

Tribute to My Father-In-Law, John Hubble

A Family Story Written by Thomas M Parsons, Linda Hubble Parsons, Miranda Parsons Shisler, Kathy Parsons Kirtland and John H. Hubble

By John H. Hubble

I was born a few miles outside the small town of Marion, Virginia on April 11, 1921. My father was caretaker or guard for the property of a coal mining company that had ceased operations in this area. Our house, a small frame building with none of the modern conveniences, and our transportation, a very good riding horse, was furnished by the company. My father's only duty was to protect the company machinery that had been left behind. The company property consisted of mountain wilderness, the local game warden being our only neighbor and living perhaps a quarter of a mile away. The area abounded with small wild game including pheasant, turkey, squirrel, opossum, and raccoon. There was larger game in lesser number, such as wild cat, mountain lion, and bear. My father, an ardent hunter, was very pleased with such a position, but my mother was far from happy about the situation. Upon my mother's insistence, we moved into town within a year.



My father accepted a position with the local lumber mill and we lived there until my oldest sister was born, three years later. Shortly after my sister's birth, my father received a letter from his brother who had gone west to settle in Indiana. The letter told of the opportunities that were to be had in Indiana and this was just the excuse my father needed to quit the lumber business. Within a year, my father had traveled to Indiana, took a job with the C.C.C. and St. L. Railroad (later to become part of the N.Y.C. System) and returned to Virginia for his family.

We settled down in the sparsely populated town of Beech Grove and there I have spent most of my life. In spite of my father's restless nature, he has stayed with the same company to this day.

I am the only boy in the family of three children, my youngest sister having been born in 1928. I inherited my father's love of the outdoors and as a boy, I spent many happy hours with him in the woods and fields and along the streams of central Indiana.



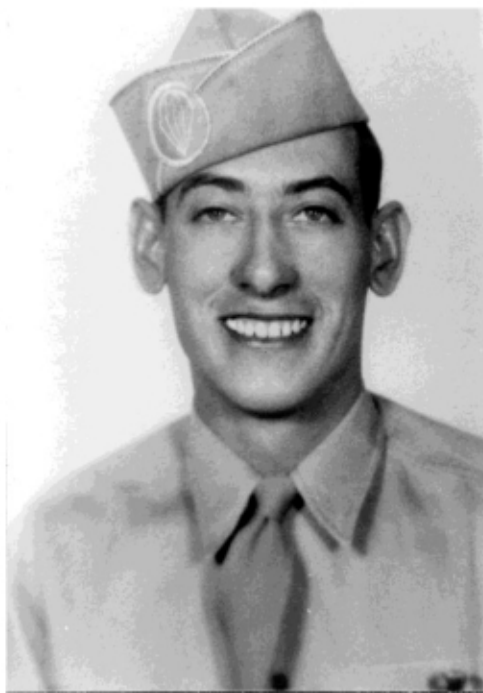
My closest friend was a slightly younger cousin of mine. He shared my love of the outdoors and we were inseparable companions during summer vacations. He would sleep at my home for a few nights and I would spend the next few nights at his home. Usually at daybreak, we were up and, taking a few provisions, we were off for the woods. Our days were filled with swimming at "Sunnybanks" or "Cardoor", burying boxes of treasure in some secret field, fishing the deep, still pools of Lick Creek, frying a sunfish or crappie, roasting a squirrel or rabbit, baking mud packed potatoes, or smoking "Indian Cigars" or dried corn silk. We crept home at dark, worn and tired, but planning for tomorrow.

Just as I loved the outdoors, I loved animals. It is difficult to recall any part of my childhood when I did not have a dog. Then too, I had pigeons, chickens, rabbits, and ducks at various times. And there were mice, sparrows, snakes, fish, frogs, and crows, all pets or prisoners of mine at one time.

I was a quiet, shy boy when I entered the Beech Grove Elementary School. However, I adjusted myself to school rather easily and I ranked high in scholastic standings throughout my first six years. By the time I graduated from elementary school, I had lost my timid nature to such an extent that I was becoming a playground leader among my schoolmates. This new personality was to be short lived, however, because I went right back to my backward ways as soon as I entered high school. I continued to be timid and withdrawn throughout high school. I got along very well with my classmates, but I just could not rid myself of my shyness. I was continually being urged by my fellow pupils to join them in their social activities, but I always hastily declined.

I was seventeen years old when I graduated from the Beech Grove High School in 1938. Thrown into the world with no planned purpose in life, I drifted about for a time. I worked as a carpenter's helper, cashier in an auto repair business, restaurant employee, and finally settled down as a machinist apprentice with the railroad company with which my father was connected. I got a good start with the company by making a grade of 98 on the written mental exam that was given for the job and I continued to build a good record by being a conscientious worker.

I entered the Army on August 12, 1942, enlisting in the parachute infantry. I chose the paratroopers mainly because the pay was higher, but, partly I suppose, because I was seeking to get to the



point where I might be idolized in a small way by Society. I liked the Army and I trained hard with my outfit. By the time our stateside training was complete, I had once more thrown off my inferiority complex and was almost a normal American boy. I never did reach the point where I was loud or aggressive, but I did lose my self-conscious ways to a marked degree.

We arrived in England and started training again, training and waiting for the invasion of France. The buddies that I had trained with dropped behind the coast of France on "D" day but I was not with them. I stayed behind as a patient in the Fortieth General Hospital. Less than two months before, I had been hurt in a training accident. A piece of shrapnel from an exploding grenade pierced my left leg and broke both bones below the knee. I was terribly disappointed, but I consoled myself with the thought I would be back with my outfit in about three months. In reality, I did not leave the hospital to report for duty until one year later. This one year was spent in various army hospitals in England and the United States. When I was discharged from the hospital, I reported for duty at Fort Benning, Georgia, where I eventually became head of the training film library at the Parachute School. I served the remainder of my three and a half year army term at Fort Benning.

Upon receiving my discharge, I went back to work for the railroad company at Beech Grove for a short time. I enrolled at Butler University in the fall term of 1946, still not sure of what my life work should be. I had a vague idea that I wanted to write and I took journalism as my major. It took me only two weeks to find that journalism was not for me, consequently I changed my major to pre-medical at the end of the semester. I had decided to concentrate on veterinary science.



I got married in December, finished the year at Butler, and transferred to Purdue for the summer session in 1947. At the end of the summer session, I decided to quit school. My grades were good at both Butler and Purdue, but we were expecting our baby in January, my financial position was very bad, and I really did not stand a ghost of a chance of getting into veterinary school because there so few positions in number for the vast number of students that were clamoring for entrance.

I went to work at the Chevrolet Commercial Body Factory in Indianapolis. We bought an acre of ground just outside the city limits and my wife and I started building our home.

Along about this time, we spent our vacation in the Missouri Ozarks. It was there that I first came into contact with our one room, one teacher schools. The teachers, high

school graduates, had no teaching training whatever. There was one young teacher in particular that I cannot forget. All through school, according to classmates of this young woman, she was at the bottom of her class. She did graduate from high school, but her intelligence was not what you would call good. The following year, she was teaching all eight grades in a one room school. What chance does her pupils have with a start like that?

Today, I am thirty years old. I love my wife even more than the day I married <=""> her, and I have two lovely daughters. We are now living comfortably in our own home and its completion is in sight. We are almost debt free and our living expenses, in spite of inflation, are low. Once more I feel that I can return to school, return to graduate.

I am still rather shy and at the present time I am finding it hard to adjust to school after my factory life. I am too tense, too eager to please. I must loosen up and I must learn to talk.

I want to become a teacher. I want to qualify myself to teach children, to give them what I have missed. So few parents are qualified to educate their children and if teachers are unqualified as well, what are the children to do.

I believe that I shall become a teacher, perhaps a good one.

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This blog entry is dedicated to the memory of my grandfather, John Herman Hubble, soldier, teacher... husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather... April 11, 1921-February 14, 2008.

Photos on this page: [1] John as a young man. [2] John with his parents and sisters. clockwise beginning on left, Janie, Mother Pearl, John, Robena, Father John. [3] John in his army uniform. [4] John and Nellie in front of their home on Southport Road in rural Indianapolis, IN. [5] John and his wife and daughters. Left to right: John, Linda, Nellie, Teri. [6] John in one of his favorite old cars. [7] John in his comfortable chair facing his television set.

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By Thomas M. Parsons

We were never alike. And yet we were very alike.

It amazes me that he accepted me so readily into his family. He told my wife-to-be that he didn't see what we had in common, but he gave her his blessings anyway.

He loved hunting, a skill and an interest derived from his father and his childhood friend Paul. And me? I couldn't pull the trigger and shoot anything. It's not in me. He loved to watch sports on television. I thought it was boring. He played tennis until into his eighties. I don't play tennis.





But we shared many things in common. He loved the outdoors as I do; he stalked <=""> things with a gun, I stalk them with a camera. He ate the things he shot; the things I shoot get to live another day.

We were both unusually shy when we were in elementary and high school, both of us losing that shyness to a great extent as young men.

We both considered journalism as a career choice, but switched to other vocations; he to education, me to the ministry, and, eventually, to education. We both taught school. And we both loved a young lady named Linda, his daughter, my wife. Dad never told me the details of how he came to know Jesus Christ as his Savior, but I never had a doubt that he was a believer. His life revealed this fact. My wife thinks that his childhood friend, cousin Paul Hubble with whom he cavorted as a young boy, probably had something to do with it. Paul later became a pastor and preached the Gospel all through the years of his ministry. In fact, I attended Paul's funeral in August of 2004 with my wife and in-laws. Dad and Paul are together again, by the way, in heaven, and on earth. Paul's grave in the Orchard Hill Cemetery in Wanamaker, Indiana is across a gravel drive from Dad's.

So, although there were things about us that were different, we had much in common. The Lord. Love for Linda. We usually voted the same, conservatives as we both were. And I look forward to the day when we share one more thing in common.

Heaven.

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By Miranda Parsons Shisler

Today, I'm a little more homesick for heaven.

Before he was there, the thought didn't cross my mind as much. I knew that heaven waited for me. I knew that Jesus was there, and that I'd see Him when my time here is through. But now, there is a tangible part of my being present in that mysterious other world, for this very moment my grandpa walks with Christ. Some never know their grandparents. Those that do might not ever be close to them, know enough about who they are to really come to love them in any sort of depth.

I had the blessing of a grandpa who wanted to know me. Who wanted to be part of my life, who wanted to share all that he was with us, his nine grandchildren. What a wealth of memories are stored up within my mind! Grandpa was an element of so many wonderful adventures from my childhood. He always had a plan, something he wanted to teach us. He took us for truck rides through the woods, he played basketball with us, he tried to teach us how to play tennis and card games. He videotaped every major event and plenty of minor events in our lives. He said little with words, but so much with his heart, his passion for life, his convictions about his Lord. Though I don't remember a single time he said "I love you" there was not a shadow of a doubt in my mind that he did. He showed it through his time, his energy, his actions, his smile.

Now, he can't mow the lawn or ride his bike or take videos of great-grandchildren or watch a game on television. He can't tease my grandma or sit by her side at the doctor's office. But he can do plenty of things that he could never do before.

He can look on the face of Jesus. He can walk with him, talk with him, share joy with the Savior that I can only imagine. No longer do the weight of memories of war and loss and heartache burden his spirit. No longer does the horrors of cancer ravage his person. He is whole. He is happy. He has found perfect peace, perfect love, perfect life. All because one night many years ago he attended a revival meeting and discovered that there was a Savior Who could be the answer to all of the plagues and doubts that marked his life. Jesus could save him, could set him on a new path and give him ever increasing joy and peace first in this life, but ultimately in the next.

And on Valentine's Day last week, he finally laid down the shell of his worn and weary body and flew to heights yet unknown to me.

I'm sad. Because I know there's no way I'll ever lay eyes even once more on his precious face this side of glory. Because I know that Grandma is alone for the first time in 62 years. Because my mom and my aunt have lost a man that meant the world to them. Because all of my sisters and cousins have lost the greatest grandfather in the world.

But I'm so incredibly happy for him. It's a relief to know that his burdens have been laid down. And my heart has become homesick for a sweet land I am destined for. A beautiful place of joy where two very special people wait. Jesus and Grandpa.

***Face to face with Christ, my Savior
Face to face—what will it be,
When with rapture I behold Him
Jesus Christ Who died for me?***

***Face to face I shall behold Him
Far beyond the starry sky;
Face to face in all His glory
I shall see Him by and by!***

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By Kathleen Parsons Shisler

He's home now. He's young again. He's no longer hurting, or laboring to breathe. He is at peace. He's with his Savior.

But we are here, still tethered to our earthly bodies and the sorrow that comes with them. We <=""> miss him. We can't help but cry in our sadness.

I've been thinking of my Grampa a lot lately, knowing this day was not far off. Memories of him keep flooding back, swirling around in my head in fragments, trying to make a complete thought. The sound of a basketball hitting blacktop. The smell of grass



and sweat. The promise of another chocolate popsicle if I do another trick, sing another song for the video camera. The game of trying to slap his hand before his fingers could catch mine. Seeing him sitting in his chair, munching on cashews and cracking jokes with Gramma.

I only knew my Grampa for 25 of his 86 years. I can't help but feel cheated. Like I should have had longer with him. In selfishness, I wish he could have been here for my children to know him better. In the few times Ethan met him, he really liked him. Even shy little Ethan sensed a kindred spirit in my Grampa. Even though I knew this day was coming, I still can't wrap my brain around a world without Grampa. He was such a constant, wonderful figure in my life. I'm sure my sisters and cousins would all agree, we couldn't have asked for a more perfect Grandfather than John Herman Hubble.

And in our sadness, through our tears, we can smile. I'll bet he's playing tennis again. Breathing deeply again. Running again. How good it must feel to run after so many years of longing for it?

I mourn for Gramma. Over sixty years together, and now there's an empty spot next to her. Even worse, her mind has trouble grasping it, being ravaged by a disease. I pray that God's peace, the peace that surpasses understanding and the limits of the mind, finds it's way through the disease and comforts her. I mourn for Mom, for Aunt Teri, having lost their precious father. May they also feel that quiet peace.

Lord willing, I have a long life ahead of me. And I will carry Grampa with me. I will think of him whenever my boys come in smelling like the outside. Whenever I see an old car, or hear the swish of a basketball net. Whenever I sing "In the Garden". I'll laugh at the jokes he told, tell my children of his dry humor and practical jokes, and even more so of his faith in His Savior, Who I'm sure is telling him at this very moment "Well done".