The Chapters of Our Lives

Wendell D. Waldie
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This book would not have been possible without the help of my daughter, Jana Garrison. Jana organized, edited, and oversaw the writing of everything that appears in the pages to follow. Her husband, Bob, was kind enough to digitize all the photographs from which we chose those that appear in the book.

Members of my family have heard bits and pieces of the story of my life recalled here and there, but very little about the period of my life in which I was in the military. Here is the entire story of my life, including my time in the Army, recalled chronologically as well as, thanks to Jana, coherently.

I would like to dedicate this book to Jana. Without her help it would not have been possible to record the story of my life in the pages that follow.

Dr. Wendell D. Waldie
2007
Ancestry

My father was born in Minden, Missouri, across the state line from Pittsburg, Kansas. His parents were full blood Scots. They moved to the Pittsburg, Kansas area where Granddad worked in the coal mines.

My granddad decided to make the run in the Cherokee Strip in 1893 and got a homestead in Grant County, Oklahoma. That’s where my dad’s story begins.

My dad’s mother died when he was five. He walked eight miles to town every Monday morning to go to high school in Medford, Oklahoma. During the week he stayed with Walter and Anna Waldie, his relatives. On Friday evenings, he walked back to the homestead and spent the weekends with his dad.

Later, my granddad moved into Medford. He was a kindly gentleman with the usual Scottish big ears and full mustache.

My dad, Robert Waldie, had no middle initial or middle name. He taught himself to play the fiddle like his father. Music has always been an important part of our lives. He and his father used to play for barn dances around Grant County, Oklahoma. He’d occasionally get that fiddle out and play it when we had company from Washington, D.C. After I came along, they had me recite some songs and things I had learned. It was a really big deal showing off Wendell Dean to Dad’s boss from Washington.

Dad was 22 years old when he graduated from Medford High School and went to the University of Kansas (KU) for his degree in civil engineering.
Mother was three and one-half years younger than my dad and was born in a sod house on the Cherokee Strip in Oklahoma. She had been a school teacher in Wakita, Oklahoma. Their homesteads were only a few miles apart; they were neighbors.

When my dad and mom were married, they went back to KU. My mother took two years at the University while my dad finished his civil engineering degree. After my dad got his degree and worked for the Katy Railroad, he got an offer to go to Washington, D.C. to be a federal employee in the United States Department of Agriculture. He accepted that job, and my parents moved there.

My dad was good at math, and was employed primarily because he was a farmer with good math skills. He knew how to prepare formulas for grain bins. If the grain bins were round or square, they were easy to figure; but, if they were odd-shaped, then they were a problem. So my dad developed formulas to measure the grain in a bin. When a USDA office was to be opened in Wichita, Kansas to cover the entire southwest quarter of the United States, Dad was offered that job, and he accepted it. This office had the responsibility to certify the grains in all federally supervised warehouses. This assured the farmer that
the amount of grain that he delivered to the elevator were still there subject to his sale. Each farmer that brought his grain to a federally licensed elevator received a USDA receipt for it.
My Early Days in Wichita

After Dad accepted the job with the USDA, he and my mom drove to Wichita, Kansas where I was born. My folks bought an apartment house on South Main. They also built a duplex next door to their home on South Market between my grandmother’s house and their house. My mom managed the rental properties.

At that time, my dad was on the road for the government 28 days out of every month, so I didn’t see him very often, which means that I was basically raised by my mother. She gets the credit for any good characteristics that I display. If I display any bad characteristics, she’d probably blame them on my dad because he wasn’t there.

I remember one time when I was about seven years old, I sat on a little hassock between Mom and Dad in a government Model A Ford on a business trip. We’d wait for him outside an elevator while he did his work, and then we’d go on to other elevators. At the end of the day, we’d stop at night in a hotel. It was quite an educational tour for me, and I enjoyed seeing the country.

At Longfellow Elementary School, I formed an important friendship with Mr. Paynter, the school principal. I kept in touch with him throughout his lifetime because he was always interested in what was happening to me.

Also, my uncles, my mother’s two...
brothers (Noble and Floyd), taught me how to handle guns, a skill which came in handy later. They taught me to fish and thus, to enjoy the outdoors. We always went fishing on Sunday mornings, and Uncle Noble said that he could worship on a riverbank as well as in a church.

My mother would sometimes prompt Mr. Sabin, an old bachelor who wallpapered the rental properties for her, to discuss some subjects with me. Mr. Paynter, my two uncles, and Mr. Sabin were all genuine male influences for me.

As the office workload grew, my dad got more employees and gradually reduced his travel time from 28 days down to just a few days a month. By the time I was 14, he was in the Wichita office most of the time.

Since my folks were both off farms, my father wanted me to have a pony. He had a two-stall barn built on the back of our garage. The first pony that he bought for me was Bo-Peep, an Indian Paint pony; she was only six-months-old, too young to be ridden yet. Then, we had an opportunity to buy Betty, a black, Welsh Shetland pony. (A Welsh Shetland pony is three-quarters the size of a horse.) I remember that Mom and Dad took me to the northwest part of Wichita. We saddled up the pony, and I rode her at a walk all the way to South Market to the barn. My folks followed us to make sure that nothing bothered us. Beside the two-stall barn, there was a chicken coop and pen. My mother had a vegetable garden, a flower
garden, and a fish pond in the back yard as well, so we had eggs and garden vegetables like regular farm folks. I helped clean the fish pond in the fall and put the goldfish in the aquarium on the sleeping porch. In the spring, we cleaned out the fish pond and put the fish back in for the summer.

In those days, there weren’t any fences in the backyards, so kids could run up and down everybody’s backyards and have a good time. My mother used to go to the back screen door and yell, “Wen-DELL…Wen-DELL!” She knew I could hear her and I knew that I’d better get home!

I used to take Betty, my pony, with me in the morning. I would walk her down the alley to the “turn-around” where the streetcar track came down South Main, turned around, and went back north. The turn-around had a nice, great big circle of green grass in the center of it. I’d stake Betty out in the circle. I’d go on to Longfellow Grade School and pick her up at noon to put her in her pen for the afternoon. She got to graze each morning that way. The streetcars never bothered her, and the passengers got to look at her.

Since I had Betty to ride, my dad gave Bo-Peep to my cousins in Oklahoma. I went to that farm for a week each summer, and got to
see her. I recently saw a picture of her with her colt, which was marked almost exactly the same as her mother, which is quite unusual.

In the neighborhood when I was growing up, I had a box scooter made out of a 2x4 and skate wheels nailed to the bottom of it. We nailed a wooden box to the top of the 2x4. If you leaned right or left, the scooter went in that direction like roller skates.

There were other boys in the neighborhood to play with, so I grew up in a relatively normal fashion, even without a father around to give me his influence. But, I didn’t play out a lot with the rest of the kids, because my mother had me taking classical piano lessons for 11 years. I didn’t get to play before I had practiced for 45 minutes.

My first piano teacher was Mrs. Thorpe, who taught at the downtown Friends University studio. After her, my teacher was Mr. Paolo Conte, who taught at the downtown division of Wichita University. He was in the Italian Army in WWI. He told me how he protected his fingers from the weight of the rifle by hanging it with a wire over his shoulder and it extended down around his rifle. Occasionally Mr. Conte invited me to his home where he fixed us an authentic Italian spaghetti dinner with imported Parmesan cheese, spaghetti, and tomato sauce like he had had in Italy.

If he was heading to a funeral after my lesson, he would ask me if I wanted to accompany him. We’d walk to the mortuary, go to the organ, and he’d just sit down and start playing about anything in the way of hymns, interludes, or whatever was asked for.

One summer I took church organ lessons from Mr. Conte. The lessons were given on the organ at First Baptist Church, and I was allowed to practice on our organ at South Lawrence Christian
Wendell D. Waldie

I didn’t do very well, because my feet are wide. I often played dissonance on the foot pedals, so that ended that.

I finally became good enough on the piano to give a private concert. I played several numbers from memory and then Mr. Conte and I played a couple of duets. After that, I played several more pieces. I got a certificate for having given a private piano concert from the downtown division of Wichita University (WU) music department. Mr. Conte was another very important influence in my life.

Besides the piano during that time, I took clarinet lessons from a young man named Eddie Turner. Eddie had had polio and both his legs were in braces. I later took alto saxophone lessons from him. Eventually, I acquired a tenor sax and a baritone sax.

The clarinet became my first school band instrument at Hamilton Intermediate under the band director, Ken Thompson. Later in his life, Ken Thompson lived here at Larksfield Place for fifteen years until he passed away in 2004. He also wound up teaching my oldest child, David, at East High School where he served as band director. He was a great guy!

I first saw Methyl (my wife) at a birthday party. She was five years old. The next time I crossed Methyl’s path was at Hamilton Intermediate School. I again noticed her, and we started doing what was called “dating” at the end of the ninth grade. In those days, a date was visiting at home or meeting at a movie.

At Hamilton Intermediate School, I took woodworking from Mr. Cox. Each of the other boys made a cedar chest the first semester and a bow and arrow set and magazine rack the second semester. I barely completed my cedar chest the whole year and had to go back to work
on it a couple of evenings late in the school year to finish it, because of being a perfectionist. I had to have everything match up; it had to be perfect. (My daughter has that cedar chest in her bedroom now as a keepsake from me.)

During my time at Hamilton, Dad bought me a pool table, because he said that he didn’t want me to go to pool halls. We put it in the basement of my folks’ house. (Then, it was moved to our first home on South Clifton, and later to our family home on Aloma for the thirty years we lived there.)

Meanwhile, my dad bought a government Model A at auction and took it down to my granddad in Medford, Oklahoma. He drove it the remaining years of his life. The government automobiles were put up for auction every two years because they were driven a lot of miles. The cars were unusual, as they had a spare tire in each front fender well, instead of just one on the rear.

After my grandfather died and in the summer prior to high school, my father brought the Model A up for me to drive. I had a great time in that car. Dad had it upholstered with blue seats and a white headliner (ceiling), which were East High School’s colors. It was quite a car!

I played in the East High marching band and in the pep band, which played at all the basketball and football games, as well as in parades. At the time, there were only two schools in Wichita, North and East High, which made for quite a rivalry.

Methyl and I would often go out after youth fellowship. We’d go dancing at the 20th Century Club where she was a member. It’s about the only time that I ever danced, because I’m really not very fond
of dancing. We’d also go to the A & W Root Beer stand on East Central and get a root beer. Even though I didn’t have much money to spend, we thought we were living pretty “high on the hog.” We attended all the high school activities together, and I played in the marching band on the football field at half-time and in the pep band at basketball games. Methyl and I didn’t get to sit together because she was a member of the Pep Club and I was in the band.

During our first year in college (1942), Methyl and I would go out Harry Street, past the Schweiter Farm, which was a quarter section of farm land (usually in wheat), and up Hillside to WU. At that time, the city development was just to the northwest corner of that farm. I didn’t make good grades that school year, anticipating being drafted in the Army. As it turned out, I wasn’t drafted until July of 1943.

During that time I worked evenings for seven months at the Playmor Club, just south of the John Mack Bridge on South Broadway—I worked there from 9:00 P.M. until 1:00 A.M. Then, I’d come home and study. Sometimes my dad would get up and find me studying at 2:00 or 2:30 A.M. and tell me that I should be in bed. I would have to be in class again by 8 A.M. the next morning.

One musician that made an impression on me was Methyl’s brother, Lloyd Charles Davis, known as “L.C.” He was a great trumpet
player around Wichita, and had perfect pitch. If he heard brakes squeal or a horn honk, he could tell you what note it was on the piano. He played great jazz trumpet and was on the road several years with some big bands. Later he worked for KFBI Radio as one of the Old Ranch Hands in the noon program, which was in the Kansas Farmers and Bankers Insurance Building and is now KFDI Radio.
I ended up being six foot, five-and-one-half inches tall, but I wasn’t extra tall until I grew five inches during my seventeenth year. My mother complained because she couldn’t keep me in trousers that were long enough. After I went into the Army on July 2, 1943, I grew two and one half more inches.

I was first sent to Ft. Leavenworth for induction. From Leavenworth, I was sent to Camp Crowder near Neosho, Missouri. It was basically a Signal Corps Camp, and, incidentally, the Army Band School for training.

Upon completion of band school, I was assigned on November 4, 1943, to the 84th Infantry Division Band on maneuvers in Louisiana. I got there for the last half of maneuvers and was there approximately a month. While there, I lived outdoors, slept in a tent, and practiced in the woods. For recreation, we played volleyball with a net strung between two trees,
creating a lifelong interest in volleyball for me.

After maneuvers, we went into Camp Clayborne near Alexandria, Louisiana. We had normal band duties, which included practicing, and playing for different units, such as five o'clock retreats, which officially ended the day. We also had dance bands that played for dances in the various units in the area and occasionally for an Army Air Corps dance.

During this time I realized that I had come into the Army weighing 187 pounds. I zoomed up to 220 pounds while in training. A person could eat as much as he wanted. I discovered that the pack I carried weighed 105 pounds. An anti-tank mine will trip at 320 pounds, so I thought it be safer to lower my weight, which I did, and stayed around 200 pounds all the rest of my service days.

I spent about 12 months in Louisiana, and I loved the weather. I saw ice frozen on a fence only one time the whole winter. Then we headed overseas. Our general loved his band, so he had a 112 piece band, which is just twice T/O (Table of Organization) size of 56 members. When it came time to send us to the European Theater, he had to send 56 of
our band members to other units. Some went to infantry units. I was sent to Company B, 335th Infantry, 1st Battalion, 84th Infantry Division in September of 1944. It didn’t bother me much that I had no infantry training, because of the experiences I had with my two uncles in hunting, fishing, and handling guns.

The division left Camp Clayborne and went by train to Camp Kilmer in New Jersey to the Point of Departure, where we were staged to go to Europe.

The troop ships went every week from New York harbor and were guarded by Navy ships in a convoy. When our ship had been out of the harbor a short time, there was a collision between it and another ship. The collision bent about 12 feet of the bow of our troop ship 90° to the left. So, our ship went back into the harbor, and we went back to Kilmer to wait until the next week’s convoy. Because time was short, the bow was poured full of cement to be seaworthy for the next week’s convoy. The earlier convoy that I started with landed at Glasgow, Scotland. The troops traveled by train through the length of England to our Winchester quarters near the south coast. It would have meant a lot to me since I’m half Scotch by birth. But a week later, the convoy with our cement-bowed ship landed in Liverpool, which is in the middle of England on the west coast, so I didn’t get to see Scotland then.

We went over on a British troop ship. When we’d go to chow, they had long counters about waist high, and you stood to eat. The weather was fairly rough, and the ship rocked back and forth. When we stood there, we leaned one way for balance, and the food would shift the other way. You had to track your food down to get it. Due to wartime shortages, we had Karo syrup to sweeten the coffee, and there
was cornmeal in the sausage, so it would go further. It was good and nourishing, but it was a little unusual.

When we arrived in England, Company B was housed in what was an English military academy; these were nice quarters. We were there several weeks. I was able to get two passes into London and hired private taxicabs to see Westminster Abbey, St. Paul’s Cathedral, and other sites.

We landed at Omaha Beach six weeks after D-Day. We crossed the English Channel without any problems. It was all cleaned up by then.

We walked inland a ways then were picked up by trucks. Our company spent one night in tents and was then trucked toward the front lines. We were attached to the British Army north of the U.S. Fifth Army under General Montgomery until we were pulled down to the Battle of the Bulge. We marched 42 miles in three days with full packs down to the Bulge. The company was then under General Patton and the Third Army.

I recollect some incidences that occurred while we were in Germany. One day we were marching through a German town. When we got our break, instead of sitting down and resting, I went into a German house that was right there. Lo and behold, the German lady

Map showing the route taken by the 84th Division
had just left, because the skillet was still on the stove with hot grease in it. Eggs were on a shelf above the stove so, I cracked about a dozen eggs into that skillet and started stirring them, when they yelled, “Fall in.” I took the skillet and spoon with me. I ate the eggs and pitched the skillet and spoon in the ditch.

During the cold weather, each of us had heavy leather mittens with fur lining and a string that went around our necks and hung down to above our waists on our chests. I found some eggs, but didn’t have anywhere to put them, so I filled those two mittens with eggs. I was walking down the street and a sniper took a shot at us. Sniping is when you don’t know that anyone is around, but suddenly a shot rings out. I jumped into a German doorway, which was recessed about 12 inches for cover. I hit both those mittens on the door and broke all the eggs. It wasn’t long before they started dripping out the bottom of those mittens and down the front of my uniform. It was a darned mess. Those were eggs that I didn’t get to eat.

A third story about eggs occurred after I had commandeered a Jeep while I was back with the band. I drove out of town one day to a little country farm. I drove into the farm yard and nobody came out. I got out of the Jeep and went to the door. I could hear German voices inside, but they were in another room visiting. I wonder why they didn’t hear me knock. I finally got aggravated, opened the screen door, and looked in. There was a basket of eggs sitting on their kitchen table. They didn’t even know that I was there. I picked up their basket of eggs, put it in my Jeep, and drove back to our outfit. We all had eggs for several days. I would have liked to have seen their faces when they came out and wondered what had happened to their eggs.
One time I was digging in a foxhole about a city block outside a small town. I had dug about six inches deep and approximately two foot by five foot. I was ready to start the second layer, and all of a sudden, a mortar shell landed about 40 yards from me. Mortars are fired in a sequence of five and generally in a line. The second shell landed about 20 yards from me and directly toward me. This meant the third one was going to be darned close, so I got down in those six inches that I had dug, and the third one was about 18 inches from my head. The next two went on 20 and 40 yards beyond me toward town. When I rose up, I could reach out with my finger and put it into the middle of the hole where the mortar exploded in the soil. The explosion pattern is like an old-fashioned pointed paper cup. The soil directs the force of the mortar up and out. I wasn’t harmed, except that my ears rang for many days after that.

Another story that is similar to this occurred near the end of the war. I was up on the edge of the forest with several officers, and we were standing by a dugout, watching the Germans retreating down a road that was a half-mile or so down below us. I was the only enlisted man there. I noticed one tank down there had turned his turret around and raised his gun up toward us. About that time, he fired a shell, and missed us and hit the trees. I told the officers they’d better get down in the dugout, and they all scrambled through the small opening. As I was shinnying down the hole, the second shell was fired. It hit the side of the bunker about two feet from my right shoulder and tore the timbers of the dugout’s roof apart. Dirt was all over the officers and everything else. It didn’t take them long to get out the backside of the dugout where the tanker couldn’t see us any longer. That was
twice that I was just about two feet from either a mortar or a tank shell explosion.

I have another story about the German tanks, specifically the German Tiger tank. The Tiger tank had a rifled barrel, which meant the bullet came out spiraling. It was 88 millimeters and was very accurate. One time our platoon was dug in outside a small town. We had been in these foxholes for three or four days in just a holding position. We saw five of our Sherman tanks as they started out from the town, spread out 150 feet apart. They got out past our foxholes, and they were heading over the next little crossroads. There was a German Tiger tank dug in at the crossroads that started firing on one end of the five Sherman tanks. The Sherman tanks started backing up toward town, and were firing at the Tiger tank. The Tiger tank missed the first Sherman tank with his first shot, but with the second shot, he disabled it. He hit and missed until he knocked all five of those tanks out before they could get back into town.

After we got out of the foxholes in a couple more days, we went through that area and we could see the bunker that the Tiger tank had been sitting in, dug down with sandbags all around. All that could be seen was the turret and gun, but, of course, the tank was long gone by then.

When I was doing the sniping, rather than being sniped at, I was at the Battle of the Bulge on a hilltop looking across a valley at the Germans. They were across an open valley in the trees. We looked over there and a German soldier walked out to the edge of the woods. He stood there looking around. I don’t know if he was tempting us, or maybe didn’t know that we were across the valley, and was just getting
some fresh air and sunshine. But somebody said, “Well, he’s too far to hit, or we’d just shoot him.” I said, “Well, let’s see.” I laid my Garand rifle in the fork of a tree, aimed about three feet above his head, and fired. He dropped. Other Germans came out of the woods, apparently not aware of where the shot came from. The next morning, there were still three bodies lying in the snow where they dropped. Anything in a German uniform is the enemy. You shoot first and ask questions later.

When we slept at night, we’d stick the bayonets on our rifles into the ground to prevent water getting into the barrel. We’d smooth away the snow just enough to put our sleeping bags in the cleared area. Sometimes we’d wake up the next morning with snow all over us.

Another memory of the Bulge was when we were moving along a narrow road through the trees and came to a U.S. tank that had been hit by a German 88-shell. The shell penetrated the front of the turret and out the back, passing between the two tankers. It didn’t explode inside the turret. The tank had backed up into the trees to free the road and was sitting there when we passed by. Their duty was over for that battle.

Our General ordered oversized white long-johns to cover ourselves and packs, head-to-toe. That was one of the early uses of camouflage. On several occasions, we got very close to the enemy without being detected, because of the white long-johns and snow everywhere. We blended in. We stayed about three weeks in the Ardennes Forest with the temperature never far above zero.

One night, we were moving into Lindern, and stumbling through a sugar beet field. It was very slick to walk on the beets wet with dew. It was like walking on moss-covered rocks in a stream when fly-fishing.
We were wondering if there were Germans behind us. I offered to carry the Browning automatic rifle, which weighs 16 pounds, and bring up the rear. I looked back frequently, but nothing ever happened to us. The sun came up the next morning. I went out and tried to shoot the Browning, but it was frozen shut from the winter moisture. It’s a good thing we didn’t have to depend on it.

We were in Lindern and cut off from the rest of our division for three days. We were occupying a house and I was a squad leader by then. One morning I was standing at the top of the stairway in this house, and there were two front windows. We had a squad member in each of those windows “standing guard,” and the rest of the squad was sleeping. We took guard duty in shifts. All of a sudden, our guy in the front window sees three German soldiers creeping up through a ditch on our side of the road. One of our guys, without waiting, shot the first one. The second German soldier had a German bazooka, which he fired back at the flash of the rifle. He missed just far enough that he hit the front door instead of a window. The front door blew into splinters all over the room. If it had hit the window, it would have come inside, but the door saved us. The other two Germans retreated the way they came. The German soldier that was shot lay out there and called for help for about two hours before daylight. Since we were cut off from our division, we weren’t going out to help him. He finally quit calling.

On another day, we were cleaning out a town and went into a home. We didn’t see anybody on the first floor. I opened a door and there was a stairway down to the cellar. We didn’t know what was down there, so I called down the stairway, “Kum en ze out.” I yelled again and we still didn’t hear a sound. To be certain, I yelled,
“Grenade!” I pulled the pin and tossed it to the bottom of the steps where it blew up. Two Germans, who had been hiding in the basement, came up through the smoke with their hands up. Caution paid off for us that time.

I have another German story which didn’t turn out quite so well for the German. We were holding our position in a barnyard, and someone out there kept yelling, “Aide Man, Aide Man!” We knew it was a German, because we called ours “Medics.” He was trying to get someone to come out, and he would have shot us. There was a tank in that general direction. We contacted the tanker by radio, and we asked him to stick his head up and look around. There was a “Kraut” out there yelling, “Aide Man.” About ten minutes later, the tanker came walking in with a German ahead with his hands up. He was walking by me when the tanker said, “What’ll we do with him?” It wasn’t me, but someone said, “I’d shoot the S.O.B” and he did—just shot him right there beside me, and the German dropped to the ground. We couldn’t take him prisoner, because there was no way we could keep a prisoner with us as we moved. We didn’t feel bad, because he was trying to lure us out to shoot us instead.

Another barnyard episode was a little more pleasant. I was on guard duty in the middle of the night in a foxhole that someone else had dug. I began hearing a rustling coming my way. I got my finger on the trigger, and was getting ready to say, “Halt. Who goes there?” Out of the haze, there came a big old black and white cow walking through the barnyard, so it’s a good thing I didn’t shoot before I saw what it was.

The best bed that I had in Europe was in an oat bin. We were on
a rest period, and I put my sleeping bag on top of the oats. It was like a soft pillow, and I slept very well that night.

There were 187 men in our company when we went in, and only two of us were never injured or killed—just my tech sergeant and me. Neither one of us was ever scratched.

I was awarded my first Bronze Star, but I have no recollection before or after this incident. We were in the finished part of a building that had a wing under construction. Somebody in that wing was calling for help, and we thought he was an American from the way he was calling. Nobody volunteered to go out to see what was going on. We knew that by going over there, we were more exposed. I went over in that wing and got him on his way back to medical care.

The other Bronze Star came when a German outfit broke through our lines in the north, coming south behind our lines, and it was their routine habit to kill every prisoner they took. Up to that point, everybody they’d taken prisoner, they shot during the night and moved on.

Our division headquarters, which included the band, was moving from the south and turned east in the town. The Germans were in the woods and they shot some of our trucks, and set them on fire. That stopped our convoy and everybody hurried back into town. Unfortunately, one of those trucks was our records truck, and burned all of our records; even though they tried to reconstruct them, they were always incomplete after that.

When we got back in town and realized that hardly any of the headquarters people had brought their weapons with them, I decided that we’d better retrieve some of the weapons, so I got a couple of guys
to help me. We headed out along the line of trucks to recover some of the weapons. I remember a colonel saying, “Save my typewriter! Save my typewriter!” A lot of good a typewriter was going to do him in that situation. We brought back a bunch of weapons.

The second trip out there was a Jeep about fifty yards off the road. The GI driver in the Jeep was injured. I went out to see what was going on. He’d been shot through a Luger pistol that he had on his hip in its holster. It took the trigger, the trigger guard, and the frame out. He was shot in the hip, and some of those gun parts were in him. I asked somebody to bring me a stretcher; we got him on it, and put him across the back of his Jeep. I drove his Jeep back to the medics in the small town that we had just come through. That was about eight kilometers, or about five miles.

I commandeered the Jeep, and went back to the headquarters, still under siege in that town. We were wondering what we were going to do. We couldn’t move on, and couldn’t back up, because some of our equipment was disabled and still burning.

I saw the Germans start out of the woods with their column of personnel carriers. I decided it was time to get the heck out of there. I had the Jeep, and we had one truck that we used to get people out. They were hanging all over my Jeep and the truck everywhere. They had to direct me, because I couldn’t see for all the GIs hanging on. They would say, “Turn right,” or “Turn sharper,” or give me some other instructions.

We made it back to the town. The guys that couldn’t get on the vehicles were left behind, captured, and put in a barn. The rest of our company moved on away from that small town. The tech sergeant and
I stayed there to identify the bodies of the bandsmen, who we assumed would be shot. The Germans had left the men in the barn when they pulled out about midnight. The next morning, lo and behold, the bandsmen began to straggle into the town. They had walked that eight kilometers into town and surprised us with the news that none of them had been shot. We presumed that it was because they were headquarters people and not combat soldiers. Anyway, that action got me the second Bronze Star, signified by a cluster on the ribbon.

I was on the front line about seven months. We would pull back for four or five days to rest a few miles behind the line. The trouble was, we had K-rations on the front line, and when we went back to rest behind the line, we were fed hot rations which gave us diarrhea. We got to shave and clean up. Otherwise, we’d go two to three weeks at a time on the front line and didn’t get to change or clean up.

Saving the best story until last, our squad was in B Company, 335th Infantry, 84th Division. We moved out of a small German town before daylight. We were walking in single file, approximately six feet apart, when a German sniper sprayed through our squad with a burp gun. I felt something hit my chest, but knew I hadn’t been injured. Fortunately no one else in our squad was hit. When it got to be daylight, we stopped for a 10-minute break and I looked down at my raincoat. There was a hole in my raincoat, I opened my raincoat, and there was a hole in my overcoat. I
opened my overcoat and there was a hole in my fatigue jacket pocket. I opened my fatigue jacket and fortunately there was no hole in my left shirt pocket. So, I began removing stuff from my jacket pocket and pulled out my GI glasses case and there was a burp gun bullet lodged in the case. Luckily, GI glasses cases are made of steel and that is what saved my life. Being fatalistic, I guess that’s why I became an optometrist.

When the war was over, we were on occupation duty. For the next seven months we stayed in Europe. The band was in a little hotel in a town called Weinheim which was sixteen kilometers north of Heidelberg and sixteen kilometers west was Manheim. These three towns formed a sixteen-kilometer triangle. Manheim was on the German Autobahn. General Patton was on a hunting trip and had a car accident near Manheim, and broke his neck. He was brought into the hospital, but he didn’t survive. The only way that the doctors could help him was to apply traction to his neck through applying fish hooks under his jaw to take the tension off his vertebrae. Patton died four or five days later. Our band was practicing half-paced cadence during the week to prepare for the dirge of the funeral procession from the hospital to the train where he was taken to the military cemetery in Belgium.

I got a three-day pass to Paris. I slept in a USO bed, and when I got back to the base, I wondered why I was itching so much; I had cooties from that bed. The quartermaster took all my clothes and told me to take a good shower. I was issued all new clothes, and that took care of that problem.

I remember two things on that three-day pass. One was going
into a department store to shop for Chanel No. 5 perfume to send home to Methyl. The second thing was that I attended the *Follies Bergere* one night. I got tickets a night or two before I went. I was clear up in the balcony. There was some nudity, and I wished that I had been closer to the stage.

When I was there later for the soldier shows, I bought the ticket the first day that I arrived. It was for a show held the last night we were there. The first three rows were big leather lounge chairs; the rest were regular theater seating. During the time that we were there, we were sight-seeing all day, and after the show, we'd go to some night spots. I was so tired that I went to sleep the first five minutes of the show, and didn’t see much of the rest of it.

The soldier show was a show put together by some of the band members who had professional entertainment backgrounds. The most recognizable was Phil Ford. The band consisted of writers, choreographers, performers, and directors. They put together a professional production. I was in a drill team, which was our version of the chorus line in which we performed with rifles. We practiced in the Stadt Theater in Heidelberg which was a very pretty town with little damage. We had German stagehands and tailors who altered our Eisenhower jackets to fit us perfectly. We were the first GIs to wear the Eisenhower jackets (other than General Eisenhower himself), so we felt pretty special. Everything went like clockwork with German stagehands.

When the show was ready, we performed it for seven nights in the Stadt Theater. One of the guests was the Special Service General, and he liked it so much that he wanted to send us to perform in the
Sarah Bernhardt Theater in Paris for a week. (Methyl and I revisited the Stadt Theater and the Sarah Bernhardt Theater in our later years.) Our General Boling was pleased, and we all looked forward to going. One could tell when our truck convoy crossed into France, because the Germans had already cleaned up all their fields. They planted crops up to the roadbed with no ditches. The tiles off their roofs were stacked, ready to go back on their roofs. As soon as our truck convoy crossed the line into France, there were weeds in the ditches and no repairs to a lot of their buildings. We knew we were in France when we saw the mess. We didn’t need boundary markers.

While in Paris those nine or ten days, the sceneries didn’t go up and down very promptly. Sometimes, they got down in the middle of an act, and sometimes not at all. Our sole duty was to get to the theater every night at seven-thirty for make up for an eight o’clock show time. At ten o’clock when the show was over, we were free to go to a nightclub or so for a couple of hours. We got up the next morning and would sightsee all day, getting back to the theater by seven-thirty. I was so darned tired!

There was a French lady in the information booth of the hotel. She had taken English in school, and wanted to learn to speak “American-ese.” She was a little higher class than the average French lady over there, and I asked her if she wanted to go to an opera one night, and she said she would. We went to the Opera Comique and saw the opera “Louise.” A couple of nights later, we went to the Grand Opera and saw “Boris Goodinov.” In return for that, she asked me and my friend, Frank Pearson, to go to a fashion show at Schiaparelli’s. We said “sure,” and went to an afternoon show. This refined French gal
and two of us in GI boots and combat clothes looked kind of out of place, but we got to see the fashion show anyway.

When we came home, we were on the **USS United States**, and it was a better ship and got through faster. The war was over then, so we didn’t have to worry about the convoy or U-boats. We arrived back in New York on January 20, 1946, and the band was taken off early to stand playing as the rest of the troops disembarked. Fortunately, there was a U.S.O. lady who was walking along the dock and came by our band with cartons of milk. That was the best milk I ever tasted! I had two or three cartons while we were playing—I should say, between playing.*

* Those readers interested in the history of the 84th Infantry Division and its role in the Second World War may find more information at: [www.lonesentry.com/gi_storiew_booklets/84thinfantry](http://www.lonesentry.com/gi_storiew_booklets/84thinfantry)
War Pistols

I was able to collect five German war pistols. When we knew we were going to come home, the Army restricted us to just one pistol per soldier. I had others that I wanted to get home. I had three band buddies who didn’t care about pistols so I had each one bring one home for me.

The first pistol I acquired was a Belgian 38. We were moving into a small town where there was a German machine gun nest that somebody had earlier knocked out with a grenade. One German had a good-looking holster/pistol on his belt, so I decided to take time to relive him of it. It was a 9 millimeter Belgian made on the Browning patent, which is like the U. S. Army Colt .45.

I was also able to bring home the top parts of the German Luger that was from the soldier shot through the Luger into his hip. Parts of guns were not under the restriction rule. When I got home, I ordered used parts that I needed from Chicago for the Luger. I now have it complete.

My favorite pistol was obtained while walking through Krefeld, which our division took. We came to a tank that was burned out, and I hopped up on the back of it to be sure that there wasn’t a sniper inside the tank, waiting for us to pass. On the left side of the turret was a P-38 (9 millimeter), which was the current German Army WWII issue. The WWI issue was the Luger which the SS officers still carried in WWII, but the general troops were issued P-38s. I pulled the P-38
out of the side of the turret. There wasn’t a holster for it, and the right side of the pistol grip was scorched. I brought that one home. I could have ordered a new grip, but I didn’t. It’s still just as I found it. Speaking of pistol grips, Patton was famous for saying that his revolvers had ivory grips because, “Only a pimp would wear a pearl-handled pistol.”

Somewhere along the way, I acquired a U.S. Army .45 that I carried, but the Army said we couldn’t bring them home. If we were caught trying to bring them home, we would be “detained.” I decided that it wasn’t worth that risk, so I traded it to a young man for a Sauer 7.65, which is a .32 caliber pistol, which I could get home. Frank Pearson, a band buddy who was in the soldier show with me, brought that pistol home for me. The other two were brought home by Gay Brinson who lived in Chicago and Gordon Huey from my own home town, Wichita (which made that particular pistol very easy to get back into my possession).

When I went to Illinois College of Optometry in Chicago, I went to Gay Brinson’s folks’ condo on the south side to pick up my souvenir pistol that he brought home for me.

*Display at Larksfield Place, November 11, 2005*
School, Marriage and Family

I returned to the States, was discharged from the Army and back to Wichita in January, 1946. I immediately enrolled in Wichita University, even though I arrived home 4 days into the semester. I had one more year of schooling to complete my Pre-Med courses before professional school. Methyl and I were back together and dating. I proposed to her sitting in my car on the WU campus on June 10, 1946. We planned to get married before I went to Chicago; but in November, 1946, her dad died and she didn’t feel she could leave her mother that soon, so we delayed our wedding, and I went on to Chicago for my first semester of optometry school at the Northern Illinois College of Optometry, in January of 1947. At the end of that semester, I returned home and we were married on May 31, 1947. We spent a few more days around Wichita and our honeymoon was our trip back to Chicago. Our first night was in Kansas City at the Hotel Muehlebach. The second night I stopped in Springfield, Illinois; because I didn’t want to drive into Chicago at night knowing where we were going to live.

All I could find for us was a seven-room apartment that was shared by three couples. Each of the three couples had their own bedroom. We shared the bath, kitchen, dining and living room on East 63rd Street. It was a two-story

Our wedding picture, with pearls I gave her
walk-up apartment—and to ring our doorbell, you would pull the cord downstairs. The cord went up past two stairways and on to the third floor to ring the doorbell for us. Methyl wasn’t too happy about that. We could not use the living room very much because that is where the “El” tracks went by and there was so much noise one couldn’t even hear or talk. We shared the kitchen and bathroom with the other couples. We were there for six weeks when a good friend of mine called and said that he had rented an apartment across the street from the school and he would let me have it if I wanted it because he was aware of how upset Methyl was. We jumped at the chance and left the 63rd Street apartment and went to a one-room apartment in a building across from the school. That building had originally been six apartments, or flats, with two apartments on each of the three floors. Each apartment had been divided into rental units. Our unit had been a living room and was now divided into a living room/bedroom combination, a divided off kitchen with a fireplace in it, and a front balcony. We had five couples on our floor, our side. There were approximately 72 people in this building. We thought we had it made. Our rent was $87.50 a month, which was pretty high, but we sure enjoyed it. There was one bathroom down the hall and, invariably, if you walked down the hall, it was occupied. I rigged a light on the outside of the bathroom that turned on with the inside light so one could tell when the bathroom was occupied without walking all the way down the hall. This saved us a lot of steps.

Since this was right after the war, there were all kinds of people going through school, and we were on an accelerated schedule. We went three semesters year round with one week off in between each
semester. There were 125 students in my one section; I was in Section D because of the name Waldie and we had 500 in our class. My section had classes all over that part of Chicago because the school didn’t have enough facilities. We had classes above a furniture store on 47th Street, above a mortuary on Cottage Grove which was on the opposite corner from the school, and we had classes in a Christian Science church which was up by the El tracks on 39th Street. I had a car and fortunately we drove here and there to class.

While we were in Chicago, Methyl became pregnant with David. Just before I ended my school career she came home to have David delivered in Wichita. After I graduated, I stayed for three weeks of post-graduate work in Chicago before returning home. My post-graduate work consisted of three classes that I took from Drs. Wesley and Jessen. The three courses were one week each: Visual Training, Contact Lens, and Advanced Refraction. I
returned home in February of 1949 for good. Methyl and I were able to live in the apartment house on South Main that my dad had purchased. He had vacated the main apartment for us (840 South Main), and we lived there for two and one-half years. At that point, we bought a little house being built at 953 South Clifton and moved there. Our second child, Jana, was born while we lived on South Clifton. Then, lo and behold, we were going to have another child! This house had two bedrooms, but with the third child on the way, we started looking for another house. We had an opportunity to buy a place in the Womer Addition, just about four blocks from where we were living; this house had three bedrooms on the main floor. We moved to that house in the spring of 1955, and had our third child, Marc, shortly thereafter. We added on to the house after a few years, and lived at 3111 Aloma for over thirty years while we raised our family.

One of the unique occurrences in our marriage is that Methyl and I were both delivered by the same doctor, Dr. Hall. We were born during the early days of his practice. When Methyl was pregnant, we went to Dr. Hall and he was the doctor who then delivered all three of our children. Shortly after Marc, our youngest, was born, Dr. Hall retired. Dr. Hall said that he had delivered children to families where he had delivered one of the parents, but never both. We were the only
ones during his many years of practice.

Methyl and I have been fortunate in that all of our children have grown into successful people.

David, our oldest, was born on December 22, 1948. He was an only child for several years and the only grandchild on both sides of our family, so he got lots of attention. He was the only one of our children that had extended health problems. In the sixth grade he developed Rheumatic Fever; was in bed for six months—and after that the doctors kind of worried about what the long term effects might be. As far as we can tell, he didn’t have any long term effects from that disease. He repeated the sixth grade, which we had to insist on, because the teachers weren’t too fond of students repeating, but knowing that boys aren’t fully developed as early as girls, I insisted that he go back and repeat the sixth grade and go on from there.

While in Schweiter Elementary School, David was in the band and began to play the trumpet. He still has the trumpet from his Uncle Lloyd. David continued to play in the band in Roosevelt Junior High and East High School. He had said almost all of his life that he was going to be an optometrist and follow his dad. I remembered and understood the philosophy from my dad that it was better to be
your own boss and not punch somebody else’s time clock. I did keep suggesting that he should consider the law, architecture or dentistry, as you can control your time in those professions; but he never wavered. He wanted to be an optometrist. He graduated from the Illinois College of Optometry in 1973. Upon graduation, he returned to Wichita and we shared our practice. I was set up for an individual practice, so he took special courses that he wanted at Wichita State University in the morning, while I practiced, and then he practiced in the afternoon. His continued education was in a special chemistry course that would help him with his contact lens practice. He also interned with Dr. Tom Brungardt in Salina, one of the best, so that he would have a good foundation.

Not long after David had begun his practice, he began coaching volleyball at Friends University. He coached the Lady Falcons and was in that position for ten years. During his years of coaching, he was able to take his team to the National Championship tournament on one occasion. David was instrumental in sponsoring several international volleyball matches here in Wichita. The USA men’s team and Poland played here in Wichita. Also, the USA national team and some of the tours they were taking through the country, stopped to play in Wichita. For his work with the volleyball team at Friends and these various events, David was entered into the Friends University Hall of Fame. We were all there for that event. David’s former band teacher, Ken Thompson, surprised us by showing up as well. Nowadays, David and his wife Jane enjoy traveling around the country, but also traveling rural Kansas antiquing. They are great antique enthusiasts and enjoy the antique stores around the state of Kansas. David is also
very talented in finding all the doughnut shops and ice cream stores in any small town. We get frequent reports on the best shops around Kansas. David and Jane also have a home on Beaver Lake, in Arkansas, where they enjoy spending a lot of time. One of his favorite toys is his speedboat. They enjoy the boat while at the lake by pulling their friends in the water, skiing, and all other kinds of water sports. David also seems to enjoy visiting the family property sixty-five miles east of Wichita, which we refer to as the “east ranch.” David is similar to my dad, going to the country to relax comes naturally to him. The east ranch is not too far away and he enjoys fishing, taking friends over to fish, and doing some clean-up projects around there.

Our second child was Jana. She was born September 25, 1954. She grew up with two brothers, a natural tomboy. Her early episode was playing football with the boys and coming home with a broken arm where she’d been hit by one of the boys when he’d tackled her. Jana was also musical. She played the flute and later, the piccolo. She started playing in elementary school, junior high and on to the East High school band, where she had picked the piccolo. She is the only one that has continued using her early music, occasionally playing solos at the church or accompanying somebody, or in an ensemble. Jana graduated from Wichita State University with a teaching degree, hoping to teach in elementary schools. The public schools needed teachers when she began the course of study to become one, but by the time she graduated there were no spots available. At that time she went to work for AAA as a travel advisor. She has remembered almost everything she learned there because she helps us all with our trips if we have any questions. After that, she went back to school to pursue a
degree in Computer Science and began working at Metropolitan Life Insurance Company for several years as a computer programmer.

Jana has two children: a daughter, Jamee, who has graduated from Wichita State University with a degree in Health Service Management and a minor in Business Administration, and a son, Shane, who is in middle school. She and her husband, Bob, are active in their church, scouts, school activities, bowling, and anything else the kids are in. Jana now has gotten her chance to teach and she’s very happy with her job and the school is very happy with her. She’s now teaching math at Butler Community College. She says some of the students tell her they understand math from her better than from any other teacher they’ve ever had.

Our third child was Marc, born August 24, 1955, just eleven months after Jana, which Methyl says is like having twins the hard way. He was always a tag-a-long and sometimes even got a little too fast for us. One time at a national convention, he almost got caught in the revolving doors because he was 20 feet out in front of us and didn’t realize it was an automatic door and would start when he approached it. He was real energetic. He was also musical and played the trombone from elementary school through high school where he played in the East High school band. All three children marched in the parades and played at football and basketball games. They all had a good time playing and being in the band. Marc showed an early aptitude for volleyball and when he got ready to decide on a college, where he could play volleyball was what was important. Marc went to college at Ohio State University and played his first year under head coach Doug Beall. At the end of his first year, his coach encouraged him to try out for
the national team. He went to Pepperdine University in California and made the team but, at his young age, was urged to go back to school and finish before he actually joined the team. He returned to Ohio State University and completed his four years. Marc then joined the national team in Chicago on their way to Russia, where he played his first match with them. Doug Beall was the head coach of the national team and had set up headquarters in Dayton, Ohio. Marc was close to Ohio State and home, and trained for the 1980 Olympic Games. This team was ready to go to Russia for the Olympics, but President Carter boycotted the Russian Olympics because the Russians had invaded Afganistan, so all the boys dropped out of the Dayton program to finish their education and they were told to rejoin the team in San Diego that next year to get ready for the 1984 Olympic Games. Marc was on the national team officially for nine years total, part of that time in school, but officially a member of the team. Marc, with his wife Deb, after finishing his degree at Ohio State University in Physical Education, moved to California and had a condo on Coronado Island, just across the bay by bridge from the training center in Balboa Park. They spent those three years getting ready for the 1984 Olympics, which were held in Long Beach, California. That team won the first gold medal in volleyball in a number of years. After the Olympics, Marc and Deb stayed in California and moved up to the Del Mar area. They had a son named Kyle. Kyle was born at one pound, seven ounces and dropped back to one pound, six ounces before he began gaining weight. He was a miracle in our eyes because we thought he wouldn’t survive. Kyle was in the hospital for three and a half months before he came home. He was able to come home at a lighter weight than normal (just over four
pounds), because the hospital staff knew the parents were extremely careful, observant and conscientious. They had been at the hospital every day, and sometimes multiple times a day throughout Kyle’s hospitalization. Kyle seemed to do well once he got home, even though he was small. A county nurse came once a week to check on him and work with him. He seemed to be ahead of schedule developmentally and everyone was pleased. He began school on schedule. When he was ready to begin the second grade, Marc and Deb decided to move back to Wichita because they wanted to raise Kyle in the Midwest with Midwestern values. They had planned to stay in Wichita until Kyle finished high school, but they missed the west coast and the ocean and Kyle wanted to play volleyball, so they moved back to California. There are no boys’ high school volleyball teams in Wichita. Kyle is attending Torrey Pines High School, plays drums in the band, is a member of the drum line, takes surfboarding lessons, plays volleyball and works part time at Sea World. They all enjoy California, and so we don’t expect them back to live in Kansas again.

Marc was inducted into the National Volleyball Hall of Fame in Massachusetts, the first volleyball player to be inducted into the Ohio State University Sports Hall of Fame, and is also represented in the Wichita, Kansas Sports Hall of Fame.

During the time that our children were young, I began a volleyball program at our church each Wednesday night. I had begun my interest in volleyball while in the Army and wanted to share that with others. We had three sessions each Wednesday: 6:00 to 7:30 for the Junior High ages and 7:30 to 9:00 for High School and 9:00 to 10:30 for the Adults. I continued that program for many years, saw many
young people grow up during this fellowship, and coached many teams in the local church leagues. I have very fond memories of all the times that were shared in that gym.
My Optometric Days

I graduated from Northern Illinois College of Optometry in 1949 and returned to Wichita, Kansas, my hometown, to enter private practice. My office was located at 2823 East Douglas, property that my dad had purchased while I was in school. I started my practice from scratch, not taking over another’s practice. I remained at that location until my retirement in 1977.

I immediately expanded my service to the profession of Optometry by becoming a member of the Wichita Optometric Society, the Kansas Optometric Association (KOA), and the Optometric Extension Program. By 1952, I had become a member of the American Optometric Association (AOA). During my professional years I became the Vice-President and President of the Wichita Society, and then became treasurer of the Kansas Optometric Association in 1957. I was in that position for 18 years. I was never opposed in any election, but I decided not to seek re-election in 1975. In 1963, I was elected treasurer of the Kansas Optometric Foundation and in 1965 I was named to the same post for the Kansas Public Vision League. Both of these positions were held until 1975, when I decided to run for Trustee of the American Optometric Association and was elected. This decision was made only with Methyl’s agreement to accompany me on each trip so that we could travel together. I was re-elected the second year as Trustee because my first year was a one-year unexpired term; then at the end of my second year, I was elected Treasurer of the American Optometric Association. At that time I knew that this would require
a lot more time and travel, so I came back from convention and told David, my son, I was retiring; the practice was his and I would be working politically for the profession after that time. Methyl and I progressed through the Board, as Treasurer for three years, Vice President, President-elect, President of the AOA in 1982 – 1983 and went off the Board in Honolulu, Hawaii, in 1984 as Past President and Speaker of the House. When I was elected to that first Trustee position in 1975, I was fortunate enough to not have a negative vote cast against me and then in the following six elections, I was unopposed in each election.

In addition to these elected positions, I have been appointed to many other positions over my years in optometry. I have served on five Resolutions Committees, been a member of the Motorist Vision and Highway Safety Committee, a member of the Membership Development Committee, Chairman of the Executive Committee, Administrative Division, Chairman of the Resolutions III Committee, a member of the Judicial Council, a member of the Investment Committee, and Chairman of the ILAMO Special Study Project Team.

I have also held positions on several building committees. I have served as Chairman of the St. Louis Building Committee that purchased the present office building, a member of the Washington, D.C., Office Building Committee, and as Chairman of the KOA Office Building Committee.
I have also served on many committees for the Illinois College of Optometry (ICO). I am a member of the ICO Alumni Association, a member of the ICO President’s Club and ICO Century Club, and have been a director of the ICO Alumni Council. I received the Presidential Medal of Honor for the 125th Anniversary of ICO.

My special honors over the years include being named the Kansas Optometrist of the Year in 1975, presented the Honorary Doctor of Science in Optometry degree from ICO in 1984, awarded the 2003 KOA Distinguished Service Award, and lastly awarded Emeritus Membership for KOA in 2006.

Methyl and I started attending the AOA Congress in Dallas in 1959. We did not go to Atlanta in 1960, but have gone to every congress since 1961 in Denver, ending our consecutive years in New Orleans in 2002, due to my health. One of the important things to us was that the Congress was a “family affair” with programs for children. We and our children have a lot of friends from all over the United States, and it has been great to renew these acquaintances each year. We were also able to take our grandchildren to participate in the youth programs in our later years.
Several of my Optometric Awards
A TRIBUTE TO DR. WENDELL D. WALDIE

HON. BOB WHITAKER

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
(Wednesday, March 16, 1983)

Mr. WHITAKER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to commend a member of the American Optometric Association, Dr. Wendell D. Waldie, O.D., president of the American Optometric Association at the time I became a member. Dr. Waldie, a long-time member of the American Optometric Association, is a strong advocate of the profession and its contributions to society. He has been an active member of the association for many years and has served in various capacities, including as a past president. Dr. Waldie is known for his dedication to the profession and his contributions to the advancement of optometry.

Dr. Waldie's contributions to the profession are many and varied. He has served as a member of the Board of Directors of the American Optometric Association and has been involved in numerous committees and task forces. He has also been a leader in the development of educational programs and has been instrumental in advancing the profession of optometry.

The American Optometric Association is indebted to Dr. Waldie for his many contributions. He is a true leader and an inspiration to all who are involved in the profession. He has been a strong advocate for the profession and has helped to ensure its continued growth and success.

I am honored to have had the opportunity to work with Dr. Waldie and to learn from his experience and leadership. He is a true professional and a true friend. I am confident that his contributions will continue to be felt for many years to come.

Wendell D. Waldie, O.D.
The Chapters of Our Lives

Illinois College of Optometry

The Board of Trustees of Illinois College of Optometry, upon the recommendation of the Faculty, hereby confers upon

Wendell D. Waldie, O.D.

the Degree of

Doctor of Science in Optometry

with all the rights and privileges thereto pertaining.

Given under the seal of the College at Chicago, Illinois, this 27th day of May

One thousand nine hundred and eighty-six.

[Signature]

[Signature]

Illinois College of Optometry Alumni Association

hereby honors

WENDELL D. WALDIE, O.D.

as

1986

Alumnus of the Year

and awards him

Honorary Life Membership

in the ICO Alumni Association

[Signatures]

Illinois College of Optometry

[Seal]

125th Anniversary

[Seal]
Retirement Years

Once I had completed my years of service with the AOA board we decided to move from our family home that we had lived in for over 30 years. We looked at a condo on Peppertree Circle. As soon as we walked in, we knew we liked it because it had light woodwork, was very nice, open and modern. We looked at it on a Sunday and bought it on Tuesday. When we moved there, we downsized for the first time from our large family home. We lived eight years on the golf course. This was the first time that we had lived on a golf course, but we liked it because we didn’t have homes behind us. However, we did have golf balls hitting our windows and broke one or two, but that wasn’t too bad. What irritated us the most was the golfers that would drive right up into our yard, lean out and pick up their golf balls from our shrub beds, rather than park their carts on the golf course and walk to retrieve their balls. Anyway, we tolerated that for a number of years. I was the treasurer of the homeowners group and helped with the repairs and maintenance.

Methyl had run into a lady from our original church and she was telling Methyl about where they had moved and that the model unit was for sale. We made arrangements to look at this villa in the Willowbend Heights Golf Villas on the next Saturday. We looked at it again on Sunday, and bought in on Tuesday. We had a golf course view, but not close enough to where the golf balls hit our windows or wound up in our patio umbrella. We had a view of the golf course plus we had open space across from us and on the north side of us, so we felt as if
we were just up there in the ideal spot. We lived there for eight years and then decided it was time to move to a place that would provide us with better care, since my Parkinson’s was progressing and we both were having more health problems. As we look back on all the places we have lived, this villa in Willowbend was our favorite.

We began looking into our options for better care, had been to Larksfield Place in the past, and decided to look into what they could now offer us. We were surprised to find out that we could build a villa, have some choices of our own in the building process, and prepare our own meals. This was a perfect combination for us, so we asked about the available lots. It appeared as though lot number one had just been released by someone who had had it reserved, it was a good location with a lake behind it and a lake to the north and just a potential for someone on one side of us, so we put a hold on it. Six weeks later we signed the contract and are now living in Villa 101 at Larksfield Place and enjoying it immensely. We were able to combine two floor plans and ended up with a beautiful floor plan that fits us perfectly. In fact, since it combines two plans, they’ve now given us a name; our floor plan is called the Arveda 1834.

This plan included a wide garage for two cars, and an extra extension on it for shelving to store things which used to be in our basement. My sons had already figured out where all the shelving would go in this garage. Our daughter did the planning of the move, had everything sorted, boxed and labeled, and our sons did the moving of the shelving, installing it and bringing all the stuff we had in boxes and putting it on the shelves. When Methyl and I got here, we were pretty well all moved in with not a lot of labor on our part. The whole
family worked and everybody got us moved. Once we were here, there was a big sigh of relief.

These moves were all a part of our retirement, but the highlights of our years of retirement come from the many trips that Methyl and I have taken. We religiously took our annual trips to Hawaii. This has been our favorite vacation spot. We both love it there, usually dividing our time between Honolulu and the island of Maui, our favorite. We also took quarterly trips to San Diego to spend time with our youngest son and his family. The last part of June was always spent at the AOA Convention, which took us all over the United States. We also enjoyed our frequent trips to Chicago for shopping and just enjoying the city.

Interspersed with these yearly “customary” trips, were our big trips overseas. I enjoyed traveling overseas more than Methyl did, but she was always the trouper and went along with me. Two of our trips were to go to Olympic volleyball matches that our youngest son was playing in. These matches took us to Puerto Rico and Japan. During my year as President of the American Optometric Association, I had the privilege of representing the United States at the annual International Optometric and Optical League (IOOL) convention which was held in Lucerne, Switzerland, in 1983. Methyl and I flew into Zurich, Switzerland, and drove to Lucerne for the meetings. That was an exciting drive as it was the first time I had driven overseas and the lady we were following “took off like a bat out of hell” and we almost lost her. We enjoyed our accommodations in Lucerne, as our hotel, the Buergenstock Park sat on top of a mountain overlooking Lucerne and Lake Lucerne. After our time in Switzerland, we flew to Paris, France for a week of visiting and touring before returning home. The main
memory from this trip is that I had bought Swiss Army knives for each of the boys while in Zurich. While waiting for our plane to return home, my package, containing the knives, was lost. I replaced the knives in the airport store.

Our next trip was later that year when we visited Spain. We flew into Madrid and spent several days in Madrid and touring the country. I had had eye surgery, so was wearing an eye patch and was not allowed to handle any of the luggage. Methyl had to do all the work for that trip. The following year, 1984, we took a 15-day trip to Italy. We began our trip in Milan, Italy, toured the country extensively, including Venice, Florence and Pompeii to name a few places, then drove through Monaco, Monte Carlo and Nice, France. From Nice we took a short flight to Paris, France, where we spent a few days before returning back home. In 1985, we took another 15-day trip called “Scenic Scandinavia.” We flew in and out of Copenhagen, and toured Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. 1986 found us flying to Amsterdam for yet another 15-day trip. This trip took us from Amsterdam to Zurich, Switzerland, through Liechtenstein to Munich, Germany, and ended in Vienna, Austria. This was an especially enjoyable trip as we spent 7 days on a Rhine cruise, where I saw many places that I had seen while in the Army. Our next trip overseas was in 1987, when we took a 14-day “British Interlude.” We flew in and out of London, England. We traveled by bus through England, to Edinburgh, Scotland, and, thanks to our bus driver, into a little bit of Wales and back to London.

We thought that there was still one more adventure that we had not done, so in January of 1989, we took our first (and last) Caribbean cruise. We cruised in and out of Miami, Florida. This one-week cruise
was nice, but Methyl and I agreed that once was enough! Also, our first grandson was born prematurely while on this trip.
Methyl and I were on one of our many trips after we had retired when I noticed a little tic in my right hand while walking through the Denver airport in 1996 while on our way to San Diego to visit our son and his family. I didn’t think much of it at the time. Later, it happened on another trip and I thought maybe it was only the stress of moving from plane to plane in the airports. But after a couple of these episodes, I decided I ought to talk to our family physician, Dr. Osio. He explained that he thought it might be the early stages of Parkinson’s Disease. He hoped that it was Parkinson’s because it can be controlled. I was referred to Dr. Leon LaPointe, MD. He was a neurologist and had been at the Mayo Clinic for years. After Dr. LaPointe performed some tests, he confirmed the diagnosis of Parkinson’s Disease. I began taking Carbidoba/Levidoba, which quieted down that tremor a little bit for a while. I continued to visit him every six months thereafter. Dr. LaPointe retired a few years into my treatment, and I was then referred to Dr. Calvin Olmstead, MD. After my initial consultation with him, I began taking Selegiline. This medicine didn’t seem to be doing much, so he added Mirapex to take with it. This combination improved my tremors for a few years. Everyone was amazed at how slowly I was progressing; however, this was a good thing.

At a later time I changed to Comtan, which was a new drug on the market. This medicine did not give me much benefit, nor did it cause me any problems. Gradually I began to have more falls and more freezing up. I had progressed to using a cane, then to a walker
for several years. The walker gradually became more difficult because it wasn’t providing sufficient balance and support to prevent freezing and I was falling more. These were the two main problems that I have experienced with my Parkinson’s. Dr. Olmstead began talking to me about being tested for a deep brain surgery that might help. I did not give it much thought at first; but as my symptoms got worse, I reconsidered.

Once I decided to look into the surgery, Dr. Olmstead referred us to the physician, associated with St. Francis Via Christi, to begin the testing process for the deep brain surgery. I had the first test and examination, but about the time I got the report, the surgeon had moved to North Carolina and left us high and dry. Dr. Olmstead then mentioned the KU MedCenter, which was probably the best anyway, and he referred us up there. As it happened, we had our appointment in Kansas City on April 29, 2003, with Dr. Rajesh Pahwa, MD. The nurse put me through a number of tests, and then Dr. Pahwa came in and reviewed my records. He reviewed a few of my symptoms with me, and pretty quickly asked what I hoped the surgery would do for me. I explained that I was looking for help with the freezing and balance because it had become quite difficult for me to stand. Dr. Pahwa’s answer was that those are the two symptoms that deep brain surgery won’t help. We were all very disappointed and frustrated that we had gone this far, for nothing!

We came back to Wichita and back to Dr. Olmstead. I continued with the plan that I was on and tried to move forward from there. We did try some variation in the doses of the medicines to determine where my drug threshold was before the major symptoms returned.
After we worked down to no Parkinson’s medication, it was decided to go back to the three-a-day dose, because that was the level at which my symptoms began to worsen. The three-a-day did not quite eliminate the symptoms, so we moved to four-a-day. It wasn’t long until I was at a five-a-day dosage. This is where I have remained. I still take the combination of the Carbidoba/Levidoba and Comtan. These have been combined into one tablet, Stalevo 100. Dr. Olmstead feels this combination is the best way to treat Parkinson’s.

At about the same time as our trip to Kansas City, we had also just moved into Larksfield Place and were finding out that there was a section of the Fitness Center there that worked with Parkinson’s patients. We pursued this, met with Anne, the instructor that worked with these patients, and she introduced us to a fellow Parkinson’s patient who was also a resident. After a conversation with this resident, I found out that she had had the deep brain surgery. Her surgery had been successful, and she explained how the surgery involves an implant in the front of each of the shoulders. The doctors can go in and make adjustments to these implants to help control what goes on in the brain. This has worked well for her but is not an option for me.

I continue to work with Anne in the Fitness Center. Their programs are designed to keep us moving and strengthen the residents. Early, I was
working with VitaBands and now use the NuStep. My disease is progressing, and I now move around each day in either a scooter or a power chair. I recently tried a new injectible drug called Apokyn. This trial ran for about five weeks, but when I could see no improvement with the increasing doses, we stopped.

I am now content to continue as best I can for as long as I can.