



2006

Steven:

Christmas already? Dang, seems like just yesterday I was Fort Knox for training during the summer. So far I am doing better this year than I was doing last year. I guess the most incredible thing is that I will be turning 21 soon. Where did time go? This up coming summer I the chance for quite a few things; ranging from Airborne training to an Advanced Summer course/internship with a government agency. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Ed:

This has been a very busy year. The most significant event was Dad's death. He died March 9th. My immediate reaction was relief that his suffering was over. It was very hard to visit him the last several months of his life. His mind was as sharp as ever, but his body was giving out. He had great difficulty moving or talking and his frustration was very apparent. The family gathered for his funeral in Arlington Cemetery. Afterwards I opened a memorial web site for him at <http://ernest.cragg.info/>. I have been working on it off and on ever since. For those who haven't visited the site since the spring, recent additions include newspaper drawings from RAF Wethersfield, England and a photo album based on the Howitzer yearbooks covering his time at West Point. I have also learned that the town library in Greenwich Connecticut has a yearbook from his senior year in high school. I will go up there with my scanner this next summer.

For many decades I had Dad's old Porsche in my garage. It had been wrecked in 1972 and I always thought I would restore it. With his death I realized that I would never do it, so I sold it on eBay. With some of the proceeds I purchased an art print entitled "Lightning Encounter". It depicted P-38s from Dad's WWII wing attacking a train shortly after D-Day. The painting spoke to me because the only war story Dad told us as boys featured the spectacular explosion that would occur when a he could jump a locomotive under full steam

In June the second family get together of the year occurred in Houston for my niece Fran's wedding. Scott and Tiffany flew in from California. Unfortunately Steven was unable to attend as he had to report to West Point for Cadet Field Training. We had a lot of fun at the wedding. Fran and Justin make a wonderful couple and that weekend was a great sendoff to their new life together.

After many years of being on the receiving end of grandchild stories and pictures from the ladies in my square dance club, Scott provided me with the perfect response: I now have a "Grand Plane"! Scott bought and restored Piper Cherokee 4261J (AKA 'Julie' - see <http://scott.cragg.info/JulieFirstFlight/slides/PICT3085.htm>). He is taking flying lessons and has soloed. I plan to visit him next summer and get my license current again. I am hoping while I am there we can fly down to the Planes of Fame Air Museum. I want to pose Julie next to "Porky II" with the two of us in front.

While by TRW/NGC retirement rules, I can now retire, this past fall made me wonder if I ever dare. Due to various events, I ended up working 4-day weeks during most of September and October. Those 4 days at work just were not enough time to recover from my weekend activities. Highlights of those long weekends were the Rice-Army football game, a wedding in Boston, and the dedication of the Air Force memorial not far from my house.

I suitably embarrassed Steven at the Rice-Army game. I sat with the West Point Parents' Club, but wore a Rice polo shirt and baseball cap (along with my parents' club badge). In fact this was the first college football game I have attended since my days at Rice. Unfortunately for Army, Rice scored more points that game than they did all year during any time I was at Rice. The picture on this year's Christmas Card was taken on the veranda around Cullum Hall at West Point overlooking the Hudson that weekend.

I broke my old camera at Fran's wedding. I bought a new one which is compatible with Scott's gear. I gave it a good workout both at my Boston friend Monica's wedding and during the Air Force Memorial dedication. I am particularly pleased with one picture taken at the dedication in which caught the Thunderbirds' flyby framed between the spires of the memorial.

And with that the old year passes on and I am looking forward to the new one. I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

**PEACE ON EARTH
GOOD WILL TO ALL**



Steven