

Chapter Nine: Roger Lamoureux Reporting for Duty

You probably wouldn't like doing what I loved doing—

With roots stretching back to 1668, when Louis Lamoureux of Normandy, France married Francoise Boivin in Chambly, Boucherville, Quebec, the Lamoureux family was said to be one of the first two French-Canadian immigrant clans to settle in and around Salix, Iowa. Salix, a small farming community sits sixteen miles south of Sioux City, in the far northwest corner of Iowa.

By 1868, when the Lamoureux and LaCroix families relocated there from Canada, Woodbury County was already divided into townships and the claims of settlers and squatters, alike, were mostly settled. By the 1910 census, my father Arthur, mother Victoria Lamoureux, and the first seven of their twelve children, were farming land belonging to Pierre LaCroix, in Salix of Liberty township.



In 1917, I joined six of the first seven siblings—Lucille, Bertha, Leo, Priscilla, Georgette, Corinne, Renault (Reno), Rachel, and Paul on the farm. The family's fourth child, third daughter Lauretta died, scalded in a kitchen accident at the age of seven. The last Lamoureux baby, Bernadette, joined the farm life in 1919. Given that I was next-to-the-youngest child, I was only two weeks from my fifth birthday when my siblings

*The three oldest Lamoureux children circa 1910 (L. to R.):
Lucille, Leo, Bertha* started to marry and leave the farm.



*The four youngest Lamoureux children
circa 1921 (L. to R.):
Bernadette, Reno, Roger, Paul*



Site of the Lamoureux Akron Farm, circa 2016 [left] and Farmhouse, circa 2014 [right]

In early 1925, our large family left the Salix farm and headed forty-four miles north to a farm just outside of Akron, Iowa. While in Akron, I had some success as a member of the Akron High School football team, especially in 1934. Earlier, I suffered from attention and expectations I couldn't control. I not only followed three hearty brothers in school, but in those days the boys of the Akron gridiron played at "Lamoureux Field" due to a series of donations made by our uncle Ed Lamoureux.

Attention and expectations aside, I barely made the team as a first-year player and was the last boy listed on the 1933 roster. However, by 1934 I earned an important role as a starting wide-out on the varsity squad:

“AKRON FOOTBALL SQUAD DRILLS FOR SEASON OPENER
Will Meet the Fast Sheldon Eleven Here Friday Afternoon, Sept. 21.”
The Akron Register Guard, page 1. Thursday September 13, 1934.

“Practice during the present week has been made up mostly of conditioning, fundamentals and working out difficulties in the offensive work of the team. Graduation last spring robbed the team of a pair of ends and one regular tackle, and it is the job of filling these gaps that is causing the most difficulty. To augment one of the vacancies at the end positions Bob Tillotson, halfback last year, has been shifted to one of the wing positions. Roger Lamoureux, a newcomer this season, has been getting the call on the other extremity of the line. This combination shows promise of developing into an efficient pair of ends and has helped to iron out the difficulties in these positions.”

Unfortunately, my football prominence was only allowed to last one full season. Leo and Reno had both joined the Army; Lucille, Bertha, Pricilla, Georgette, Corinne, and Rachel all married and moved from the farm. Mom was often sick so Dad, Paul, and I were the only able hands left.

Lamoureux Farm, Akron Iowa, December 1, 1935

“Mère I really want to talk with you about something.”

“What is it Paul? You look very concerned.”

“I’m hoping you can talk with Père—it’s kinda’ serious. I don’t think that he understands how really important Roger’s senior year in high school is to him. For goodness sake Père forced him off the football team in the fall even though he was a star player as a junior. He really took that hard but he came home and worked his tail off on the farm anyway. You’ve always said that you wanted all of your children to graduate from high school. I don’t really understand why you’d let Père take him out of school. Can’t you talk with him so Roger can keep going to school and graduate in the spring?”

“Paul I’ve already talked to your Père. And he’s set on it and there’s nothing I can do.

These hard times have him worried. With you going off to the Navy real soon Roger's the only strong set of hands that we have left. Your Père says that if we have a real good year this next harvest then Roger can go back and finish school the next year."

"Ah Mère that's no good. Nobody wants to stay behind in school a year."

"Paul—son—that's the end of this. Your Père has decided."

"Well I don't think that'll be the end of it."

"And what do you mean by that young man"?

"Ah nuthin. I just don't think that'll be the end of it that's all."



The Akron Register Guard, Thursday February 20, 1936, page 1.

"DEATH SUMMONS MRS. A. LAMOUREUX

Sudden Passing a Shock to Relatives and Friends of Esteemed Woman"

"Mrs. Arthur Lamoureux, residing east of town, passed away in her sleep at about 5 o'clock this morning, February 20, 1936, in the home of her son-in-law and daughter Mr. and Mrs. James Redmond, in this city, her death being due to heart trouble and complications. Mrs. Lamoureux had been quite indisposed during the past month. She had planned a trip to Sioux City several days ago, but on account of the severity of the weather and irregular train service decided to stay with her daughter here for a short time. Her sudden and unexpected death came as a grievous shock to her family and many friends. Mrs. Lamoureux would have attained her 60th year the 7th of next March. She is survived by her husband and eleven children, one child having preceded her in death. The community extends its sincere sympathy to the bereaved relatives."

The next week, the February 27 *Register* featured a front-page article announcing the funeral services for my mother, our dear Victoria; services were delayed because it took more than a week to gather the large clan from as far as California. That same day, a note appeared about another of the Akron Lamoureux family:

The Akron Register Guard, Thursday February 27, 1936, page 1.

“Roger Lamoureux went to Des Moines Tuesday evening to take the examination for enlistment into the U. S. Navy.”

Brother Paul was right; my father taking me, first, out of football, and then out of my senior year of high school came with costs. The week after our mother’s death, I signed up to join Paul in the Navy. This forced father to “retire.” Seventeen-year-old Bernadette was the last Lamoureux with Arthur on the farm; there simply were not enough hands to maintain a working operation so my father moved into Sioux City to live with my sister Georgette and her family while Bernadette moved to Chicago.

My brother, Paul, entered the Navy on December 11, 1935; I followed July 14, 1936 and was sent to the same training station in San Diego, California where Paul had been, seven and one-half months before. My Navy entry was less-than-smooth. It would take years to correct the misspelling of my last name (LEMROEAUX) on my enlistment form; changing the typo of my middle name—as *Maxine* instead of Maxime—took twenty years and brought me a never-ending raft of teasing.

20395-17-43

United States Navy

ENLISTMENT of Lamoureux, Roger Maxine., # 321-07-08, \$ 21.00

Accepted for enlistment at Sioux City, Iowa. App. Sea.

Enlisted at U.S. Navy Recruiting Station, Des Moines, Iowa Date 14 July, 1936.

Transferred to U.S.N.T.S., San Diego, Calif.

Occupation Student. * Citizenship White U.S. Place of birth Salix, Iowa.

Date of birth 28 Jan. 1917. Home address Akron,

Plymouth Iowa. (Street and number) (Town)

Soon enough, we were stationed on the aircraft carrier *Saratoga* (CV3) under the command of then Captain W. F. Halsey, Jr. From October, 1936 through November, 1939, we served on that ship participating in training maneuvers designed to test naval war preparedness in the Pacific. Often, the exercises found Pacific forces wanting. After being “destroyed” a number

of times in exercises off the Panamanian coast, the *Saratoga* was able to successfully “attack” both San Francisco and Hawaii (in 1938).

On board the USS Saratoga, coastal waters east of Hawaii. April 1, 1938

“Engineman Lamoureux—report to the officer’s library at ten hundred hours.”



USS Saratoga (CV3), June 6, 1935

“Yes sir. May I inquire Sir?”

“The Captain has called a number of men together sailor; do not be late.”

“Yes Sir. Thank you Chief.

“Attention!”

“Gentlemen you may be seated. The Captain has news for you. Captain Halsey, Sir.”

“Thank you Lieutenant. At ease men—please be seated. Men the ten of you have been chosen based on recommendations from your Executive Officer and Chiefs after careful consideration by and myself and the officers at my leadership table. As you know these are troubled times; in many parts of the world US forces are engaged as though at war. The Navy is and will always be first at preparedness in peace but especially in wartime. To that end we are working hard to train our very best sailors for leadership positions. You’ve been carefully selected for an honor that far exceeds the expectations of most of the able and worthy men serving on this elite ship. You are being recommended for a commission to the Officer’s corps by way of our finest training ground: the Naval Academy at Annapolis. We will transfer you while we here at Pearl Harbor. Hopefully, in

four short years you will be back at sea leading our sailors and ships in defense of our great nation. It's my pleasure to recommend you for this honor and I am sure that each and every one of you will fulfill the potential you've demonstrated in service on the Saratoga. The Lieutenant will answer any questions that you might have; this information comes to you suddenly and I am sure that you'll want to know the details. I will see you off when the arrangements are in place and you leave the ship. That is all gentlemen."

"Attention!"

"As you were men; you may be seated. So, there you have it. You are headed stateside to the best damn college in the country on the fast-track to the Officer corps. Before you know it you might be standing next to a Captain as his second-in-command. Please see my attaché—Ensign James here—for appointments to discuss any details. We'll spend all the time with you that you need. I'll be putting these orders through before the day is out. We expect to hear back about these recommendations and appointments quickly. You should be headed to Pearl and then stateside within the week. The Saratoga is due to return to patrol missions soon; we will be ready to get back underway before the 12th of the month. That's it gentlemen. Back to your duty stations."

"Excuse me Sir. Roger Lamoureux Sir."

"Lamoureux, you heard me ask that you set up an appointment?"

"Yes Sir I did. But I don't think one will be necessary Sir. If I could have just a moment of your time I think that we can clear this up really fast."

"Alright mister. What's on your mind?"

"I think there has been a mistake Sir. I think someone may have given you the wrong

name or sent the wrong person to you. With all due respect Sir I don't believe that I belong here."

"Engineman Lamoureux. As the Captain told you, the men here today were selected in numerous discussions by the executive team of this ship. Getting the wrong guy is not a mistake that we are likely to make. We chose you because you've shown excellent leadership potential and a sharp mind. We think you'll make an outstanding officer."

"That's wonderful to hear Sir. Thank you Sir. But Annapolis is as you say Sir one of the best colleges in the country."

"Yes it is sailor."

"Lieutenant I never graduated from high school. My father took me and my brother out of school to work on the farm. I didn't even go to school during my senior year."

"We know that Lamoureux. This is one of the things that we will discuss when we meet during your appointment. In your case the effort will take five years instead of the usual four. You'll have to go through and pass a high school equivalency program before you can enter the Academy. We are aware of that sailor and arrangements are being made."

"As great as that sounds Sir—do I have a choice Sir? Can I decline? The Captain said it was a recommendation rather than an order. I'd never refuse an order Sir. But if this is a recommendation I can turn it down can't I Sir?"

"Lamoureux, I cannot imagine a single reason under the sun why any enlisted man would turn down this opportunity. But to answer your question—yes— you can turn it down. Honestly sailor what could possibly cause you to say this?"

"Well first Sir my brother Paul is here with me aboard the Saratoga. We very much enjoy

serving together. I'd hate to leave him. And besides he's probably smarter than I am; he's the one who should go to college."

"We considered that factor Lamoureux. We found that your brother's work is unquestionably of the highest order and that he has a strong character and a sharp mind. However he prefers working alone to working in groups. He gets along with everyone just fine but he scores low on leadership tasks and tests. He's not officer material at this point in his career. He might be someday but not right now. We have good reasons for selecting you rather than your brother."

"Sir I don't want to argue with you. But I don't think that I'm smart enough for Annapolis. Heck before I joined the Navy the furthest I'd been from the farm was Sioux City; that's about 30 miles Sir. College and officer training? Honestly Sir if I really do have a choice in this I think that I'd provide better service to my country by going to war if it comes than by risking failure in a classroom that I'm not really prepared for. I appreciate your confidence in me Sir—and that of the other officers—especially the Captain of course. But with all due respect Sir I think I need to ask you to select another sailor for this opportunity. I just don't think that it's for me."

"I'll take this up with the Captain sailor. I appreciate your honesty, though I can't say that I'm happy with your judgment in this matter. Still we'll need good men with us at war if we go. I'd be proud to have you even if I disagree with your decision to pass on this opportunity. I will check with you in a couple of hours to see if you've changed your mind. You should have a chat with your brother; perhaps say a prayer or two for guidance. Give it some hard thought. If this is what you decide I'll recommend that the

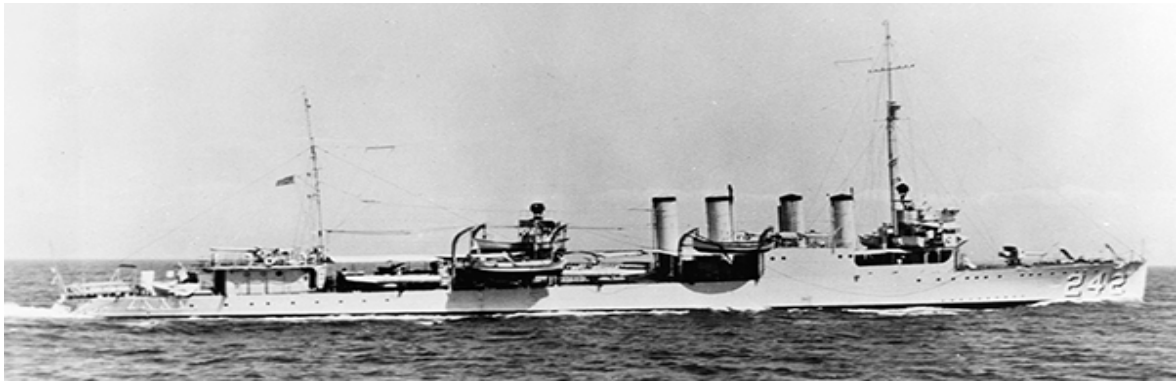
Captain and the Navy accept it without prejudice. But I hope that you change your mind.

If so I'll put the recommendation through without mentioning this conversation.

"Thank you Sir. I appreciate that Sir."

"Dismissed Sailor."

Paul and I stayed on the Saratoga and I remained in the enlisted ranks. In late 1939, we transferred to the USS King (DD 242), a destroyer patrolling the Pacific off the California coast, San Diego to Alaska, through early 1943.



USS King (DD 242) circa 1930

In fall 1942, our Navy careers were forever changed. Late January and early February, 1943, we both returned to Iowa for a quick visit at home, then reported for training at the submarine base in New London, Connecticut. By July, I was at Mare Island just off the coast at San Francisco continuing my training on submarines and preparing for duty in and under the Pacific Ocean; Paul was not.



*Leo, Arthur, Roger Lamoureux.
Varina, Iowa, circa 1942-43*

US Navy Submarine Base, New London, CT, June 14, 1943

“Paul. Hey Paul. Paul!”

“Jeez Rog can’t you see that I’m trying to get some sleep here? We’ve been training pretty hard lately. Come on brother dear. Take a powder and let me catch those sheep I’ve been counting.”

“We got it Paul we got it!”

“Sorry you lost me. We got what?”

“We got an assignment on a sub in the Pacific brudder Paul. We are going onto the *Whale* in the submarine service to fight the Japanese in the Pacific! She’s a brand- new boat—hardly more than a year old—and they’ve already been on two successful war missions. It’s just what we asked for and I’ve got my transfer letter right here! You’d better go ask the Teletype operator if you can pick yours up!”

“Ah I already got my letter Rog.”

“You what? You got your letter and you didn’t tell me about it? Since when is my brother keeping secrets from me?”

“Well you see Rog I got to thinking about it”

“First mistake—*big mistake*—you thinking!”

“Alright, lay off. See there was just one thing about this transfer that well I didn’t really want to tell you. Heck I didn’t really want to tell anyone. I mean I just found out myself since we’ve been here in training.”

“Found out what Paul?”

“I can’t stay in the sub service. I’ve discovered that I just can’t be closed in all the time like that. It seems like I have a mild case of claustrophobia. I’m ok when we go out for a short training run; I can manage that. But the thought of being out under the water for days or weeks or months without being able to stretch my legs on dry land. I just don’t think that I can do that. In fact I know I can’t. So I told them that I need an assignment to a ship that travels on the top of the water instead of below it.”

“*Oh brother . . .* I sure didn’t expect that. I thought that you liked the subs.”

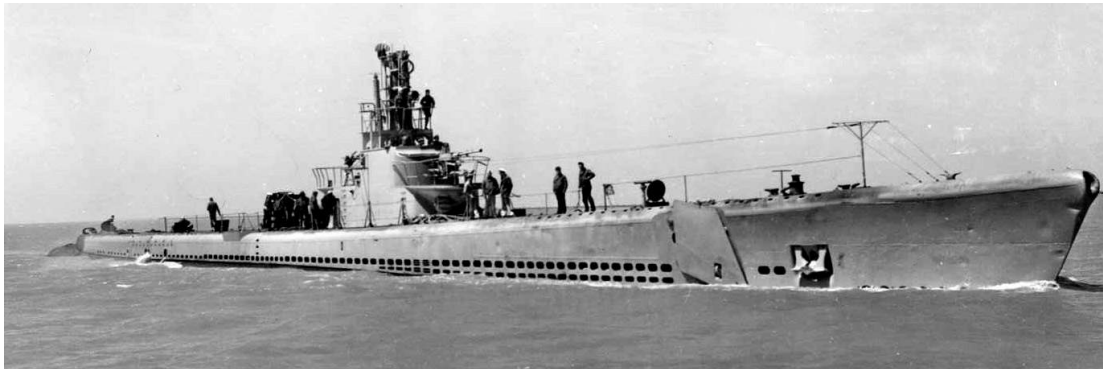
“Darn it that’s the thing Rog I *do* like the subs. I think they are just wonderful. I’ve really enjoyed the training and I’m thrilled that you got the assignment that you want. I just know that I can’t be in a sub as long as I’d have to be. Hell I just signed up for a new hitch so it’s not like I’ll be going home and out of the war or anything. I’ll be in the Pacific right there with you. We’ll end up in lots of the same ports. Who knows maybe I’ll even get to service or refuel your sardine can someday.”

“I don’t know what to say Paul. You know that I’m going to miss you—a lot. What if we never see each other again? I’d like to stay with you but I really want to serve on submarines.

“I know Rog. I will miss you too. God willing we’ll both get out of this thing ok and pretty soon we’ll be riding tractors and herding cattle on farms of our own back home. In the mean-time we’re both going to get to do what we’re good at. And if you ask me I’ll bet that you’ll be the best damned man in the engine room on the *USS Whale*.”

USS Whale, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, 9th war patrol, off the coast of the Philippines and Formosa, August-October, 1944

“Mac McDoogal! Darn it sailor! We do not have a lot of time to finish this game, I’ve gotta’ get back to the engine room before the Pacific Ocean dries up. Count your hand!”



USS Whale (SS-239) 1945

“15-2, 15-4 and the rest don’t score. Crap. Not very good.”

“15-2, 15-4, 15-6, 15-8, and 6 is 14. Swish swish.”

“Ataboy Frenchy; angles and dangles, every hand”!

“Does he always win?”

“Nah not always. But most of the time yeah he does.”

“Sorry Frenchy. I was just thinking about how close that last depth charge sounded; kinda’ hoping that Jap ship gives up chasing us soon.”

“I get *so* tired of listening to you guys with ‘it was close’ and ‘how close was it?’ You know how this works. You put your two-bits here and you write down your guesses for the distance. Ya’ pay your money then takes yer chances.”

“Ok Frenchy. I put down two-bits says that the last one was one-hundred and-fifty yards

out. And I swear to the Good Lord above I'm making sure that dummy watching the sonar ain't in cahoots with you like those cards are"!

"Hey, hey! Do not take the Lord's name in vain. It is not his fault that the Jap chucking those charges over the side has a pretty good idea where we are down here. But don't forget that it might also be the Good Lord's doing that we are too deep for them to reach us. So thank Him when you get the chance and honor Him in the meantime. I have seven sisters



*Arthur and Victoria
seated; L-R, Lucille,
Bertha, Pricilla,
Georgette, Corrine,
Rachel, Bernadette.
Circa 1926*

praying for me at home and I'm pretty sure that none of those depth charges are going to sink us. Now I've got a street to finish here and then I'll get back down to the engine room. You deal and Big Mike will go check with the sonar-op to see who won the side-bet."

A couple hours after that cribbage game, and less than a week further into our 5th war patrol, *Whale* encountered the enemy, and trouble, at the same time. About one-hundred miles south of Iwojima Island we spotted a large Japanese ammunition transport ship, the *Naruto Maru*, and her escort, the destroyer *Asangi*. Just as we were ready to open fire on the ships, our forward gyro regulator failed forcing us to shift to manual operation of the gyro regulator. Once we'd re-established full control, we fired torpedoes and struck a direct hit on the *Naruto Maru*. The ship came to a full stop and began to sink. The *Asangi* had just begun lobbing depth charges at us when we hit the *Naruto Maru* with another torpedo. There were massive explosions on board as the ship's cargo, munitions for the *Asangi*, ignited. At that point, the *Asangi* stopped

firing at us and turned its attention to rescuing *Naruto Maru* survivors. Around 300 people were saved that day, while approximately 30 Japanese crewmen lost their lives.

Quarters, Lt. Comdr. Albert C. Burrows, Commanding Officer, USS Whale, Midway Island, February 4, 1944

“Roger Lamoureux reporting Sir!”

“At ease sailor. Engineman Lamoureux please come in and sit down.”

“Thank you Sir.”

“Lamoureux as you know the command of this ship is about to change. Next week Lt. Comdr. John B. Grady will take over as Captain of the Whale and I’ll be moving on.”

“We are all sorry to see you go Sir. It’s been an honor to serve under your command.”

“Thank you Lamoureux. I’ve never led a better group of men and I want to talk with you about that. Before I leave this command I am going to recommend you for a promotion to the Officer’s ranks. You have shown tremendous leadership ability through every mission. We got into more than a couple of very tight fixes out there over the last two runs and you and the men you work with served in ways that not only earned commendations but that more than likely saved our lives. I’m told that you are largely responsible for much of the coordinated action taken by the men of the engine room. You’ve demonstrated the extra dimensions of service that indicates officer material. I will see that my recommendation is effective before I leave the boat next week.”

“Permission to speak freely Sir.”

“Of course sailor you are at ease here. What’s on your mind?”

“With all due respect Sir I want you to know how much I trust your judgment and appreciate your decision. I am honored—really honored Sir. However I want to ask you to not put in that request.”

“Why on earth would you say such a thing Lamoureux?”

“Sir this duty is very difficult. You are more aware than any of us how dangerous our missions are. The men that I work with—the men and I—we get along great down there in the engine room. As new as this boat is it’s still hot and hard work down there. We do our work well together. I don’t have any trouble getting the men who work with me to do what we have to do. We work together—it’s not like they are following orders Sir. We just work well together. I don’t want rank to get in the way of that.”

“Well Lamoureux I can see that the recommendations I received for you were correct. You are clearly officer material. Roger this is probably not the best decision that you can make for your Navy career. But I have to tell you that I deeply respect your motivation on this and I understand your reasons and concerns. I’m proud of my men and I’m



Roger in the Pickerel (SS 524) engine room in 1956-57 while on West-Pac. Same class sub and engine room as the Whale during WWII, with updates.

particularly proud of the reasons you've given me although I can't say that I agree with your decision."

"Thank you Sir."

"However I am going to put you in for a promotion nevertheless. As Commanding Officer of the USS Whale I am directing that you be immediately issued a promotion to Chief Machinist's Mate. The paperwork and the stripes will take some time to come through, but you go back to your post and inform your mates that they should start calling you 'Chief.' I assume that promotion within the enlisted ranks strikes you as appropriate and won't separate you from the enlisted men you work with." "Yes Sir. I'm honored Sir. Thank you, Sir. It's been an honor serving with you."

"Dismissed. And best of luck to you Chief."

"*Whale* got underway on 24 August for her ninth patrol. Shortly before, Admiral Halsey had requested a sizable force of submarines to form a reconnaissance line between the western Carolines and the Philippines to act as offensive scouts during Operation 'Stalemate,' the invasion of the Palaus. This flotilla, nicknamed the 'Zoo,' consisted of nine submarines organized into three wolfpacks."

On the 27 September, *Whale* evaded a small patrol craft and the next day submerged for a periscope patrol 60 miles south of Formosa. On 29 September, she made rendezvous with *Seahorse*; received written instructions for conducting the remainder of the patrol; and set her course for a new station southwest of Formosa. The submarine arrived on station on 3 October and submerged some 60 miles north of Cape Borjeador, Luzon, and patrolled around Calayan and Dalupiri islands in the Babuyan group.

'Wilkins' Bears' searched the Luzon Strait on 6 October and found a convoy of at least nine ships. Using a high periscope, *Whale* could see two large tankers, a large tender, and two *Hibiki*-class destroyers patrolling ahead of the tanker. *Whale* fired six bow tube shots at the tanker; then submerged quickly to avoid detection. The escorts dropped 34 depth charges, none of which was uncomfortably close. Meanwhile, *Seahorse* verified the sinking of *Whale's* target,

Akane Maru, and sank a destroyer herself that was picking up survivors from the tanker.” (*Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, “Whale I—SS-239”)

Between October 17, 1944 and September 2, 1945 our allied forces made good on General MacArthur’s promised return. The Philippine Liberation Campaign drove the Japanese from the Philippine Islands before the end of the war and liberated POWs in the Philippines. Naval forces participating in the Philippine Liberation took part in transporting POWs from both



the Philippines and Japan at the war's close. My brother Paul earned the Philippine Liberation Ribbon as part of that force.

From January 1945 through April, 1946, I was stationed in New London, Ct., serving on submarines tasked with training submariners awaiting duty on newly constructed (or drastically refitted and updated) boats. These submarines patrolled along the eastern seaboard, from Maine to Florida. My duties were aboard the *USS R-18 (SS-95)* and the *USS R-5 (SS-82)*. Training was augmented by duty on a month's-long round trip to the Canal Zone aboard the *USS Sea Robin (SS-407)*. While in the Canal Zone on the *Sea Robin*, I transferred, as a Chief Motor Machinist's Mate, to the new Trench-class *USS Cutlass (SS 478)*, June of 1946.

For the next year and one-half, the *Cutlass* cruised the Caribbean Sea out of the Cristobal, Canal Zone Navy base. From August 2, 1946 to October 1947, we traveled down the coast of South America, around Cape Horn, and visited Valparaíso, Chile, before returning up the east coast of South America through the Straits of Magellan. The voyage include participation in traditional "Crossing the Line" rituals moving me from "pollywog" to "shellback" status. In October, 1947, while in the Canal Zone port, I transferred to the *USS Sea Cat (SS-399)*, serving through June, 1948.

1948 stands as a bellwether year in my life. The winds of change blew both good and ill.

Portsmouth, New Hampshire/Kittery, Maine Naval Shipyard, February 1, 1948

"Hello . . . yes I'm calling the home of R. L. Davidson in Keokuk Iowa. I want to speak with Mrs. Corinne Davidson. Yes yes I'll hold. Thank you. Corinne it's your baby brudder."

"Roger! How are you?"

“Oh I’m fine just fine. How are Dave and Timmy and the baby? Oh that’s great. Hey I’m coming to visit; I hope that’s ok with you. Oh good; I thought it would be. Well I’m being transferred out of the sub service for a while. No not permanently. I hope it won’t be too long. But with the war being over we need boats for different kinds of missions than the fleet was designed for. The Navy is building new submarines and modifying the ones that qualify for upgrades. They won’t need many crewmen until they get more boats into the water and out on operations. So I’m going to spend a couple of years on recruiting duty then go back on subs when they are ready. I’ve put in for the recruiting station in Sioux City but I won’t know if I’ll get it until I’m done with training. I’ll probably get sent to San Diego over the summer; that’s where our main recruiter’s school is. But I’ve got a month off now and a bunch of the Navy’s money in my pocket so I’m going to drive out to California and visit Lucille and Arkie. If I get to see them again later in the year all the better! I am leaving here tomorrow. I’ll stop in Chicago and see Pricilla and Joe and Bern and Fred then drive down to Keokuk. I should be there late Thursday or early Friday depending on whether I spend an extra night in Chicago. I’ll call again and let you know. I’ll stay a day or two then I’m going to drive through Sioux City and see dad, Georgette, Reno, Paul and Leo on the way to the coast. I’ll probably stop to see you on the way back east; depends on how big a hurry I’m in. But we can work that out later. Oh I know I can hardly wait to see you too. I’ll call when I get to the Windy City. In the meantime say a few prayers that the weather stays clear. Oh and you know, it sure would be nice if there’s a batch of soup made for me when I get there. Ha. Love you too. See you real soon.”

***Home of R.L. (Dave) and Corinne Davidson, 912 Franklin St. Keokuk, Iowa,
February 7, 1948***

“Roger—Roger did you get everything? Did you take the lunch bag that I packed and left for you by the front door?”

“Yes I’ve got it. Thanks a lot. I gotta tell you that dinner last night was just great. You shouldn’t have gone to all that trouble. Oh and you know the girl you got to show up was ok too!”

“Roger Lamoureux you devil you. Should I call Frances and tell her when you’ll be back in town?”

“Well we’ll see when I get back through. I might have to squeeze a little extra time into my return trip but I’ll cross that bridge when I get there. Gotta’ hit the road so I can make Varina before nightfall. Please thank Dave and Timmy for me, and give that darling baby Vicky a big hug. Don’t forget how much I love you sis.”

“God bless you boy. Drive safe and come back as soon as you can. Say ‘hi’ to all my brothers and sisters and their families. Oh, and tell Lucille and Arkie that we’ll try to get out to Long Beach see them as soon as we can manage it. Love you now. Bye bye.”

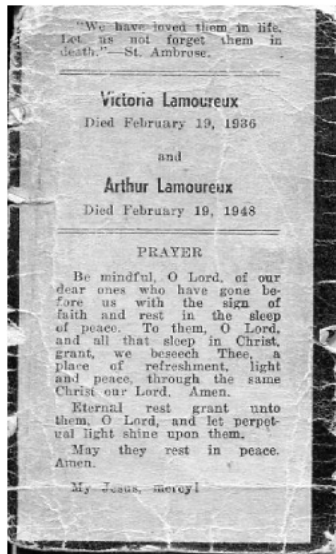
Apartment “C,” 500 8th Street, Sioux City, Iowa, January 19, 1948

“Yes hello, hello can you please connect me with the local police in Sioux City, Iowa. Yes I’ll hold. Hello? Yes I need to report a dead person. Yes I am sure that he’s dead. He’s my father. I’ve been gone all day; I had to go to the Navy office in Omaha. He was fine this morning when I left but when I came back I found him on the floor in his apartment. I

think he's been dead a few hours; he's pretty cold. I've covered him up. Yes I'll wait right here. It's 500 8th Street apartment "C" upstairs. I am Roger Lamoureux. Lam-our-eux; no! EUX. He's Arthur George Lamoureux. Yes. Same last name. Ok. I'll be here. Thank you very much."

***Home of Georgette and Merv Murray, 1219 9th Street, Sioux City, Iowa,
February 19, 1948***

"Hello I'm calling for the home of R. L. Davidson in Keokuk, Iowa. Mrs. Corinne Davidson please. Yes yes I'll hold. Thank you. Corinne this is Roger. I'm fine but I'm not



going to be able to go to the coast. Corinne—Corinne—Dad passed away today. I don't like having to tell you like this but I wanted you to know right away. I'm hoping that you'll call the Chicago families for us. Yes today. I found him about 6 o'clock this evening. I was down in Omaha working out the details for my recruiting duty—I'm eventually going to get Sioux Falls, South Dakota by the way. Yes that'll be great but not quite so much now. He seemed fine when I left him this morning. But when I got back to his apartment he was

on the floor and his body was pretty cold. I suspect that he must have been lying there most of the day. What? No no he wasn't at Georgette's house. He was staying in an apartment by himself. I found out about it when I came into town. I came here to Georgette's looking for him but the kids told me that he didn't live there anymore and they gave me his address. I was bunking here with him instead of at Georgette's because I hated to see him here alone. And damn it if he didn't go and die alone on top of that. Shit.

I know I know probably nothing I could have done even if I had been here. What? Ah I'll tell you a little more about that when you get here. You will come for the services won't you? Ok, we can talk about it then. You won't like it. I don't think anyone but the family in Sioux City knew about it. Leo and Paul and Alice didn't mention it when I went out to their farms to visit when I first arrived. Anyway I don't want to talk about it on the phone. We can discuss it after you get here. I think they are shooting for Tuesday or Wednesday for services; depends on whether Lucille is going to make the trip from Long Beach. We haven't been able to reach her yet. Georgette or Rachel will call them later and then decide about the services. You please give the Chicago people a heads-up and we'll call you back and let you know about the arrangements once we them set up. All right I've gotta' go. It's been a long day. I love you too. Ok. Bye now."

Home of R.L. (Dave) and Corinne Davidson, 912 Franklin St. Keokuk Iowa, February 25, 1948

"Yes, hello Bertie how are you today? Good good. Bertie would you please connect me with the O'Brien's residence? Yes—Veronica please although Jim will do if she's not there. Thanks anyway but I think I'll just hold and see what if she's home. Yes. Thanks. Hello Veronica, how are you dearie? Oh yes, we're fine. The trip to Sioux City for Dad's services was hard on all of us. You know he died on the very same day as our dear mother Victoria, February 19 back in '36. Very unexpected but exactly twelve years apart. Maybe mother got him into heaven as a gift from God on her memorial day. Anyway the reason that I called is that my brother Roger is going to stop here again on his way back to New Hampshire. When he came through a couple weeks ago he was planning to go from to

Long Beach to see our sister Lucille and her family in California. But Dad died while Rog was visiting in Sioux City on the way out to California and he has to be back on duty in New Hampshire by March 3 so that trip to the west coast will have to wait. He's bringing a Navy buddy with him on the trip—he had a friend in the Sioux City area who needs to get back to a base on the east coast too. We're having a little dinner party—nothing fancy. We'll serve drinks and food and then maybe play some cards. Roger dated that Frances Tallerico girl last time



*Evangeline
in "K3"
circa 1946*

through so we'll invite her. It would be just grand if Evangeline could come over so Roger's buddy has someone to talk to and be partners with at a card game. Would you ask her for me? Oh wonderful. You are such a dear thanks so much. Let me know if anything changes and we'll plan to see you and Jim and Evangeline around 7 o'clock on Friday. And don't anyone get too dressy—it's a casual evening you know. Maybe a little gathering will help cheer Roger up before he heads back to his base in New Hampshire. He was staying with our Dad in Sioux City. Roger came home and found Dad dead on the floor. Quite a shock. We'd like to send him off with better memories.

***Home of R.L. (Dave) and Corinne Davidson, 912 Franklin St. Keokuk, Iowa,
February 27, 1948***

“Well we're all packed up and Marty's in the car raring to go. He's gotta' be on the base by the 1st so we'd better hit the road. Thanks so much for the great dinner last night Corinne. If only we'd had a little more of that rare roast beef.

“Oh Roger you tease. I’m glad you enjoyed the evening. I’m counting on you to stop and visit us again when you come back on the trip to San Diego in June. Would you like for me to call Miss Talerico and have her put the date on her calendar?”

“Eh— no I don’t think so. But I’ll tell you what—if I’m able to stop back through here I would not mind seeing that sister of your friend Veronica.”

“Just as I thought little brother—you are a lot smarter than you act.”

“Yeah that gal is a looker. Seems very nice too. Good thing that Marty won’t be coming back this way again. I think he really liked her!”

“Oh Roger I think she’s just adorable. She’s very smart and is a hard worker. I’m told that she types faster and more accurately than anyone they’ve ever seen at Midwest Transit or at the law office either one. I’ll be sure to get a word over to Veronica that when you stop here again we’ll host cocktails. Then you can get her a steak dinner at Tip-n-Buds for a treat!”

***Home of R.L. (Dave) and Corinne Davidson, 912 Franklin St. Keokuk, Iowa,
March 5, 1948***

“Corinne! You who—Corinne Davidson! it’s Evangeline. Are you home?”

“Oh hi Vange. Come on into the kitchen with me. I need to tend to the stove—I’m cooking up some ox-tail soup for dinner. I’ve got a loaf of bread in the oven. Tim should be home from golf practice any minute and Dave will be along shortly too. Would you like to join us?”

“That sounds just wonderful Corinne but I feel like I’ve been here so much lately. I don’t want to be a pest just because I’m right down the street.”

“Oh now stop that Evangeline. We love having you over you know that! And who knows maybe we’ll be seeing a lot more of you in the not-too-distant future.”

“Well— actually that’s what I’ve come to talk with you about. I have something to show you. This was in my mailbox when I got home from work this evening.”



“What is it dear? “

“Oh—it’s one of those fold-out travelogue cards.”

“Let me see. The Pennsylvania Turnpike. Ok. Oh. Oh. Oh I see. It’s from New London.

Roger that rascal. Looks like he mailed it the day he got back to the base. What did he say on it?"

"Well that's the thing Corinne. He didn't write anything on it. Look here's a page for just checking off boxes to make a message because there's no clear space for writing anything. He didn't even check any of the boxes. No signature. Nothing. It's just addressed to me. I'm not even sure it's from your brother."

"Of course it is dear. Who else do you know in New London?"

"No one; I suppose you're right. But I'm not sure what to make of it."

"I am pretty sure that I know what to make of it. My brother wants to see you again. But he just used up all the leave he has—what with the funeral services in Sioux City and all. So he wants you to take the Pennsylvania Turnpike and come see him."

"Maybe he doesn't realize that I don't have a car for a trip like that. Oh and Corinne—I still feel real bad for you folks Corinne. Roger seemed very sad about it but resigned to it at the same time."

"Thanks hon. Yes it's hard this soon after. But I think Rog took it really well especially given that he was the one who found Arthur after he'd passed. You know, ya' have to have special nerves to be able to spend almost five years under the water on a submarine during the war."

"Heck, you couldn't get me into one of those little things if it was in the Mississippi River let alone the ocean while at war! Although you know I would like to get inside one for a look and I suppose a short ride would be ok as long as they didn't take it down too deep or stay out too long."

“Well I’ll tell you what. Why don’t we drive out to Connecticut together and see if my baby brother can line you up with a test drive on a Navy submarine?”

“Oh Corinne you have to be kidding? We’re not even sure that the card is from him let alone that he wants me to visit.

I’ve only been around him once and I wasn’t actually his date. What makes you think that he wants me to visit him?

Did he say something to you?”

“A little—and I saw the look in his eyes and on his face after being around you. And besides the man sent you a road map.

Oh come on. We can call him and you can talk with him. If a visit is what he wants we can find out what month and days are ok for him and you can see if you can get the time off work. We’ll take my car and we can share the driving. We can do the trip in a week.

And we’ve already got a guide map for the Pennsylvania Turnpike!”



*Corinne Davidson and
Evangeline Marie
Bechtel on the road from
Keokuk, Iowa to New
London, Connecticut,
June 1, 1948*

NADO, Navy Base, Portsmouth, N.H. April 2, 1948

“Lamoureux, Roger Maxine
321 07 08, ENC (35190-29) USN, U.S. S. SEA CAT (SS 399)
Rating changed to postwar rating of ENC.
W. A. Schoenfeld, LCDR, USN, Executive Officer”

In early June my sister Corinne drove to New London for a visit. She brought Evangeline Bechtel along with her. I met Vange at a double-date-dinner at Corinne and Dave’s house in Keokuk just after Dad died. She’s a real sharp cookie! I enjoyed their visit—a lot—and by the

time that they'd left I was pretty sure that I wanted to see Miss Bechtel pretty-darned soon if I could.

From June 14 through July 24 I attended recruiting school in San Diego so I got to make that trip to visit my sister Lucille and her family after all. Although I was still assigned to East Coast submarine duty on the *Sea Cat* I'd requested recruiting duty near Sioux City Iowa during some of the time the Navy would spend re-fitting and building new submarines. The closest available assignment was in Sioux Falls, South Dakota—a relatively short eighty-five-miles north of Sioux City on highway US 12. This posting was both close to my family in the Sioux City area and only a day's drive from Evangeline and the Davidsons in Keokuk.

U. S. Navy Recruiting Station, 30th & Fort Streets, Omaha, Nebraska September 12, 1949

Recruiting duty in Sioux Falls was the perfect base for launching an all-out-post-war-campaign of love on Evangeline Bechtel. A successful outcome was reached by early May 1949.

We were not-so-young newlyweds: I was thirty-two; Evangeline was a month from thirty.



“Mr. and Mrs. Roger Lamoureux whose wedding took place in St. Francis de Sales Roman Catholic Church Saturday morning, May 7. Mrs. Lamoureux is the former Miss Evangeline Bechtel, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Bechtel of Devils Lake N.D. Mrs. James F. O’Brien of Keokuk is the sister of the bride.”

The Keokuk Gate City and Constitution Democrat, May 11, 1949,

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Roger and Evangeline Lamoureux Wedding Party, May 7, 1949. (L to R) Cyrus Edward Bechtel, best man R.L. (Dave) Davidson, Evangeline, Roger, maid of honor Veronica O'Brien, flower girl Jean O'Brien (now Nash), Anne Bechtel



We made our first home on the 2nd floor at 761 So. 3rd in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The house was less than a mile from the west bluff of the Big Sioux River, overlooking southwest-downtown Sioux Falls.

Since we owned a *very* old Chevrolet sedan with a hole in the backseat-passenger-side floorboard, it was helpful that the house was only ½ mile from the recruiting office in the Federal Building at 400 S. Phillips and only 1.3 miles from Evangeline's receptionist and secretary job at Manchester Biscuit Company on 524 N. Main St. I walked to work and the days that Evangeline didn't take the car she was only blocks from the downtown bus route.



761 South 3rd St., Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Roger and Evangeline lived in the 2nd floor unit

While living in Sioux Falls, I took advantage of the United States Armed Forces Institute and American Council on Education General Education's "Development (and examination) program" (GED). The course of study allowed military personnel like me, who entered the

service without a high school degree, to finish high school. I studied for and took the tests to complete the equivalent of my senior year in high school and my GED was issued on May 23, 1950 a little more than a year after our wedding and a year and one week prior my transfer, and our move, from Sioux Falls to Groton and New London, Connecticut.

The old *U.S.S. Threadfin* (SS-410) was re-fitted at the end of the war and by 1951 she was back in New London running training cruises and serving as one of the Navy's Greater Underwater Propulsion Program (GUPPY) test boats. The GUPPY conversions rewired and refitted the subs' battery systems. 504 higher-capacity, lightweight batteries, replaced 252 cell batteries. The subs' topside fittings were streamlined, deck guns were removed, and a snorkel system, allowing underwater battery recharges, was added. Roughly fifty submarines were refitted to serve as a bridge in the fleet conversion from diesel to atomic powered boats.

As a Chief Petty-Officer, I split the time between May 1951 and early 1956 among four assignments: Sailing aboard two training-and-testing-oriented submarines, *Threadfin* and *USS Creville* (SS 291); seventeen months as security officer on a submarine tender, *USS Proteus* (AS-19), docked at the New London base. I finished-up duty in New London (while assigned to the *USS Cavalla*—SSK 244) in charge of the Chief Petty-Officers' club at the Naval Shipyard and Base at New London.

I served on the *Threadfin*, from May 1951 through November, 1952. Just prior to the boat's conversion from a Balboa to GUPPY class vessel, the *Threadfin* served as a training vehicle at the submarine school in New London. Training voyages included visits to the *Threadfin*'s port after conversion: Key West.



Threadfin (SS 410), circa. 1952



Roger (far right) with Threadfin shipmates at a ship picnic, 1951. Life-long Lamoureux friend, John DiFilippo, far left

From November 1952 through April 1954, I served on a Navy *ship* (rather than on a submarine—those are *boats*) for the first time since leaving the *USS King* in 1942. The *USS Proteus* (AS-19) was a submarine tender that docked at New London to serve



USS Proteus (AS-19) circa. 1980

during the massive project refurbishing and updating the submarine fleet. I worked as a security officer on the *Proteus*.

Between May 1954 and July 1955, I was back as Chief of the Engine Room on an active submarine, this time on the *USS Crevalle* (SS-291). The *Crevalle* was a workhorse in the South China Sea and South Pacific Ocean during WWII and served as a training vessel out of New London through the 1950s. We sailed to and around the Caribbean, including a visit to the harbor of, and coastal waters off, Havana, Cuba, while on the *Crevalle*.



Castanets from USS Crevalle trip to Cuba, 1954-1955

After service on the *Crevalle*, I was “transferred” to the *USS Cavalla* (SS 244). We didn’t spend much time at sea on that boat. My

assignment to her stood as the final interlude between me and what proved to be my last and most secretive, submarine adventure. But that episode, and mission, comes a bit later.

From August 1955 through January 1956, I served, primarily, as the administrator in charge of the Navy Chiefs' Club on the New London base. Our commanding officer said that my background as a boxer, service in security on the *USS Proteus*, as well as the patient but firm demeanor I exhibited and developed in the submarine corps, made me a good candidate to "settle down" a raucous club with a bad reputation for fights and assorted mayhem. By the end of that duty, the New London Submarine Base Chiefs' Club was a smooth operation. I had a secret weapon in my arsenal: I brought a Navy psychologist into the club as a consultant and followed that officer's advice to repaint the Club's interior. I replaced the red color scheme with ocean-blue; the color was calming to sailors and order was soon restored at the Chiefs' Club.

Duty at the Chiefs' Club also enabled me to spend time aboard the *Cavalla*. After WWII, the *Cavalla* was converted to a hunter-killer submarine by adding a curved bow in order to mount a BQR-4 sonar system and by remodeling the original conning tower and bridge designs. *Cavalla's* new sonar array made her valuable for experimentation so while she was at New London, she was used to evaluate new weapons and other equipment (including surveillance gear). My assignment after *Cavalla* turned out to be a clandestine one and I underwent special preparation for that duty, both on-board the *Cavalla* and via additional visits, for fire school and other training, at Naval facilities in Philadelphia, PA and Portsmouth, NH, respectively.

The time I was on duty on the *Cavalla* was notable for another reason. That's when a life-change event took place at the Lamoureux house, 46 Hart Street, Groton, two miles south of the New London Naval Station.

After two years of applications to and interviews with Catholic Social Services in New London/Norwich, our adoption efforts were finally successful. Born on September 11, 1953, tipping the scale at 5 lb. 3 oz., Francis Wayne Beaulieu lived, for just under a year, in the nursery at St. Francis



Lamoureux rental home on Hart Street Groton, CT

Hospital in Hartford and then spent two months in a foster home. By late fall, 1954, new adoptee Edward Lee Lamoureux entered our lives and home.

This is the “false” birth certificate provided by the state after the adoption.

Roger “Maxine” Lamoureux was no longer the only name snafu in the family: Ed’s birth name is mis-ordered on the adoption hearing document. He was born Francis Wayne Beaulieu, not Wayne Francis. The formal/final hearing took place a year after placement with us.



Edward: Pleased to be in a permanent home



New parents: Thrilled to have him



Edward Lee not long after arriving at his new home. Walking, Ed spoke in the foster home but did not speak again for almost a year after his adoption

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