

Remembering Eli Ellison

By Mark Stuart Ellison

Eli Ellison, membership director of Sheepshead Bay Chapter 160 during the latter half of the 1980s, died on July 6, 2004 after a long battle with cancer. He was 81. He was also my dad.

My father was really two parents. Throughout my childhood, my mother suffered from an eating disorder and was largely absent from my life. My parents had marital difficulties unrelated to Mom's illness, and they were long divorced by the time Mom died.



Although sociable by nature, Dad was withdrawn for many years due to his unhappy marriage. PWP restored the sparkle in his life. As membership director he made new people feel welcome. An agile and enthusiastic dancer, he enjoyed fox trotting at Parent functions, where he met a soulmate.

My father also wrote poems. Here's one from the Chapter's April 1986 newsletter:

*More important than seeking wealth,
Is being at peace with yourself.
On those wounds we mustn't dwell,
Instead let's listen to the melodious bell,
That guides us to the next incline,
Where luscious grapes will soothe with wine.
For while we didn't stage this scenario,
Of being a player in life's show,
We're learning our part, we're in fashion,
We'll deliver our lines with tempered passion.
The stage has darkened, the lights turned low,
It's time to enjoy the PWP show,
And rejoice in the thought,
That we still retain our inner glow.*

The careers my father chose reflected his courage, and dedication to the less fortunate. A Social Services caseworker from 1968-

69, and a home instruction teacher for 35 years, he worked in some of New York City's worst neighborhoods. He donated frequently to veterans groups and considered his military service a high point of his life.

From 1943 to 1945, my father was an Army Air Corps radio truck operator in Western Europe. There were plenty of ball games and dances, but there were even more buzz bombs and air raids. And Dad didn't always get enough to eat.



He was a communications liaison between lead pilots in fighter squadrons and controllers in operations blocks. Dad was usually five to ten miles behind the front lines, except during the Battle of the Bulge, when he was right on the front lines.

After the war, my father cherished the safety and comfort of America as never before. To him, the peace and prosperity of the United States was blissful compared to the pulverized cities through which he had passed. Whenever I was bothered by a personal problem, Dad always reminded me that no bombs were falling and nobody was shooting at me. To this day, that admonition helps me keep things in perspective.

Shortly before his death, Eli Ellison collaborated with me on Dear Mom, Dad & Ethel: World War II through the Eyes of a Radio Man, a novel based upon his military experiences. It is the product of six years of writing and research. I know the subject in my head, but Dad knew it in his heart and gut because he lived it. ■

About the Author

Mark Stuart Ellison has worked as an attorney and reporter. He can be contacted through his web site www.momdadandethel.com. Dear Mom, Dad & Ethel can be ordered at www.iuniverse.com or by calling 1-877-823-9235.



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