

## My Life of Brushes with Danger

*By Dennis Payton Knight*

It was fraught with peril, but I was fearless as I made my assault on the barrier and faced with readied hands the fearsome pack of five hundred. I broke through and the first, courageous vanguard came fluttering at me like an eagle on the wing. I fainted, seized my opponent in one grasp with the finesse of a nimble jujitsu artist, and rolled him single handedly under the forceful platen of my Model 19 Remington. 499 others stayed menacingly but smartly in their formation. I had emerged victorious in yet another brush with the ultimate danger facing an Army typist, the dreaded paper cut.

I spent thirty-four months in the hazardous theater of the paper wars. Most will likely never experience as many harrowing brushes with danger as I did in my Army years, having typed my way through cases and cases of razor-like U.S. Army-issue 20-pound bond. I did suffer periods of bloodied, painful convalescence but lived through them all, surviving with the help of a box of band-aids purloined from the medics; not enough to get me a Purple Heart. But it should have been.

I thought I would engage as a civilian in less dangerous pursuits. But fate has put her trust in me and has sent me into battle time and again against opponents demanding courage that would make even the brave Audie Murphy cower.

In my retail years I dealt with brigades of heavily armored Marx trucks. You know, the kind we had as kids with their tin fenders fastened to the tin body with tin tabs. Innocent enough, but capable of removing an entire thumbnail in one skirmish. I got glossed in cosmetics, recoated in the paint department, cultivated, weeded and uprooted in the garden center, unhinged in hardware, and lost for a week in bras and girdles.

Somehow, I finally found my way out of the retail jungle, into the gut-wrenching experience of paralegalism, and right back into the battlefield of paper cuts. I held my own for over three decades, fighting through avalanches of law books, and sometimes violent, one-on-one combat with that nuclear-weapon of American office warfare, the dreaded Xerox machine. I typed many a petition to the powers that be to right the wrongs, to writ the rights and to write the writs. I alphabetized, bates-numbered, redacted, indexed, exhibited, allocated, summoned, complained and responded. I deeded, declared, demanded, exemplified and subpoenaed. I transcribed, transmitted and, for an extra five bucks, notarized. And if affidavit was a verb, I did that, too.

And now I am in what has been identified as my retirement years. It is an oxymoron when you think about it. Why would we, after fifty years getting tired of working, turn around and re-tire? Instead, I'm calling it my "untirement" and, to prove it, I have gotten myself on the Board of Directors for my very large homeowners association, Windsor Gardens. One more brush with danger.