

In Loving Memory

This Body is Not Me

This body is not me.
I am not limited by this body. I am life without
boundaries. I have never been born,
and I have never died.

Look at the ocean and the sky filled with stars,
manifestations from my wondrous true mind.

Since before time, I have been free.
Birth and death are only doors through which we pass,
sacred thresholds on our journey.
Birth and death are a game of hide-and-seek.

So laugh with me,
hold my hand,
let us say good-bye,
say good-bye, to meet again soon.

We meet today.
We will meet again tomorrow.
We will meet at the source every moment.
We meet each other in all forms of life.

~ By Thich Nhat Hanh, *Chanting and Recitations from Plum Village*

Interment

Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery
1520 Harry Wurzbach Road
San Antonio, Texas 78209



Kenneth Rea Whitley

August 19, 1933 – July 2, 2018



Things I Remember

(Excerpted from Kenneth's unpublished memoirs.)

"My earliest memory before I was six years old was in 1936 to 1938 when we were living in Agua Dulce, Texas. My brothers and I were playing "King of the Mountain" on a high pile of dirt, the "King" trying to keep the rest of us from climbing to the top. I don't remember who the "King" was.

"In 1939, Momma and Dad had separated and Victor and I were living with Momma at Dramuver and Dranny's place at Sullivan in Guadalupe County near Kingsbury. I didn't know the country was still in the Great Depression in those years but there were a lot of hobos on the road back then. One day in 1939, a hobo came walking up the lane to Dranny's house. I was playing by the smokehouse and watched him go to the back door. He was wearing an old overcoat. He was looking for a handout and Dramuver had him chop some mesquite firewood for the fireplace. She gave him a sandwich that he put in his overcoat pocket and he walked back down the lane to hop a train. Sullivan was a switch siding for the railroad and that gave the hobos riding the rail time to beg at the nearest houses before the train started up again.

"There was an underpass below the railroad in front of Dranny's front gate that led from Woodrow Center Road up to the highway (US 90). The school bus would use the underpass rather than cross over the tracks at the regular crossing. There were always dewberry vines on the slopes by that underpass, and I can remember picking dewberries there."

"Dranny had a windmill for a water source and he had a wooden tank atop stilt poles to store water pumped from the well. The height of the tank allowed water to gravity feed through piping into the kitchen. We didn't have indoor bathroom plumbing so Dranny had a two-hole outhouse. Sure was cold in the winter time, but I don't remember ever being cold in the house. We bathed in wash tubs using heated water from Dramuver's kerosene cook stove. We did our homework by kerosene lanterns. I don't remember when they finally got electricity but Dranny listened to the news on his radio. I can still see Dranny climbing the windmill to grease the windmill gears."

USAF Memories

(Excerpted from Kenneth's unpublished memoirs.)

TURKEY: "After the Cuban Missile crisis was over, we had to remove our Jupiters. The other missile units in Italy had started taking down their Thors. Bill McFadden and I were sent to Joya del Coll near a Thor unit in southern Italy to observe how the guys there took their missiles out. Not too difficult. Wrap det-cord around and around them and blow them apart. If that wasn't completely done, use saber saws to cut up any big pieces left. The engines had to be removed and shipped back to the U.S. Taking those missiles off Russian targets didn't really matter, The U.S. Navy had nuclear subs in the Mediterranean Sea covering them!"

JAPAN: "I wasn't supposed to be going to Japan after my training at Lowry. I had volunteered for Vietnam. But the North Koreans had taken over the USS Pueblo, a US Navy "spy ship" at about that time, and in response, the U.S. started a fast and furious military buildup in that area. My TDPFO (Temporary Duty Pending Further Orders) turned into orders assigning me to the Yamada Ammo Annex out of Itazuke AB, Kyushu, Japan, and over near the city of Kokura, a highly industrialized city. It had been designated a primary target for the A-bombs dropped in 1945, but weather interfered so Hiroshima and Nagasaki became the primary targets."

VIETNAM: "I asked for assignment to Vietnam in lieu of Thailand. Didn't take the guy long to tell me he had an opening for a Senior Master Sgt at Bien Hoa AB near Saigon. We did have a little combat action if it could be called that (my recommendation for the Bronze Star said it did!), and in several cases airmen did get killed or injured. We got hit by VC rocket and mortar attacks six times the year I was there. Usually, the VC would set up their rocket or mortar/grenade launchers a few miles from the base perimeter, set timers and then leave the launch site. The closest one that exploded near me was about three or four hundred yards. They usually happened about six o'clock in the morning. My bunkroom was on the lower floor of the barracks that had a four-foot concrete barrier wall on the lower floor. When attacks came, I would just roll out of my bunk, slip on my protective vest and helmet and hunker down by that concrete wall. With the all-clear after an attack, we would all gather outside to talk about it. One day after an attack, one of the guys asked me what happened to me--I had a big knot on my forehead and didn't know it. I told him I must have bumped my head rolling out of my bunk but never felt a thing!"

Obituary



Loving husband and father Kenneth Rea Whitley joined his wife of more than 61 years, Rena Jeannine Marie (Plourde), in the afterlife on Monday, July 2, 2018. He was born August 19, 1933, near Granger, Texas, to Vernon Edward Whitley and Letha (Appling) Hanks; the youngest of their four boys.

Kenneth retired from a 25-year career in the United States Air Force as a Chief Master Sergeant. He served in South Vietnam during the war and received a number of decorations, badges, campaign ribbons and citations during his career, including

the Bronze Star Medal, The Air Force Commendation Medal for Meritorious Service, the National Defense Service Medal, and Air Force Good Conduct Medals. After retirement, Kenneth and Rena moved to New Braunfels, TX, and he completed his Bachelor's degree from Texas State University – San Marcos (formerly SWTSU) and taught grades 9 -12 in the Comal School District for several years. He spent more than 30 years of his life researching and documenting his family genealogy, including the publication of several 'mug' books. He was preceded in death by his brother Chester P. "Bubba" Whitley, with whom he spent many hours on "grave-hunting" road trips for their genealogy research. He also had a special bond with cousin Alvy Ray Smith on Smith and Whitley family genealogy. Kenneth was a lifetime member of the VFW, American Legion and Sons of the American Revolution. He most recently resided at the Frank M. Tejada Texas State Veterans' Home in Floresville, TX.

Kenneth is survived by two of his brothers, James (Gloria) and Victor, daughters Catherine Ann dePlour, Sheri Lynn Whitley and Rachelle Whitley, as well as 5 grandchildren, 8 great-grandchildren and 4 great-great-grandchildren.

A book that is particularly pertinent to Kenneth's memory is downloadable for free to anybody at <http://alvyray.com/Smith/>.

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Order of Service

Honoring Kenneth's Life and Service to His Country

Military Honors.....*Joint Base San Antonio Honor Guard*

Prayer.....*Arthur ("Art") Gray*

Reflections.....*James E. Whitley et al*

Closing Prayer.....*Arthur ("Art") Gray*

Dinner (Dutch) to immediately follow the service at the Olive Garden Restaurant at 7920 IH 35, San Antonio. Reservation is under "Whitley Family".

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*The committal service with full military honors will be held on Friday, October 5, 2018, at 1:45 – 2:15 p.m. Location: Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery, **SHELTER # 5** 1520 Harry Wurzbach Road, San Antonio, Texas.*

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to a charity of your choice. (The cemetery does not permit flowers to be left on the day of the service.)



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