Written at the request of my daughter Mary

Copy

Started
July 27-05

I

Military Record of Donald W Stobbs during WWII

On October 30-1940 the first draft no was called. You had to be 21 to register. After Pearl Harbor in 1941 the requirement dropped to 18 but you weren't called till you were 21. Bayard had worked for Braden and Bailey from the time he graduated in 1937.

Since the US was actually gearing up for war there were lots of jobs becoming available in industry. Some time in 1940 he left Bailey and went to live with Aunt Blanche in Pittsburg and her son got him a job in a steel Mill. He was only there a short while when he was drafted in the 2nd draft call out of Belmont Co. You were only supposed to serve a year. After the war started it was the duration plus six months.

II

The attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec 7 1941 came shortly before his year was up. He wasn't released until 1946. He worked in a Post Office and was never sent overseas.

I registered in the spring of 1942 when I was 20. When I became 21 on June 21 the draft board was on me like a hot potato. There were many industries that were essential to the war effort and certain jobs deferred people from the draft. Farming was one of them. They classified farms by "units". Ten units would require a man. Units were classified by 1 horse - 1 cow - 2 sows - 1 acre of either orchard or vegetables - etc.

The draft board employed a man whose job was to match farm boys with farmers who needed help.

If you were placed on a farm you were usually deferred for 3 month and then went into the service. Since Papa had enough units for 2 men I was given a 3 month deferment to remain at home starting Aug 1, 1942.

I was a rebellious soul and did not like the idea of being drafted. The first part of Oct I went to the Navy recruiting station in Wheeling. Their physical was pretty much, if you had 10 fingers and ten toes you were in. Most all recruiting stations were run by some one local who was either too old or physically unfit for active service. They all used for publicity. I don't remember how long I waited before they had a big celebration, Parade, food and took 130 of us at one time

down to Charleston WVa which was the next step to getting in the Navy. Down there if you could count those 10 fingers and 10 toes you were sent on.

I was examined by a fat Dr when out of the blue he asked me if I graduated from high school. Yes, are you married? No. Do you want to fly? That question to a kid who was still running outside and pointing up when an airplane flew over.

I asked him what the advantages were and he said if I qualified I would make more money and it was a better part of the service to be in. Since I was starting down a long scary path anyhow, one direction was as good as another so I said, OK.

He handed me a written exam which I filled out and passed with no trouble. He then told me to go back home and get my birth cert, high school diploma and three letters of recommendation from responsible people, & then looked at him and asked point blank Why did you ask me about flying ?? He said you have a strong heart and we look for potential pilots. With my heart now at 84 I'm wondering if his stethoscope wasn't a little bit off. Out of the 130 who went to Charleston they only picked out 2 of us. I never saw the other fellow after we got back to Wheeling.

I fullfilled the requirements and reported back to Charleston. I was given a ticket and orders to report to the Navy building

in Washington DC on Nov 3 1942 for a real going over. I was not in the Navy yet and the Draft Board had me listed to report to Ft Cartwright on Nov 5 for the Army. They had a quota to fill each month and they were quite testy.

I spent all day Nov 4 taking all kinds of tests and interviews. I passed and at 05:15 PM I was sworn into the Navy. Prior to the war you had to have a College education to even be selected for Pilot training. They dropped the bars away down to let people like me in. The Army, Navy and Marines were all vieing for manpower and they sucked us in before they had the facilities and equipment and instructors to take care of us.

VII

I was in the V5 Naval Aviation Cadet Program. They said give us your home address and we will call you when you are to go on active duty. I listed Bridgeport Ohio. No - No. We can't send orders to there. That's another Naval District. The Ohio river was the boundry line and I had enlisted in Wheeling W Va. I gave them Uncle Herbert's address.

Since most of the fall work was done and Roy had settled into the routine I went to Worthington to stay at Emily and Jays and looked for a job out there. Jay gave me the names of three places to apply. The first place I asked was the Union Railroad station in the Railway Express part. The boss saw a warm body, hired me and wanted me to start on the spot,

VIII

I started to work the next day and worked till my Orders came about the 8th of Feb 1943. I worked steady day turns 7 days a week till someone tried to bump me. My boss said no way was he giving me up but he did have to give me a day off every so often after that.

At that time every passenger train had "baggage" Car on the back for transporting packages. Columbus was a Central Distribution Center and we took packages into a big room where they were coded and rerouted to other trains in all directions.

I enjoyed the work. I saw thousands of troops going thru.

In early Aug I had gone to a Recreational and Leadership conference at Bowling Green University. That is where I met Edna Irene Chapman from Ashtabula OHIO

She had just signed up for the WAACs "Women Army Auxillary Corp". I don't know when she reported for duty but she took her basic training in Iowa and then served in two places in New York. I dont remember our corresponding much but we must have. Sometime in Jan 43 I received a call from her at Emily's. She was home on furlough for a few days and wanted me to come up. I took a couple of days off work and went up and met lots of the people in Ashtabula.

My orders came from the Navy to report to Washington DC on Feb 11 1943. Hughie and I were done at the same time. He was in a program starting Feb 12-43 at Denison University, Granville OHIO. Hughie had flat feet so he was never sent overseas but he was shafted at every turn.

He wasn't released till the spring of 46 so he was in a few month longer than I. He doesn't carry very good memories of the Army.

My Notice of Seperation from US Naval Service lists as

407753 Stobbs, Donald W
Ensign, (AI) USNR
Bridgeport OHIO

ENlisted 11/3/42 Entered Active Service 2/11/43

Service Schools Attended	weeks
CPT-Roanoke, VA	16
Pre Flight- Athens, GA	12
Primary - Olathe, Kansas	16
Advanced - Corpus Christy, Tex	32
Navigation - Shawnee, OKLA	6

Qualifications - Naval Aviator

Service Vessels and Stations served on
VPB 135
Fleet Air Wing Six

Foreign And or Sea Service World War II
Yes

I was sent from Washington DC to Roanoke College at Salem VA. Salem was a suberb of Roanoke. We were in College Dorms and had Classes, "Yogi" Navy term for Athletics, and drills. Drill is where your brains and your feet don't Cooperate. We were taken several miles to a small town called Monvale where we learned to fly Piper Cubs. We flew off of what had actually been a Cow pasture. It was listed as CPT "Civilian Pilot Training" We had misfits for instructors. For various reasons, age, health, etc they couldn't qualify for Military Service. About half of them wore Military uniforms without the insignia. We who wore green CCC- Civilian Conservation Corps clothes which we wore part time but mostly we just wore our own Civilian clothes. We weren't officially Navy yet.

Edna visited one week end down there and I got to go home one time.

My next base was at Athens GA. We lived in dorms on the University of Georgia. This is where we were officially Navy. Issued Cadet clothes and had all Navy personel and regulations. It was the same as Army boot camp and was rough. When some of the ones who had been there awhile would see a platoon of new ones they would yell. ("Take to the Hills" They can't catch all of you"). We had classes drill and Yogi. We usually participated in a different type of sport every 2 weeks. The first week we learned the basics and the 2nd week we would have competition. It was hot and they guarded us.

XLII

I was at Athens when Leslie was killed. He turned 18 in April Graduated from High school June 1 and was drafted the first week of July. He was placed on a farm on sunday and was struck and killed by lightning on thursday.

I left Athens at 02:50 AM and went to Atlanta where I got on a train at 07:00 AM and 12 hours later was in Wheeling.

I had sent Edna a telegram saying, Brother killed by Lightning Funeral at ___. "The Powers that be" up there thought it was her brother and gave her a furlough without questioning it. She didn't tell them any different. (Its furlough in the Army and leave in Navy) She arrived in Wheeling at 11:00 We ate at Aunt Effie's and walked across the bridge to Wilsons Funeral Home. I had about an hour with him before the funeral.

XLIX

The inscription on Leslie's Tomb Stone reads. "He died in the service of his country." There are some Parents who loose sons in battle who do not agree with that, but the point is they all died as a result of Wars.

Besides talking on radio we had to learn four different means of communication. Code - dit-dah - Blinker - Lights - Flags - 26 different flag for each letter and no - Semaphore - hand signals with 2 flags.

As a result of being away for a short period of time I fell short of being able to take so many letters in a given time in Blinker. The result was I was held over 2 weeks and given a crash course on it till I was able to pass.

Until the day you could pin your Gold Wings on at Bryan Chute you were allways in fear of being "Washed out"

I never knew of anyone being put out at Athens because most of us had the physical ability and the mental capacity to get thru there.

At was at all three of the bases where you flew that the strain was on. You usually had an instructor for 5 students and he flew so many flights and you learned certain things. You would then have a flight with a different instructor who graded you. There were many who had more brains and athletic ability than I who went out on the flying. Many good potential pilots were washed out for maybe a single mistake or mis judgement call. It seemed to many of us that when the war elsewhere was going good they cut more out and when it was dark they let more pass thru. As I write this I still wonder if I really went thru all of that.

I went from Athens Ga to Olathe Kansas. About 35 miles west of Kansas City. We had the usual drill, yogi and classes in addition to flying. It was a large modern base. We flew Stearmans a very stable plane. I had no problems there but my instructor missed a lot of flights due to an asma type problem. He later served on an Aircraft Carrier in the South Pacific and did quite well.

After the war he became an attorney and practiced in Columbus Ohio. Brent had a few contacts with him. My last training base was at Corpus Christy Texas. It was started shortly before WW2 started. Prior to that time all Navy or Marine pilots graduated from Pensacola Fl. Corpus Christi was a very large complex.

It was billed as the largest Naval Air base in the world. There were at least a dozen different fields or training facilities. Basically 4 different types of planes. Single engine land, multi-engine land, single engine water (float) and multi engine water. Some of the fields were 75 miles or more from the main base. Everyone had the same training on 2 of the bases and then you went to one that was more like the operational planes you were to fly in combat. They asked everyone what type of plane you wanted to fly and whether you wanted to graduate as a Navy or Marine officer. I think that was more to keep a Yeoman (Clerk or secretary) busy than of their concern for your wishes.

It was the luck of the draw if you got what you wanted for they filled their quota as they saw fit. The only difference between a Navy and a Marine Pilot was the uniform you put on when you graduated.

I think the Marines puff their chest out a little further. The Navy had a good propoganda program. They convinced us we were the best. Something I vainly still believe today.

Before the war you had to be a College graduate and the training to be a pilot only lasted about 6 months.

As the program escalated and the ability of the Govt to get instructors and bases for the vast no of students they took in lengthened to training time. I think mine lasted about 16 mos.

We were told that if we graduated we needed to buy 4 different colored uniforms.

Whites, Blues, Tans and Greens. I think we got $160.00 clothing allowance from the Navy. We wore the tans as Cadets and only had to change the "boars" on our shoulder to conform. I only wore the whites and blues for graduation and picture taken.

The tans were more or less a work uniform in the South and the whites and blues were dress and they changed with the season.

The greens were work uniforms up north both winter and summer and after I left Navigation training Shawnee Oklahoma I wore greens all the time.

I graduated at Corpus Christi Texas on Aug 16 1944 as a Navy Pilot and a Commission as an Ensign in the United States Naval Reserve. Anyone entering the Navy after Pearl Harbor was only in the Reserve. It didn't make any difference to most of us but many of the ones who were in before Pearl Harbor thought they were a step above us.

Edna and I were married in a Methodist Church in the evening of Aug 16-1944. At that time you had to have a blood test to get a Marriage License. I had mine done at the base "Sick Bay". I had to go back 3 times for them to draw blood. The dirty "Bastards" told me they either lost or broke the vials. I knew they were lying but couldn't do anything about it. It was a case of where a Corpsman could lord it over a Cadet and they took advantage of it.

I got a leave and Edna and I came home for everyone around here to meet her. When I reported back I was sent to Navigation School at Shawnee Ok. It was quite a [redacted] disappointment as everyone expected to go to Lake City Florida to learn to be a Co-Pilot in a PVI operational plane. I had always disliked Arithmetic and was never very good in it and that is the basic component of Navigation.

There is one other thing about my training that I disliked. I thought of it yesterday, but I have forgotten it today !!

Edna came out to Shawnee and stayed with me till we buried her at Holly Memorial. At Shawnee we had day & nite Classes and Navigation flights. The flights consisted of a Pilot, Navigation instructor and 4 Students in a Beechcraft twin engine plane. The instructor would tell one student to give him a course to a city in X direction and X miles away. The other three had to chart our pass along with them. About half way thru the trip the instructor would tell another student to give us a course to another city and we would land there and eat. It was usually about 4 hrs flying time.

I remember landing in New Orleans Olathe Kansas. Rochester N.Y. Carlsbad N.M plus a few others. After Navigation school I got a short leave before orders to report to San Diego, Cal for Operational training orders. My transportation was paid for by the Govt but I had to pay Edna's way. I gave the Rail Road agent in Wheeling a $100.00 bill and he gave me a penny back for a round trip ticket from Wheeling to San Diego for Edna. It took 3 days. We never had a bed or a decent meal. The trains were crowded. Sometimes we had a seat, sometimes we stood in the isle or sat on our luggage. Sometimes there were dining cars on the end of the train but they only allowed Service people to eat there and since Edna wasn't in uniform she couldn't go in. I resided to go without her as we ate $1.00 bologna sandwiches and

WWII

50¢ apples or oranges when they were available.

When we got to Los Angeles we visited my Aunt Lottie Hunter. Two of my cousins: Alberta and Gladys were staying there while their husbands were over seas. Gladys wanted her ears pierced and rings put in and no one would do it so I told her it wouldn't hurt me so we heated a needle and I did the job.

In San Diego I got orders to report to Sand Point in Seattle WA. We rode up the west coast and stopped in San Francisco and visited a Cousin of Edna. We got to ride under the Golden Gate Bridge on a ferry. At Sand Point I got orders to report to Whidby Island Naval Air Station. There were two bases there. Ault Field was land based twin engine Patrol Bombers, Ventura PV-1's. Thats where I reported to.

WWII

The other base was for the PBY's. They were float planes but many had been adapted with wheels so they could land on land as well as in the water.

The two bases were about 2 miles apart and ~~buses~~ buses ran constantly between them.

We were able to get a room in a building in Anacortes several miles from the base. It was a large room on the 3rd floor and had a bed, 1 chair, small table and as wash basin in one corner. It cost $1.00 a day. We stayed there till I went over seas. There were many jobs available so Edna soon got a job in Inventory in the Supply Dept.

Since this was an intimate training base there was a lot of turn over in personell. Many of the crew members arriving there had wives and families and when they were sent out the families often went home so these people were

not looked on very favorably when they applied for a job.
Edna had VA pregnance was smart, passed her tests for advancement but was denied her ratings until I went overseas and she proved she was staying. We were very unhappy about it but understood the reason for it. I have nothing but good things to say about how the local town people treated the Navy personel. We made many friends while there.
Edna contracted for and paid for her ride from Anacortes to the base but I never knew when I stepped out to the curb how I was riding with. It was an unwritten law then that if you had room in your car you never passed up a man in uniform. There were many civilians who worked at the bases and they had cars as well as some of the older Navy personell

When I arrived at Whidbey I was put in a temporary outfit till my permanent Squadron came back from a 30 day leave and was reformed.
The were several VPB squadrons each consisting of 18 crews of 10 men to a crew if you were going to the Aleutians and 5 men if to the South Pacific. Pilot (PPC) Patrol Plane Commander - Copilot - Pilot, Navigator - which is what I was. All officers. Three crew members. Radio-man - Gunner - and Plane Captain. He was in charge of maintaining the plane on the ground and monitored the engines in the air. He and the Pilot - Navigator also manned guns in case of attack in the air.
As the war progressed the conditions, plans and procedures constantly changed. The overall plan for the North Pacific area was that a squadron would

be out six months and come back and regroup, retrain and go back out. The plan for the personel was that you went out the first tour as Navigator the 2nd tour as Co Pilot and the 3rd tour as P.P.C. You were to get your training on the job so to speak. Thanks to the Atomic Bomb the war ended while I was on my first tour.

All of the Navigators were fresh out of Flight school at Corpus Christi and the Navigation School at Oklahoma. Some of the Co Pilots were from Lake City Florida where they had been checked out in the PV1 Ventura The rest of them were men who had been Navigators on the previous Tours. We were pretty much in awe of the Pilots since most of them were of the rank of Lt Senior grade or Lt Commanders they all were experienced Pilots and we had complete confidence in them.

We were completly checked out and ready to leave for Attu When the Navy came out with a new version the PV2 Harpoon so we had to retrain in that. The San Juan De Fuga straight was 10 miles wide and 90 miles long out to the Pacific ocean. We traveled it many times. One of our exercises was of me directing the Pilot at low level by Radar thru one of the many islands around there. He pulled a canvas screen down and flew entirely blind directed only by my instructions by radar. The Co Pilot was able to see as a safty precaution.

Once we flew up to 10,000 feet and flew east over the mts and looked down on the Yakima valley. It was a beautiful site seeing all of the rows of apple trees.

Our Squadron VPB 135 left for Attu in early August 18 crews plus some Ground Personell We were staggered in our departure We made 1 stop before Alaska - One nite in Alaska One nite on Adak and then hit Attu. I remember them talking about one group that took 3 weeks to make the trip (due to weather)

Attu was relatively civilized when I got there. We had steel mat runways to land on. Most of the roads on the base were stoned solid and the walkways between most of the Quonsett huts were wooden. The Island was mostly either lava rock or Tundra which is a damp lusscious growth to grows and dies and over the years becomes quite spongy.

Very little of the Island was wide of a terrain that was traversable as much of it was mountains with snow on in mid summer.

The war ended shortly after we arrived but we were kept occupied by doing some flying patrols and practicing GCA (Ground Controled Approach). That is when a man in a trailer at the end of a runway would talk you down by radio. He directed you to a certain altitude and course and then you descended down an invisible beam by him telling you to go right or left up or down till you were within 50 feet of the runway. I never flew the plane but I have ridden down there fog and never seen anything till we hit the runway.

One time we landed on Shemya a long low Island about 35 miles east of Attu. It had the longest runway of any Island in the chain. I think B 29s could have landed there if the war had continued. During our off time one of the senior officers would check out a vehicle and we would tour the island and battle zones.

It was said that if the Bomb hadn't been dropped Japan would have been attack by soldiers from three areas 2 weeks later. ~~The~~ There was an Army on China, One from the south Pacific Islands and a large force in the north. Most of them would have departed from Adak and we would have flown cover for them.

Some time after the war ended the "Powers that be" decided they wanted pictures of the northern Jap Islands so my crew was one of a few planes selected to make the flight. We were being briefed early in the morning and I began to feel sick. "Chicken" "Scardy Cat" yet thats what some actually verbalized to me. Wiser heads prevailed however and I was taken to a station Sick Bay where they took a blood sample. The Corpsman said "White corpuscles don't lie," He is sick.

They took me to the main hospital and 10 o'clock that nite a surgeon removed my appendix. They gave me a spinal so while I was groggy I wasn't completely out. I remember him holding it up and saying. "Pretty angry looking. That would have burst befor morning" I think I was vindicated.

They began to break the squadron up while I was in the sick bay and I never saw my PPC [illegible] For 5 years later he got a job at an airport here in Ohio and I went to see him. I have never seen any of the enlisted crew members. The crews left the Island under a system I was never made privy to. When I was well enough to drive I was made "Officer of the Day" I was given a jeep and my duty was to see that the orders and directives of the head honchos were carried out.

My arm band let me go to the head of the line at chow. I left Attu in the Skippers plane. How and when his own navigator left I don't know. We made one stop on the way back before landing at Kodiak. I was there three weeks before flying back to Whidbey Island in another crews plane. I replaced his navigator and he was quite upset but I had no say in it but he assured me he was going to beat hell out of me if he ever met me in civilian life. I did see him again in 1985 at the Squadron reunion but I think he had forgotten about it by then. "I think I could have still run faster than he could." At Kodiak I retained my Officer of the Day job until I left. I was able to get one day off when a few of us got to go out to what I believe was the highest point on the Island,

I believe it was about 4400 hundred feet and took a little over 2 hours climbing up and about 45 min to come down. I didn't see any of the bears that lived on the Island. The runway at Kodiak was short, at sealevel and had mountains on both sides and at the end. If you started in you landed. You did not have room to circle around.

For some unknown reason the Commanding Officer who was a Veteran Pilot with the rank of Commander of a PBY squadron violated his own stringent orders and came in, attempted to circle and crashed. He killed himself and most of the rest on board. His Copilot had graduated with me at Corpus Christi and Colma and I both had contact with him during our training on Whidbey Island.

I was at Whidbey Island about one week, when I was told I was to be discharged. I had the option of getting it at Seattle or Great Lakes. I chose Seattle so Edna and I came home on the Northern Route. I was in the Navy a total of 3 years. I enlisted in Wheeling, was sworn in at Washington D.C. Served on six different training bases and was on two Aleution Base Islands overseas. I never liked the Military but I am proud that I served in it. I am also proud of the fact that I had a wife and two sons who served.

Donald W Stobbs

Finished June 30 - 2006

Five Stobbs Brothers WW2

Bayard - Army 6 yrs ■ Edna Chapman Stobbs
* Donald - Navy 3 yrs WAAC 14 mo
Hughie - Army 3 yrs +
Roy - Army 19 mo after war ended
Leslie - Killed by lightning less than a week after being placed on a farm by orders of the Draft Board

* Son - Richard USN. 18 MO - 15 in VN
* Son - Brent MP 18 MO. - Special Training

I consider that I was very fortunate in my War Service. While even today, any time man leaves the earth and flies he is in danger. I did not suffer the hell of battle in Europe, The South Pacific or on the ships on the oceans.
I still had my 10 fingers and 10 toes when I came home and I got to see an awful lot of the world that I would otherwise never have seen.

D.W.S.

■ Service times may not be accurate!