

Epilogue

From our mother's memoirs

After Arthur came home from the war we had two more sons. We had a very happy marriage and hope we were a role model for our children. They are all married and with a family of their own.

When God called Arthur home he was still alive in my heart, my mind, and things he did around our house.

There are three things of my husband's that mean the most to me, namely 1.the American Flag that covered his coffin when he died, 2.his Army uniform and 3.the Purple Heart Medal.

God be with him always.....Love, Mom





Somebody Cares

Somebody cares for you,
Cares so much,
That the heart grows glad
At your slightest touch
And the sound of your voice
And the sight of your smile,
Makes all my burdens
And cares worth while.

Somebody cares for you ---
Bye and bye
When the years roll on,
You will know it's I.
Then looking back
On the road we've fared,
You'll see how much for you
Somebody cared.

What rapture, dear, to hold your hand
Against my beating heart —
And hear you say in whispers low,
"We nevermore shall part."

The sweetness and the warmth of you
Are like a perfume rare
That drugs my soul and holds my heart
Because for you I care.

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Pito in 1920



Pito with sisters Cookie and Vera
Eagle Pass, 1926



Pito in 1930



Cookie



Vera



Guio



Sarah



Mora

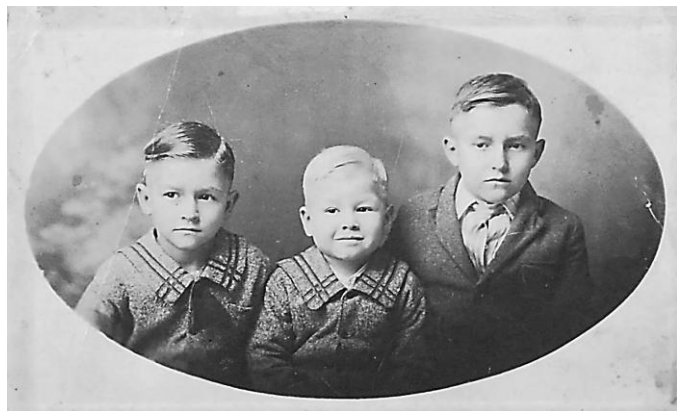


Tinzi and Leo

Arthur and siblings in 1925
Hopedale farm near Eagle Pass, Texas



Charles Arthur



Oscar Edward Joe



Henrietta (Tete) and Mary



Arthur in 1945
2nd Infantry Division
9th Regiment, K Company
Combat Infantry Badge
Purple Heart Medal
Bronze Star Medal
Good Conduct Medal
American Defense Medal
EAME (ETO) Ribbon with 2 battle stars



Oscar
2nd Infantry Division
9th Regiment, Cannon Company
Purple Heart Medal (posthumously)
American Defense Medal



Joe
1st Cavalry Division
8th Engineer Squadron
American Defense Medal



Edward
Company B, 99th Signal Battalion
Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Ribbon



Charles
USS *Bismarck Sea* (CVE-95)
Carrier Aircraft Service Unit 2
Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Ribbon



Mary with baby Rose Lee

Afterword

At the end of the movie "Saving Private Ryan" the dying Captain's last words were 'earn this, earn it'.

It is my hope that this story also has given meaning to those words; that it has placed the reader in the times and places in which it took place. And maybe having been there you can come back with some learned value that can make the present time in which we live better. At the least I hope that it will give you an understanding and greater appreciation for keeping such stories from fading away. That we must do our part to earn the freedom that so many have paid the ultimate price to preserve. If not; and if you did not shed a few tears or felt some sadness along the way; then I have failed in my efforts to reach your heart and soul.

As this story was mainly written for my family members, I sincerely hope that you cherish it and pass it down through the generations. For those who are old enough to remember some of our departed loved ones, perhaps you know them a little better now. I pray that their values will have, or continue to have, a positive influence on you wherever you may be in your life.

As for me, I cried many times while writing this story. I got to know my Uncle Oscar in a small way. For as long as I can remember, my Mother would fly the Flag, not only on the 4th of July, but also every 3rd of July in remembrance of him.

From the research I did I also gained more insight into the experiences of my other uncles; experiences that I never heard them speak of. And, of course, the research helped me visualize the path in Europe which my Father travelled.

When he returned from the War the sound of a siren, sonic boom, or similar sound would instinctively cause him to 'hit the deck'. He would also have bad dreams as if struggling with the enemy. My Mother would awaken and calm him. They got through those episodes without a complaint.

I will close with a word on my dear Mother which I hope was clearly expressed in this story. She had an unwavering faith in the Lord and was an expression of His love.

Perhaps someday I will continue the story in the writing of another story post WWII; maybe someday, God willing.

I bid you farewell for now and leave you with the following Memoirs from my sister.



Jimmy and Rose Lee

Remembering where we come from is an
important part of our family

Rose Lee

Memoirs

by Rose Lee Backus

I recall so many treasured and meaningful memories of my childhood. My three brothers and I were raised by loving, caring parents. We were blessed growing up in a Christian family. Parents are the most important part of our lives and daddy and mama were strong pillars in our life. They provided us with love, respect, security, encouragement and much, much more. My daddy was a responsible, giving, humble, and courageous man.

Our first family home was 741 Division Ave. in San Antonio with a large backyard. Our neighbors were far apart with large yards of their own. Daddy was happy to have his mini farm by cultivating rich black soil to plant and grow carrots, onions, spinach, squash, beets, melons, and much more. There were tall stalks of corn that were my favorite.

My brother Jimmy and I would take the ears of corn off the stalks. It was a fun chore for us, until I would become anxious and scared seeing a tiny green harmless worm. That

frightened me as a child! However, Jimmy would comfort me and gently remove this tiny creature with caring hands and letting it live somewhere else far away from me. He was my brave adorable brother, always protecting me. He was my best friend and we had a special bond between us. He made me feel safe and secure. Jimmy (later we called him Jim) guided me to follow a Christian life and to live by faith.

Daddy also had rabbits and chickens. This was like a dream to him; attending to his mini farm. I am sure it reminded him of his youth on the farm in Hopedale. Needless to say, we never did without an abundance of healthy food.

My daddy was a giving, thoughtful father. I recall one day when I had measles and not feeling well lying in bed. My favorite snack was Fritos corn chips and ice cream. I vividly remember daddy coming home from a hard days work with a bag of Fritos for me. This cheered me up and I was delighted. That definitely lifted up my spirits. The following

day, daddy made homemade ice cream for all of us, but especially for me.

Occasionally, daddy and mama would help me with my school homework. I always had a difficult time with math, but daddy would patiently explain by using different strategies for problem solving. He used illustrations, patterns, underlying words, etc. All of this helped me better understand the word problem with a good solution and correct answer.

In 1962 I graduated high school and started Junior College. I met and became friends with a classmate. JFK was our President at the time and America was threatened by the Cuban missile crisis. My classmate friend and I would converse about our military family who served in WWII. I mentioned that my dad had received the Purple Heart (which I proudly have). He was wounded, but by the Grace of God he came home. Sadly, she said her dad was killed in action. She never knew him. I am so grateful that God protected my dad and he came home to mama, Jimmy, and me.



Daddy and me when I was 2 years old



Jimmy and dad in 1946

Throughout the years, daddy and I would have conversations, small talk if you will. I was always curious about his years in WWII serving our country. Some stories he shared; others he didn't because they were too painful. He showed me his horrific scars on his arm and stomach where he was wounded by enemy gunfire. The wounds landed him in the hospital. I can just imagine how my mama felt, praying every night and day for his recovery. And yes, God was listening and answered her prayers.

Both of my parents were patriotic and would display our American Flag outside on Memorial Day, Veterans Day, Flag Day, and the 4th of July.

My beloved mother was an incredible woman of faith. She was a strong believer in Jesus Christ. She was an excellent role model with a very kind, generous, and caring personality. To use a metaphor – she had a heart of gold.

She inspired me in many ways. As a child, I wanted to grow up to be a nurse as she had

once been. However, that was not in my future. Instead, I became a dedicated teacher. My brother Jim was also an educator with an advanced degree. Our mother, no doubt, was a source of encouragement that helped us to succeed and excel.

I remember Jim opening a neighborhood library at 741 Division Ave. when he was a teenager. The shelves were filled with fiction and non-fiction books, as well as magazines and comics. There were novels, short stories, and an assortment of literature for all ages. The reading materials were well organized, and categorized by title or topic. It looked just like our public school and city libraries.

I was a fluent reader and this was my happy place. To read a book captured my childhood imagination that took me to faraway places. The neighborhood kids were so excited to check out reading material from my brother's library and were always responsible to return it on time.

One of my favorite TV shows was Howdy Doody Time. It was in black and white on our

small TV screen. I sat there with a bowl of ice cream. This took me away from reading for a while which was good for me.



Mama was always active in our life. In fifth grade, she was a room mother for my class. Whenever the school celebrated birthdays, holidays, or patriotic days, mama was there to help. I recall when she signed up to bring homemade cupcakes. (Everything back then was homemade). It wasn't an easy task for her to travel the city bus and transfer twice before arriving at the school. She never complained and always had a sweet smile on her face as she greeted my teacher, me, and all the students.

Growing up as an only girl I would watch my younger brothers Billy and U.J. climb trees. At the time it seemed fun to me, so I wanted to do the same. As I climbed a huge tree in our front yard without a care in the world, I became stuck between two branches. Oh my, what am I going to do now! Daddy was at work and Jimmy wasn't home. Billy and U.J. couldn't stop laughing at the sight of me hanging on for dear life. I was frozen in time terrified. Mama, with her patience and calmness, reassured me she would get help. She decided to call the fire department. Two firemen showed up and carefully, with a rope, retrieved me from that awful tree. What a learning lesson for me. I will never, and I mean never again, climb a tree!

Our kitchen had an enticing delicious aroma of mama's homemade meatloaf with her special ingredients; so scrumptious and my favorite dish. As a matter of fact, daddy and my brothers loved it too. Mama perfected it every time! In later years, I tried my best, but it never was like Mama's.

Another amazing dish was her pot roast with all kinds of vegetables. This is how mama made sure we got enough vegetables without complaining. It was cooked in a pressure cooker (they didn't have crock pots) and one would use only a fork to eat the tender, juicy meat and the tasty vegetables.

One morning breakfast was what mama called "egg it on". Now it is called "egg in a hole". It was mainly an egg cooked in the center of a slice of bread in a hot skillet on the stove. We all looked forward to eating this with mama's creative idea to eat an egg once in a while.

Let's not forget daddy in the kitchen making his special praline candy. It was so yummy! I would watch him pour milk, butter, white and brown sugar, a touch of vanilla into a pot on the stove. It constantly needed to be stirred and I helped taking turns with daddy. This was the key before pouring the pecans into it. These pecans came from our very own trees. Laying out wax paper on the kitchen table and

pouring spoonful's at a time leaving enough room between them was a must. In anticipation and a watery mouth, we waited for the candy to cool a bit before eating.

One of our family pass times in the summer weekend evenings was gazing at the night sky filled with brilliant countless stars. In our backyard, me, daddy, mama, Billy, U.J. and sometimes Jimmy would join us in setting up lawn chairs, cots, and soft blankets to lie on the grass and look up at God's creation. Daddy and mama knew the names and locations star to star of all the constellations. This must have been one of their childhood memories. One at a time, we would choose a constellation and share a make believe story of how that constellation formed. We would each take turns in using dad's binoculars. Later, Billy and U. J. would peer into the lenses of their own telescope. The magnification was incredible!

Not knowing at the time, when I later became a teacher, one of my lessons to my students was studying the constellations, and I would share this story with them.

Another family night outdoor time was catching fireflies in our glass jars. This was exciting to see these bright, shiny yellow bugs flying here, there, and everywhere. We would then count how many we captured. After a brief time, we would release these tiny flying insects to their freedom once again. No harm ever came to them. Now a days, I am sure there are still a few fireflies in rural areas.



During Fiesta Week in San Antonio, Jim would be involved in designing and decorating some floats for the parades. He would rent and bring home shaved ice, popcorn, and cotton candy machines. This was a treat for Billy, U.J., and I. He loved his younger siblings and enjoyed the happiness he brought to us. Later, this became a family tradition with mama's sisters, brother, and their extended families.

The spring and summer months mama worked in her garden and flower beds. Our front and backyards were filled with luscious

full monkey grass, huge elephant ears, a variety of blooming flowers such as daises, marigolds, lilies, and bushes of sweet roses. She always wore her garden gloves as she dug into the rich black soil tenderly planting and caring for each individual flower or plant.

By always taking care of her hands, they were soft and gentle to the touch. For me, her hands expressed love and beauty. Her long manicured fingernails were always filed and had a polish of bright red.

One of mama's favorite poems was "Footprints" and every once in a while she would read it aloud in her soothing voice. An Irish lullaby she enjoyed singing was 'Over In Killarney, Too Ra Loo Ra Loo Ra!'. She wrote in her journal, "*this song I like very much*". She sang this song to us rocking us to sleep as babies. She also wrote in her journal, "*As a mother, I believe that my children are a gift of God and the hope of a new tomorrow*".



Daddy was full of surprises and one day mama saw a new house being built facing another street from our backyard. She was curious and would peer through the window waiting in anticipation for it to be completed. Soon afterward, daddy took her hand and walked her to the new home. In his other hand, he held a key to enter the house. I am sure mama was in awe looking at this modern house. With a big happy smile, daddy said "*this is your new home-this is our family home*". I am sure this is what happened. The year was 1956 and I was twelve years old. Our new address was now 822 Carlisle Ave.



I've had mixed emotions in writing these memories. At times, it brought me joy to remember good family times of my childhood. Other times, tears flooded my eyes in sadness because no longer I had my daddy, mama, or Jim here on earth. They are all at peace now and I have been blessed.

*"Honor your father and mother, so
that you may live long in the land
the Lord your God is giving you."*

Exodus 20:12

Rest in peace, daddy 1911-1978

Rest in peace, mama 1914-2002

Rest in peace, brother Jim 1936-1977



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Contact uj@ujays.net

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