

# ALMA A Remarkable Boxer Dog

*by Felder Phillips, 2nd Bn, HQ, 261st*

Germany

France

Austria

Alaska



Bermuda

Maryland

North  
Carolina

Clemson  
College, SC

## Introduction

ALMA was a rather remarkable dog. She was born in Kematen ad Krems, Austria about the end of WW-II. At about 6 or 8 weeks old, she joined me in the U.S. Army at Kematen. Following the hostilities. A small group of us were stationed at the train station in Kematen. Her owners had noticed that I seemed to have a way with animals. I had taken in a small deer for awhile. They asked if I could take Alma (not yet her name). I saw that this was one fine dog and said, "Yes", not really knowing how I would go about it. Alma took to Army life right off. I am still amazed at how smoothly this took place.

From Kematen, I was sent to Ingelstadt, Germany and we were there until we started the long trek home. I finished my senior year at Clemson College, after which Alma and I drove Aunt De's new car to Alaska. We drove past Chicago on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1947. This is where I met my wife to be. We left Alaska in May, 1948 for the "Lower 48", got married in Rochester, NY and settled in the Maryland/Washington, DC area.

## Austria

World War II ended in Europe, May 8, 1945. This found my Antitank Squad with our 57mm



antitank gun on the front in Austria overlooking the Enn River at the town of Enns. Enns is just a short distance East of Linz, Austria and near where the Enn and Danube Rivers come together. We stayed at Enns for awhile. At Enns I had my wisdom teeth pulled. The Army had arranged for it with a local dentist. He had a large office overlooking town square. I was not impressed and more than a little apprehensive. He was excellent, even though there were root complications.

Then some of us were moved to Kematen ad Krems, about 25 miles West of Linz, Austria, where we set up quarters in June in the train station. Our job was to occupy the railroad station and monitor train traffic. It's hard to describe what for, but this was near the edge of occupation between us and the Russians.

We liked Kematen and its people. There had been a British POW camp there. The word was that without help from the locals, life would have been much worse for the POWs. They shared their fresh bread, fruits and vegetables with us. We shared our rations with them and hunted rabbits and deer to give to them. They could not have weapons.

My first exposure to real pumpernickel bread was enough to cause the Austrians to double over with laughter. I'm glad they saw the humor of it. It was still warm from the oven. Ah-h, fresh bread. I cut a slice from the round loaf. The crust was delicious. The middle was so spongy I was a long time getting it down. Finally, I ate the crust and formed a ball with the middle and played bounce the ball against the side of the building, to everyone's amusement. Later, I learned that you were supposed to let the bread sit for a day or two before eating. Or, at least let it get cold!



For awhile I had a small deer that almost became a pet. An Austrian family noted this and concluded that I liked animals. They brought me a boxer puppy 6 to 8 weeks old and wanted to give it to me if I could keep it and give it a home. They raised fine boxers, but then it was even hard to keep them. I had no idea as to how I was going to do it, but I promised to try. One look and I sure wanted that dog! GI's got a monthly ration of cigarettes. Not being a

smoker, I had a few cartons, which I gave to them, about all I could offer. American cigarettes were highly prized among Europeans. And so Alma joined the Army to later become part of our Phillips family.

## Ingolstadt, Germany

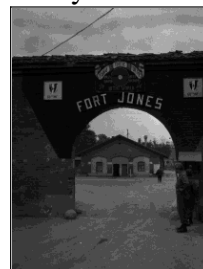


*The USO in Ingolstadt, Germany*

Despite my best efforts to prevent it, she would sometimes disappear. I knew where to go - the USO, where I'd usually find her sitting in a chair at a table having a beer, sometimes literally, with some GI's. Her picture appeared in the Stars & Stripes paper. That's me on the left.



Later, we were moved back into Germany to Ingolstadt, an interesting city. It was a walled city with a moat around it. It is on the Danube River, about half way between Munich and Nurnberg. We were set up in a former SS barracks across the Danube, a short walk from Ingolstadt. Some of Ingolstadt was a shambles, but some was relatively intact. A USO had been set up in town, an easy walk from our quarters.



Alma's pedigree papers were lost in Munich, Ger. I had a paper describing the situation and where they should be, but it was written in German. I tried to get it translated in Ingolstadt, but the Germans couldn't read it either. Finally, I was told of a man across town that might be able to do it. It seemed that Austrian German was different. I found him and he told me what it said. It told where the papers should be. I tried to find them, but it seems the place no longer existed and nobody was too concerned about dog's papers. Anyway, I didn't find them and am pretty sure they no longer existed.

Alma rapidly became a "GI".



*Second prize winner Alma, owned by Bob Phillips, doesn't drink beer, but you can see that she's proud of her prize just the same.*

Alma got shot while at Ingolstadt. One of the guys was cleaning his 45 cal. pistol.

Somehow, it fired and hit Alma in a hind leg. It couldn't have been better aimed. It passed through the skin at the joint in the middle of the leg. The scar can be seen on the cover picture on the inside of the left leg. A small fraction of an inch in any direction and it would have crippled her. We packed it with sulfur (no penicillin in those days) and found a doctor in town. He took one

look at Alma and was incensed that such a thing could have happened to her. Obviously, he thought of her as being an exceptional animal. He did an excellent job, and other than a scar, she was not affected by it.



As time dragged on in Ingolstadt many of us had amassed plenty of points to go home and were getting plenty of excuses why we couldn't. Selective service wasn't recruiting people for occupation. Those fine young men were just starting their careers after all and what a hardship that would be for them. "Let the veterans do it. They were there already." I wrote a letter to Mother in Charlotte, NC complaining about it. She excerpted it in a letter she wrote to the Charlotte Observer, adding her own comments and they published her letter. Others were doing the same thing. Finally, the issue of a long term occupation force had to be faced.

## Going home - via Le Havre, France

Finally, it came time to head for home. Attractive

offers were made if I would re-enlist overseas. No way, I had other plans. We had comfortable transportation for the trip to Le Havre. They were known as 40 & 8's, meaning boxcars which could hold 40 men or 8 horses. Sometimes, I'm told, the men followed immediately after the horses. Actually, ours were nice. We had way less than 40 men in each so had plenty of room. They were clean with plenty of clean straw. We could lie down comfortably. They made rest stops periodically so we could stretch our legs and those of us with dogs could let them do their thing.



Trouble was, the engineer was very impatient. He would blow the whistle, wait a few seconds and start moving. There would be a mad scramble getting back on. Jumping up into a moving boxcar was no small task and we taller ones had to often help the shorter ones. On one occasion, by the time it was my turn, the train was moving too fast. I got Alma in, but then I could do no more than hang on. Guys were trying to pull me in. Then Alma grabbed my jacket, gave a mighty pull and I was aboard. She was one really smart dog. She could always size up a situation and know what to do.

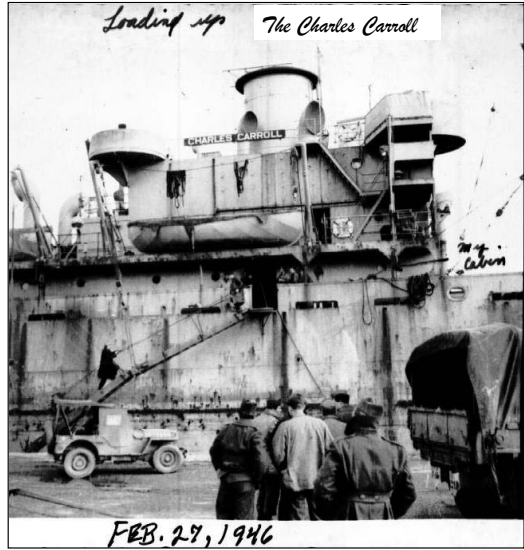


At Le Havre, there were no ships. There was a shipping strike in the US. They wouldn't even let troop ships go. Words can't express how more than a few thousand soldiers in Le Havre felt about that. Our group having dogs were still being kept as a group.

I had made arrangements with American Express for Alma to be shipped home. I don't understand how they had a ship. Soon, Alma was to leave the next morning. I had no prospect of leaving, yet. Then we learned that they needed

*Much cleaner than 1st time I saw it*

people to tend the dogs on the ship. There were 118 dogs. Several of us that had dogs leaving on the ship went to camp headquarters and managed the impossible - to get ourselves transferred in about a couple of hours. We left headquarters in a van, picked up our belongings at our tents, proved to our startled officers that we did have proper orders and shortly afterwards reported to the dog ship, the "Charles Carroll". We had a nice cabin on main deck, right under the bridge. The ship was a rusty old Liberty ship on its last trip, then to be scrapped.

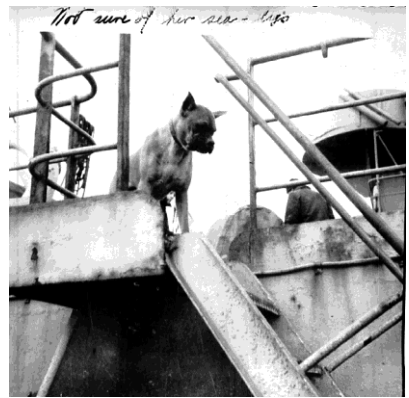


Next day we were on our way. The dogs were in

nice crates with wire in the doors. They were in the hold about mid-ships on the first level below-deck. The hold below there's was empty, the decking over it was in place, so we had a nice area for the dogs. We got them arranged so there was a work area in the

middle and they could be taken out in small groups and exercised.

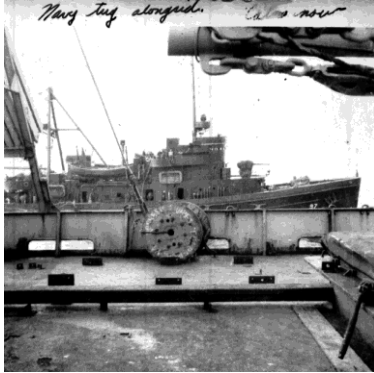
The ship went to Swansea, Wales, to pick up a cargo of coal. There, our troubles began. The captain of an American ship in front of us fell down a ladder and died. Our captain had to officiate. We were there about five days. The coal was to be loaded in the same hold, below the dogs. The longshoremen took up the decking and were preparing to chute the coal. We pointed out that they were about to kill a bunch of dogs. They said that was too bad. They had their orders. The captain would not intervene. So, we went into the hold with the dogs and said, "We're taking the dogs out first. The captain ordered them to go ahead. The ship crew was working hard for our benefit. Finally, a sheet screen was rigged through to the lower hold to guide the coal through. The crew told us that it was supposed to be done that way, anyhow, but the captain was in a hurry. And, he hated having the dogs aboard. So, loading proceeded. Even so, the dust and dirt on the dog level was bad. We were days cleaning up.



Somewhere past the Azores, we encountered bad storms and the ship threw a thrust bearing. We just drifted for two days. The ship was lightly loaded and did 40 to 42 degree rolls on several occasions. We were told that 45 degrees was the limit. Sometimes, it seemed as though it wasn't going to right itself. It was dangerous being down with the dogs. Crates were breaking loose, dogs were sick and it was almost impossible to work. The crew helped all they could. The captain just sat on the upper deck as though nothing was happening. The crew said that he had been a great captain during the war, but that his mind had snapped.



When things calmed down, the engineer managed to rig the propulsion so we could at least go at minimum speed. The captain ordered normal speed. He was warned it would break again and that would finish the propulsion. It did. The captain accused the engineer of sabotage and mutiny and had him put in the brig. And so, we just drifted - - and drifted, the captain splendid with his posturing on the bridge. And the days went by. No messages by the crew were allowed out.



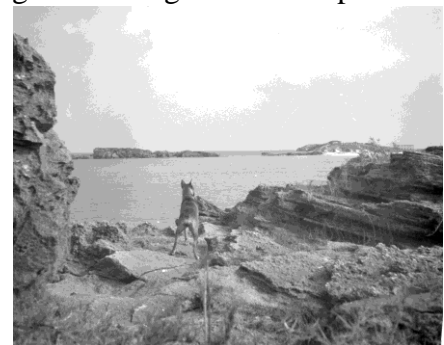
But he couldn't stop us from sending ship-to-shore messages to our families. He censored them, but then we were not new to encoding censored messages. It wasn't long before families were calling important people. Then, it wasn't long before the company was wondering where their ship was and what it was doing. Pretty soon, a befuddled captain had to respond and soon after a sea-going Navy tug arrived to tow us to Bermuda.

During all this, the dogs were getting sick. Distemper shots they were given prior to leaving were "temporary" and only good for 15 days. We were ordered to keep the dogs in their crates, but we ignored the captain and got them on deck in the sun as much as we could, but it wasn't enough. We gave out of food for the dogs. The ship's cook was finally cutting up steaks to make stew for the dogs. That helped a lot. Water got to be a problem. The crew rationed water so the dogs could have enough. The situation was really desperate and a few dogs were dying. Finally, we made it into St. George, Bermuda.

## Bermuda

Things started happening in Bermuda. The word about us had preceded us. We were no sooner docked when the Air Force and the Navy showed up (they had large bases on Bermuda). A veterinarian was being flown in. We had a beautiful island across the harbor to use. It was connected by road. A stockade was being set up so the dogs would have shelter and running room. A barge came alongside and off-loading began immediately. A truck came up. "It's yours to use. I do ask that you please check it into the motor pool by 10:00am each morning, so they can check it over and gas it up". Now, we knew this to be an order, but note the please. We're dealing with Majors, Colonials and Navy Commanders here.

This was plain and simple heart-felt respect. Humanity was alive and well! We found energy we didn't know we still had. They gave us a big tent to set up on the island. We could either sleep there or on board the ship while it was being repaired. There were restrictions for GIs stationed in Bermuda. These did not apply to us and all MPs were so instructed. We couldn't do anything without help being offered. We couldn't pass a mess hall without being offered food. A major was looking at our clothes. Quartermaster had kept the good stuff when we left Europe. He wrote down our sizes and pretty soon we all had brand new clothes. On the island, we would drive to the nearby St. David's lighthouse to fill up jerry cans with water. Pretty



soon a major was looking around and asked what we did for water. In a couple hours, a big tank truck pulls up. "Here's your water. Where should I park it?" That's the way it was.

The Bermudans were really nice to us, I'll always love Bermuda. We were treated like royalty and they do know how to treat royalty. The ice cream and banana splits! Oh my. Walk down the street and they would come out to talk and invite us in. Wouldn't let us pay for anything. Pretty soon, the doctors were advising us to ease up on the ice cream. Our stomachs weren't used to it.

We were in Bermuda for 15 days while the ship was repaired. The veterinarian arrived soon after we did with distemper vaccine and other supplies and the dogs got well, although we lost one in transit to the island and a couple more on the island. I think we lost 12 dogs in all. The vet worked real hard. Our island "retreat" was beautiful. It had a lovely beach. The ship's engineer was released from the brig and charges dropped.



We left Bermuda on the same ship and arrived in New York harbor about April 10, 1946 on a cold drizzly day, but nobody noticed that too much. It is hard to see the NY skyline in the picture, behind the ships in the distance. I know that the picture of arriving New York is a very ordinary picture. But, when I look at it, I still remember the feeling as the skyline emerged from the mist. We were lined along the rail watching.

Alma was sent on to my folks in Charlotte, NC. I went to Ft. Bragg, NC, where I was discharged on April 13, 1946 and joined my folks and Alma in Charlotte soon after. Home at the time was at 1000 Dilworth Rd. in Charlotte.

I went back to Clemson right away for my senior year. Part of the time Alma was in a kennel in Charlotte and part of the time I took her to Clemson, when I could use the family car. The kennel people loved Alma. The school and the students at Clemson were very cooperative about her being there. In fact, I am still a little amazed at how she would just fit in. By now, Alma considered herself to be "human" and she almost was. In Charlotte, Alma and I were crossing a busy street. Charlotte had a leash law and I carried a leash, but seldom used it. A policeman was on the other side of the street and started our way. I had the leash, but not attached to her. Cars whizzed by. Alma heeled close, watching traffic and moving as I did. The policeman watched, then waved his hands, "What the heck", smiled and went on his way. Now, I had tried to teach Alma about things, but one didn't "Train" her. She just picked it up.

One day we were walking on campus when I was approached by a psychology professor who inquired about Alma. He had been watching her and wanted her as a teaching aid on, "Conditioned Response". I took her to his morning class the next day on my way to class. When I came back later in the day to get her, not knowing what to expect, Alma was sitting on the professor's desk listening intently to every word. Class was over, but they were all there chatting, and the professor was sitting in a student desk. The professor was delighted. "You know, she has reasoning ability", he said. I said, "Yeah, I know, she thinks she is human". The professor really liked her. She went to his class several times and would stay there much of the day, even during classes that were not "her" classes. He said she just sat there and paid attention. He said he admonished his students that if they were as alert and paid as much attention as Alma did, they would learn more. So, whenever she could, Alma was an assistant professor of psychology at Clemson.

On Jun. 8, 1947, I was awarded a BSME from Clemson College, Clemson, SC. Home at the time was Charlotte, NC.

In Jul. 1947, I drove to Alaska. My Aunt Delia was a nurse at the time at the General Hospital in Seward, Alaska. She bought a car through her brothers in Detroit. At least one of them worked at General Motors. GM was just starting to build cars again after WW-II. Now, the question



was how to get the car to Alaska. Having just graduated from Clemson, after only a little break since returning from Germany, and no job yet in sight, I welcomed the opportunity to drive it to Alaska for her. I left from Uncle Roger's home in W. Palm Beach, FL, where I was visiting with Uncle Joe, Dad and Aunt Marie. I made my way to Detroit. Alma, was already there with the Gabriel families. They sure wanted to keep her. They had done a good job getting the car ready for the trip. The ALCAN Highway was a gravel road and had little habitation or supplies for long distances. Travel on the Highway was very limited and only by

permit.

We drove past Chicago on July 4th, 1947. During the drive on the ALCAN Hywy., facilities were few and far between and what there was would be minimal. If I found gas, it was often to pour from their jerry can to my jerry can. I was required to have at least two 5 gal. gas cans, two spare tires mounted on wheels and many spare parts. We would see maybe three vehicles in a day's travel. The scenery was so spectacular that it was hard to decide where to point the camera.



As I recall, the drive lasted about two weeks. Along the way, we slept in the car, or just outside it on the ground. On two occasions, Alma woke me with the clear indication to be still and quiet, something was there. Her ears tracked it like radar. In the morning, we found large bear tracks close by. After that, we were sleeping inside the car.

Alma never missed a chance to attack a porcupine. She didn't win those encounters. I spent a lot of time pulling quills out of her muzzle and mouth.

Once I thought I'd lost her. A deer entered the woods by the car. Out the window she went and I heard her chasing the deer. Then quiet. I called - nothing. I blew the horn and called for the longest time. Finally, I heard her tracing her path back.

She never curled up and slept while we were driving. She was in the passenger seat co-piloting! A great companion.

Aunt Delia met us in Fairbanks with friends of her's from Seward. They were the tailor in Seward and his wife. Alma and I stayed overnight at the Fairbanks Hotel. There was a large dorm style room in the basement. We shared that with several "Bush men", trappers, prospectors, etc., each with a powerful rifle by the bed. They liked and were intrigued with Alma, but they worried that she did not have enough of a fur coat for Alaska. She did see lots of



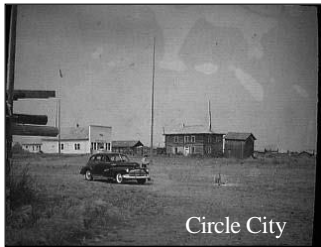
cold, while in Alaska and it never seemed to bother her, but it never was the cold they had in mind.

I went for lunch at a cafe nearby and seated myself at the counter next to a “Bush” guy, his rifle leaning to the counter, and looked at the menu. Ninety nine cents for a hamburger!?! The Bush guy’s hamburger came out at that time. It covered a dinner plate and my thought was, “Could I eat all that?” He took one look and bellowed, “You tryin to starve me to death!” They grabbed his plate and quickly brought a bigger one!

From Fairbanks, we drove on up to Circle City on the Yukon River. We stayed overnight in a cabin at Circle Hot



Springs.



These three pictures were taken from almost the same spot



on the Yukon River. The river current rotates the baskets (there is another basket down into the water. Fish are scooped up and slide via the chute into the box. As the third picture shows, it does work. The fish are dried to preserve them. From Circle City, we returned to Fairbanks, and continued on to Valdez via the Richardson Highway.



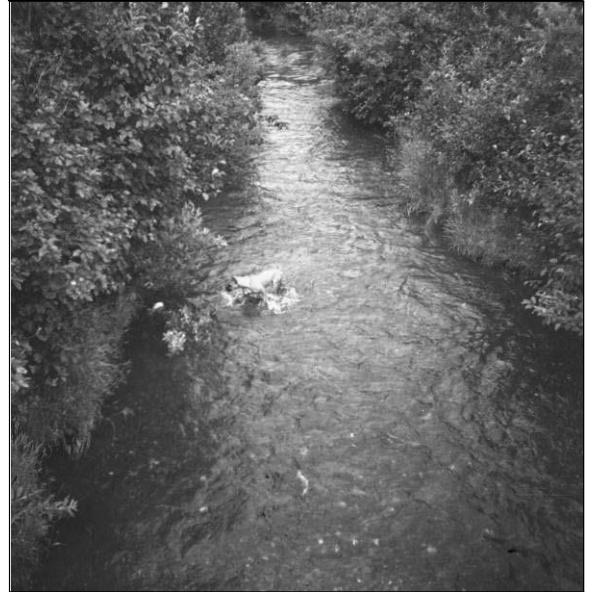
Along the Richardson Hwy.





Can barely see Alma and me in front of the glacier on left.

This stream at Valdez was full of salmon coming into fresh water to spawn. A bear was just upstream. Alma saw it swat a salmon ashore and tried it too. She did, then looked at us like, "Now what?" She tried to bite it. It almost shook her head off before she could get rid of it!



Valdez, Alaska. Here we boarded the SS Baranof for Seward. The car was stowed aboard the ship.

Salmon moving upstream. They will move on upstream to the spot where they were born, where they lay there eggs and die. They begin to turn red when they enter fresh water from the ocean.



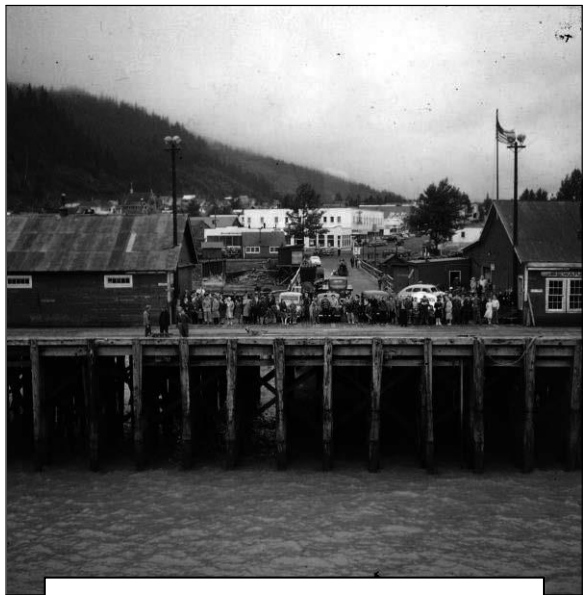


Aunt Delia Gabriel was a nurse at the General Hospital in downtown Seward. After we got back to Seward, I got a job at the, "Home in the Woods" Sanatorium (The San) about two miles N, of town (up in the picture below). This had been an Army hospital, but was then operated by the Methodist Church as a TB sanatorium serving almost entirely Eskimo and Indian TB patients. The Eskimos and Indians were not very immune to the disease.

Seward. Alaska



Aerial shot of Seward



About to dock at the bottom end of Main Street at Seward. It was at this dock that Alma and I first met Mary Francis, the future Mrs. Phillips.



This (upper picture) is one of the buildings at “The San”. All the buildings were similar to this, and widely spread out over the area.

The two pictures below are of the apartment We occupied. We had three bedrooms and it looked like the upper picture unit. I don’t know where the furniture came from. Cabinets aren’t finished yet. We had a cook stove, ice box, etc. Very comfortable. The building had been a frozen food locker. We converted it.

It was so well insulated that keeping it warm - absolutely no problem. Julian Denny, the x-ray guy, moved in with us, and later two high school students, the Ness brothers from Kenai, shared it with Alma and I. Kenai is about 100 miles away on the West coast of the Kenai Peninsula, so the Ness brothers moved to be near the school. No road existed to Kenai then. In winter, a rough road was plowed in the snow. The Ness brothers were known to visit home via skis.



My job at The San was to help tend the three boilers in the steam plant with two other people. This was along with any other things that needed doing, driving the two trucks (old army ambulances), fix whatever was broke. It wasn’t a dull existence.

About the end of September, 1947, I was told that a new nurse was arriving on the “Aleution”.

Would I meet her with the ambulance? So Alma and I drove down to the dock. Now, the Strait of Alaska is notorious for rough crossings. One look at her and I knew that this was no exception. As she stepped aboard, she came unexpectedly nose to nose with a curious Alma. I was expecting her to faint, especially since boxer dogs were virtually unknown in the US at the time! I was murmuring something apologetically and hopefully welcoming. She looked at me and calmly asked, “What’s its name”, or something like that, and came on in. In my head was going, “This is no ordinary lady!” Alma was obviously coming to the same conclusion, and they took to each other right away. I had just met Mary Louise Francis and the following May, we would be flying to the “Lower 48” to get married at her parents’ home in Rochester, NY.





When the snow started falling, it kept on coming. The picture at left, and the one below, are at mile 12 on the one road that ran North up the Peninsula



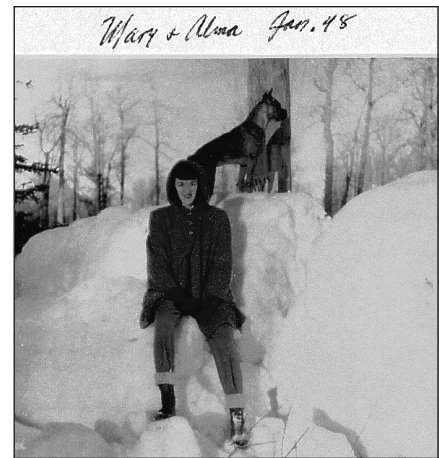
from Seward to the town of Hope.

I am skiing on 20 ft. of new snow. The surface was slightly wind-packed. Alma could get around on it fine, but without skis are



snowshoes, I'd go straight down, and did. This was my first time on skis (I'd ordered them from Sears Roebuck), and I later fell about where I am in this picture. My skis stayed on top with me hanging down from them. Even so, I couldn't touch the ground. The snow was like fluff. I could move around with no resistance from it. The others looked down through the hole, laughing. I finally worked the

skis under me, stood up and skied forward, finally rising back to the surface. "You're supposed to fill in your "Sitzmark", they said. "Yeah, sure"! Next time we were up there, there was no sign of my fall. We later scrounged some gear and put together a nice motor-driven rope tow.



Alma had an uncanny ability to understand a situation and pitch in to help. Sometimes, this was misunderstood by us humans. Mel Anderson and his wife lived in the house across the street from us. He and I worked together. Mel was a smart guy and he got the idea that Alaskans would love fresh eggs. Flown in cold storage eggs were all we could get. He read thick books on chickens and eggs and ended up ordering fertilized eggs from Sears Roebuck. He put them in the warm boiler room to hatch and by Spring he had chickens – a bunch of chickens, to be raised by the book – arguably no finer anywhere. Then came eggs, mostly all extra-large, many having double yokes. People couldn't get enough of them. Except an "Old timer" tried one, "What's all the fuss, they got no flavor!"

Alma and I were out with Mel one spring day while he exercised his chickens. Suddenly, they began going away in all directions and Mel got very agitated. Suddenly, Alma began to run at high speed in a slowly tightening ring around the outside of the brood. "She's chasing my

chickens”, Mel screamed. “Wait, Mel”, I said. Soon, the chickens had been herded into a tight bunch where Mel got them under control. As soon as Alma saw this, she came over to stand by us, looking very pleased with herself. Boxers aren’t well known as shepherd dogs.

Once in a while, Alma would disappear, to finally come back with a moose leg bone. We never figured this out.



Group at the airport seeing us off

practicable then, and despite careful preparations, she had a very rough trip from Oregon.

That is Mt. Resolution in back. Its about 5000 Ft. high. The ride was a thriller. He took off by heading for the bay end of the runway, a short distance, at high throttle, then spun the plane around at the end and it was full throttle toward



This is our airplane to Anchorage

## Leaving Alaska

This is May 2nd, 1948. We are at the Seward airport about to leave Alaska for the “Lower 48”. We were going to Washington, DC for Mary to meet my Mom and then to Rochester, NY, to be married at Mary’s home. Alma stayed with my friend “Denny”. He would soon be coming out to his home at Portland, OR, and he brought Alma out with him and shipped her to me. Flying out with a dog was not



Not our airplane

Mt. Resurrection. He banked sharply to the left with wheels just above the trees and proceeded between the mountains to the left. There was a dead end at a high glacier face. Then a sharp turn left in the face of the glacier and we proceeded back the way we came. Now we had comfortable altitude and proceeded to follow the road North past the right side of Mt. Resurrection. During this time, we could easily see animals on the mountain sides.

After a while, clouds were getting closer to the ground and so were we. Finally I asked, “Why aren’t you flying over this?” Answer; “I can only go so high. The mountains are higher and I don’t know how high the clouds go. So, I want to keep the road in sight. If I have to land on it,

it'll cost a couple of wing tips, but we'll be OK." It got touchy for a while, but then the clouds lifted, as I'm sure, he had figured on.

We had a large airplane from Anchorage, by way of Fairbanks. We passed Mt. McKinley on a gorgeous full-moon night. The view was indescribable!

We just barely missed out on jobs in Alaska that we'd hoped to get. They had just been filled. Mary and I got married in Rochester, NY and started our new life in the suburbs of Washington, DC, in an apartment in Hyattsville, MD.

Alma made it back to us at the apartment, and our new lives began.

## Settling down in Maryland.



Hyattsville MD-Nov'48  
Mary-Alma-Apartment Window

This is the apartment in Hyattsville, MD. There was a Safeway store nearby where we'd walk to for groceries. Alma usually went along and would wait outside while we shopped. The store



Christmas tree 1949

manager and many of the regular customers got to know and like Alma. One day the manager said to let her stay inside. "I didn't think it was allowed?" "Who cares?" So, she would sit inside up front. One day, there was a commotion up front and I arrived, as did the manager, to find a kid had pulled Alma's neck chain off trying to make her move and was hitting her over the head with it. Mama was there saying, "No no, that's not nice". The manager got there first. He grabbed the kid and thrust him to Mama, then was checking Alma for damages. "How dare you handle my child! That dog shouldn't be in this store!" The Manager said, "That dog can be in this store whenever it wants to be. I don't want to see that child in here ever again!" The other customers were agreeing. I tried to apologize, but he'd have none of it. Seems the kid was a well-known problem and he was glad to be rid of him. Alma was OK. She made a lot of friends that day and established a local reputation for boxers being good with kids.



Mary, Billy @ 2 Mo. & Alma



1st House May 1950  
Alma is in the yard.

Also, 1<sup>st</sup> car - 1935 Ford that Grandpop Francis had propped up on cement blocks during WW-II. Good motor - fenders flapped! Cost? \$1.00



Still grading the back yard



Apr 1953 Alma-Gussie-Bill-Tom's feet  
Rockville - Okinawa Ave.





1957 Outer Banks  
of NC. Ft Raleigh

We went to the Outer Banks  
of NC several times. We  
would rent a cottage right on  
the ocean. These were fun  
vacations.



Bodie Is. Light





Granpop Francis built the houses for them. They used them, and I think, liked having their own, "Place". But they were basically "indoor, with the family", dogs.

1959 – Rockville - Okinawa Ave.



Gussy & Alma  
Gussy was born abt 1957.

Alma died abt 1961