

ALFRED VAN ORDEN BATEMAN

ORDEN BATEMAN

I was born to Alfred Hess and Idella Van Orden Bateman on Monday, August 11, 1924 at Logan, Cache County, Utah. My Parents Named me Alfred Van Orden Bateman. My mother called me "Orden" because she did not want a "Big Alfred" and a "Little Alfred." Her brothers were all called "Van" so this name was not an option. Thus this is the name I have answered to when used by my parents and friends. When someone asked for "Alfred" or calls for "Al," I then know that they do not know me very well.

We moved from Logan to Idaho where my father had accepted a job teaching Vocational Agriculture at the Midway High School. He taught here for one school year. We then moved to Ashton, ID where he taught the same subject at this high school. Any recollections of the time spent at Ashton are not clear. We moved to Idaho Falls when I was about five years old. Dad accepted a teaching post at the Idaho Falls High School. Here he taught for the next ten years.

We lived in three different houses in Idaho Falls, before moving five miles north on old highway 91 at Beeches' Corner. The first house in Idaho Falls was located on Fifteenth Street. Here I began the first grade in the fall of 1930 at the Central Elementary School. We moved to a house on H Street and I then went to the Westside Elementary School for the second grade and third grade. We moved back to the East side of town, on sixteenth Street, and then attended the Eastside Elementary, where I had to take the third grade over. From there we moved to the farm. I remember the walk between high drifts of snow on either side when I followed our cow all the way from town to the farm. While living on the farm, I attended the Emerson Elementary School and the Idaho Falls Junior High School. The farm was five miles from town and Helen and I rode to school each day with Father. I remember listening to Dad sing, many old WWI songs, on the way to school in town.

Heating was accomplished by coal and wood burning stoves. I don't remember any outdoor plumbing. I do remember that when we were bathed that Mother heated water on the stove. The hot water was poured into a large laundry tub in the middle of the kitchen. At the farm we had indoor plumbing with hot water running from the taps, a toilet and all of the things that we have come to expect. Childhood at Beeches Corner brings memories of making the fire in the kitchen (my job each morning) on cold winter mornings, weeding the garden, milking the cows at night (Dad milked them in the Morning). We had all of the farm's out buildings to play in, the potato cellar to ski down in the winter. In summer I helped with the haying by riding the derrick horse. This horse went back and forth all day long pulling up a loaded fork which lifted the hay from the wagon. The hay had to be placed high on the hay stack, then back up to repeat the process again. I thinned sugar beets, hoed weeds and other chores needed on the farm.

Dad taught Vocational Agriculture for fourteen years before deciding to go to work for the Soil Conservation Department of the U S Department of Agriculture. He took an interim job (three months) with the Farm Security Administration at Tremonton, UT. Here we lived in the back of a hotel for the three months. We had several rooms to live in. We moved to Morgan Utah and lived in a house with central heating (a furnace in the basement.) I had to clean out the ashes and clinkers from the furnace. Morgan was our home for about nine months.

Dad was transferred to St. George, Utah in the Fall of 1939. Mother left Morgan before the transfer date so that she could register "all of us kids" in school. We stayed a short period of time in some small apartments that were about the size of a large motel room for the first few

days. We then move to the house that is just south of the Brigham Young Home. This house was owned by Jed Fawcett. We had the upstairs and the Fawcetts lived in the basement. The Mitchells lived in the Brigham Young home and I did go into the kitchen with Jed Mitchell who lived there at that time. It was much later that this house became part of the Utah State Park System and then later became part of the LDS Temple Visitors Center

When we moved to St. George there were only three wards. We met in the then new elementary school on Tabernacle and 1st East. Entertainment consisted of having weenier roasts on the red hill behind the sugar loaf (the big red rock to the north that has “Dixie” painted on the side, school dances and after MIA all three wards would meet and dance in the “Rec Hall - Now gone” . We lived in St. George for three years, attended the Woodward school and Dixie High before moving to Cedar City where dad had been transferred. I stayed in St. George to finished the rest of the school year (1941-1942) before going on to Cedar City. My folks were living on the top floor of the Eden Apartments when I arrived in Cedar. That summer I worked at the North Rim of Grand Canyon. Here I lived in a four-bed dorm room behind the cafeteria. I returned to Cedar City after this employment to graduate from Cedar City High School.

Schools (Elementary-High School College)

I began grade school (1930) in Idaho where Dad taught Vocational Agriculture at the Idaho Falls High School. Here Helen and me began to play band instruments. Helen the flute and I took up the clarinet. I can remember walking from the Emerson Elementary and the Junior High School where we played in the band. I have vague recollection of how tall the Jr and Sr Hi kids were and all I could see was their legs. I completed one year and the Idaho Falls Jr. High School before we moved to Tremonton. I began the eighth grade there. By the end of October or the first of November we moved to Morgan where I finished the eighth grade.

Dad was transferred to St. George Utah in the fall of 1939. Mother loaded up the three of us and headed for St. George. I remember that there were lots of miles of the road was still gravel. Mother attempted to let me drive on some lonely stretches of highway south of Nephi, my sister and brother, Helen and Russell raised a big howl each time that she let me drive the car. I had been playing the clarinet in the band in Idaho and continued in the band wherever we were living. Everyone at the Morgan School played in the band. Morgan high school had a large band. All grade levels above the sixth were members of the band. The band traveled quite a lot to band contests and to the Utah State Fair. All summer the band gave a concert at Como Springs. Here was a park to relax, have a picnic, swim, or whatever. The high school band members could swim free for playing at Como. I took full advantage of this and was in the pool every week day all summer long

I had one severe bacterial infection (Staph) at Morgan. After an evening of sleigh riding down the snowy road from the highway down to the rail road under pass., I crashed the sled. I had a scrap on the side of my leg. The sulfa drugs were new and the doctor gave me a new treatment for the infection, That helped a lot.

I began the ninth grade at the Woodward School. In N R Frei’s class I watched the Germans and the British move back and forth in North Africa. I played in the Woodward Band and in the Dixie Jr.College band. The college band was made up of students from the Jr. High, High School and the Jr. College. I went to school at Woodward for two years (9th & 10th

grades.) I completed one year(1941-1942) at the Dixie High School. Dad was transferred to Cedar City and I attended Cedar City High School my senior year where I graduated in 1943.

Military Service

Upon graduation from Cedar City High School I entered the US Army on June 20, 1943, at Fort Douglas, Utah, on the bench above Salt Lake City. I had taken an examination while still in high school. I was instructed to present the results of the examination to the inducting officer upon entering the service. In high school I had spent each after noon in studying radio and code. I could understand Morse code at about eight words a minute when I left school that spring. I thought that I would go to the signal corp. with that much radio training. When I presented the results upon joining the Army all, other options closed as I was to be sent to Camp Roberts CA. For infantry basic training before entering the Army Specialized Training Program. The training battalion was to be filled with ASTP candidates. This took all summer and we did not finish the required training until November.

After Basic training the members of the battalion were sent to Syracuse University at Syracuse, NY. Syracuse University was full. We marched all the way back to the train Station. Here we were placed on a train heading to we knew not where. About three hours later an officer came into the railway car and informed us that we were to go to Alfred University at Alfred, NY. Imagine my address (Alfred V. Bateman, Alfred University, Alfred, NY). We studied hard and on week ends I went into Hornell, NY to roller skate on Saturday nights. Alfred, NY was a Seventh day Baptist town. Every thing was closed on Saturday and one Sunday every thing, banks, store and the Post Office were open.

Midway threw the elementary portion of the schooling I was transferred to City College of New York (CCNY). While in New York I rode the subway, tried ice skating at Rockefeller Circle, roller skated at Columbus Circle.

Near the end of the elementary portion of the schooling the program was discontinued and at Easter time in 1944 those of us who attended CCNY were sent to Camp Polk La. We had been assigned to the 75th Infantry Division which was on maneuvers in the swamps around Camp Polk, LA. We move out of the dormitory at the college and into pup tents in the field. I was assigned to company H, 290th infantry, 75th Infantry Division, as a machine gunner. This was because I had qualified an expert on the machine gun at basic training back at Camp Roberts, CA. After three weeks of maneuvers in the Louisiana swamps the Division was sent to Fort Breckinridge, Ky.

When we arrived at Breckinridge the military determined that those of us who had been transferred in have not had a furlough in the past year. We were all sent home for two weeks. We were greeted on our return by empty an barracks. All of the privates had been shipped out as replacements. The division began training all of the newer arrivals for all of the empty slots made available with the transfer of the "old" privates. I became the first gunner a machine gun squad. All the new privates were sent to drivers school in addition of the normal assignments that they had. At the end of drivers school, I was invited to stay in the motor pool as Jeep driver. I elected to stay with the vehicles as there should be less walking. I felt that drivers would be required to do less walking than the other squad members. We all knew that we were to go overseas. I hoped that we would go to Europe and that our division would be shipped intact. After a summer of training we were shipped to the European for Operations.

We left from New York harbor on the S.S.Brazil in November of 1944. We arrived via a

sea convoy at the Welch port of Swansea after eleven stormy days. The battalion was sent to an old castle near Port Talbot. All but the Headquarters and the Cooks were billeted in a large building called the Orangeries.

The Division Headquarters and the Artillery came on a later ship. I was sent on detached service to division headquarters at Tenby, Wales, a pretty little vacation village on the southwest Welch Coast. I remained there for a couple of weeks when I was again sent with the advance party of the Artillery to barracks near Cardiff to await the arrival of the Division Artillery. When the Artillery arrives I was sent back to the company at Port Talbot.

Several days after I arrived back at my duty station the Division was sent to France. I Did not have a jeep issued to me in Wales and have to wait until we arrived in France. The motor pool left Southampton on LST's and the rest of the division was transferred via freighters. The crossing of the English channel was really rough, with the flat-bottomed LST pitching all the way. The next morning we entered the Seine River and most of the day was spent on deck looking at the burned out vehicles along the river bank. We disembarked at Rouen, France. We then were transferred a short distance to bivouac in a muddy field in our pup tents. Straw, belonging A Frenchman, was taken from a nearby stack and placed on top of the mud where we had to placed our sleeping bags. Here, I was Issued a Jeep with a good motor and chassis and a body that full of bullet holes.

Our stay in the field near Rouen was short and we were to go north into Belgium to join the Ninth Army. On the third morning, (we were now in Belgium) after leaving the muddy field we were told that our orders had been and that we would now join the first Army. The battalion had been assigned a bivouac area. That area could be in German hands and we would "have to fight" for our assigned area that night.

I should say something about the trip north from Rouen. I mentioned the muddy field and the time a year was mid December. On the convoy proceeded north and it was so foggy that we were allowed to use our blackout lights on the jeep during the day. We needed the blackout lights for markers during the day. The roads that we traveled on were lined with trees and even at high noon only the trees on the right-hand side of the road were visible as just shadows in the mist. To the left you could see nothing but mist, no trees. I was about fifteen feet behind the Jeep in front of me. About all that I could see were the four small slits of light before me, no Jeep was visible.

On the third day the fog lifted and is being a bright sunny day. Mid morning we stopped and put into place, a text book road block. I stopped the jeep and parked under a tree. From this vantage point I could see that there were waves of B-17s in the sky. You could see the ack-ack in the sky, most was below the aircraft, but once in awhile you could see a burst in the formation. Several planes would fall from the sky. Sometimes there were parachutes and some time there was nothing other than the falling airplane.

After several hours we left this location and moved to a wooded area about one mile from Soy, Belgium. We spent about one week in these woods. The snow was deep. We could hear small arms and artillery fire. The rounds from the artillery landed in the open field between our woods and the village of Soy. Before New Years day we were moved into Soy and a house with a hay loft. We enjoyed sleeping in the hay because it was soft and warm and out of the weather. I stood guard from 10:00 P.M. to midnight (for the Jeeps and the troops) on New Years Eve. As I returned to the sleeping area, our artillery fired three rounds in the direction of the Germans. Nothing happened for three or four minutes then the Germans returned our New Year's greetings. I dove into the stable where we were sleeping. The solders who were sleeping the loft

all came down the Ladder and one GI Climbed down, sleeping bag and all.

After the New Year began we began to move forward pushing the Germans back. The Bulge was shrinking. My division ended at Veshlam, Belgium. The major recollections of the Belgium Bulge were the depth of the snow and the number of GI who were killed. I remember driving along roads in that area and seeing the bodies piled like cord wood along the road waiting to be sent somewhere else.

With the Germans retreating back to the line where they had began the offensive in December we were transferred to the French First Army in the Alsace Area near Colmar, France. Here the 75th with two other American divisions pushed the Germans back beyond the Rhine River. Not much has said in the U.S. History, but when were riding along though the same area on a Cosmos tour in 1986 the guide commented about how the Americans were instrumental in taking the area from the Germans. This offensive lasted about three weeks. The 75th Division earned another battle star for this action. The City of Colmar, France awarded the Americans a citation, but the army did not authorize our wearing of the award.

We were then sent to the Ninth Army in Holland. This where we where to be sent when we first arrived on the continent. The division replaced a British Unit is a small town in the Netherlands on the Maas River. The British had been driving at night with one headlight. We could not use blackout lights on any vehicle and made our way in total darkness. I probably drove 20,000 miles in the dark with only the light from the sky to see my way. The Canadians were across the Maas coming south between the Maas and the Rheine and the Americans coming north when we relieved the British. We had only been there a few days when the western side of the Rheine was captured and we moved to a position on the Rheine. It was through our Regimental area that the 9th Army crossed the river. I still remember the Aircraft over head the day before the crossing was made. These airplanes sounded like and butch of bumble bees all day long. The Artillery began firing about midnight.

In Holland and Germany I had a job at regimental headquarters (in addition to the regular message center that had been setup by the Army) The regimental Commander took one officer and on Jeep and driver to be his personal liaison between his HQ and that of the battalion Commander. I was assigned to that duty and I had to make three or more trips from regimental HQ to the battalion HQ each day. At this time I stayed at the regimental HQ. I was driving someone some where most of the time. Once in a while I would drive the Regimental Commander on these trips. This assignment lasted until we were placed on occupation duty near Hagan, Germany. The 75th Infantry received three battle stars, one for the bulge, one for the Kolmar pocket and one for the battle of the Ruhr Valley.

Just a note about the places that I lived during my time in the Army. In the US we lived in barracks where the beds were arraigned with the head and foot alternating down each side of the room. There was a communal bathroom at the end of the building. In the Field we slept in pup tents where one solder carried one-half and another the other. GI sleeping bags consisted of a woolen bag in a canvas cover. Usually you could get extra woolen blankets if they were needed. The time in NYC was spent in an orphanage where we slept in bunks as in the barracks but the other thing like wash basins and drinking fountains were only tall enough for the small children we has displaced.

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Wedding and Married Live

I returned to St. George after discharge from the Army in February of 1949. I worked in a drug store all summers until college began in the fall. I married Afton Jones of Cedar City, Utah on May 21, 1946 in the St. George Temple. We live in an apartment in a large house where the county and state have offices now. Upon completion of one year at Dixie Junior college I attend the new College of Pharmacy at the University of Utah. I graduated with a BS in 1950. Afton and I then returned to St. George and a new career in Pharmacy

Recreation

Boats, Travel Trailers, Pine Valley house, Motor home, 22 ft mini 27 Ft Allegro

Organizations

VFW> Kiwanis, Rotary, UPhA Civil Air Patrol, Chamber of Commerce American Legion