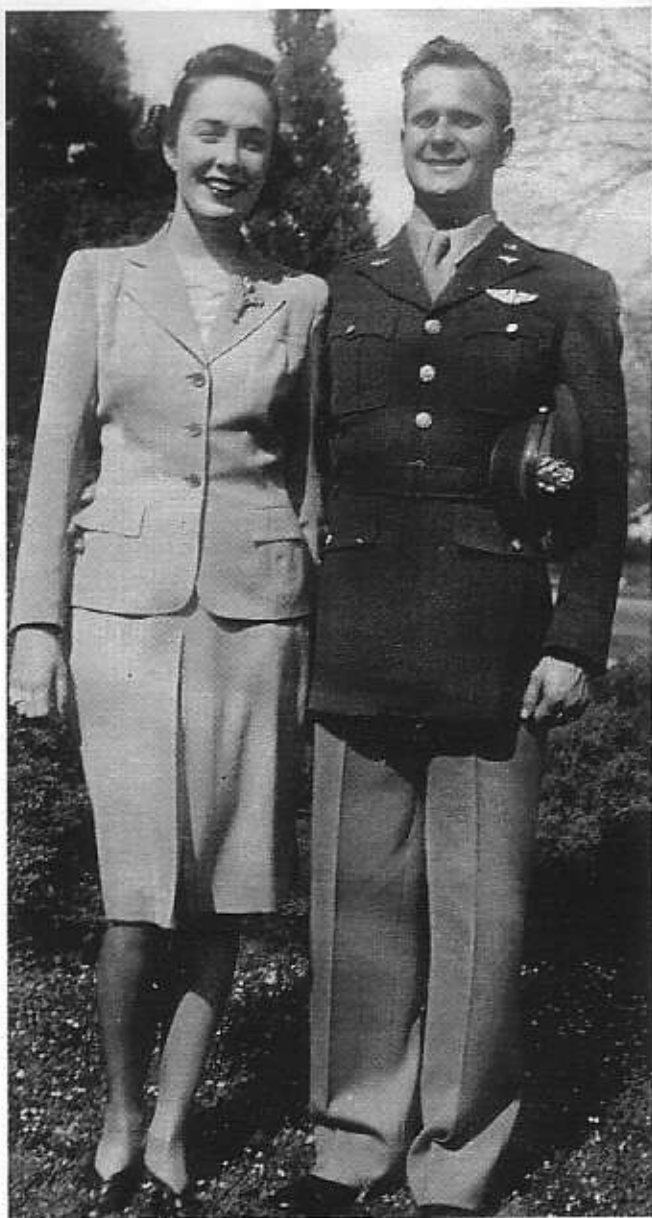


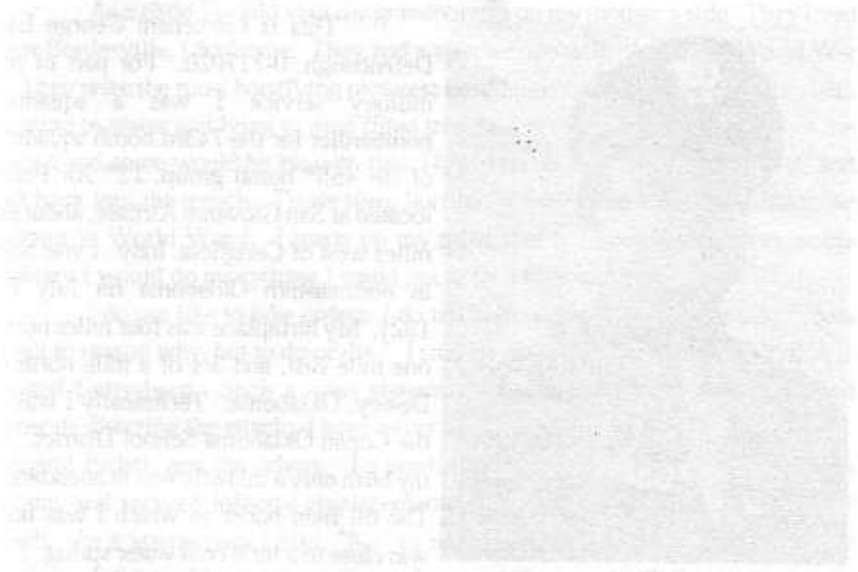
**Ask the Reason Why
Before You Do or Die!**



George Earl Defenbaugh



George and Dorothy, 1944



To all the men and women who have the courage to ask the reason why before they blindly proceed to do or die.

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George E. Defenbaugh

This is Lieutenant George E. Defenbaugh, O-717020. For part of my military service I was a squadron bombardier for the 743rd bomb squadron of the 455th bomb group, 15th Air Force located at San Giovanni Airbase, about six miles west of Cerignola, Italy. I was born in northeastern Oklahoma on July 28, 1921. My birthplace was four miles north, one mile east, and 3/4 of a mile north of Dewey, Oklahoma. Technically I was in the Copan Oklahoma School District. At my birth only a midwife was in attendance. The oil field house in which I was born was close to a little cold water spring. I've heard that when I was born the midwife

bathed me in warm water, then I was taken out and 'sent off' in the cool water spring.

I have never had much sympathy for all the cry babies who are wanting government help in housing and all of the fine things; telephone, electricity, air conditioning, etc. The house in which I lived until I was ready to go to college did not have electricity, inside running water, or plumbing. We used an outhouse. There was no telephone or radio, and TV had not been invented. Our school bus was a four-wheeled horse drawn wagon with a top on it, enclosed back door, and a coal stove in the center. We had to meet the wagon at five o'clock in the morning to make a six mile trip to the school in time for eight o'clock assembly. This is all I am going to say about my early life at home. However, I want to place on record that my father and mother only had 8th grade educations. At the time of their marriage, mother was age 15 and dad was 21. My father was from a little town, Wayside, Kansas. His 8th grade graduation test, which is of record, was so difficult that most of our present day college graduates could not pass it. My father started in the oil fields as a roustabout, became a pumper, then a foreman, and finally a district superintendent. During the time that I was at home, we lived in three different school districts; Dewey, Bartlesville, and Copan. I do not have close high school chums. As dad would transfer to a new oil district, we moved across school districts lines. That changed everything.

As a child I would visit my grandparents on my mother's side. They lived near Bartlesville, Oklahoma. They had a stereoscope with pictures of World War I. They were the most horrifying pictures; dead horses bloated, dead men bloated, floating in water and lying in mud filled trenches, some going over the top of the trench and some would be hit with fire. They'd throw their arms up in the air and fall back into the trench. Those were horrible pictures and I felt sorry for those fellows in World War I. I made up my mind that if I ever had to serve in the military I would do everything I could not to be a foot soldier.

I do not like to take orders. I do not believe in the old phrase that "yours is not to reason why, but to do or die." I studied the maneuvering of the Civil War around Gettysburg. Such a mass slaughter. It was conducted with appointed generals directing the attack. I have never been a great follower of Robert E. Lee, General Pickett, and the others. To send men into open fields to face northern canons and secured infantry emplacements was nothing but a condemnation of death. As a young man I said, "No" to military service as a foot soldier in the infantry. I did not like to take orders, salute, and put up with all that authoritative crap. I did take a fancy to flying. I said to myself that if I ever had to serve I would try to get into the Army Air Corps.

When World War II selective service started, I decided to volunteer and become an Aviation Cadet. Being under age, I had to secure permission of my mother and father to join the Air Force as an Aviation Cadet. In doing so, I would not be called to military duty until the Air Corps had a place for me in the training program. I was able to avoid the foot soldier proposition.

I mentioned earlier the meager living conditions that we had at home. This was during the depression years. We always had a roof over our head, and while we didn't have electricity, we had lots of natural gas. Our lights used natural gas, and in later years after it was developed, we had a gas operated refrigerator. We always had a cow which I had to milk and water. In addition, we always raised a calf or a pig for butcher. Some of my



Dad, Mom, and George, 1944

heartbreaks were when I would make a pet out of a pig or calf. When it came time, I'd crawl under the bed as dad and others proceeded to butcher it. There were several employees involved in the butchering, each taking part of the meat. We always had a huge garden, sometimes it would cover about an acre. We would grow everything possible in that climate. It was my duty to till, maintain, and water it. We had a seasonal crops starting with beans and peas, going into corn, and then the vine stuff; the gourd, watermelon, pumpkins, peanuts, and potatoes. Even



George, Katie, and Herb

though we were miles from a grocery store, and too poor to buy produce, we maintained a large produce garden and mother canned a lot. I think my parents, who did not have a high school or college education, were the smartest, most intelligent people I have ever known. In 1924 dad invented an oil well sand pump for which he was given US Patent# 1507989, the principles of which are still used today all over the world. They educated their three children with college degrees.

I went to the University for about three years before I was called to active duty in the Air Force. After the war, I finished my education under the G.I. bill. I obtained a BA degree in law and a Doctorate of Jurisprudence from the University of Oklahoma Law School. I started practicing in 1948 and have been a member of the

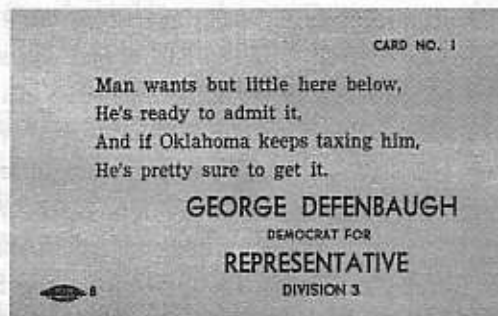
Oklahoma Bar ever since. I became involved in real estate development some years ago. Now I'm retired from the practice of the law and look after our commercial real estate. For all of which I give thanks to the encouragement of my wife, mother, and father. Along the way, I served two sessions as a State Representative in our Oklahoma legislature (1951 and 1953). I did not seek a third term. I became disillusioned with the legislative process. I, along with 100 other representatives from all over the state, were nothing more than figure heads. Whatever we proposed fell on deaf ears. Also, there were a lot of scandals which involved the speaker of the house, and some of the chairmen of various committees.

Beginning in 1940, my wife has played a very important part in my life. In September 2002, we'll have been married 59 years. In 1940 I was attending summer school at the University of Oklahoma and I was working at the library for 25 cents an hour. I also worked at a little café called the Dutch Mill three hours a day for my meals. I was taking accounting at the business school. One day when I was going to class, I entered the building and walked down the hall. The most heavenly smell a perfume came from some place down the hall. I wondered, "where could this be coming from." I turned down another hall toward the classroom, and the smell continued (the perfume was French, "Toujours moi"). I entered the door to my classroom which was built like a theater with rows of seats higher than the row in front, etc. I observed a lovely young lady wearing a bright yellow pants suit surrounded by four boys. They were laughing and having a good time. For some reason, I decided to sit in front of the group on the row which was below them. I was right in front of the young lady who smelled so good. During the conversation that was going on, the subject was whose turn it was to provide the gum. They had been chewing gum and each day a different one had to bring the gum. For some unknown reason she immediately included me in the group. She tapped me on the shoulder and said, "Do you have your gum?" I said, "No" and she said, "Well, this is your day to bring the gum." I said, "Oh? I'm sorry I can't accommodate you," or something like that. I said, "I spent all my money buying this art gum eraser" which was a brand new eraser and at that time they were somewhat expensive, 25 cents I think. I held it up over my shoulder and she

immediately grabbed the art gum and bit it in two and put the two pieces back in my hand. Well, I was shocked. I said to her, "I have spanked people for less than that." She quickly replied, "Well, would you like to try." I said, "Why yes,



GEORGE
DEFENBAUGH
Representative
Division 3



1950

name the time." She said, "Well, over at the sorority house (she was a Kappa Kappa Gamma) we're having a fried chicken party tonight, why don't you come over and get some fried chicken?" I said, "I'll be there, what time?"

We met at the sorority house and they had lots of fried chicken. All the girls had boyfriends. I met her and we had fried chicken, potato salad, etc. I suggested to her, "Well, lets go outside and sit on the curb. It's dark and the moon's up, we can go out there and visit." She consented. We went out to the curb. Sitting on the curb talking chit chat, I felt her mind had been turned off of us and on other things. I put my arm around her and flipped her over on my lap and pounded her fanny really good. This surprised her. I don't think she'd ever been spanked before. She sat up, wide eyed and said, "Oh!" but she didn't run me off. During the 60 years we have been married I have never spanked or hit her again - arguments, yes, but never physical violence. We began to date after that, about every day and every night. That's the way I really met my wife.

I was at the sorority house having Sunday dinner on December the 7th when the Japs bombed Pearl Harbor. They had a radio at the sorority house. We heard President Roosevelt's announcement to the nation. We were at war. We had to devote our lives to that problem. Fortunately, I had joined the Army Air Corps to avoid being drafted as a foot soldier

walking through mud. During the first two years of my attendance at OU, I had to sign up for ROTC. The OU ROTC unit was a calvary and artillery unit. All training focused on getting horses hooked up to a canon, etc. To me it just looked like a continuation of the pictures I had seen of WWI in France on the stereoscope at my grandfather's place. I was so thankful to be signed up for the Army Air Corps. They told me there was just no place for me to go for training, therefore they left me in school and at home for quite some time. During which time I had met Dorothy as I said. The government was building two big naval bases at Norman, Oklahoma, where the University of Oklahoma is.



Dorothy, 1941

Dorothy and I got summer jobs. She was working in the payroll department and I was on janitor detail, in other words, a potty cleaner for a while. Finally, I was transferred to the payroll department. Dorothy was a year ahead of me in school. When Fall came, she graduated as a dietitian and left for an internship at Duke University Hospital. She was required to complete a year internship before she could become employed by a hospital. Duke was a distance from Oklahoma. I knew that my time of freedom was about to end and I wanted to see her one more time before I went into military service. My mother provided enough money for me to take the great southern railway back to Duke. I went by way of Cincinnati, Ohio, and Greensboro, North Carolina. Dorothy had arranged for me to stay with a student who was studying pharmacy. He had a car. Once in a while we could sneak out with his car. That year Bing Crosby's White Christmas was very popular. On one of our dates, this pharmacy student and his date, also a dietitian taking her internship with Dorothy, went out for dinner. We had a great time. We even bought champagne. We decided that Dorothy would bring a bottle of that champagne back to Oklahoma, a dry state, save it, and when we got together and perhaps married, she would have this bottle of champagne for celebration.

In a little while I was called for service. I went to San Antonio for my physicals, mental examinations, and educational examinations. I shipped out from Oklahoma City with about ten other fellows who were also aviation cadets. When I got into San Antonio, I took all of the examinations. I qualified for training as a pilot, navigator, or bombardier. When I got around to taking my physical, I was held there for five extra days. The rest of the fellas shipped out to different air bases for training. The reason for my delay was they had discovered a heart murmur. It didn't bother me in the high altitude chambers or the other physical tests. But it caused them concern. After continuing physical examinations they finally concluded that it must have been something with my heart at birth. I was able to perform all the tests and they decided to send me on to boot camp. After that I was sent to Hicks Field at Fort Worth, Texas. My primary flight instructor was a civilian. His name was Moss. He was an excellent fellow and I really enjoyed primary training on a PT-17, a low wing open cockpit plane. I could do everything a person could do with an airplane, spin, loops, rolls. I had a great time. One of my dear friends crashed in his plane. I was sad about that. At the time I was at Hicks Field, George Gobel was there. He gave performances Saturday night in the hanger. From Hicks Field I was sent for basic flight training to Vauca Air Base, Enid, Oklahoma. Training was in a BT-15, a stub nose, single wing air craft, with

a 450-horsepower motor. It had an electric start on the engine. I was never able to get the feel for that aircraft. I did solo it one time and I did a very poor job. I didn't damage the aircraft but I certainly didn't fly it with any respect.

In the meantime I had learned that this was a training field for four-engine aircraft. I really didn't like that. I had my heart set on being a fighter pilot. They were grooming me for four engine aircraft. The rumor was four engine bombers with a crew of ten. I did not like that. I did not want the responsibility of flying an aircraft with ten others under my direction. It was beyond my mind set. I went to the commanding officer and asked that I be relieved from flying duty. Because I had been proved to be qualified to be a navigator or bombardier, I asked to start my training again in one of those fields, preferably bombardiering. He was somewhat surprised and had long conversations with me trying to give me courage to continue. Finally he said okay he'd let me go. I had to wait quite a while to obtain an assignment off of that base. In the meantime, I had communicated constantly with my Dorothy. We agreed that we would be married, not knowing what my military duties were going to be. We were sent to Houston, TX, and I was assigned to Randolph Field for basic training. This was a surprise to me. I thought I had been through basic training.

Dorothy found a job at Rice University, and I went to training camp. Because of my bullheadedness and stubbornness, I had to walk the ramp two or three times on Saturdays. This was when Dorothy was free to come and visit me on the base. We went through these hard times. From Houston, I was assigned to Laredo, TX, for gunnery school. They'd already figured me to be a bombardier. The bombardier was the gunnery officer on the plane. We bivouacked at a place

called Eagle Pass. We lived in tents and trained in dirt and grime. I had to learn how to keep the machine guns cleaned and in working form. We had to fly and shoot the flying target while being pulled behind a tow plane. There were different colored 50-caliber tracer ammunition. Three cadets would fly at a time. Each had 100 rounds of different colors.



Primary at Hicks Field (George on right)

The nose of my 100 rounds were red, the next guys were blue, and the next were yellow. If you hit the target sock, the bullet would leave its color. Back on the ground, they would count the different strikes that had been made and give you a score. My score was sixty out of one hundred (very good!). I learned the 50-caliber machine gun, how to take it apart and put it back together blindfolded in less than three minutes. I could name each part of the gun. Another thing we did was skeet shoot from the back of a moving pickup. At home I was a good shot with a 12-gauge shotgun. I was able to break the clay birds as we drove around the circle at 15 mph. As we would drive by the pull stations, they would shoot out a clay pigeon. The object was to hit the clay bird moving in a different direction. I broke 90% of my birds in the four days that we were doing this. I qualified so well they took me off of the project. Those who couldn't hit the clay birds were left going around and around.

We were headquartered at Laredo. Across the Rio Grande River was Nuevo Laredo, Mexico. In that Mexican town was a bull fight ring. There were Sunday bullfights, real bullfights, where they killed the bull etc. Dorothy came to visit me one weekend and one



Married September 11, 1943

of the things that we wanted to do was to go to a bull fight. She had courage, so Sunday afternoon we went across the river. We stopped at a Mexican restaurant, had something to eat and two or three highballs. At about show time, we went to the bull ring and bought our tickets. We entered the bull ring on the lower level. There were rows and rows of seats. The lower rows were already filled with Mexicans. They didn't look too clean and they didn't look friendly. We decided we would climb to the very top of the arena and take seats there. The first bull came out, was killed, and drug off. The Mexicans were hooting it up and hollering. They gave the matador the tail and the ears for his good performance. I recall it was on the 6th bull that the matador was not as agile as he should have been and the bull gorged him, tossed him up over his head, and flung him down on the ground. When that happened, Dorothy, who almost cried every time they slaughtered a bull, stood