

## **FATHER'S DAY**

*To most this is a precious day of remembrance of those first moments when as a small child we see our Dad, holding our hands as we play 'rocking horse' on his leg and other poignant times together. I am fortunate that I had the call as 'dad' for two boys and two girls, and had the opportunity to have a step-father relationship with another boy and two girls. So I am blessed. I have hoped my example complemented the two ladies –their mothers-whom I have had the privilege to share in our children's upbringing. If I have been a 'good man' then it has to do with association with two better women. Their Dad was not so lucky.*

*It was 1936 when my father died. Although I did not know my father well-he and my mother had been divorced since 1932-I recall a large man, jovial and caring with a round, fleshy face who played Santa Claus every year. As 1933 turned to 1934, an infrequent visit caught us in the midst of a great flood in Glendale, Ca. Our crossing of Chevy Chase boulevard was almost boat-like. Vivid too were waters flowing down the narrow washes from the Montrose foothills, now overflowing, and we saw a lady sitting against a tree, perhaps thrown there like a discarded doll. A last visit blurred by my tears was at the hospital where he died. He was 50 years old, and I was eleven. I never was privy to his counsel and influence.*

*Going to war in WWII laid the groundwork to become a professional soldier and led to my service in two more wars. I remember with envy two of my closest friends, Charles DW Canham the II and Terry de La Mesa Allen military officers of first rate minds and elan whose fathers(namesakes))were stirring examples to their sons. Canham senior led the 116<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the 29<sup>th</sup> Division in the invasion of Normandy in WWII. Chuck, my friend, lost a leg commanding a battalion in the First Cavalry in Vietnam, later died of his injuries.*

*Terry Allen reminisced with me while we soldiered at Fort Benning, in the fifties about his famous father who led the Big Red One(First Division)in Africa and Sicily before summarily relieved not for cause-but more for conformity and military protocol by Omar Bradley. Allens never forgave Bradley for this 'effrontery'. My friend Terry commanding a battalion of his father's old division in Vietnam was killed in 1967. I had often thought about those relationships denied me.*

*When I returned from Vietnam in 1968 –I looked forward to the visits with my family in Alameda, California to include my mother who was then hospitalized. She died on Christmas day at the age of eighty. Then in almost tearful irony I learned I was adopted by the Carmichaels in 1926, never shared by my mother. She had the original documents and perusal noted that my biological name was John Close the product of the union between George and Carolyn Close who agreed to let me go at different times, approximating 3 mos, hence an abandoned children's home in San Francisco.*

*Research found my learning George Close died in April of 1955, age 51 in Marin county, Kentfield, California. George and Carolyn had divorced and gone separate ways by then. Almost like some psychic phenomena I was privy to discovered facts that my biological father had gone to Alameda High School post WWI. As head of the Junior ROTC program at Alameda High School-my children attended also-prior to my VN trek is mind-boggling at the coincidence...some 45 years later. So many years without a father.*

*Dad, I hardly knew ye!*