of course, we shared the word processing file with the budget office and they were extremely thankful. It improved effectiveness yes, but efficiency as well, virtually eliminating frequent oversight and reconciliation.

At CGSC, I came into a very fluid situation where there had been agreement that the idea of a second year of CGSC level education for selected students was worth taking a very close look. There was really no curriculum, no syllabus, just an idea. Very soon after I arrived – with the first week I think, there was a briefing in which the TRADOC CG said, “OK, let's go ahead with a pilot program for this next academic year.” That meant we had, instead of the typical 18 to 24 months lead time, 3 months to get up and running. While the two Lieutenant Colonels and one civilian professor worked on the actual class schedules, I took on all the logistics and administration tasks. Soon we were assigned a secretary (I almost used the word graced until I realized her name was actually Grace!) followed by a Specialist to help get the “words on paper” collected, cleared for publication and printed (a lot of photocopy work those first months). Of course the instructors had to decide what books and we tried to get enough copies so that students could keep some of the classics, i.e. Clausewitz “On War”. During the years I was there we expanded from 13 to 24 to 48 and added a second course for War College level students, some of whom would become instructors for the junior course the following year.

Once I retired from the Army, I went to work at Armed Forces Insurance as a “PC specialist” meaning as a service desk technician in today's terms. After a few months, I was offered a job selling PCs in a local computer shop, which I accepted – obviously a mistake, since I was not very good at convincing people to buy something they didn't need. I did get better at making sure folks did get everything then actually needed – sort of my introduction of detailed needs assessment rather than simply jumping off the cliff and then noticing there was no safety net! George and I then decided that a book store would be a good idea! After all, the market for used books for CGSC students was grand! We didn't realize 2 things: 1) The CGSC rule against the on-post bookstore selling used books wasn't as rigid as we thought (we proved after the 1st year of our existence that the idea had merit); and 2) the volume we anticipated was at least twice what we actually could turn over, and when the policy changed, it fell down to miniscule. The upshot is we both went broke, me

more so than George, but it was devastating financially, emotionally and family wise to both of us. We both were divorced during and shortly after the business went under.

I went back to Armed Forces Insurance (yes, they took me back!) where I helped usher in the movement from “green screen” to PC based desktop mainframe emulator applications. I was introduced to the Y2K problem there and helped with the assessment that for the home and auto line of business, the problem was essentially a database and screen problem. The date handling in the software was much less of a problem than I would encounter with the annuities line of business later at Computer Science Corporation later.

I was recruited to CSC from AFI to help with the transition of the “Variable Annuities System (VAS)” to allow processing across the century transition. Without getting into too much detail, the transactional nature of annuities frequently meant using the transaction date and recalculating buys and sells, matching transaction dates with price points in effect on that date, and so on. The point is that annuities based on stock trading prices for the day in question is much more complicated than issuing a homeowner policy on date X with a price of dollar Y. We were successful, and, as you might expect, consolidation and constriction after everyone had just been through this “modernization” resulted in significant layoffs and shrinkage of the job market for our team. We shrank from 350 employees, to 300, 250, 150 and eventually to mostly non-technical “business processing outsourcing (BPO)” only. My first exposure to imaging and workflow happened during this time. I was unemployed for 9 months before eventually being rehired by CSC in an administrative position – and at 2/3 my prior salary. During my second stint at CSC I was allowed to go to Six Sigma training to become a “green belt” and further exposure to efficiency and effectiveness measurement methods. I can still quote the DMAIC (Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve and Control) phases. I no longer am a practicing green belt, and I think the phases may have changed up somewhat – and Six Sigma isn’t quite as prevalent as it once was, but still, the concepts stuck with me – and I used the training to great success later. I will say, while still at CSC I led a project to examine whether to spend \$2 million on a new mainframe computer and we determined that the machine was maxed out at night, but extremely lightly used during the day. The upshot was the idea that the online system was so central to our clients lives that any interruption would be devastating. We determined that since that idea had been prevalent (20 years ago), significant improvements had been made to the basic operating system of the mainframe where segregation of processes was greatly improved and the utilization of the mainframe during the day was about 2% capacity! We eventually moved much of the night work to the afternoon, allowing better coordination and “immediate action” between offshore and onshore

resources, thus improving “turn around” and making for better effectiveness along with the efficiency of using the computer resources when there was little demand rather than trying to cram all the work into a smaller 5 hour window. They did not have to buy the new mainframe at that time.

One of my friends from CSC wound up at Forrest T Jones and Company and asked me if I knew anyone wanting a Business Analyst job – of course he was asking if I wanted it! Well, yes, I do! I came to FTJ and started working in the finance area, working on check processing within the Policy Administration department. During the time I was at FTJ, I worked on numerous projects, with a short list including moving the mainframe applications from one data center to another – and a second move to a third vendor location; implementing an imaging and workflow system (I was part of a team – not the PM); advising on the conversion of the accounting system from mainframe to client-server; moving the admin system from mainframe to client-server; implementing an enrollment system; and overlapping with many of these, acting as a team lead, manager, and eventually as a Director with 16 direct reports and 10 systems to supervise.

WHO ARE THE TRUE 'DOMESTIC TERRORISTS'?

PATRICK BUCHANAN

Feb 2, 2021

"Never allow a good crisis (to) go to waste. It's an opportunity to do the things you once thought were impossible."

Thus did chief of staff Rahm Emanuel advise Barack Obama on the financial crisis he inherited in 2009.

Following the Capitol riot by a mob of pro-Donald Trump protesters, the left took Rahm's counsel, seizing upon and exploiting the episode ever since to paint the right as America's safe harbor for "domestic terrorism."

According to leftist columnists and commentators, going back to the '60s, the real threat of domestic terrorism has always come from the right.

That is not, however, how some of us remember those days.

The most destructive acts of violence in the '60s were the urban race riots that began in Harlem in July 1964, when 15-year-old black youth James Powell was shot by a police lieutenant.

In 1965, Watts blew up, followed by Newark and Detroit in 1967.

In 1968, 100 U.S. cities exploded in racial violence after Dr. Martin Luther King was assassinated in Memphis on April 4.

Anti-war riots followed the urban riots, beginning with an attack on the Pentagon in October 1967 and the occupation of Columbia University in 1968. That August, leftists ignited a riot at the Democratic Convention that nominated Hubert Humphrey in Chicago.

After President Richard Nixon took office in 1969, a mass anti-war protest in Washington, D.C., spun off a mob that trashed the Department of Justice. A riot at Kent State in May 1970 precipitated the killing of four students by the Ohio National Guard, and follow-on riots on scores of campuses that shut down higher education for the rest of that spring semester.

That same year, terrorists in a Greenwich Village townhouse blew themselves up with a 2,000-pound bomb they were making to massacre noncommissioned officers and their wives and girlfriends at a dance at Fort Dix, New Jersey. This was followed two months later by an explosion that blew up the mathematics building at the University of Wisconsin, killing a father of three.

As Nixon speechwriter Ray Price recorded in his memoir, between Jan. 1, 1969, and April 15, 1970, "More than 40,000 bombings, attempted bombings and bomb threats, were recorded in the United States.

"In the 1969-1970 school year there were 1782 demonstrations, 7561 arrests, 8 people killed, and 462 injured, (299 of those injured were police). There were 247 cases of campus arson and 282 attacks on ROTC facilities."

The criminals responsible for this carnage were leftists.

What about 2020, the year of mass protests that followed the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis in May.

According to the London Daily Mail, with the riots, arson and looting that began in Minneapolis spreading to Portland, Seattle and 140 other cities, the National Guard was called out in 21 states, six people died, scores of police were injured and between \$1 billion and \$2 billion in property was damaged or destroyed.

According to insurance company figures, it was the costliest urban violence since the LA riot of 1992, when a Simi Valley jury acquitted the four cops involved in the beating of Rodney King.

Other forms of "domestic terrorism" are far more common but all too frequently ignored because we Americans have come to take them for granted.

As Heather Mac Donald wrote in The Wall Street Journal just days ago:

"The year 2020 likely saw the largest percentage increase in homicides in American history. Murder was up nearly 37% in a sample of 57 large and medium-sized cities. Based on preliminary estimates, at least 2,000 more Americans, most of them black, were killed in 2020 than in 2019.

"Dozens of children, overwhelmingly black, were killed in drive-by shootings. They were slain in their beds, living rooms and strollers. They were struck down at barbecues, in their yards, in malls, in their parents' cars, and at birthday parties. Fifty-five children were killed in Chicago in 2020, 17 in St. Louis, and 11 in Philadelphia."

While the riot was taking place at the Capitol, where a cop and four protesters lost their lives, less-noted lethal events were happening all over America in the first days of the new year. Writes Mac Donald:

"The anarchy of 2020 has continued into 2021. Shootings in South Los Angeles rose 742% in the first two weeks of the year. In Oakland, homicides were up 500% and shootings up 126% through Jan. 17. In New York, murders were up 42% and shooting victims up 15% through Jan. 17."

The truth: The vast majority of criminals who rob, rape, shoot and kill Americans in the tens of thousands each year, and the people who did almost all of the rioting, looting, arson and assaults on cops in 2020, never wore MAGA hats.

Pas d'ennemis a gauche. No enemies on the left. The enemy is always to be found on the right. And because reality contradicts this central tenet of liberal ideology, it cannot ever be conceded.

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DEATH OF THE PATRIARCH

We all knew it was coming, like the cold of winter follows the warm summer. The fall brings changing winds, cooler, less strong. Winter brings the harshness of cold, bitter days. Life does progress around the circle. Death comes to us all eventually.

Yesterday we lost our brother. The oldest of our siblings. The one who could best be described as the patriarch of our generation. Our father was from a very large family, with many brothers and sisters scattered across Texas and beyond. Robert told me several times that “Childress, where it all began,” was the center of our universe. He tried (and succeeded) in making sure that our family had a hometown to come back to. A few years ago, we discussed what we should do with our reunion, as we were concerned that we were placing too heavy a demand on him personally. He would have none of that!!

What did Robert Lee Mills mean to me? The difference in age between he and I resulted in my not remembering much about his school days. Of course, the stories are told of his high school football days, where he once tried to jump over a defender who “clipped” his leg and caused him to flip over and land on his feet and run for a touchdown. “It really happened” I’ve been told many times. He has always been the one to emulate. The one who I tried to “be more like!”

It’s for others to list facts and such. To me, Robert was the responsible one, who everyone looked to for tried-and-true advice. The person who you could count on to always be there. Did he have flaws like everyone else? Of course. Was he also the epitome of the feelings associated with “Patriarch?” Absolutely, at least in my opinion.

In January, I was told words to the effect “Winter is coming?” Yesterday, my brother died. Winter has arrived.