

## CHAPTER XX - MY SECOND CAREER

I retired from the Navy on August 31, 1971. I only had two things going for me. I was a highly skilled photogrammetrist, and I had a reputation for being a top notch Legal Officer. The problem was that neither of these fields prepared me for a second career. Becoming a lawyer was out of the question. It would mean starving my family as I struggled through law school. My expertise as a photogrammetrist was next to useless in the civilian sector unless I moved to Saint Louis or Houston. There wasn't a demand for photogrammetrist in San Diego. To find a job in the map making industry I would have to get a job with the Army Map Service in Saint Louis or with NASA, just south of Houston. I chose Houston.

At Houston, I dropped by NASA with resume in hand. I was disappointed to find that NASA did very little of its own work. Almost all of the support work at NASA was jobbed out to big aero-space contractors. NASA zeroed in on the word photo in my job description, and sent me over to Eastman Kodak, NASA's photography contractor. The personnel director at Eastman Kodak thanked me, for dropping by but said they didn't have a need for a photogrammetrist. Stung by rejection and getting desperate for a job, I decided to set my sights a little lower. I started looking at any and all possibilities.

### TEXAS MARITIME GIVES ME A JOB

I finally landed a job at the Texas Maritime Academy at Galveston. The Maritime Academy is one of the many fine colleges that make up Texas A & M. Mr. Milton Ablow, the schools head accountant, hired me as an assistant, assistant accountant and purchasing agent. Mr. Ablow was reluctant to give me the job because he felt that I was over qualified and I would leave the Academy as soon as someone offered me a better position. I promised Mr. Ablow that I would not leave him for a better offer. I told him that even though the Academy didn't pay much, it was enough to supplement my Navy retirement. My new job also required that I cruise on the Academy's training ship, S.S. Texas, each summer, as the ship's purser. These summer cruises had a dual purpose. They gave the students practical experience by letting them work on a real ship and they served as a recruiting tool by luring gifted high school seniors to the Academy.

As soon as I landed my new job I busied myself with relocating my family from San Diego to Texas. I started off by selling my California house to a neighbor and good friend, David Coble. Dave was in the market for a good investment property. He offered me cash for my equity if I would give him a break on the asking price by not going through a realtor. We settled on a fair price minus what we would have to pay in real estate commissions. We closed the deal with a quit claim deed and a handshake. Before leaving Texas, I had found and placed earnest money, on a nice little three bedroom house about a mile from my parents' house in Texas City. I then called the Navy and requested that they arrange for my household effects to be shipped to Texas. Margaret, the kids and I then said good bye to our San Diego friends, and headed for our new home in Texas.

This move almost cost me my marriage. First of all there were animosities between my wife and my mother that I wasn't aware of. My two favorite ladies definitely were not overly fond of each other and the one mile separating them wasn't nearly far enough. Actually adjoining states would have been too close. Next, there was the house I picked out and bought. Margaret Ann hated it. What bothered her most was the fact that I had bought the house without consulting her. She was also 1500 miles from her closest friend and had little to keep her

company besides the kids and a television set. Even the TV set turned out to be a negative for her. Some lunatic in nearby League City had developed a passion for killing young girls and dumping their bodies in a large weed and brush covered area just off of Calder Road. The news media was obsessed with this monster. If they weren't reporting a new victim, they were talking about the old ones. Margaret Ann spent her days depressed, lonely and terrified.

### LOCKHEED ELECTRONICS HIRES ME TO WORK FOR N.A.S.A.

After about a month at my new job, I received a telephone call from the manager of the Lockheed Electronics at NASA. He asked me if I would like to tour his facility. I asked him how he came to know me. He said that he was given a copy of the resume that I had left with Eastman Kodak. I told him that he was about a month late. I had already found a job and I was happy with my new position. He said he would love to show me around anyway and offered me a private tour the following Saturday.

I was very impressed. With the exception of some of the Top Secret equipment that I was aware of from my Navy days, Lockheed Electronics was at the leading edge of technology. After the tour, I was offered over twice the pay I was making at the Maritime Academy. I told him no thank you, but he gave me his card just in case I changed my mind.

The following Monday, I told Mr. Ablow about my tour and the offer. Mr. Ablow asked me when I would be leaving, I told him that I wouldn't be leaving, that I had rejected the offer because of the promise I had made to him. Mr. Ablow told me not to be foolhardy. He then advised me to call Lockheed and accept their offer. I took his advice.

My job with Lockheed Electronics was making graphics and photo mosaics for NASA. For my first assignment, I was given a formal written project that was written by one of NASA's junior engineers. His request had been submitted to and was endorsed by his senior who in turn sent it to his department head for final approval. The NASA Department Head then sent the proposal to Lockheed Electronics Chief Executive who gave it to my boss who gave it to me. I preformed the task as I understood it and gave it to my boss. My work was returned to me about three days later. It was all marked up and had a note attached from the junior engineer saying that the work I had sent him was almost what he wanted, but not quite. Instead of redoing the project and taking a chance that I might misinterpret something else, I walked over to the junior engineer's office and asked him to help me clarify any points of confusion. In less than five minutes, he told me exactly what he needed. Without this personal contact, we could have spent weeks on what turned out to be a four hour job. From that moment on, every time I received an engineers proposal, I would pay the engineer a courtesy call and make sure I was delivering exactly what was needed. I later learned that our company's payment from NASA was based on the grades given on our various projects. Before I began working for Lockheed, our grades averaged in the high 80's. I received a 94 for my first grade. After that all of my grades were in the high 90's. While there I produced a bovine anthrax map overlay for a NASA veterinarian, designed a logo for the International Veterinarian Association, laid a ten foot square color photo ice mosaic of the Beauford Sea for a NASA Arctic Expedition and worked the Apollo 17 Lunar Mission.

### MY SON DIES AND APOLLO 17 GOES TO THE MOON

My son, Richard died on 13 November 1972. He passed out from inhaling Right Guard anti-perspirant. He vomited as he lost consciousness and drowned in his own vomit. I didn't

know it at the time but his death was the beginning of the end of my relationship with Lockheed. I replaced all of my sorrow and grief with productive energy for NASA. Apollo 17 was only four weeks away and I was tasked with making a photo mosaic map of the Taurus Littrow Valley with a horizontal sketch of the mountains as they were predicted to appear from the four cardinal points. My map was taken to the moon and used as a navigation device. When the Lunar Rover was used for surface excursions the astronauts had the choice of going out so far and then following the Lunar Rovers tracks back to home base or they could use my map for line of sight navigation. Using a compass was not an option since the Moon does not have a magnetic pole.

Much of my time with Lockheed was spent constructing large semi-controlled photo mosaics. Traditionally these mosaics consist of several rows of black and white photographs that are glued together to form a larger photo map. The process is started by locating the center print. This print is trimmed by cutting about one half way through with a sharp razor blade and feathering the edges and gluing it to the center of a sheet of particle board. The remaining photos are cut, feathered and glued to the board, matching features of a previous mounted photo. The glue is applied by bathing the print in mucilage. During this process the mucilage allows the photo to be stretched or shrunk enough to make a near perfect match with the one next to it.

This process can not be used on color photography, however. Lockheed asked me and their other photogrammetrist, Alejandro, if we could lay a large color photo mosaic of NASA's Beauford Sea's research area. A color mosaic had never been attempted before because mucilage just doesn't work well with color photography. Someone suggested that we try using hot wax instead of glue. Hot wax worked beautifully. Our 10 foot square color mosaic became the show piece in Lockheed's main lobby.

#### MARGARET COULD STAND IT NO LONGER

While I was preoccupied with what I thought was my second career, Margaret Ann was becoming more and more depressed. Patti had returned to California so that she could marry a high school sweetheart. Three and a half months later Richard died. It was simply too much. Margaret's heart ached for California and hated Texas with a passion. She blamed Texas, for the loss of Patti and now our son. She also lived in terror of the uncaught League City serial killer. Finally Margaret could stand it no longer. She told me, in no uncertain terms, she was going back to California. She hoped that I would go back with her, but she was going whether I went with her or not. I gave it a lot of thought and decided to sell our house in Texas City and move her back to California. Dave agreed to sell me back my old house. My plan was to get Margaret Ann and Cindy settled and then return to Texas and work for another six months. That way I could earn money enough to cover this venture. I planned to stay with Mom and Dad and send Margaret Ann most of my paycheck. The plan would have been a good one except that on my first evening back in Texas City, instead of going to bed when my parents did, I decided to stay up a bit longer and wallow in self pity. I poured myself some of my Dad's Wild Turkey (a premium bourbon whiskey) and started watching something stupid on T.V. About two in the morning, stewed to the gills, I made a decision. I wrote Mom and Dad a goodbye note, packed up my things and headed for California. It was about mid day in New Mexico when I finally sobered up enough to realize that I should call someone. I called Margaret Ann and told her that I was on my way home. She told me that Mom and Dad had called her earlier and were worried. She agreed to call them for me and let them know that I was alright. I also called my boss at Lockheed and asked him to send my severance pay to my California address.

## I FIND WORK WITH THE GROSSMONT HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

I made it home the next day. The following day I went out looking for work. The first place I went was the Unemployment Office in El Cajon. From there I went to the Grossmont High School District Classified Personnel Office and asked to be placed on their substitute custodian list. Custodian is a nice word for janitor except that custodians are supposed to be a little more responsible. There were ten high schools in the Grossmont High School District. I worked as a substitute at all ten of them before I was finally hired on a permanent basis at El Capitan High School at Lakeside, California. After almost a year at El Capitan, I applied for and was hired as Boys Physical Education Attendant at Santana High School, at Santee, California. One of the things that attracted me to Santana was the spirit of my son. Many of the boys attending Santana had been grade school buddies. Watching these young men on the playing fields brought me closer to my son.

My job at Santana was the assignment of Gym lockers, keeping all of the playground and athletic equipment in good repair and handing out towels when the shower bell rang. I also went to all of the varsity games and administered first aid, when one of the boys got hurt. Santana always seemed to have a strong basketball team, often finishing at the top of their league. Their football team was a consistent cellar dweller on the other hand. Santana also offered wrestling, tennis, baseball, golf and track as varsity sports. These sports received some fan support but were largely ignored by the student body however. It was obvious that Bart Hair, the basketball coach, knew basketball a lot better than Joe Ditamaso, the football coach, knew football. At least Bart Hair seemed to understand the art of coaching better than the others. For starters, all of the sports at Santana were under funded. The lion's share of funds went to football. This was justified because a lot more people bought tickets to watch football than they did for the other sports and football equipment was a lot more expensive than the gear required by the other sports. Bart was an innovator. He was always dreaming up fundraisers while the other coaches seemed to take whatever fate dealt them. One fundraiser I'll never forget was when the San Diego Chargers football team was talked into playing the Santana High School Sultans in an exhibition game of basketball. The Grossmont League Champion Santana Sultans played a San Diego Charger Team made up of great professional athletes like Dan Fouts, Kellen Winslow, Hank Baur and Charlie Joiner. Not only were these San Diego Chargers great football players but they showed everyone that they could also play a mean game of basketball. In a very close "run and gun" game the Sultans managed to win 138 to 137. After the game Dan Fouts thanked Bart Hare for his best and most enjoyable work out of the season. Bart in turn, thanked Dan for being a part of the biggest fund raiser of the year.

My unhappiest moment at Santana High came about because of a Federal "feel good" program. The U. S .Government had decided to fund jobs for under privileged kids. The Santana School Administration had decided to create as many jobs as they possibly could. The administration decided that I needed a student assistant for each physical education class. These assistants would sweep the locker room while the students were out on the playing fields and then hand out clean bath towels in exchange for dirty ones at the end of the period. Once we began this program, every day I would receive at least one complaint that someone had their locker broken into and their money and other valuables stolen. At first I suspected it was one of the kids that hung around a couple of minutes after the rest of the kids headed for the playing fields. Because of this suspicion, I started watching the laggards, like a hawk, and then locking the locker room doors so that none of them could sneak back in. After I locked them out, I wouldn't let them back in until there were enough to guarantee against last minute break-ins. Despite all my efforts the thievery continued. I couldn't help but notice that the overwhelming number of complaints came from the fifth period class. All the evidence pointed to my fifth period assistant, but all I had was a suspicion. I decided to set a trap for the little crook. I

dropped by Good Will and purchased an old wallet, a shirt and a pair of ratty blue jeans. Next, I copied the serial numbers off of three one dollar bills and placed them in the wallet. Then, just to make sure, I engraved my initials, C.S., on some loose change that I had in my pocket. At the end of the fourth period, I placed all this in a locker facing the equipment cage. I then placed a lock on the locker but I didn't snap the lock shut. Having set my trap, I then crawled up into the loft above the equipment cage, made myself comfortable and awaited the inevitable. I had asked one of the coaches to tell Timmy, my fifth period assistant, that I had had an emergency call from home and I had to leave unexpectedly. He told my assistant that he would have to carry on without me. Timmy cheerfully accepted the responsibility of carrying on alone and carried out his usual routine, which included stealing other people's stuff. I sat there on my perch above the equipment room and watched the little crook take the bait. I stayed quiet until the end of the period. I wanted to make sure that no one knew of my secret perch, in case I needed to use it again. At the end of the period, I vacated my hide out and went down to the Vice Principal's Office to report my findings. The Vice Principal sent a student runner to find Timmy and to bring him to his office. When Timmy arrived he was asked to have a seat. He was then ordered to empty his pockets. All Timmy had was three one dollar bills and some change. The Vice Principal then asked Timmy to read off the serial numbers of the bills. As Timmy read off the numbers, the Vice Principal compared them against the list that I had given him. Timmy was then asked if he could explain how my initials happened to be on all of the change he was carrying. The evidence was overwhelming. Timmy confessed. The administration punished Timmy by transferring him to Continuation School, a school for wayward students. My reward in this little episode was peace of mind. The thievery stopped.

#### I SUPPLEMENT MY PAY WITH G.I. BILL MONEY

In order to stretch my meager pay at these jobs, I enrolled at Grossmont Junior College on the G I Bill. During this time, I earned an Associate in Arts Degree from Grossmont followed by a Business Degree and a Degree in Real Estate from Cuyamaca College. From there I enrolled at San Diego State University for three semesters. During my fourth semester at San Diego State, I dropped out because the High School District promoted me to Plant Manager at Monte Vista High School that served Spring Valley, California. Three months after I was promoted to Plant Manager, I was offered a similar position at the Grossmont Training Center in EL Cajon, California. This was a newly created position that was an attempt to combine two cost centers. I had the misfortune of stepping into the middle of two feuding camps. The head of the adult division and the head of the juvenile division seemed to have only two things in common. Neither trusted the other and they both felt that I should resign. I agreed to resign if personnel would let me restart at a position of my choosing. I had seniority rights to three positions. I could return to Monte Vista as Plant Manager. The problem with that was I would be bumping the man that replaced me at that job. He had been hired off of the streets and I would be sending him straight into the unemployment line. Another option was P. E. Attendant. My replacement there was also hired off of the street. Bumping him would also cost him his job. The only real option I had, without hurting someone, was my first tenured job, Custodian at El Capitan.

I was happy with my reassignment. I felt that I had worked my way up the ladder once and I could do it again. Because of this, I made it a habit to follow the district job vacancies that they published on a regular basis. One of these vacancy notices advertised for a gardener. I loved gardening and applied for the job even though gardener and custodian paid the same. My interview went well and felt that I would be given the job. Unfortunately I was wrong. The head gardener hired a man off the street. When I received the disappointing news, I went up to the

man doing the interviewing and asked him why I wasn't given the job. He started giving me a carefully worded crock of blarney, and I stopped him. I told him to cut the blarney and tell me man to man. I also gave him my word that I would not take any action against him even if I felt wronged. He told me that I had an outstanding reputation "up on the hill" (district headquarters) and that his superior was retiring in a couple of months. He said that if he hired me I would have a really good shot at his boss' job. He said that he didn't hire me because he wanted that job. I thanked him for his honesty.

### I GO TO WORK FOR SOLAR TURBINES, INC.

That encounter hit me like a sledgehammer. I couldn't help but wonder how many other doors were closed to me for much the same reason. It jarred me enough that I started skimming the help wanted ads in the daily newspaper. One advertisement caught my eye, "Solar Turbines Inc., Assemblers wanted." I made an appointment for an interview. The interviewer said that in his opinion, I was not qualified, but the hiring foreman wanted to talk to me anyway. I told him that if I wasn't qualified it didn't make sense to stick around wasting time. Just then the foreman came in, and I told him what the interviewer said. The foreman said, "I understand that you were an Aviation Structural Mechanic when you were in the Navy?" I said, "Yes, I was for about ten years." He said, "In my opinion, you are definitely qualified." and he gave me the job. The interviewer scheduled me for an indoctrination class and told me that Solar was a closed shop. I would have to join the Union before I could actually start working for Solar.

Solar Turbines is a subsidiary of Caterpillar Inc. Solar was owned by International Harvester when I was first hired. Solar paid me about 30% more than the school district did which made me pretty happy. There were also advancement opportunities and occasional overtime. Working as an assembler, my job was to clean parts and clamp them into a jig for my welder. After the welding operation, I had to clean them again and send them on to their next operation. After about 3 months, I noticed that assemblers were offered very little overtime while the dispatcher servicing my work area worked overtime almost every Saturday. He was loafing a lot during the week, so that he would be behind enough in his work to justify weekend overtime. He was doing a lot less work, and making a lot more money because he was milking the overtime for all it was worth. His job was simple enough. All he had to do was to round up the material that was needed for the next job and see that it was delivered to where it was needed. I studied what he did for a couple of weeks and then requested that I be promoted to dispatcher. I convinced the front office that I could handle the job and they gave me the promotion and sent me to the Kearney Mesa plant.

Solar had several plants in San Diego. During my dispatching days, I had the pleasure of working at all of them. After working at the Kearney Mesa plant for several months I was returned to the Harbor Drive plant. My work station was in the same building where the "Spirit of Saint Louis" was built in 1927. After about three months at Harbor Drive, I was "bumped" by a senior dispatcher to the overhaul and repair facility located downtown. . This facility sat up on a hill overlooking the Harbor Drive Plant.

A few months later Solar moved its overhaul and repair operations to Tijuana, Mexico in a complex deal with Pemex, Mexico's Nationalized Oil Company. Over half of the turbines that Solar had sold to Mexico in the past were inoperable and needed to be overhauled. Mexico's position, as I understand it, was that they would let their turbines rot rather than let the Americans have the repair contract. By opening a plant in partnership with Mexico, the American company wouldn't make as much income but at least they would share in the profit.

This deal with Mexico led to the shut down of the American Overhaul and Repair Facility, and I was transferred back to the Harbor Drive Plant.

## THE UNION STRIKES

I was back at the Harbor Drive plant when the Union called a strike against the company. It was my opinion that Solar treated its employees fairly and the Union was making unreasonable demands. I told my foreman that I was against the strike, but the Union had told me that I would be heavily fined and ostracized if I didn't support the strike. They told me that I would have to pay a second initiation fee to rejoin the union when the strike was over. My foreman sent me to Industrial Relations for answers to my questions. Industrial Relations advised me to send a letter of resignation to the Union and granted me super seniority as a reward for my loyalty. The company stood firm and fought every demand made by the Union. After a hard bitter struggle, the Union folded and the company won the strike. The company fired each and every striking employee and made them re-interview and be re-hired before they were given their old jobs back. The new contract also declared Solar an open shop. Employees no longer had to be dues-paying Union members in order to work for Solar.

Ironically, my loyalty to the company almost got me fired. After the strike, one of the Union Loyalist assaulted me as I walked through his work station. The assault came to the attention of Industrial Relations. The Industrial Relations Investigator told me that the person who assaulted me was in danger of losing his job. I knew that the man had attacked me in a fit of passion because I was a "scab" that had crossed the picket line against the union. But even though he was wrong in assaulting me, I didn't want to see him lose his job over it. Rather than give damning evidence against him, I clammed up. At this point the investigation was recessed until the next day. The Industrial Relations man told me to meet him in my supervisor, Mr. Viatalli's office the following morning. As I arrived at work the next day, Mr. Viatalli and the Industrial Relations man were sitting in the office chatting over a cup of coffee. I was told to hang around that the Industrial Relations man would see me in a few minutes. After a short wait the Industrial Relations man came out and read me the riot act.

## MR. VITALLI ALMOST GETS ME FIRED

He said that before talking to Mr. Viatalli my assailant's job was on the line. Now it was my job that was in jeopardy. He made several statements along this line, ending each of them with, "Do you know what I mean?" I answered them all with a polite, "Yes, Sir." To this day I can only guess what Mr. Viatalli told this man. Mr. Viatalli was a young "know it all" who was hired by Solar right out of college. One of the things that irked me about him was that every Monday afternoon he made it a point to inspect each of the seven areas that he was in charge of. My area of responsibility was number seven on his list. One Monday I came to work and found my "in" basket crammed with priority production orders that needed to be filled. I made an all-out effort in filling the orders rather than be the cause of a production line being stopped because of a lack of parts. I worked through my break and even took a late lunch to make sure all the orders were filled on time. During my late lunch, I strolled past Mr. Viatalli's office and noticed that he had been busy inspecting and had posted the results on his bulletin board. My area, area number seven, was marked down because he noticed a piece of trash next to my office. I went in to see Mr. Viatalli and complained because failing the inspection reflected upon my character. I told him that I was under the impression that production took priority over clean up. I told him that if he were to inspect a little later my area would pass with flying colors. He disagreed. The

mark against my record stood. The following Monday, I came in and completely ignored the orders in my “in” basket. I rolled up my sleeves and started cleaning up in anticipation of Mr. Viatalli’s Monday afternoon inspection. After a couple of hours, a production foreman dropped by my area and asked me when he could expect his order to be filled. I told him that I would fill it right after I finished cleaning my area. I told him about how I had been marked down for putting orders before cleanup, and I didn’t want to be marked down again. The foreman didn’t like my explanation so I told him he would have to take it up with Mr. Viatalli. Not long after that, Mr. Viatalli came down and told me that there would be no more formal inspections and asked me to get busy and fill production orders. I had made my point.

I really got even with Mr. Viatalli a few months later. When Margaret Ann’s mother died, Margaret Ann came into quite a bit of money. Margaret Ann decided she wanted to spend some of it on a larger house. We found a house that was perfect for us in nearby El Cajon. In addition to four bedrooms, it, had a nice living room with a beautiful custom-built fire place. It also featured a showcase den that also had a beautiful custom-built fire place. It also had an elegant formal dining room. The master bedroom looked out over a balcony with a marvelous view of El Capitan Mountain, a built in swimming pool and an inviting Jacuzzi. The master-bedroom also featured a large walk in closet that contained a laundry chute leading to the laundry room next to the two car garage. It was a showcase to begin with but Margaret Ann wouldn’t rest until it radiated sheer sophistication. We bought a huge elegant crystal chandelier for our entryway and added a stairway from our balcony to the Jacuzzi. After a lot of paint, new wall paper and new furniture, we were ready to show off our new home with an open house party. Among those invited was my boss, Mr. Viatalli and his wife. After the party broke up, Margaret Ann chided me because I wasn’t overly cordial with Mr. Viatalli. I told her that I wasn’t cordial with him mainly because I neither liked nor respected him. I invited him and his wife because he was a snob, and I knew that he couldn’t afford such elegance. My devious trick did have an effect on Mr. Viatalli. He quit playing his silly power games and began treating his workers with more respect.

## I BECOME A TURBO ENGINE MECHANIC

The new Union contracts lead me into making my next change. The dispatcher classification along with the store keeper and the expeditor classifications were all lumped into one classification called the material mover. Under the old contract the dispatcher, now material mover, was paid a little more than the assembler. Now the assembler was one pay grade higher than the material mover. This irritated me. What was originally a promotion was now a demotion. I went down to personnel and filled out a request to get my old assembler job back. While I was at it I also submitted a request for promotion to turbo engine mechanic. The following day, I was informed that both of my requests for promotion had been approved. I had to choose between them. I chose turbo engine mechanic because it paid a little more. I started out working with a crew making a mid-range turbine package called the Saturn.

The Saturn Turbo Engine was coupled with a large generator for making electricity or with a large compressor for pushing gas through cross country pipelines. There were about twenty mechanics working on the Saturn production line. One of these mechanics was a short, rotund, Jewish guy named Benjamin Gurfunkle. Everyone called him “Bennie.” Bennie was an intelligent, hard-working man and was a great innovator. He liked working with the engineers and was responsible for several inventions. Because of this special relationship, one of the engineers gave Bennie a camera so that he could take pictures of his work so that the engineer could better visualize Bennie’s ideas without having to come down to the assembly floor. Solar had a strict rule against hourly workers having cameras in their possession. Bennie was aware of



this policy but was under the impression that the policy had been wavered because a Solar Turbine engineer had given him the camera. Someone told internal relations about Bennie having a camera and they decided to investigate. An internal relations man, and Bennie's Supervisor came down to our work station to question Bennie about the camera. I was sitting by my tool box eating my lunch and Bennie was away at the cafeteria eating his. Bennie's tool box was closed but the lock was not snapped shut. The foreman, letting impatience get the better of him, removed the lock and looked inside of Bennie's box. He took out a couple of items, so that he could get a better look and found the camera. Bennie came back from lunch just in time to be fired and walked to the gate. He was charged with unlawful possession of a camera and industrial spying. Actually Bennie wasn't really fired. He was suspended. To avoid unnecessary lawsuits Solar routinely suspends, investigates and then fires. I was interviewed as part of the investigation. I told the investigator that the foreman opened Bennie's box without Bennie's permission and it was therefore an unlawful search and seizure. Because of my testimony, Bennie was brought back to work.

Bennie was mad as hell. He said that the Industrial Relations Department was anti-Semitic and that they were out to get him because he was a Jew. He figured that it was just a matter of time before they succeeded. I told him that if what he said was really true, he could get some protection by forcing the issue. I recommended that he attend the annual stockholders convention and make a motion that the corporation add to its charter that Caterpillar Corporation will not tolerate anti-Semitism within its organization. Bennie wrote a letter to the corporate president requesting that this proposal be placed on the ballot at the next stock holders meeting. Publishing such a proposal would put Solar's parent Company, Caterpillar, in a position of having to explain to its Muslim customers the need for a pro-Semitic declaration to be included in its charter. Two or three weeks after Bennie mailed his letter, he received a phone call from the President of Solar requesting that they meet for lunch. Over lunch, Solar's Chief Executive advised Bennie to formally withdraw his request and offered Bennie a position in middle management. Bennie accepted the President's offer.

### I BECOME A LEAD MAN WITH MY OWN SHOP

As a Turbine Mechanic, I eventually gravitated to a small shop that specialized in making subassemblies. We made a lot of shutters, vents, fan assemblies and air ducts. I had blueprints for over a hundred different models of air control devices that we manufactured. The largest device that we made was only about twelve feet high so we didn't require a lot of overhead space. The huge turbine packages made by Solar required a lot more overhead room than my little shop did. In order to make room for more Turbine Packages in the main building, I convinced the Production Manager to move my little shop from the main building and into a large empty shed in the back area of the compound. Working outside the huge central area and a relatively small tin shed made all the difference in the world. All I had to do was keep our production schedule ahead of the master production schedule. Instead of pushing us to do more work, my boss actually asked us to slow down. As a reward for our production I was designated "Lead Man" and I began receiving a fifty cent per hour bonus over top mechanic pay. My little shop continued to produce ahead of schedule until I retired in the fall of 1999.