

Town of Eddington · February 22, 1811

EDDINGTON

Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2023

IT'S CALLED A JOURNEY

A Series by Nancy A. Nolette



My journey continues. . .

As the all-volunteer army was implemented, gals were completing ROTC, were students in the co-ed Officer Candidate School (OCS) and were graduating from West Point. This heralded the end of the Women's Army Corps (WACs) and, fortunately or not, I attended the last 3 month Women's Officer Basic Course class.

Now I needed to select a branch. First, I looked at the number distribution of women in the noncombatant branches we were permitted to belong. In the end, I justified my request for the Corps of Engineers as the Maine Army

National Guard is organized as engineers should I return to Maine. I knew I could do the engineering math. In this 3 month Engineer Officer Basic Course were 2 foreign officers from Africa, 5 gals, military academy graduates, ROTC, direct commission and OCS classmates. Many had non-engineering degrees as all the Corps of Engineers' design work was either contracted, and many civil engineering designs were standard and already on hand. Officers served as combat engineers, construction engineers and facility engineers.

The engineer basic course included hands-on applications such as: designing utilities (waterlines, sewers roads and electricity) for various structures, designing bridges and airfields and methods to destroy/blow them up, designing and assembling a timber bridge and Bailey bridge, laying trip wires and booby trapping buildings, designing and laying personnel and vehicle land mine fields and retrieving them, creating road drainage with explosives, blasting rock in a quarry and more. On one training day I had an opportunity to drive and operate this equipment: scoop loader, dump truck, 16-S portable concrete mixer, grader, deuce and a half ton truck, shovel with clam bucket and a 60KW generator. I quickly got a serious appreciation for personnel who maintained, repaired and operated this equipment for hours with the noise and jostling around in

the driver's seat. Hence, my aversion even today for equipment and vehicle leaks, hydraulics', unusual operating noises and flashing dashboard lights. I experienced designing a rock crusher mill and railroad track, calculating and placing dynamite and C-4 to blow things to pieces, create battlefield obstacles or remove them. The "million dollar minute" definitely got my attention and awe. It was a Marine Corps combat display of air, water and land forces in action. I certainly do not want to be on the opposite side of these combatants. Obviously military engineers have many expensive "toys" to include an engineer combat vehicle (tank with a blade), pontoon boats, prefab buildings and bridges and more in their career field. These are all the skills a gal from Maine needs to know about and experience! And, needed or not, I still have my engineer "Junior Woodchuck Manual" for quick calculations in the field.

After completing my branch course, I was assigned as a battalion administrative officer at Fort Lee, Virginia. As I approached my second year, I was promoted, yet if accepted, I incurred another 2 year commitment. I decided to stay in the military and became a training officer in non-resident instruction at the Quartermaster School. As I completed 4 years of service, I was eligible for the 6 month Engineer Officer Advanced Course and another promotion. Upon competition this required a 3 year commitment with a transfer

overseas. My initial plan to remain in the military for 2 years had now mushroomed to 7 years.

My assignment in Germany was in the Directorate of Engineering & Housing, as Chief of Engineer Plans & Services in a military community of about 10,000 Americans composed of soldiers, their family members and US civil service personnel. I had a dozen German nationals, four American civilians and no military in my division. This division had three branches: Master Planning that included drafting, site plans and property records, Architectural-Engineer Design for contracts and Construction Inspection. The branch chief of engineering design had been in the German Wehrmacht--army during WWII. The Master Planner and Inspection branch chiefs were Americans.

After a year I was moved to the vacant community facility engineer position. Now I supervised 300 German nationals in 4 branches responsible to repair and maintain 14 military sites. They were Utilities Branch, Buildings & Grounds Branch, 2 separate Fire Stations and the Directorate's Budget Branch. I had an airfield for transport helicopters, 2 missile sites, 2 sensitive ammunition sites and several USAF operated radar sites. All these military and family support facilities as well: K-12 school, barracks, dining facilities, grocery store/commissary, recreation facilities, motor pools, maintenance and storage facilities, child care center, exchange/department store, medical and dental clinics. My chief of utilities had been a WWII German submariner. I had 4 US army NCOs and 1 enlisted personnel in this division. The construction military engineer battalion utilities squad was detailed daily to my division in order to maintain their technical skills.

Of course, each branch chief had a translator even though they spoke English to me. English correspondence was translated into German for them to reply in German then it was translated back into English for the US army. When I had replies that stated "just because" and "ditto" I interceded for the detailed answer. Since the German nationals had been there prior to my arrival, I was sure they would still be there long after my departure.

I believe many nationals had service in the German military during WWII. They understood the military rank/hierarchy system. I was their supervisor, a female, military officer, not necessarily a facility engineer expert yet they respected me. I was frequently called, "Frau Hauptmann" (Mrs. Captain), and I certainly brought a new perspective to them. When a facility emergency occurred, I asked what was needed now to solve this emergency? I asked questions and we discussed alternatives. In the end each branch chief left with my decision to implement and my directed division's resources to accomplish the tasks.

Eventually we gals in key management positions formed a networking group, i.e., chief nurse in the medical clinic, officer/NCO club manager, transportation officer, commander's legal advisor, DOD school principal, commissary officer, child care center manager and facilities engineer. We met weekly at a local German gasthaus (small local restaurant). Our purpose was to coordinate with one another for assistance in meeting our community support needs. One request was for paint so the fathers of the child care center could paint the building exterior one weekend. My German crew mixed all the odds and ends of leftover paint we had on hand. The fathers

painted the building yet the center manager complained about the result—a dull bubble gum color that was not visually attractive.

I was frequently visited by military personnel from our out of area supported sites. We discussed their facility needs. After they left my office, I wrote down their request on paper and dropped it into my bottom desk draw. Twice a year I had the equipment and personnel services of our US army engineer construction battalion for community projects. We/community facility engineers provided the supplies for their projects and they were completed during these weeks.

My greatest challenge as a facility engineer was the growing backlog of deferred maintenance to repair, maintain and upgrade our thirty year old community sites. What further hindered this challenge was the affect on our military budget from fluctuating exchange rate to convert US dollars to German marks to pay for supplies and services contracted from the local economy.

During my 3 years in Germany, I was able to sightsee and visit many historical and tourist sites in Western Europe. Of significance, before the Berlin Wall fell, was a long weekend in West Berlin via travel on the US troop train from Heidelberg thru the Russian occupied portion of East Germany. Also, I was able to visit Leningrad, now renamed ST Petersburg, and Moscow, Russia for 10 days. I was definitely "on guard" and on "good behavior" during my time there.

What American items were priceless for the locals: ice cream, a carton of cigarettes, a bottle of whiskey, corn-on-the-cob, peanut butter and candy bars. For the East German soldiers and Russians: girly magazines, panty hose and

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As my three years in Germany were coming to an end, I wanted to be assigned to the DOD Procurement and Contracting program. I was awarded this designation as my alternate career code. However, lacking troop experience, I envisioned my next assignment as an engineer training company commander at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. Now I had almost 14 years military service towards 20 years for retirement. I elected to leave active military service and join the US army reserves again part-time. I could easily complete this remaining time for 20 years' service and collect my retirement benefits at age 60.

I began my once a month weekends and 2 weeks military service in the US Army Reserves. The first position opening was as a logistics officer in an El Paso, Texas petroleum supply battalion. After moving to California, I served as a supply and service officer in a military police battalion, a logistics officer in a training brigade with another promotion, a plans, training and intelligence officer in a training battalion, an assistant staff engineer in a US army reserve headquarters, an operations engineer in the Sacramento District of the Corps of Engineers and lastly as administrative support in a one evening a week readiness training unit. In total I completed nearly 30 years of active and reserve military service for retirement.

What did I do next? I enrolled in the non-resident the US Army Command and General Staff College and the Certified Financing Planner course. I created the BeWise Financial Planning Services Corporation. Unfortunately, this venture was short lived due to the severe downturn in the

economy causing little need for these services. Moving to northern California I started Fossil Works, Incorporated that manufactured a pot hole repair mixture available in bags and bulk deliveries. Then time was ripe for me to get politically involved with the county's taxpayers group founded in response to the 1976 California Prop 13 litigation. I wrote numerous tax abuse articles for their quarterly tabloid and set up and maintained their web site.

In retirement my move was to the warmer weather of southern Nevada. I returned to my political interests. I became editor of the weekly 4 page tabloid, "BC Free," focusing on the city's spending. I was a petitioner for 4 ballot questions in 2006 and again 4 ballot questions in 2010. Each time the City of Boulder City filed lawsuits against us to STOP the residents from voting on them. We represented ourselves/no attorney lost the 2006 litigation that was argued in the Nevada Supreme Court. However, the learning curve applied and we with our attorney won all the 2010 ballot questions litigation heard in the Nevada Supreme Court to include a small settlement for each of us.

I have retired from my political activities. I am returning to my first interest, now an avocation, in our local Maine history. As a 5th generation descendent, I am documenting our family's oral stories told to me by my father and editing handed down personal records. I am donating to local museum's our collection of heirlooms from Maine's tanning and timber industry for future generations to experience and enjoy.

Maine Baked Beans

Ingredients:

2 pounds dry beans
1 onion
1/2 pound salt pork, cut up
1/4 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup molasses
1/2 teaspoon pepper
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons dry mustard

Directions:

Soak beans overnight: drain water off. Put in bean pot with enough water to cover beans. Add remaining ingredients, stirring pot. Bake at 250 degrees for about 8 hours. Check beans periodically to make sure they do not need water. If water is needed, add enough boiling water to cover beans again. You may also need a little more molasses at this point. Too much molasses will cause the beans to be hard and too sweet.



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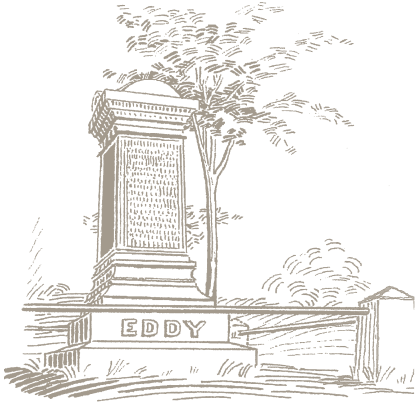
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The Sweetest Words

“Nana, will you play with me?
We can play tractors on the rug,
And if you’ll sit and play with me,
I’ll give you a great big hug!”

“Yes, yes, and yes again,”
My answer will always be
To the loveliest words I’ve ever heard,
“Nana, will you play with me?”



The little face, the sweet little smile,
The gleam in those large blue eyes;
The look that says, “If you can’t play,
Then I will surely have to cry.”

“We can play motorcycles or racing cars.
We can go chase a bumble bee.
We can pick dandelions on the lawn.
So, Nana, will you play with me?”

Oh, I know there will soon come a day
When playing with me won’t be much fun.
I’ll be replaced with older friends
Who can play ball outside in the summer sun,

But I’ll always remember the fun we had—
The laughter of that little voice—
And I wouldn’t trade it all for anything
If ever I were given a choice!



Just because Nanas change and grow old,
And little boys become young men,
Doesn’t mean that Nanas will ever forget
About wanting to go out and play again.

And as the years go passing by,
I think that there shall never be
Sweeter words that fall on my ears
Then, “Nana, will you play with me?”

— Pam Dorr