

Chapter Eleven: A New Family and New Duty-Stations

New London to Honolulu to Waterloo to a New Life



May, 1955: Lamoureux Family



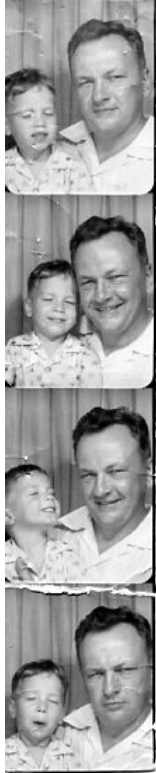
Easter 1955

By May, 1955 we settled into our new family configuration, ready for East Coast Navy duty. But come January, 1956 life got exotic, exciting and somewhat surprise-filled. Truth be told, the surprise was mostly for Evangeline and Edward as I'd suspected—all along—the sort of duty my next assignment would bring. The only things I didn't know were the exact location and timelines for my next transfer and deployment.

I received transfer orders to Pearl Harbor in Honolulu, Hawaii and assignment on a fully converted GUPPY-class submarine—the *USS Pickerel (SS524)*. The transfer under the control of the Pacific Fleet at Mare Island off the San Francisco coast.

Evangeline packed up our east coast home in late February so that we could take our 2 ½ year-old son Eddie—and our new car—west for passage aboard a Matson Lines ship to Hawaii from San Francisco. After our cross-country drive, embarking on our voyage to Hawaii was unexpectedly interrupted.

Just before the voyage I received word from Long Beach that my brother-in-law—Arkie Hauck—passed away on March 8, 1956. My oldest sister, Lucille, lived in Long Beach most of her married adult life and hosted me many times over the years as my duty assignments went



through naval stations in Long Beach and San Diego. I left Evangeline and Edward in San Francisco at the home of long-time Bechtel family friends from North Dakota, Art and Catherine Timboe, in their new home at 354 Cresta Vista Drive and motored to and from Long Beach for services. It's a good thing we had replaced that old Chevy with a newer model (sans floorboard hole) and brought it along for the trip to Hawaii! On my return to San Francisco we took the next Matson Lines ship west to Honolulu and my partially "secret" adventure. Quickly after our arrival we were taken to a small married/family housing unit on the base at 866 Morrell Drive.

Evangeline's birthday gift from Eddie & Roger, Honolulu Hawaii, June 13, 1956

My service on the *Pickrel* divided our family. It appeared that Evangeline and our new son would spend most of their time in Hawaii without my company. *WESTPAC* wasn't deeply classified but was still a surveillance mission requiring long-term deployment and virtual "radio-silence."



Chief and son in Hawaii, 1956

The Navy made it clear that we were headed for Japan: wives were encouraged to prepare and send shopping lists via the military mail system. I sent Evangeline a shipment of bone china in packages from Japan; the "tell" was the Japanese postage and lack of return address. Clearly this was not a classified mission. Even though the duty and the spying were less-than-secret, no direct communication to families or friends was allowed from the boat or the men. The only messages "from the sailors" consisted of a generic-monthly-Defense-Department-telegram verifying that we were safe and that our voyage continued. Families were encouraged to send

notes to us “in the blind” not being sure that the mail got through but with Navy department assurance that we appreciated receiving family news.

Although the mission was not strictly a classified secret, the Navy took a number of steps to “muffle” their actions during *WESTPAC* surveillance missions. Families involved in the duty were prepared and moved in ways that gave the appearance of normalcy: The Navy moved all of our belongings (cars included) as though the Hawaii assignment was regular shore-duty for a standard length of time (two years). Travel to Hawaii was via standard civilian ocean liners and other non-military transports.

While Evangeline knew some things about the trip before we left I could not tell her the full story. Navy wives with lead-time and knowledge prior to arrival at Pearl Harbor would prepare differently than wives who were kept in the dark. We knew that the Japanese were keeping as close an eye on us as we were on them, so giving our wives and families too much information before the move risked security leaks. On the other hand, we both knew that the assignment to the *Pickrel*—a submarine with special equipment and capabilities—meant that I would be back under the sea for an extended period of time. My training in New London included trips to the sub base in Portsmouth New Hampshire—a location the Navy used for clandestine training. This aspect was well known among wives and immediate families. Evangeline was never any dummy: She believed what I told her but suspected more.

On November 21 of 1956 the *Pickrel* joined vessels tasked with “keeping an eye” on the Japanese as part of the decades-long mission to secure the Pacific. In the late 1950s a focus of that mission was ensuring that the vanquished Japanese maintained their WWII surrender

demilitarization commitments. My service on the boat found us at sea and away from Hawaii and family for four months (through March 15 of 1957).

Evangeline took full advantage of life in beautiful tropical Hawaii. Since she did not work while there she had lots of time on her hands and was surrounded by a large group of Navy wives with families of their own and in the same circumstances. Ed was 2 ½ when we moved and yet the family had hardly been together a full year. Hawaii offered the perfect setting for mother and son to bond via lots of fun and interesting activities.



On the Honolulu beach



First baseball bat & hat. Neither would be the last



Evangeline and son, Hawaii, 1956



Pensive in Paradise.



Ed's 3rd Birthday, Hawaii

My wife also leveraged a valuable “perk,” offered to families of men on extended *WESTPAC* voyages, during the time that I was away. Edward and his mother flew, “space available,” on a Navy transport airliner to San Diego, CA. They spent a month visiting with her parents, Cy and Ann Bechtel. Native North Dakotans, Cy and Ann moved to Chula Vista, California after Cyrus Edward retired as Chief of Police in Devils Lake, North Dakota. Inhabiting a small trailer near Oceanside, Cy took up work as a security guard at the local power plant and Anne continued her work in the beauty and personal care business. However, instead of hanging out a shingle for a hair salon, either at home or in town, Anne took up cosmetics sales as an agent for Merle Norman Cosmetics.



*Edward with Grandpa and
Grandma Bechtel, Chula
Vista, CA 1956*

Meanwhile, my time as Chief of the Engine room on the *Pickrel* proved to be the most personally and professionally satisfying assignment in my long career as a submariner. Good thing as the *Pickrel* served as my last sub duty: something I didn’t know then.



USS Pickrel (SS 524)

Administrative Remarks
4 August 1956
USS Pickerel (SS524)

“USS PICKEREL (SS524) was adjudged the outstanding ship in Submarine Squadron SEVEN in the Intratype Competition of the Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet for the fiscal year 1956 and has been awarded the “E” for overall excellence. Because the competition was extremely keen within the squadron special credit accrues to USS PICKEREL for being adjudged “OUTSTANDING”.

Roger *Maxime* [yes, the Navy *finally* started getting this right] LAMOUREUX, ENC (SS), 321 07 08, USN for your personal contribution to the winning of this award by the excellent performance of your duties, I hereby commend you.”

P.L. LACY, Jr., CDR, USN, Commanding Officer

C.F. WAHL, LT, USN, EXECUTIVE OFFICER
23 JAN 1957: COMMENDATORY MAST

“18 NOV 56: Appeared this date at the Gateway to the FAR EAST, the same being the Realm of the great and powerful Golden Dragon, and, by crossing over from east to west the 180th Meridian reckoned from Greenwich, did enter into the ancient, honored, and Royal order of the Golden Dragon and did render unto the Golden Dragon the traditional tribute exacted from all initiates; to wit, one full day from his life.



The Navy’s fleet was quickly moving toward nuclear-power and away from the diesel engines that I knew so well. I was approaching my 40th birthday and although I was an effective life-long learner, the curve for coming up-to-speed on nuclear powered engines was probably best left to men half my age. That issue was made moot by my deteriorating physical condition: Fourteen years in and out of submarines, up and down from top side to submerged, left me with badly shattered ear drums. As the Navy’s submarines evolved and improved, the depth of their dives, the length of time spent under water, and the speed with which they surfaced, caused me intense, sometimes excruciating, pain. It would take almost twenty years after leaving sub

service before my ear canals healed thoroughly enough to drive down a mountain without stopping every fifteen-to-twenty-minutes to equalize the pressure and clear my ears; I did not travel in an airplane for decades after retirement. My request to train for and serve on nuclear submarines was denied. Life after the *Pickrel* would not feature submarine service.

The *Pickrel* returned to Pearl Harbor on March 16, 1957. By May 1957, I had adjusted to the news that I would no longer be able to serve in subs. I requested stateside recruiting duty as close to “home” as I could get: I wanted to retire in Iowa.



*Return to Pearl Harbor
March 16, 1957*

“The reason for requesting the above area is that I have completed over 20 years in the ‘Best Navy in the World’ and when I transfer to Fleet Reserve upon completion of tour of recruiting duty, I expect to make my residence in the above area.”



*Happy Lamoureux Family, headed
stateside on Leilani spring 1957.*



S.S. Leilani at dock.

My request was granted and I was assigned to the recruiting station at Waterloo, Iowa. By August 1957, with Evangeline and Edward in tow, I headed for a return to Iowa and duty as a Navy recruiter, this time in the Federal Building at 419 Commercial in Downtown Waterloo.

Our home was only a few miles away from my sister Bertha, her husband Walter Ceilley, and four of their five off-spring: Ed and Bernie, both married with families in Cedar Falls, and Carol and Roger, both still living at home. Oldest son Richard was married and living in Texas. Initially, we lived with the Ceilleys in Cedar Falls.



*Baltimore and
West 5th St.
Waterloo, Iowa*



Southeast corner, Baltimore and West 5th St. Waterloo Iowa. Now a vacant lot; the Lamoureux family rented a small house at 1222 West 5th St. Hard to believe that a house used to sit in that very small footprint. Ed says that the Dairy Queen directly across the street on the Northeast corner seemed (to his younger self) as though it was blocks away

Eventually we moved to a rented a house at 1222 W. 5th St. in Waterloo. The house was less than ½ mile south-west of Sacred Heart Church and School, straight down W. 5th, where Eddie attended kindergarten and 1st grade, with my recruiting office ½ mile further down W. 5th.

Life in Waterloo seemed, generally, pretty grand. First and foremost, we were almost always together as a family: My recruiting duty seldom took me further than a couple hours away and always found me at home in time for nightly dinner.

Navy Assigns New Recruiter to Waterloo

Chief Engineman **Roger M. Lamoureux** Wednesday joined the staff of the Waterloo Navy recruiting station as a recruiter.

A veteran of 21 years' service in the Navy, ENC, Lamoureux came to Waterloo from Pearl Harbor, where he was stationed with a submarine, the USS Pickrel.



During World War II he served Lamoureux on the USS Whale, a submarine, in the Pacific for three years. The majority of his duty has been on submarines, although he has also served as a recruiter in Omaha.

The new recruiter is a native of Akron, Ia. He is married to the former Evangeline Bechtel of Keokuk. They have a son, Edward Lee, 4, and are now living at 1109 Tremont, Cedar Falls.

*Waterloo Daily
Courier
October 9, 1957*

Second, in addition to being less than eight miles southeast of the Ceilleys' home in Cedar Falls, Waterloo is only 175 miles northwest of Evangeline's sister Veronica O'Brien and family in Keokuk, Iowa.

After we moved into our house, we visited the Ceilleys at least once a week, ostensibly so I could see Bertha and her family. However, it seemed like our primary purpose was so Eddie could watch *Wagon Train* and *Rawhide*, his favorite cowboy TV shows, with his uncle Walt.



*At home in Waterloo,
Iowa 1957*

The Burlington Northern train station in Waterloo served as the perfect platform for Evangeline and Eddie to take numerous trips south to Fort Madison, where Veronica and/or Jim provided transport to Keokuk for a visit with the O'Briens.

The house in Waterloo provided an almost perfect location for our young family. We had friendly neighbors with young families for Eddie to play with and for Evangeline to spend time with during the day. There were small businesses nearby, including a dentist's office (Eddie ended up needing thirteen fillings in his "baby teeth"), a florist (that proved a convenient place for Eddie's "emergency pit stops" during his walks home from school), a barber shop where we both got our hair cut, a shoe repair shop, and a Dairy Queen, all within ¾ of a mile from the house.



*Ed with favorite
male cousin, Patrick
Michael O'Brien, in
Keokuk in 1957.
Grandma Anne, on
a visit to the
Midwest, sits in the
background*

Evangeline engaged in many activities that were typical of white, middle-class, Midwestern, city-dwelling housewives in the late 1950s. She kept her sewing skills sharp with dresses and general clothing repairs. There were many fruit and vegetable canning projects (especially lingonberries and rhubarb). Clothes were washed in an electric machine, with hand-driven ringer, in the basement. Clothes were hung to dry on a line outside until winter's freeze forced the drying into the basement. While she ironed and smoked, watching soap operas on the black and white television in the living room, she introduced Eddie to self-sufficiency with steam-iron lessons on my white handkerchiefs.

Sacred Heart Church and School were hardly five blocks from home and directly on the route of my short drive to work. I took the family car to work each day so I'd drop Eddie at school in the morning. All of the children, K-8, attended daily mass before lunch. Some days, Evangeline attended that mass; other days she met our son after the service was over. The kindergarten children went home before lunch; children in grades 1-8 went to a short recess on the schoolyard (weather permitting) between church and lunch. Early in his kindergarten's fall term, Evangeline walked with Eddie from school after a quick stop at the little boys' room in the gym before the hike home.

After a couple of weeks, both mother and son grew confident in our youngster's ability to make his way home on his own. Lunch and a nap awaited. More importantly (to our young son), later in the day Marshall J., the most popular daytime children's television celebrity in Iowa, hosted his show every afternoon. That was followed by Edward's favorite: the Mickey Mouse Club television program. Eddie adored both



*Grandma Anne and
Dick Bechtel visit
Waterloo 1957*



Who cares that the Hawaiian-looking shirt doesn't go well with the side arm & holster? Eddie rode hard through the Waterloo years!

programs and would do almost anything to be sure that he did not miss them. Apparently, he was not the only excited viewer. Marshal J. (a regional media personality named Jay Alexander) was an Iowa phenom during the hay-days of the television cowboy-show era. The Marshall J. program attracted hundreds of thousands of young viewers and, of course, Disney's Mickey Mouse Club regularly drew between forty-eight (1955) and twenty-two (1958) million daily viewers. The road from Sacred Heart was short and straight and was not a deterrent to our young son's viewing habits.

School at Sacred Heart produced a traumatic series of events that would much later prove significant in Eddie's life. In his early days this aspect was simply inconvenient and embarrassing. In later life . . . well, that's a story he'll have to tell.

As children are apt to do at recess in areas with snow during the winter, snowball fights were the most popular schoolyard activity for months at a time. Bloody noses often ensued. Young Eddie thought nothing of the injuries or the blood when they happened.

However, once reaching 1st grade, the daily drill changed as half-days turned into full days; Mass followed recess, before lunch. More than once, witnessing a bloody nose on the playground and then kneeling at church on an empty stomach induced Eddie into a fainting spell. As if passing out in church wasn't bad enough, wet pants usually went along with the fainting.

Later, Eddie discovered that the combination of kneeling (or merely being in church) and an empty stomach were not really crucial parts in the volatile mix: The rest of his natural life, the sight of humans bleeding (Eddie or others, no matter) presented the potential for passing out.

Eventually, even extracting blood for tests, the sight of a vial of blood from those tests, or the “BAM” of a strong sting from a shot given with a needle, were enough to induce brief unconsciousness. These were thought trivial events; later they proved to be less-than -trivial.

Over the 1959 summer, we drove to Southern California for a Bechtel family reunion at Cy and Anne’s in Chula Vista/Oceanside. The trip proved to be the first of many summer trips between the Midwest and West Coast.



At the reunion, Cy and Anne hosted meals and get-togethers for all of their children and many of the grandchildren. Veronica arrived, from

Bechtel Family Reunion, Chula Vista CA, summer 1959. Back Row l to r: Joe, Dick, Jack, Don, Jerry. Front Row: Veronica, Anne, Cyrus, Evangeline

Keokuk, with Maureen and Patrick in tow while Jack and Ellen brought Donna Lee from Wisconsin. West Coast inhabitants Joe, Jerry, and Don were joined by wives and many children. Bachelor Dick arrived with the last female sweetheart that he would have, but at the time they were a happy couple apparently on the way to the altar in the not-too-distant future (that wedding never happened).

The gathering also included Eddie’s first attendance at a major sports event. Eddie and I headed, with Don Bechtel and his two oldest boys, the twins Brian and Bradley, to the L.A. Coliseum to witness a game between the Dodgers and the S.F. Giants. That game contributed mightily to Eddie’s life-long hatred of the Dodgers. In the first place, reflective of my early years in northwest Iowa, I had developed an affinity for Milwaukee’s Braves. Henry Aaron, Lew Burdette, Warren Spahn, and Eddie Mathews were Braves and among the very best players in the

Majors. Since the Braves and the Dodgers were opponents in the National League, I was not about to cheer for the “Bums” who were previously located in Brooklyn. The game at the Coliseum, combined with my preference, cemented Eddie’s bias against the men with the blue uniforms sporting the oversized D.

Late in the game, Dodger pitcher Johnny Podres struck out Giants star Willie Mays with the bases loaded. Eddie did not approve as Mr. Mays was the six-year-olds’ favorite player. A Dodger win provided extra impetus for our return to Iowa, although the family reunion was a great success enjoyed by all.

Right before arriving in Iowa, I was awarded a bronze star recognizing my reception of a fifth Good Conduct medal. And apparently, the recruiting office benefitted from my experience and performance. Indeed, by 1960, I was promoted to Senior Chief Engineman.



Associated Press.
TRADITION of the Sullivan family in U. S. navy history is being carried on with the enlistment of James T. Sullivan, 17, at Waterloo. He is the son of one of the famed 5 Sullivan brothers who died in the Pacific in 1942. Jim, son of Albert Sullivan, received instructions from Recruiter Roger Lamoureux Wednesday.

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*Enlisted Evaluation Report
12-JAN-60*

“LAMOUREUX is an outstanding Chief Petty Officer, Recruiter and Petty Officer in Charge of a Branch Recruiting Station. He is very capable and is a keen thinking man. In addition to the excellent record of service he has demonstrated through his recruiting ability, his management ability, and his public relations ability that he is well qualified for promotion and he is recommended.”

Unfortunately, our time in Waterloo was troubled: By 1960 the difficulties overwhelmed everyday life and called for dramatic changes. Eddie suffered through two years of near constant visits to the local dentist; the fact that the office was just a block or two from the house did little to salve the pain of thirteen filings in overly soft and cavity-prone baby teeth. But that wasn't the most serious issue.

Worse, he developed a propensity for tonsillitis. Repeated infections-after-long-illnesses prompted many trips to doctors and missed school days. By winter 1959-60, Eddie's 1st grade year at Sacred Heart, aggressive action was clearly indicated. Navy doctors provided our health care and in those days Navy doctors avoided surgeries on dependent children. The docs' primary responsibilities were treating us sailors and our dependent wives. The surgical procedure itself was not so much the issue as was the anesthesia protocol for small, young children: The docs wanted to avoid elective surgeries when young dependents were involved.

The Navy doctor assigned to Eddie's case counseled us with the following:

“Chief . . . Mrs. Lamoureux . . . You have two choices with regard to young Edward and his tonsils. First you can just wait this out. Let him be sick; tonsillitis is not going to kill him. He'll miss a lot of school but we'll treat him the best we can and he's mostly only sick in the winter. He'll probably grow out of this. The other choice is that you can move away from Midwest winters. We are not going to do surgery to remove his tonsils at this time or in the foreseeable future.”

Although challenged at first, I eventually saw what looked like an easy solution. Our precious, adopted, family cargo was not going to miss a lot of school and be threatened by near constant illness four-to-six months out of the year until he got to be who knows how old. We

always told Eddie the he was “special” because other parents got what God gave them whereas we picked our son purposely.

As a result, I put in for a transfer to Southern California, fully expecting Navy approval. Never in my twenty-three years of service had the Navy denied one of my geographic transfer requests. However, much to my surprise, I would not leave the Navy with a perfect, winning, record in that regard. My transfer request was denied.

Needless to say, I was more than a little miffed; chagrined might capture it; pretty pissed-off is probably about right. Generally, I thought “to heck with this.” I realized that I qualified for the Navy’s new minimum retirement age. So, without as much as a second thought, I returned the shock and favor to the Navy; I retired, effective immediately. Honestly, the Navy did not see that coming.

I had been preparing for eventual retirement by taking classes, passing tests, and earning a Real Estate sales license in the state of Iowa. Being native-born and having spent the last 2 ½ years recruiting throughout the four-hour perimeter surrounding Waterloo/Cedar Falls, I felt confident in my ability to sell real estate in my home state. Now we would have to see if that acumen transferred to a new home in Long Beach.



I moved the family to the Southern California climate that offered a temporary cure for Eddie’s throat ailments. “California here we come.” Although, I’d often visited my sister, Lucille, and Southern California, between duty assignments, taken classes for a few weeks in

San Diego, and Evangeline had lived in Los Angeles for two years during the war, moving there was not exactly heading “right back where we started from.”

In 1960, oft-visited eldest sister Lucille (Lamoureux) Hauck lived alone in the upstairs unit of the duplex, at 215A Termino in Belmont Shore, that she and Arkie had purchased before his untimely death. The apartment featured two unused bedrooms and Lucille extended an invitation for us to live with her while I got my real estate feet on the ground and we found a home of our own. There Eddie entered the 2nd grade at St. Matthew’s, the Catholic school in the local parish.

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