

## Once Upon A Time In North Park

Roy Enright Guy

By Lorraine Halac

Once upon a time, in North Park, there lived an ordinary, young man who loved his family, friends and his home. They all influenced his life and his future.

Roy Enright Guy and his family moved to 28<sup>th</sup> Street when he was eight years old. He recalled vividly his first day at Jefferson Grammar School (that is what they called it in those days) when he was reprimanded for not using the cross walk, a lesson in rules that he never forgot. His favorite teacher, Helen Wills, was a strict disciplinarian but an inspiration. Jefferson School was a two-story building facing Landis Street, with a basement. There was a Candy store across the street on Utah and Landis Streets where the children would stop to buy candy on the way home from school. In those days, the local theaters offered many incentives to draw people to the movies: animal contests, Depression glass giveaways, grab bags, etc. It was the place to go on Saturdays for 10 cents. Roy entered his two Dalmatians in the animal contest every year to obtain a pass to the show...funny what people remember after 50 plus years. Dalmatians are still a favorite breed of the family.

He began playing the trombone with his brother (Howard) when he was 10. They both played in the Bonham Brothers Boys Band and the Rogers Brothers Boys Band in parades across the city, county, Southern California and also in the Toyland Parade in the 1930s and 1940s. In their teen years they played in various dance bands. He was thirteen when his mother died. His older sister, Evelyn, along with her own two sons, Jack and Harry raised Roy, his brother Howard and sister Margery.

In high school, Roy played football and went dancing at the Vasa club, Tent Ballroom and Balboa Park Club. He recalled riding to and from events in the rumble seat of his brother's car, trips that included visiting the ice-cream parlor at 28<sup>th</sup> and University for 10 cent malts.

Roy's best friend, Dewitt Sacks, lived on Pershing Street and was a great influence in leading him to church, where he accepted the Lord for life. Dewitt later joined the Civilian Conservation Corps and was drowned at Lake Tahoe. Another boyhood friend was Bob Sprague. Bob would sit for hours building model airplanes and Roy developed a passion for aircraft through Bob's influence and that of his next door neighbor, Carl Nesbitt, a test pilot for Ryan Aeronautical. Bob Sprague later joined the Royal Air Force. He flew Spitfires in the early days of the war (WWII) and later transferred to the American Air Force Fighter Groups where he was killed in an air collision over Britain.

After graduation from high school, Roy worked for Consolidated Aircraft, but his dream was to fly. Roy's desire to fly was squelched by the news that he did not pass the military eye examination. After several months of treatment, to strengthen his eyes, he was ready

for the local aviation cadet school but the school was closed. He sent a telegram to Franklin D. Roosevelt and told him his sad story. The President intervened and sent a telegram to the Air Force telling them to “let this boy in if he is qualified.” Roy took his training on B24s in Tennessee, where he graduated in 1943. The commencement speaker was the famous Eddie Rickenbaker. He and his crew sailed to England in 1944 on a ship with twenty two thousand people on one ship, no escort. Glenn Miller and his band were on board and played a concert every afternoon.

Roy flew fourteen combat missions over Europe and his plane was crippled five times. On August 5, 1944, the controls and two engines were knocked out. He was able to fly the plane back to England where he and his crew had to bail out. Roy landed upside down in what he said was the only tree in upper England...he was rescued by a “dear” Englishman. On his fourteenth mission he was shot down over Germany and held in several prison camps, ending up in Saltzbruck where he spent eight months of mistreatment. While he was a prisoner, he wrote a diary on whatever paper he could find. He also drew a picture of his home on 28<sup>th</sup> Street from memory. He was liberated by the Russians and returned to the USA on May 12, 1945. Roy and twelve other former prisoners of war were featured on the television show, “Real People”, in September 1980.

Roy served 30 years in the Air Force, in WWII, the Berlin Airlift, Korea and Vietnam and lived all over the world... but he loved his family and his home in North Park. Col. (Ret.) Roy Enright Guy passed away January 11, 1996 in Cypress, California.

*Author Loraine Halac was the Secretary of the NPCA History Committee and she has prepared an Oral History of Col. Guy, from which this article is excerpted. Mrs. Halac lives in the house in which the Colonel grew up and has a copy of his home that he drew as a prisoner of war.*