

Very Short Stories From Dad Melvin Shaub – includes stories of Holtwood, Family Times, Travel, Work, Friends and Family

The entries are sorted to allow for an easier to read flow. May contain typos – still a works in progress.

#	Area	Memory
0	Who's Who	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jack is Jack Trimble. Jack and Dad were about the same age and they often drove around town when they were young adults, not caused trouble of course. Jack helped get Mom and Dad together, and also helped dad get a job at Conowingo. • Bill is William J. Lamont – Dads Son in Law married to Phyllis, Bill passed away Nov 2024 and is buried at Bethesda. • Clarence is dad's cousin and the father of Ben Shaub who was killed in WW2. • Chester grew up and lived in Holtwood and went missing when his plane was shot down in WW2. They never found Chester, and a song often sang at Bethesda Church was <i>Because He Lives</i>, perhaps in hopes of someday, Chester would show up. He was never found. • Ruth Shaub was dad's oldest sister who only lived to about five years old. She died of an ailment, and Art and Clara did not have children until Harold in 1915. Ruth is buried with Art and Clara at Bethesda. • Bessie and Roy are Ethel's parents, and they lived near Rawlinsville but moved to Millersville later in life. • Belva was dad's older cousin on the Shaub side. I think she lived to 100 and once when dad was discouraged, I told him he had to keep going so he would beat Belva. He laughed a little over that. • David Feiler – dad's best friend at Holtwood. They kept in touch their entire life.
1	Holt	In the 1930s', Dad's brother Ralph had two beagle dogs, and he would turn them loose at night to chase down game. Ralph, his buddies and dad would stay in one place while the dogs took off running a large semi-circle, hearing the barking in the distance, and chasing the game back to Ralph and my dad. I don't think they hurt the game, which may have been deer, maybe fox.
2	Holt	Dad and David both had dogs – dad's was called Topsy but I don't know the name of David's dog. But they pretended the dogs were racehorses (dads' dog would be Seabiscuit, and David's dog played the role of War Admiral) and they would get the dogs to run and race around the yard. Years later, Dad and David would laugh at the things they did as boys. Dad and I watched the movie Seabeiscuit a few years ago and while he was interested, he seemed to indicate the movie was not like the real thing – of two dogs racing, coached on by two boys with big imaginations.
2	Holt	Dad spoke fondly of Crystal Brook School. He spoke of his friends, playing baseball, they played a game of throwing the ball over the roof of the school, they sledded down the hill by the school, they would get water and coal to keep the school warm, and he pointed out that the corner of the school building was first base. I recall dad telling me that Bethesda Church helped build the school. The school was about 1 mile from the church, and about ¼ mile from dad's home (that is now underwater), and the Feiler home.
3	Holt	The boys had chores and one of them included farmwork. During the off season they would go out into the field and pick up rocks and either heave them in a wagon or throw them to the side of the field. This was monotonous hard labor, and dad

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		recalls how it motivated his oldest brother to get off the farm and do something more interesting. Dad did not say exactly what his oldest brother said.
3	Holt	'Ol Doll' was the farm horse, and dad's parent left for a few days, leaving older brother Ralph to tend to things with young Melvin, 'Ol Doll' got lose into the corn field. Neither one noticed until later and by then 'Ol Doll' consumed so much corn that she became 'sick Doll'. They had a phone, and Ralph called the vet who said just don't let Ol Doll lay down, and to try to keep her moving. I think 'Ol Doll' recovered, and upon the parents return, nothing was said about it, and nothing seemed out of order. But I wonder if the vet said something to my grandfather Art, who was kind enough to just let boys be boys.
4	Holt	Dad said several times what a good brother Ralph was to dad. Ralph looked out for his younger brother, and dad spoke of a time where Ralph got dad a bike and they put it on the front of the car to bring it home. Ralph was a good brother.
5	Holt	Dad had a friend named David. David was a year or two older and David lived down the road about ½ mile. I think Dad looked up to David. The boys would go out into the woods and play, and dad told me once they took a two man saw and cut down a big tree, then cut it into small firewood pieces. I asked him why they did that he didn't know why – that they just did it. They had more energy than they knew what do to with.
6	Holt	Dad would go play with David on Sunday's, but David went to church Sunday morning, so David's mother asked David to ask young Melvin if he wanted to come to church with David the next Sunday. And Young Melvin went, and he went again and again. I think it eventually drew in the rest of the Shaub family, and they all started to attend. Later Mom and Dad would continue to take us to the same church – Bethesda Methodist Church. This church had a profound impact on the entire Shaub family.
7	Holt	Dad loved Big Band Music. He listened to it on the radio, and I think they played some of it in the Holtwood Village Community Center. At least once, young Melvin and at least one of his buddies skipped school and hitch hiked to Philadelphia to a Big Band Concert. They had a great time but made it back in time for dinner. He said the teachers, nor his parents even knew he went to this concert. Dad once told me that as high schoolers during WW2, there was a thought that they better enjoy themselves now because soon, it would be their turn to go to the war and probably not come home.
8	Holt	Young Melvin and his father would observe for enemy aircraft. They had a book used to identify any aircraft, and if they saw one, they would call it in to a central call center. They would report what they saw and what type of aircraft they thought it was. They never saw any foreign aircraft. But it shows the fear Americans had back then of a potential bombing or invasion.
10	Holt	Walter Cramer, (aka Hapfy) was dad's Uncle on the Clara's side of the family. He was a young and mischievous uncle, who liked to play tricks on people. At times, he would catch a black snake and bring it around the Holtwood House supposedly to aggravate his Brother in Law, Art. Apparently, Art was adamant that Hapfi get rid of that snake. I guess Hapfi was that kind of a nephew. But also, dad said he liked Hapfi because he would sneak dad (as a young boy), candy. To his last day, Dad put

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		flowers on Hapfi's grave at Bethesda as he did his other close relatives for Memorial Day. When dad could no longer deliver flowers, and I assumed this responsibility, dad would always ask me 'did you put flowers on Hapfi's grave?'. He was delighted when I confirmed that Hapfi got his flowers. Hapfy was killed crossing Rt 30 East of Lancaster in 1932 and he is buried behind the front row behind Art and Clara Shaub.
11	Army	The army was building up its manpower in 1945 for the invasion of Japan and we now know the casualties may have exceeded 1 million Americans. Dad was almost drafted before he graduated from high school as part of this sweep, but dad's father Arther spoke to the draft board, and they allowed young Melvin to finish high school. Off to Camp Blanding Florida he went, and he said it was miserably hot and humid in the Summer of 1945. By then the war was over in Europe and his training was geared towards what we believe was Mongolia. But the war ended before his training was completed and instead, he went to Italy in the first peacekeeping ship that went into Europe after the fighting was over.
12	Holt	Ben Shaub was lost in WW2 and how the family never quite recovered from his loss. German POWs would come around Holtwood to do labor in 44 and 45. They were scorned by those in the community due to the growing losses of those in the Holtwood community. Ben earned a Silver Star for jumping behind enemy lines during D-Day, and for his heroic action for battling against some Germans solders that his squad came upon near <i>Audouville la Hubert</i> . Ben survived Normandy but he was fatally injured from a land mine in the Netherlands sometime around Market Garden later that year. Ben died of his injuries in England, and he is buried at Bethesda Church. He was part of the lost. Ben's heroic action is detailed in the book ' <i>Vanguard of eh Crusade – The 101st Airborne division in World War II</i> by Mark Bando. https://www.honorstates.org/profiles/426160/ & Traces of War .
13	Army	They often rounded up surrendering Yugoslavia who came down from the hills and mountains, apparently fortifying themselves to survive for as long as it would take for the rebels to win their cause. But lacking substance and facing overwhelming firepower and manpower, the rebels came to their senses and surrendered to the young Americans. Dad noted how rough, dirty, rag tag they appeared.
14	Army	Well, they must have eventually made it across the river because dad told me of how he and a couple of his Army buddies made it to this town and had dinner with a Yugoslav Family. One of the young solders apparently fell in love with one of the young Yugoslav girls which was why they were invited. Dad was NOT the one in love, but he was impressed with how civil and kind the family was, and how this young man who loved the Yugoslav girl had to eventually leave but was also quite upset that they had to go their separate ways – one back to the old world the other back to the progressive western world. Dad did not know if the couple were ever eventually reunited.
15	Army	While assigned to the 350 th Infantry Regiment near Trieste Italy, enforcing what was known as the Morgan Line, the First Sergeant (the adult leadership of his group) directed his solders to NOT cross the bridge at the bottom of the hill. My

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		understanding it that they would be crossing illegally into Yugoslavian, so naturally these young men went down the road to the bridge to cross into the mysterious territory and visit the nearby town in Yugoslavia. But guess who was waiting for them – the First Sergeant and stopped them from possibly causing a dust up with Yugoslav Rebels, but also inhibiting and adventure good time for the young men across the Morgan Line.
15	Army	Some of the time the American solders lived in an apartment building. From the roof he could look across the street to another building that kept German POWs who often came out on the roof of their building for fresh air. One day, dad threw one of the German solders a beer from his building to across the street. The German was elated and kicked up his heels in delight.
16	Army	Dad and some of his Army buddies had a few days leave in Switzerland. He toured the local area and noted how kind the locals were to the young Americans. So dad asked a Swiss man why everyone was so nice to them and the Swiss may said 'because you fellows won the war!'. These American were disconnected enough form current events, yet in the middle of current events that didn't realize the impact of the Americans in WW2 and especially their role in WW2.
16	Army	Dad disembarked in Naples or Rome, but I know he was in both locations. He often spoke of an Opera House and the covered streets, which impressed him. He spoke of Pompeii, and he learned the right way to eat Spaghetti (which is he later taught us). But he also saw lots of devastation, hunger and war damage, especially the rail yards that were devastated. He toured the area where only a year earlier, fierce battles occurred between American Forces and German forces in their attempt to take Italy.
17	Army	Dad and his squad sometimes rode around box cars in Italy. Their job was, among others, to dismantle the remnants of the war machine remaining in Italy, mostly of which was destroyed. He recalls watching unused American fighter planes being dumped into the Mediterranean, riding at night in the box cars and shooting tracers into the night sky, of target practice from the side of an open box car door, and cooking K-Rations on a fire in the box car (He liked the K-rations). He told me of how the German POWs drove the 5-ton trucks hauling the Americans to where they needed to go, and how he thought he might get killed on the mountain roads due to the wreck less driving of one of the former German Soldiers.
18	Army	Dad and his troop were assigned to guard the Morgan Line? Unless you are a military historian or lived in Trieste Italy in the 40s, you probably never heard of the Morgan line but that was the line between Yugoslavia and the effort of the guerillas to take northern Italy, and to include it in their area that was ruled by Tito. The guerillas made a good choice by not attacking. The American Forces, as cavalier as they were, would be not challenge to the victorious U.S. Army. That is why you probably never heard of the Morgan Line – because nothing happened.
19	Army	You fellows won the war! Dad and his Army buddies were granted leave, or they were temporarily assigned to a base in Switzerland. He told me how the C47 flew between the mountains going into Switzerland and how close the peaks seemed

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		to be. This may have been Brenner pass, which was a main air route from Northern Italy through the Alps to Switzerland or Austria to Germany. Many American Bombers passed through this route. Upon their arrival he found the Swiss to be very friendly to the Americans and he asked a Swiss Man why they were so friendly, and he said 'Because you fellows won the war!'. Its as if they didn't even know they won.
20	Army	When dad came home from Europe after WW2 at Christmas, he and a couple of his buddies had a choice. They could go home to waiting families and spend Christmas with them or they could spend Christmas in NYC. Now as young men they probably thought there would never be another time to be in NYC but they'd have a lifetime of family Christmas'. So, it was logical that they spend time in NYC and go home to family after the holiday. And that's what they did. Of course, the oldest brother (Harold) who by now was a parental figure to dad, had a few parental words for my dad. All part of growing up.
21	Adult	And by the way, he went back to NYC many times. He had many Christmases with family. Reminds me of someone else in the family that once said (years later) you can always retake a test, but you can never relive a party. Everyone turned out OK.
22	Army	Dad said his time in the Army in Italy was the best time of his life and he didn't want any credit for what he did. He even said once he should have paid the Army but at other times he told me of the poverty, the war damage, the hunger of the Italians, and our American Soldiers were not always of the best behavior. He told me that too many people were ready to go to war without having any idea of what it will result in. I think what he observed in Italy had a profound impact on the rest of his life.
28	Adult	Since 'The War' and perhaps before the war, local people cleaned the graves stones of the local cemeteries and placed flowers on graves in remembrance of those who passed away. This was apparently done by Clara and Art Shaub, and probably others, and this tradition eventually passed on to my parents who place flowers on graves at Memorial Day for many years, without fanfare. I discovered after my mother had passed and I then started to help my dad in this tradition. When he could no longer perform this duty, I continued to do so and tried to bring in my grandchildren who seems especially pleased in helping, especially when we were finished and went for ice cream.
32	Adult	Jack is Jack Trimble, a school buddy of dad who when dad returned from 'The War', Jack and my dad 'hung out' together. One weekend night they were following the bus on Manor Ave towards Millersville and there was an attractive young lady on the bus. Jack was driving and tried to get close to the bus, as the young lady and dad were apparently making eyes and waving at each other. Although they knew of each other, that was the first real contact my dad and his future bride, Ethel Mae Gochenaur.
33	Adult	Dad was laid off from RCA (he was about 28 years old) and needed a job to support his young family. Jack contacted his relative who worked for Philadelphia Electric (I think it was Mr. Weaver), and dad got an interview. Part of the interview was to move parts around a box (or something) during which there was a loud bang that when off behind them, to see if startled the potential employee. In the case of dad, it apparently did not startle him enough to be rejected. The person conducting the

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		interview asked dad if he had references, and dad provided the references on the spot, and the hiring manager called the references also on the spot. At the conclusion of the interview the man said we normally like to hire men right out of the service, but dad was hired anyway.
35	PE	Dad attended training on how to perform a 'Black Start' at the Power Plant. This is when the power is lost on the grid, and it takes a hydroelectric plan with the gravity fed energy to restore at least some power to the grid to allow other non-hydro plants such as coal or oil, to be 'jump started'. There is some power on the grid from a very few other plants, but it takes a hydro plant to start the system. After learning the black start from training, dad expressed to his boss at Conowingo that he wasn't sure he really knew how to perform a Black Start. His boss said to not worry about it because he'd never have to do one anyway. Well, there was a blackout in the Philadelphia area and all the other plants on the grid counted on Conowingo to supply enough power back on the grid to allow the others to start i.e. the Black Start. And guess who was on duty – dad. The black start required the control of two lever and watching the sine wave on a meter and synchronizing the levers just at the right time to allow the power to go back online and energize the grid. Dad did so (with some nearby coaching) and got it right. Power surged back into grid, other plants were carefully restarted and dad restored power to Philadelphia.
40	Me	About 2012 dad and I took a drive out in the Lancaster Counter River Hills. It had especially cold for a few days and the roads were icy, but safe if driven carefully. During our drive the road we were on turned into a dirt road down by the river, and the road turned up a hill. Thinking I had an imperious 4-wheel drive I plowed up the hill for the 4WD on and part of the way up I started to slide back and to the side. TO the left was a steep embankment. My stuck inched close to the edge but stopped, and my dad and I just looked at each other with big round eyes, and my thought was how will I him out of here? What if this truck slides off the edge and he got hurt? Well, I got out and threw some gravel behind the tires, enough to carefully back down the hill with at least some grip. When we got back to Willow Valley, he was quick to tell is buddies of this great adventure. So, it turned out to be OK.
41	Travel	We took a trip to see Bill and Phyllis in Jan 2015. We continued up to Wellsboro and Route 6, then down to Williamsport and over to NYC. We spent a couple nights in NYC and toured Manhattan, then went to the Hyde Park – FDRs home. This was special because he remembered many of the policies and the speeches given by Roosevelt. He admitted that he was probably a good president. We concluded our trip by visiting the Hocutt's in East Windsor Conn. We had a great time.
42	Travel	About 2015 or so, we visited Ben Hocutt when he was in his Navy training in Pensacola FL. Cindy and Jerry came over from the Villages and Ben gave us a tour of the Navy Air Museum, plus we observed an end of day retreat where Ben lived in the barracks. We concluded our trip eating out in I think Destin along the beach. Ben didn't say much but dad always spoke highly of Ben, and I think Ben respected dad. In fact, when Mom died if dad went somewhere and if Ben were nearby, he would always ask Ben to ride with him. Perhaps he was just good company without saying too much.

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43	Travel	About 2012 Dad and I flew to Daytona and rented a car to drive over the The Villages. We stayed in a hotel and the next morning we went over Bob Evans for breakfast. Cindy brought Jerry over to the restaurant, and Jerry had no idea that we were there. It was dad's birthday on Feb 14 th and Jerry's birthday on the 15 th . Jerry walked in and was so surprised. This was one of the best birthday memories I ever had, and it was not only special for dad and Jerry, but it was special because it was shortly after mom and passing and we needed to cheer things up.
44	Travel	Trip to Ontario for Jack Shaub's memorial service – don't recall date but it was shortly after Mom's passing. After the service we gathered in the social area to meet and greet, and dad was asking me who people were, and he seemed a bit nervous. It occurred to me that this was one of his first outings after Mom's passing and that he depended on her for name recall, and the best way to greet people in a setting of many people, even if among friends and family. No one else there recognized his nervousness – once he got started, he blended in well. We then drove out to where his brother Harold once lived along Lake Erie, and on the way home we drove, and were amazed by the large wind turbines in upstate NY.
45	Travel	Dad and Phyllis to China, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Japan fly over get on cruise ship and sail from point to point, then fly home. Dad and Phyllis also went to Israel and Jordan, and I think Moracco. Dad was offered to trade Phyllis for a camel, which of course is a joke. Dad was impressed how busy Phyllis was, going the extra mile to see the last sight and get the best picture.
50	Me	I had an ear for music and was asked in 4 th grade to play a trombone (like many 4 th graders). I told the music teacher that no, I wanted to play a trumpet because that's what my daddy played. The music teacher (Mr. Donald Reed) didn't argue with me.
99		More to Come
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