

What were the 60's like?



Life in the 60's –

I guess I should say in some ways I was blessed since dad in the military and I was able to live in many different places. In 1959 dad was transferred to Menwith Hill Station in Yorkshire, England. When we arrived, it was a new base and no housing or schools were completed. So we lived in Harrogate and I went to British schools for one year.

When we arrived, we first lived in a hotel downtown for a couple weeks, but then moved to the Green Park Motel and it was fun. We had our rooms and there was a nice dining room and a very nice park across the street. It had a concrete pond that people would use to sail small sail boats. I had one about 18" long and I would set it sails and rudder and then use a stick to push it into the pond and watch how it sailed. You would have to move around the pond eventually to recover the sailboat. The park also had a golf course and I could rent a couple clubs and play 9 holes.

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Kathy and I were old enough to enjoy the park for most for the day. Candy was just over 2 and stayed with mom. Mom was having a lot of back trouble and in bed most the time. The dining room taught me the meaning of sufficient and that British were fairly precise in their interactions. We had an assigned table and the waitress was usually the same one. We would have out plates and then waitress would come around with a dish of vegetables or whatever and give you a spoonful or some portion. Then she would say "Sufficient" and I would respond, yes or sure. So put more on my plate and asked again "Sufficient". Ended up getting more than I wanted in the beginning but finally I learned that it was "Sufficient". In the evenings we always waited until dad got home from work for dinner. We got to know some of the Brits on tables around us. Candy was of the age she was talking and dad was teaching her little rhymes but he had a sense of humor and changed them slightly. So then after dinner and visiting with someone at nearby table, he would get Candy to recite one. It was funny as the watch as the Brits listened and then towards the end have a strange look on their face....

Only one I remember is, 30 days have September. Only dad's version was.... 30 days have September, April, Jun and No wonder, all the rest have peanut butter except Grandma and she rides a bicycle. They would look at her strange and then most the time the Brits finally got the joke and laughed... There were

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several he had taught her but I cannot remember the others.

When we moved from hotel, we were in a duplex for a few months and since it was still summertime day RENTED us a TV to watch. When school started the TV went away. Kathy and I started in a British school and we had to wear a uniform. The boys wore shorts year around. The girls wore skirts. So when I was in trouble they had no problems with sending me to principles office and punishment was switch on the back of the legs below shorts. I have always been a slow learner so I made more than one trip to his office. For some reason we moved from duplex to a house after a few months and ended up living across the street for some very nice people, the Blackstones. We visited and Kathy and frequently went over there after school to visit. They had a Minor bird that talked and was fun. They had a very attractive teenage or older daughter living there and every time she came in the room, the bird would wolf whistle and say Sandra!

We were friends with them forever, seems they came to visit us once when we were still living in Tomales years later.

Finally in Summer of 60 the base had housing finished and had built a school so we moved on post and a new life started. The 2 housing areas were a circle of 4 plexs with half moon parking for each side and a road thru the middle. It seemed that most of the others living in these were young officers. Kathy and I being 9 n

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11 were the oldest one there so we became very sought after, baby sitters. We took care of newborns and others, because young officers felt they had to go to the officer's club to keep up with others and social events. We made 25 cents an hour and getting rich!! Of course, today you would go to jail if you allowed that, in fact a 8 n 11 year old needs a babysitter. I liked to make money, so I had dad get me a bicycle and I got a job delivering the Daily Bulletin in both housing areas. Don't remember what I was paid for that, but it was something. Then we had our allowance as well. We got 25 cents for each year old we were. But there were things we had to do to earn this. For me it was shining shoes. Dad would kick off his shoes each evening and place them by the door of the closet under the stairs. That closet was my shoe shining office. I was pretty good at it. The only issue I had was that when buddies of dad's would come home for dinner with him or evening, they were told to put their shows by closet too, so I was kept busy.

Life on base was fun, I had friends, they built a movie theater and it cost 10 cents on Saturday morning to go watch cartoons. We bowled and learned to play tennis.

Mom and dad were in the British Motors car club because dad had bought his Sprite when we first arrived in 1959. So, one time there was a trip to Europe for them with the club. So, they took off for two weeks and we were still just living in out 4 plex while

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they were gone. We had friends next door that we went over to have breakfast and dinner with but other than that we were pretty much on our own. Hahaaa again you could go to jail for that today!!

Dad made a point of getting us around all of England and taking in all we could. Kathy and I would get in the Sprite with him and the turn signal was a flip switch in middle of the dashboard and we would take drives and each time we came to a stop sign we took turns flipping the switch for us to decide which way to go.

While we were there mom bought Yorkshire Terrier dogs, male and female and they were great pets. Unfortunately, we were not great owners. We took some fun in making Nicki, the male Yorkie, but like a lion and we would grab him around neck and make him growl and flash his teeth. We decided that was not really the right thing, but Nickie now had that attitude. Kathy and I would get in arguments and fight and she would pick up Nickie point him at me and I would slap at them both, and he would start growling and flashing teeth to protect her. So it got to be a thing to never reach for him if Kathy was holding him. One day as she was coming out of the post office carrying Nickie, a GI saw her and came over to was going to pet Nickie's head and nickie made mince meat of his fingers. We had to be very careful after that to be sure no one else got chewed on. Once during Christmas vacation, mom and dad had some friends over and

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then went out to the Officers club. We were at house and decided to to give Nickie some milk and we put him down a bowl. Then we found that he could hardly stand up, and fell trying to go upstairs, so we used couch cushions to make him a padded cell. Mom and dad got home and asked what happened. We told them we had given him some milk from fridge!! It was spiked eggnog!! When we were back in California, Nickie would get out of yard and then pick on bigger dogs until he was hurt. One time I found him, he was hanging on the cheek of this German Sheperd who was trying very hard to get him back inside his mouth. We saved him but then Nickie was bandaged and living slid into one of moms nylons to keep them all on. Enough about out pet abuse.

The whole family went to London and my first live musical was the "Sound Of Music" on stage. It was great. We went to Scotland to see or not see the Loch Ness "Monster". We found McPherson Plaid and mom made dresses for the girls and shirts for the guys with it.

I had a "Felt" hat and I got pins from every where we went and I still have it plastic wrapped on display in kitchen. It was a great experience and I think us kids benefited from being there and seeing how other countries live.

In summer of 1963 we came back stateside. We landed in NYC and dad went down and bought a 1957 Chrysler Imperial. It was a great car, but funny, he got a good deal because it had a big dent

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in the back passenger door. No one hardly ever noticed, it was dark blue and really did not show. We went up to Massachusetts to the little house dad owned there and had been renting out while we were gone. We spent a few days getting it ready to sell. Then we started driving cross country. Stopped in Missouri to see Mom's dad and see his horses and ranch. Then Kansas for some other relatives and on to Tuscan where most of dad's family lived. Then up and into California to go back to Tomales where dad had the house he had bought when stationed there in the early 50's. We had one of the swamp cooler type things hanging on the passenger's window that hung outside and brought air in but cooled it first. It was funny, something was mentioned about the wind noise inside car as we were going across Arizona and dad said it might be because we were doing 125mph. He had us kids watching out the back most the time to be sure some trooper not sneaking up on us. So, I can say my driving habits were learned from years of riding with him.

Dad bought us a horse and saddle and him an old Dodge panel truck for \$100 and we started our lives in Tomales.

I started 7th grade in Tomales and was there just in time for them to tell us one day in class that President Kennedy had been killed in Dallas, TX One of the few events in my life that I can tell you exactly where I was. I guess I was not like other boys my age, did not know about football, barely baseball. I was made fun of a

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bit and caused one of the few fights I ever had. But my trips to the principle's office were about the same. One time my buddy Glenn and I used his father's keys to school to sneak in a night and steal math test answers. Of course, if he and I had just used the answers ourselves, we would have been fine, but we decided to share with the whole class. As test was ending one girl could not stand that she cheated, so she tells teacher the whole class cheated and that we had provided the answers.....

As we were graduating from 8th grade, math teacher that was not well liked and during one of the last days as school ended that year, Glenn and I came up with the idea to water balloon him. The math teacher took exception to this and proceeded to pickup garden hose and spray us so we took hose away from him and finished the job. So we got to see the Principle one last time. Note - The math teacher had come to our school after just getting his teaching certification. He taught at our school, 7/8th grade math and after those two years he left teaching.

In high school I found again I did not fit well but I did get into the school band and it served me well for the 4 years. The band teacher, Miss Gibson, liked me I guess. She tried to teach me the trumpet the first year. The second year she put me on the bass drum. Then she decided to make me the Drum Major to lead the band. This suited me well. When I was in class I could hang out in trumpet section or drum section. When marching I was told

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that I was leading the band and that all I had to do was follow those girls in the short skirts, the majorettes. They were always in front of us all..... I could do that!! She sent me to Drum Major school one summer for a week to Squaw Valley. It was great spent most my time riding horses and walking on mountain. Yes, there were some classes to attend, so I tried to make at least one a day, if time allowed. The second year for the summer she sent me to Santa Cruz for a week and I really don't remember any classes there. Mostly 4-5 of us would walk into town to the boardwalk and have fun around the beach.

Now one of the things I might have missed in classes was how to use tall hat, plume and baton. On the very first event I was leading the band for our first football game I learned the hard way. The hat was designed for both left and right handed people. So, when you put the plume in hat, it slides into holder on either side. I put it on the right side. So here I am standing under the goal posts as half-time comes and I blew my whistle and twirled my baton and knocked my tall hat down over my eyes as the baton hit the plume on the right side. I am right handed. But I tilted head back and moved out, barely able to see where I was going.

For my purpose here, I will just say I got my first car before I got a drivers license and then as a junior got a second car, so I had two cars in high school. I lived about 300 yards from the high

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school. I drove every day, down driveway, up past school, around town and then back to school. Sometimes if early, I would try to beat the bus to a girl I liked and pick her up so she did not have to ride the bus. See story about my cars in high school.

High school was good though except for the year I lost my sister. On Dec 18, 1964 as she was driving into town, she lost control and slammed into a tree. She was killed and my little sister had her legs broken badly. She was in body casts and other until she finally got out of hospital for her birthday in March. I did not do much in school and so I ended up failing all of my semester finals. Most teachers gave me the grade I had before Kathy passed. But the English teacher was a family friend and I guess did not want to show favoritism, so she failed me in English. This did not sit well with dad and he made that very clear. I ate a lot of meals standing up for a while. But I never failed another class.

I had a buddy Danny who had dropped out of school and was kind of the area bad boy. He had sources for obtaining liquor and hosted parties on the beach with bonfires which were not allowed on beach. My cousin Evon was visiting from Arizona one summer and she took a liking to him of course. I tried to keep them apart when I could. We were hanging out at the gas station and they went out to get in his car, so I came running out of the station, used my hand to grab the door jamb to help turn corner

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and it ripped my class ring off my finger, leaving a gash and blood everywhere. Well, they did not leave at least. After she left he met a girl that summer that was a weekend visitor to the beach 5 miles away. This of course led to more trouble but also with hanging out with him and his girlfriend, they decided to set me up with her sister. When I showed up for date, she would not go out with me. We ended up married two years later.

Dad liked to go fishing and hunting, so we made good use of the Dodge panel truck. We would take boat down to the ramp and go out side the bay and dive for abalone and then dig horse neck clams on the way back until the sand bar covered over. Then back home and clean them all. No one seemed concerned I missed a morning of school. Dad and I went hunting once in Mendocino County with the boat. We would nose up to a spot and tie up boat and go looking for deer. Once when we returned we were on a hill looking down over the area where boat was and we saw two fish at the surface, gulping air or just eating flies maybe. Dad said you take the one on left and he took the right one. We shot the fish with our 30-06's and hit them both. When we picked them up later with the boat one, was almost perfectly gutted and cleaned and dad says that was the one he shot. We did not get any deer that trip. Another time we went t Modoc County and had driven up overnight on Wednesday before Thanksgiving. As we got there, we saw does coming over mountain but we could not get

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setup to take a shot. But by lunch time we had had two loaded and headed back home. Just a little late for turkey dinner. A hunt in less than 24 hours with 2 does harvested. Then once we went to a friends cabin in Lasson County and it was the night before season opened and here on the road we see a nice buck. Then he steps off side and starts down mountain, we were standing out there watching thru rifle scopes trying to decide if we should or should not. We did not, but we also did not see another that whole weekend. We thought it would have been funny when I friend Neal would show up in morning to show him a buck keeping warm in his bed!!

Dad and I also went to the North Rim of the Grand Canyon. It was a week after my honeymoon and no we did not take her with us. We got into the camp that uncle Bob had setup and he showed us the buck he had in a tree already. It just walked into his camp the first night he was there. We did not see anything else for the week until the last morning, we were only going out for a short hunt. In that area Bob and dad would stand on top of mountain and send me into the draw to flush out whatever was there. Turned out I took wrong turn in draw was two mountains away when I saw a buck under a tree. When his head moved it was like the whole tree moved. I emptied my rifle and had not yet hit him but now he was down on the other side of draw running cross ways to me so I reloaded two rounds and knelt and hit him. Dad

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and Bob were sure it was not me, since whoever fired had a semi-auto and I just had a bolt action. Well, they finally found out it was me and they got Bobs Jeep at the top of the mountain where I had buck down in the draw. We used all of the winch cable and a couple nylon ropes to get tied to the buck to pull him up. I was helping hold his head up as Bob winched him up but he got stuck on a rock and when I freed him it was like he came alive jumping up another 20-30 ft. We finally got back to camp after lunch to start packing up.

One trip to Northern California to hunt we had a Sgt from dad's unit with us. I was driving age and it was a special treat to be able to drive the International Travalall because it was almost brand new. Dad and his friend were sleeping when in the road I saw a 2x4 and did not want to swerve on the highway so I hit it. Then at the next gas station I saw a dent behind the wheel so I showed dad and fessed up. A month or so later, mom forced dad to tell me he had done that dent running over a rock in Nevada Hunting with Uncle Bernard.

Dad and I always liked going to the San Fransico Boat show each year and I had seen these new, small watercraft, for one person. It was a Hydro cycle and 9ft long and 35 hp outboard to push it. The beginning of what are wave runners today. I had to have one. I got the dealers used one, with 35 hp Mercury on the back of it. I had a great time with it. Mostly I used it in Tomales Bay and on

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occasions, I would follow dad, who was in the 16ft Glasspar bowrider fishing boat, headed out of the mouth of the bay to fish for salmon a few miles off coast. People already thought we were crazy because I used to water ski out over the rollers at the mouth of the bay and into the ocean. I learned to ski in the bay and to me a foot chop was a smooth day. The first time I saw a lake to ski on, I could not believe it was like glass. I took off without a life jacket or anything and showing off fell into the water. I almost drown before they got back around to me. I was so used to skiing with a wet suit and in saltwater, that I did not know I could not really swim.



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Anyway, once we were out in the ocean and trolling for salmon, I would just put the hydro cycle on a rope and tow it. Then ride it back into the bay. It was great surfing it on the rollers coming back in. It was a lot of fun on the lake too. I had a buddy there that had a ski boat, flat bottom and v-8 engine. I would challenge him to drag races. I would win for the first 60 or so yards!!! It took a while for his prop to catch the water and get his ski boat going...

I made a great trip cross country with my Sprite, see cars in high school. I brought Grandpa Warburton from Missouri to Northern California. Grandpa had had a heart attack a couple years prior and he was told not to get worked up or excited, so he did not. As

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we were driving a small wire caught fire inside the car and he just says “Son I think something is burning” with no excitement or urgency in his voice. I pulled over and he just opened his door and rolled out. Another time I had been driving too long and fell asleep and weeds from side of road were coming over the hood. Calmly he says, “Son, I think you need to rest a bit” One morning we stopped for our breakfast, milk and doughnuts, and I was drinking some of the milk as I was driving down the road and he says, “Son, they say you should not drink and drive” He was fun and he was not really able to read but he would not admit it. We would go into a diner and he would look over menu and then when asked what he wanted he would just say, “You have some fried chicken and some milk?” And that’s how he handled it, just asked for what he wanted and diners would find something like that to give him.

When we stopped in Tucson to see relatives, Uncle Bob gave me a couple cans of honey he had harvested. When I was pulling our sleeping bags out of back of Sprite in the North Rim of the Grand Canyon campgrounds, one bag caught on flip top of the can and opened a whole 2lb can of honey in the back of Sprite. We only had cold water and paper towels to clean that up.

We came to a sign as we left Las Vegas that said no gas for 200 miles. A Sprite will not go 200 miles on one tank, so I went back to last gas station and bought a 2 gallon can and filled with gas

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to get us over the mountain.

Well with summer of 1969 finished, it was time to get back to life and I started Santa Rosa Junior College for my Police Science Degree. The 60's were a great time and I think of them often.