

# Day of Infamy, 7 December 1941

## Forrest G. Brandt

I wouldn't be born until February of 1943, and then to parents who had been warned to not have a second child. I have no doubt I was an attempt to keep my dad out of WWII. My sister, born in 1935, made that abundantly clear to me.

The collective stories I have heard from beer softened aunts and uncles goes like this: On December 7, 1941 my dad, Forrest, my mom, Virginia, my uncle, Clifford, my aunt, Rose, and my Uncle Bobby—then a 17-year-old bachelor—were all working in the gloom and chill of a late autumn/early winter afternoon, putting roofs on the two one-car garages that Uncle Cliff and my dad were building on Hale Avenue in what was then Van Buren Township.

Around four, with the light failing, they decided to quit working. Dad, Mom and Granddad stopped at Murphy's Bakery in Belmont, on Dayton's south side -why was a bakery open on Sunday in an era of strict blue laws I often ask myself, but then I wasn't there, so this is their story -Dad bought some bread and lunchmeat—Murphy's was more of a delicatessen than bakery—but while he was in the store he was told to turn on the radio, the Japs had bombed Pearl Harbor. They listened to the radio as they drove back to my grandparents' home on Bremmer St.

All five brothers, the two wives, Mom and Aunt Rose, and my sister gathered at the family table. Tears and anger poured out—that my family, sister included, has confirmed—they'd just climbed out of the Depression. Dayton's factories were running full tilt to fill the needs of Britain and Russia and the boys had full salaries for the first times in their lives, and now this. The draft was sure to strike and take that all away from them.

The youngest, Bobby, baby of the family and a junior at Wilbur Wright High School, wanted to join the army on Monday. Anna, my grandmother, refused to sign his papers. Dad, Cliff and Ray were willing to late fate of the draft overtake them while they continues to work at Delco.

Bobby landed in Normandy at D+19, with the 59th Armored Field Artillery, part of Patton's Third Army vanguard. Uncle Cliff (75th ID) and Uncle Ray (99th ID) arrived in Rouen in November, 1944 and were sent to Bradley's First Army on the north shoulder of what would become "The Bulge" on 16 December.

I would appear before the Selective Service Board on Third and Main in late 1942, albeit in the belly of my mom, as my dad's proof that he had two children, not one.

Didn't matter, they found him suitable for service and he soon found himself as a coast artillery spotter in Adak and Attu in the Aleutians and then as an MP in Casablanca. I don't think his sinuses survived the experience.

What I do know is that the life of the entire family was profoundly changed that day and that the ripples of that day's event will continue as long as any of the family DNA is passed on.

Thinking of you this day: Forrest Glenn Brandt Sr, Virginia Rankin Brandt, Betty JoAnn Brandt McIntire, Clifford Brandt, Rose Stoddard Brandt, Raymond Brandt, Betty Eva Brandt Kozmar, Bill Kozmar and especially Robert "Bobby" Brandt—awarded six Bronze Stars, one of the liberators of Dachau and Buchenwald, and a victim of PTSD long before we knew its name.

[Photos follow]



Granddad, Booby and Dad,  
“Garage” on Hale in the  
Background.



Uncle Cliff, Bobby, Steve Stoddard,  
my sister, Betty Jo, is held by Bobby.  
Bremer St. April of 1944