

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, January 31, 2011

Alan Marshall Mancill (1924–1945): Alan and his twin brother, Robert F. Mancill II, were born on October 5, 1924, the sons of Norman B. Mancill and Anna Marshall Mancill. Alan was one of the six grandchildren (four boys and two girls) of Israel and Elizabeth (Lizzie) Marshall, who built Auburn Heights in 1897. The Mancill boys, like F. E. and F. O. Stanley in Kingfield, Maine, two generations before, were simply known as “the twins.” Also like the Stanleys, they had one older brother, Norman Clarence Mancill (1914–1988), the only baby to come into the world at Auburn Heights.

The twins grew up on a property known as Linger Longer on the Kennett Pike between Mendenhall and Hamorton, which their parents had bought in 1923. There was a spacious yard of between two and three acres, with nice, old trees, and a comfortable bungalow with a detached two-car garage. I spent many happy hours on this property playing with the twins, as did Eleanor A. Marshall, our female cousin born the same year who married Benjamin J. Reynolds in 1960. Easter Egg Hunts were an annual event between 1926 and 1939, held alternately at Linger Longer, Woodcrest (Eleanor's parents' home in Yorklyn), and Auburn Heights. All had lawns and many shrubs suitable for hiding eggs, and the fiascos were captured on home movies by Alan's Uncle Clarence (Marshall).

For six weeks in January and February 1935, the Mancills and my parents, along with Sara C. Bowers and her mother, Mary L. Chalfant, of Kennett Square, rented a large vacation home at Southern Pines, North Carolina, owned by the writer Struthers Burt of Philadelphia. Ten of us plus three domestic helpers occupied this elaborate property, and a tutor named Kennedy was hired so that the twins and I could keep up with our schoolwork. The main floor of the mansion had a large entrance hall with a sweeping staircase, a ballroom 30' x 42' with a fireplace, a music room, a library, a small drawing room, a large office off the main hall, and a dining room connecting to an old-fashioned kitchen. Three sides of the house were surrounded by a terrace, and the circuitous gravel driveway was ½ mile long where gateposts connected it to the end of Rhode Island Avenue. Paul T. Barnum, a Southern Pines real estate agent, made three girls' bicycles available to us during our stay (he had three daughters), so the twins and I had wheels. About 4:30 each afternoon, we three boys would sit in front of the home's only radio and listen to “Little Orphan Annie,” “Superman,” “Jungle Jim,” and “Jack Armstrong, the All-American boy.” Uncle Norman and my father were not much for going to the movies, but we all went to see Will Rogers in *Life Begins at Forty* at the local theater and enjoyed it.

In July that year, the twins and I attended camp at Camp Lenape on Fairview Lake near Hawley, Pennsylvania, run by the Kaiser brothers. Bob and I called Alan “Oop” after Alley Oop in the funnies. His father called him “Tick” (he called his son Norman “Bear”). Alan was easygoing and always happy. Everything suited him.

Uncle Norman Mancill died in late February 1937, and soon thereafter Aunt Anna and the twins moved to a slightly larger but more modern bungalow on Locust Lane near the Kennett Country Club. “Normie” was attending Penn State, but he soon terminated his education to operate and then close out his father's earth-moving business. After he started working under Roy Bengé at the Marshall Brothers paper mill, Norman C. Mancill married June Baker in June 1940, and they moved into Linger Longer.

The twins, as well as Eleanor and I, attended Wilmington Friends School, but the Mancills transferred to George School, a Quaker boarding school in Newtown, Pennsylvania, in 1940 or 1941. In the 12 months or so that followed the attack on Pearl Harbor, able-bodied young men of our age realized we were going to be drafted into the military. In the Class of 1943, Alan and Bob were drafted and called to active duty in the infantry immediately after graduation. They trained first at Camp Hood, Texas, and then at New Mexico State University at Las Cruces. Finally in late spring of 1944, they were at Abilene, Texas, preparing to be sent to the European theater. They were in the same unit and were never separated.

During the third week of June 1944, Clifford C. Ham and I were driving to our new weather forecasting assignments in the southwest, and we stopped at Abilene to see the twins. We found they were to be out all

night on a bivouac, and they suggested we sleep in their bunks, which we did. About 5 A.M. the occupants of the barracks returned, so we had a short night. Bob had KP the next morning, but Alan got a pass to go with me and Cliff Ham into Abilene, a few miles away. We dropped Cliff off at the bus station, where he boarded a bus for the final leg of his trip to a base in Arizona. The movie theaters in army towns were open almost 24 hours a day, so Alan and I went to the movies, although taking naps would have made more sense. When we came out about noon, the temperature must have been 100 degrees. I took Alan back to the base and made my way west toward Roswell, New Mexico, alone. I never saw him again. The twins' division went to France in midsummer, and Alan was killed by a Nazi sniper near Colmar on the Rhine about January 16, 1945. His twin brother witnessed the whole thing and was taken prisoner. Their mother knew both her boys were missing, and she learned of Alan's death in early March. She didn't know of Bob's fate until he was released just before V-E day in early May 1945. Out of my 12 first cousins, Bob Mancill is the only one still alive.