



Elizabeth Kauffman Bush

**AMERICA'S  
FIRST  
FROGMAN**

**The Draper Kauffman Story**

Foreword by President George H. W. Bush

# AMERICA'S FIRST FROGMAN

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This book has been brought to publication with the generous assistance of Marguerite and Gerry  
Lenfest.

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*Portrait by Alice V. Knight*

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The Draper Kauffman Story

**Elizabeth K. Bush**

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This book is dedicated with love to my husband, Pres, whom Draper so greatly admired, and without whose encouragement this story would never have been written.

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—*E. K.*



# Foreword

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THIS BOOK IS ABOUT a true American hero. It is about “duty, honor, and country.” It is about service and sacrifice.

When Adm. Draper Kauffman’s sister, my own sister-in-law, asked me to write this brief introduction, I set aside my policy of not writing forewords or blurbs for books. I did this because of my great respect for Adm. Draper Kauffman, about whom this book is written.

In the summer of 1944 my torpedo bomber squadron, VT-51, based aboard the carrier USS *San Jacinto* covered some of the landings on Guam and Saipan. I remember vividly the sight of the Marines going ashore in the face of severe enemy fire. I remember thinking rather selfishly, “Thank God I am a pilot, not one of those Marines going in there to face hell. In an hour I’ll be back aboard ship in clean clothes, in great quarters, and with great food, and these guys will be trying to advance one hundred yards in the face of enemy fire.”

What this nineteen-year-old navy pilot didn’t know at that time was what had transpired before the Marines landed. I knew nothing about the frogmen, nothing about those courageous underwater men who bravely paved the way for the Marines.

I didn’t realize that Draper Kauffman, whom I barely knew then, was not only a pioneer in the field but also a fearless leader who put his own life on the line right next to the men whom he had trained and whom he led into harm’s way.

This book tells of the heroism of the underwater demolition teams. It also tells about Draper’s service in France in 1940, his being taken prisoner by the Germans, and of being part of a truly brave group of men in the British navy in 1940–41 who rendered safe the German time bombs and mines.

In 1941 he transferred to the U.S. Navy, where he developed a bomb disposal team, joining again with selfless, courageous volunteers in this still-vital work.

In telling us about her brother’s life of service and dedication, Beth Bush also defines sacrifice and heroism.

The question is rhetorically asked, “Where do we find such men?” My answer is that when a crisis arises, the United States will always find such men. We found them in Desert Storm, in Vietnam, and in Korea. Surely we found them in World War II, and now we find them in Afghanistan and Iraq. Draper Kauffman is one such man who brought honor and credit to the uniform he wore.

Day in and day out, he laid his life on the line for his country. He was a true leader. He always put his men first. He went in early and often. He led by his own courage. Draper Kauffman, proud officer in the U.S. Navy, defines for me what service to country is all about.

I was very proud to have been a lowly lieutenant (jg) in the navy during WWII. There I learned firsthand about service to country. And I learned a lot about sacrifice and patriotism.

Much later, as president of the United States, I was proud to have been the commander in chief of our armed forces. In both these incarnations, my appreciation for those who served was honed, my appreciation for real heroes sharpened to a fine edge. My respect for the U.S. military knows no bounds.

Adm. Draper Kauffman’s commitment to service and his exemplary record have reinforced my views on duty, honor, and country.

Who says there are no American heroes? Draper Kauffman was a true hero. This book tells why.

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George H. W. Bush

## Preface

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IN JULY 1942 *Time* magazine ran an article about an American who had joined the British navy. It told how, in November 1941, in the lobby of London's Savoy Hotel, some reporters got to chatting with a fellow American who, they noticed, was wearing a uniform of the Royal Navy. The reporters wanted to know why. The American said he had been in the Royal Navy exactly one year and was going stateside for a month's leave the next day.

"I'm supposed to be a naval officer," the young man said, "but they won't let me go to sea!" He wore spectacles, and after a pause he added, "Bum eyes. They threw me out of the U.S. Navy." His voice was bitter. "They've got me on shore duty, nursing those goddam land mines. Nothing like what those pilots do," he mourned.

The reporters looked at one another, silent. They knew that land mine duty in Britain took at least as much courage as being a fighter pilot.

His name was Draper Kauffman, he said, and his father was Rear Adm. James L. Kauffman, the commander of U.S. Navy defenses in the Gulf of Mexico.

"Fat lot of good that connection did me," said Lieutenant Kauffman. "Eyes went bad on me just after I finished at Annapolis."

The article concluded: "While Lieut. Kauffman, R.N., was on leave in the U.S., the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. The U.S. Navy then found Draper Kauffman's eyes and experience good enough for war. Last week Secretary Knox awarded Lieut. Kauffman, [USNR], the Navy Cross for exceptional heroism. His deed: unloading and examining a live, 500-lb., Japanese bomb, which failed to explode when it hit an Army field in Hawaii, last Dec. 7."

Draper Laurence Kauffman was my brother, and that Navy Cross was just one of a series of distinctions that would make his unique career. This is the story of Draper Kauffman, who graduated from the Naval Academy in 1933 but failed to gain a commission on account of defective eyesight and who, despite this inauspicious beginning, went on to become a hero in World War II, an admiral and—ironically—superintendent of the U.S. Naval Academy. It is the record of a naval career that was not only successful but also, in the annals of the U.S. Navy, surely one of the most unusual.

After being forced out of the navy in 1933, Draper was employed by a New York-based steamship company, the U.S. Lines, which sent him to Germany at the very time Hitler was hammering in the shape that country's collective mind-set. Draper's deep-seated reaction to events unfolding in Nazi Germany would shape the course of his life for years to come. It would compel him to travel to wartime France, where he served in the American Volunteer Ambulance Corps and was taken prisoner by the Germans; he became a British naval officer and eventually, when the United States had its rude awakening at Pearl Harbor, found himself back in the fold of the U.S. Navy. Draper's subsequent career setting up the navy's first bomb disposal and underwater demolition schools, and later serving as a UDT (underwater demolition team) commander in the Pacific, is a story of great leadership and unyielding determination.

This is also the story of Draper Kauffman's relationship with his family—most notably, with his father, Adm. James Laurence Kauffman, who had an impressive career in his own right as well as a profound influence on Draper's development.

Both my brother and my father had a genius for leadership. Dad focused his talents on his great

loves—the sea and ships, especially destroyers—and inspired a generation of officers who commanded surface ships. Draper was superb at revolutionizing groups and creating new organizations from scratch. He loved the navy deeply and thought that it brought out the best in people. It is no accident that the Naval Academy's Leadership Prize is named for Draper Kauffman.

Both men, at one point or another, appeared sidetracked in their naval careers and still went on to make flag rank. Both had a passion for command. They relished the role of having final responsibility and were unhappy if the buck did not stop with them.

Both were lucky enough to have supportive wives who enjoyed the challenges of navy life, who were uncommonly adept at handling them, and who brought their influence to bear on several generations of navy wives, an accomplishment not to be taken lightly.

Both believed deeply in serving their nation; both turned down lucrative civilian jobs to remain in the navy. Both believed that the opportunity to “make a difference” was a far greater reward than fame or wealth. Draper's son, Draper Jr., once jokingly chided his father for not parlaying his conspicuous wartime role into fame and fortune. His father replied that it was rare for anybody to be given the chance to serve his country in an important way—that the opportunity alone was worth far more than wealth and left a legacy far more enduring than fame. That was a belief he shared with his own father, one that above all defined their lives.

WHILE I WAS writing this book, a great nucleus of information was Draper's oral history, produced under John Mason's program at the U.S. Naval Institute. Dr. Mason had a deeply intelligent, sensitive approach to oral history and developed great rapport with Draper. He ended the oral history saying, “These interviews are fitting and perceptive accounts of a dynamic, innovative officer, a humanitarian par excellence—a thoroughly lovable man!” I also availed myself of numerous speeches, letters, and articles by and about Draper.

A source for writing the first chapter about Draper's time in France was Col. J. A. Frécaut, whom I had the good fortune to meet in Alsace-Lorraine while he was doing his own research on the war. He escorted my husband, Pres, and me, and Draper's daughter Kelsey Kauffman to the villages where Draper had driven his ambulance. Colonel Frécaut also took us to the location of the German prisoner-of-war camp in Lunéville, where my brother was held. When he finished his own research into the war in that region, he kindly sent me a copy of his published account, “La Vie en Lunéville, 1939–1945.”

For the second chapter, about bomb and mine disposal in Britain, I had invaluable help from men involved in that dangerous work—men who possessed the inimitable British gift for understatement and who were inordinately modest, though many had been awarded Britain's prestigious George Cross for their heroic accomplishments: Lt. Comdrs. John Ouvry and Horace Taylor, Capt. Roger Lewis, Adm. Geoffrey Thistleton-Smith, army captain A. B. Waters, and Maj. J. D. Hudson. Maj. Arthur Hogben, author of *Designed to Kill*, kindly gave me a tour of the explosives museum outside London that houses samples of the German bombs and mines Hitler rained down on Britain. I was given a tour of HMS *Vernon* and was surprised to find that the people there are still deeply involved in bomb disposal work. I also had helpful visits with Moe Archer, who worked with my brother on a George mine in England and later at Pearl Harbor, and with Philip David, also briefly in England, who later followed in Draper's footsteps as head of the U.S. Navy Bomb Disposal School. Philip wrote the history of the school, which he kindly loaned me.

For later chapters, I'm indebted to James Barnes and the board of directors of the UDT-SEA Museum in Fort Pierce, Florida, for giving me access to source materials. The executive director H. Aldhizer painstakingly removed photographs from the museum walls after hours and had them photocopied for my use. My heartfelt thanks also go to board member Bob Marshall, who during the

Pacific war served as executive officer of UDT 5, which Draper commanded, and who fought alongside my brother. Bob has filled me in on innumerable details and recounted some funny stories.

Draper's wife, my sister-in-law and best friend, Peggy Tuckerman Kauffman, gave me needed encouragement when I first set out to write this book. Sadly, she died soon after my brother. How I miss her, and how I wish she had been here as the story of her husband took shape. Draper's eldest daughter, Cary (the baby in this book), a beloved Unitarian minister, gave me welcome advice from time to time; sadly, she too has died. Draper's son, Draper Laurence Kauffman Jr., and daughter, Kelsey Kauffman—both PhDs and published authors—were tremendously generous with their help. I also relied on notes that Draper Jr.'s wife, Susan, jotted down when my brother was still alive, telling me his unforgettable stories.

Pres's and my children were a source of inspiration. Over the years, our daughter, Kelsey Bush Nadeau, found background books that were invaluable to me as I was writing, and our son Jamie Bush was a tireless advocate, putting me in touch with Hugh Hewitt, a writer and TV and radio show host, and through Hewitt, the authors Merrill Bartlett and Michael Levin. Our son, and Draper's godson, Prescott Bush III recorded thoughtful comments about his uncle.

While dwelling on family, I want to express special gratitude to Pres's brother, George Bush. Former presidents are flooded with requests to promote books, and though George has a policy of refusing such requests, he graciously agreed to pen the foreword to this book. George had a great rapport with my brother; he has been the speaker at a number of events in his honor, including the christening of the USS *Kauffman*, a guided missile frigate named after Draper and my father.

I am also profoundly grateful to men like Robert Eigell, Jim Warnock, Dan Dillon, Tony Watson, and Bruce Beame, who, when they heard what I was writing, recorded their memories of Draper, some of which have found their way into these pages.

And then there is the contribution of Peter Blanchard. Peter was always on call to tame my word processor and keep me from throwing it out the window. Without his computer expertise and his patience with a woman who was schooled in longhand, I would have been composing the manuscript with a pen.

Three people are most responsible for this book in its civilized state. The first is Al Viebranz. After writing the first few drafts, I became discouraged and was ready to walk away from the whole enterprise. Then Al, a neighbor and friend as well as a published writer, read it and was so intrigued by the story that he offered to show me how to put things together. Thanks to his know-how, ability, and enthusiasm, I was back in business.

But I was still not satisfied, and Al understood how I felt. A friend and author, William Ewald, asked his friend and author, Capt. Edward L. Beach (author of *Run Silent, Run Deep*), to give me advice. Captain Beach had served in the navy with my father, about whom he told some marvelous stories. He put me in touch with Constance Buchanan, a superb freelance editor and a delight to work with; she helped me put the manuscript into almost final form to go to the Naval Institute Press where executive editor Paul Wilderson has a marvelous talent for leading frustrated authors through to publication.

Last and most important, there is my eternally patient husband, Pres, who supported me without question when it seemed as if I was eternally writing. Pres was always there to help me choose the right word or phrase, a wonderful talent of his. His enthusiasm for Draper's story never dimmed (if my brothers-in-law could have been closer), and that, more than anything, kept me going until the end.

IN THE PREFACE to her book about her mother, *Clementine Churchill: The Biography of a Marriage*

Mary Soames writes, “One curious effect of writing about my parents is that as time and the book go on, I myself from being an observer in the wings become involved as a witness in the story, and background ‘incidental’ participant in events which have shaped and shaken all our lives” (vii). This is precisely how I felt as I delved into my brother’s career. In the beginning, I kept my presence to a minimum. Then I realized that Draper’s story couldn’t be separated from my story or that of the rest of our family—or indeed, from the events that shaped so many millions of lives during World War I. Like Mrs. Soames, I became an incidental participant in the tumult of that era.

Of course, there’s a big difference between being an incidental participant and an active one. Over time and again, my brother Draper placed himself in the middle of the fray—in France, in Britain, and in sundry spots in the vast Pacific. All of this put his character to the ultimate test, and each time he rose to the challenge. Draper was born with charisma and drive; over time, he became a dynamic and outstanding leader. Draper’s courage was contagious; those who followed him became as courageous as he. Through active participation in the war, Draper Kauffman did his part to shape the future, and it is that, above all, that inspired me to write this account of his remarkable service during and after World War II.

# AMERICA'S FIRST FROGMAN

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## An Ambulance Driver in Alsace-Lorraine

EARLY IN THE MORNING OF 10 MAY 1940—NOT LONG AFTER MIDNIGHT—Draper Kauffman reported to his new job in the French region of Alsace-Lorraine. It was his first day, officially, as an ambulance driver for the French army. The decision to go to France was made without considering the feelings of his immediate family. “STOP HIM IMMEDIATELY !” his mother had cabled his father at sea as soon as she caught wind of Draper’s resolve. He was getting embroiled in a war that the United States wanted nothing to do with. But no amount of stern lecturing from Capt. James Laurence “Reggie” Kauffman, USN, could persuade his son to veer from the rocky road down which he was heading. As his mother once said about Draper, “He always says ‘Yes dear,’ then does exactly what he pleases.”

Kauffman’s first day as an ambulance driver happened to be the very day that western Europe came apart at the seams. On 10 May German armies invaded Holland, Luxembourg, and Belgium, smashing through what was thought to be the impassable Ardennes Forest toward France. Hitler’s actions in May 1940 were the starkest indication yet of his designs on Europe. In 1938 the führer had annexed Austria and invaded Czechoslovakia, managing to justify his actions to France and Britain, which, only twenty years after the Great War and the loss of almost an entire generation of young men, were anxious to maintain peace at any cost. Not until September 1939, when Hitler marched into Poland, with which France and Britain had a treaty, did those countries feel compelled to declare war on Germany. The declaration, however, had no effect on Poland’s fate; without armed Allied support that nation quickly succumbed.

An uneasy quiet settled over Europe, an eight-month lull that became known in England and the United States as the phony war; in France, the *drôle de guerre*. Under cover of silence, Hitler was consolidating his gains—plundering resources from the territories he’d invaded or overrun, transporting entire factories with hundreds of workers to Germany, establishing concentration camps, and strengthening his war-making capabilities and his defenses. It is hard to believe today how little of that behind-the-scenes activity got through to the rest of the world, or rather how entrenched the world was in wishful thinking. That see-no-evil stance had less to do with Hitler’s gagged press than with a world grown weary of war and depression.

One of the führer’s efforts during the phony war was construction of a series of defenses known as the Siegfried Line. The Siegfried Line lay along the French-German border, almost parallel to France’s own defensive Maginot Line. In some places, including Alsace-Lorraine where Draper Kauffman would soon be, the two lines were a mere ten miles apart. The Siegfried Line fooled the



French into thinking that Hitler planned to fight a war of fixed defenses. Far from it. Unbeknownst to French military leaders, the führer's intention was to launch a swift, aggressive invasion of France and to send the bulk of his forces around or over, not through, the Maginot Line.

The Maginot Line was a series of fortifications in the east of France where that country bordered on Switzerland, Germany, and Luxembourg. This elaborate defensive frontier consisted of six-story underground forts, pillboxes, barracks, hospitals, power stations, miniature railroads, and casemates with their guns pointed east toward the potential enemy. The French government had built it at enormous cost after World War I and convinced the French people that it was impregnable. So secure did the French military feel with this snaking steel and concrete colossus that they had conscription and neglected to update weaponry—they did not have a single new tank. During the phony war, French army divisions stationed on the Maginot Line made no attempt to shell Germany's portion of the Saar River, which was industrialized and within easy range of their heavy artillery. In fact, the French did little more than probe the Siegfried Line around Saarbrücken, in northeastern France. Captured German soldiers apparently claimed not to know that war had been declared between their country and France—which only confirmed the French army's sense of security.

The problem with the Maginot Line was that it stopped short of the supposedly impenetrable Ardennes Forest to the northwest. That, as events proved, was a fatal miscalculation. On 14 May 1940 German army divisions that had muscled their way through a gap in the Ardennes crossed the River Meuse at Sedan, France, easily outflanking the Maginot Line, while additional army divisions pressed against that line to keep French army units pinned down in the east of France. The divisions that had broken through at Sedan made a swift drive west toward the English Channel. By early June the Germans had routed British, French, and Belgian troops and gained control of northern France. At that point, Hitler abandoned an attempt to cut defending troops off from the sea, husbanding his precious panzers for a drive southward through France, and the routed Allied divisions were evacuated at Dunkirk. With his objective in northern France secured, Hitler's Armies A and B launched their broad attack against points south while Army C continued pressing against the Maginot Line at points east, including where Draper Kauffman was stationed in Alsace-Lorraine, south of Saarbrücken.

On 10 May 1940, as Hitler initiated his opening thrust against western Europe, Kauffman reported for ambulance duty. He was stationed near the town of Sarre Union, about ten miles short of the Maginot Line.

He had arrived there by an unconventional path. Kauffman had graduated from the Naval Academy in 1933 but was refused a commission when he failed to pass the eye exam. He went to work for the U.S. Lines Steamship Company in New York, where he had a good job that he enjoyed—until they sent him as an assistant operations manager to survey their Berlin office in early 1939. The sight of Hitler's huge army and emotional following of thousands struck him as frighteningly ominous. In Germany, he had not the slightest doubt, was planning to go to war. When indeed that happened, Kauffman joined the American Volunteer Ambulance Corps because at the time, with isolationist sentiment strong in the United States, it seemed the only way he could play a part in helping to slow Hitler's advance. He arrived in Paris in March and went through ambulance driver training.

On 10 May he volunteered to go to an advance post six miles beyond the Maginot Line, just five miles short of Hitler's Siegfried Line, a no-man's-land between the two lines that was patrolled by a volunteer group from the French army called the Corps Franc. The Corps Franc was an extraordinary collection of elite fighters—"as brave a group as I've ever come across," Kauffman would later write in a rare, twenty-page letter home to the family. At the time his mother and sister were living in California; his father was commanding a squadron of destroyers in the Caribbean. "You were either accepted by the Corps Franc or you weren't accepted," Kauffman went on, "and the two were mil-

apart.” In the horrible weeks that were to follow, as French troops staved off German attacks across the Maginot Line, Kauffman would be inspired by the valor and tenacity exhibited by the men of the Corps Franc. “There wasn’t anything they wouldn’t do for you,” he wrote. “If one member of the patrol was trapped and there were five others, they would attack fifty Germans to try to free the one man who was trapped.”

For Draper Kauffman, that first day at his post was truly a baptism by fire. A couple of Corps Franc men came racing up on bicycles exclaiming that they had many men wounded near Frauenberg and requesting an ambulance to go for them. Kauffman volunteered for the duty and picked as the chief stretcher-bearer a man by the name of Gauvoi, who looked the calmest of the would-be volunteers. “I never would have done this if I’d known what it would be like,” Kauffman confessed in his letter. “So many shells exploded in the road ahead ... that my only instinct was to drive as fast as possible and I damn near wrecked the car doing it. When we picked up the wounded, the attendant calmly asked me to drive slowly so as not to jolt them. I ... kept below twenty kilometers an hour—though every second on that road it seemed to me increased their chances of really getting killed. After we got them transferred to another ambulance to go back to the hospital, I sat in my driver’s seat and started shaking like a leaf.” From that moment on, Kauffman understood how an infantryman could freeze, and how a soldier could run away.

While he was collecting himself, several more Corps Franc men came tearing down the road on bicycles and asked him to go again. He wanted to refuse. “I certainly would have if I’d been a Frenchman,” he offered candidly, “or an American with Americans, but I couldn’t very well disgrace us with them. I’ll never again be as scared or feel as sick, but I think I covered it up so they thought I was cheerfully volunteering. The second trip was as bad as the first, with terribly wounded ones to be lifted and carried. Incidentally, both Gauvoi and I got Croix de Guerres for those trips. But more important at the time was my invitation to dinner that night with the Corps Franc.”

On the first night at dinner there were 120 volunteers of the Corps Franc—of those only 14 would be alive and uninjured when Hitler’s army breached the Maginot Line near Saarbrücken on 16 June. Draper Kauffman took his place among them, struggling to *tutoyer*. His school-boy French was barely adequate to the task of the formal *vous*, and now he was being called upon to address this close-knit group with the familiar *tu*. He sat between a nineteen-year-old lieutenant named Toine and the fellow who had asked him to drive to the scene of carnage, Marcel. Toine was small, a gentleman of the finest, most sensitive type, and, in spite of his young age, very old school in his courteous manner and courtly bearing. Marcel was a large strapping farmer of twenty-eight, rough in bearing and manner. But their obvious differences mattered not at all. The Marcells and the Toines were brothers in the Corps Franc.

The elaborate dinner ritual struck Kauffman as a scene he might see in a movie. Each man killed since the previous night was solemnly toasted. Next someone read out the names of the wounded and they were toasted. Then the assembly drank to the American in their midst and he was allowed to make the final toast. “Confusion to Hitler and long live France!” The reigning spirit of selflessness was so grand it was contagious, and from that time on it enabled Kauffman to perform his job without caving in to fear.

He received a separate invitation to dinner each night, though he could accept only three more times because he almost never had enough time to sit down to eat. The friendships that these gatherings nurtured were in one way good, but they made the war and its horrors far more personal and terrible for Kauffman because every time he went to collect the wounded there was at least one in each load who was a friend. “You sincerely call a man a friend in a very short time when things are hot,” he wrote in his letter home. “This climaxed one day when I picked Toine off the field with his face ha

gone, one arm shot to pieces, and his left foot gone. When we got him into the light of the Poste Secours I almost gave way, and he didn't help any by winking at me with his good eye and squeezing my hand with his good one."

In early June Kauffman was sent to a rear post called Berig, in the French countryside, for some rest and recreation. There he wrote his mother to reassure her:

Today I am feeling like a million dollars! I have had twenty-eight hours' sleep, a shower, and a delicious hot meal, the first in nearly three weeks. I am in a post in the rear getting a rest and fully enjoying it. That shower was the most marvelous thing you could imagine!

Another driver and myself are billeted with a wonderful French peasant family, with lots of milk, bread, butter—oh, all the things we've wanted. This is really R&R. The war is going on all around us but doesn't touch us. There is a large open hospital here where we make only about one trip a day, and that is usually to hospitals farther back, so they are not dangerous at all. The French treat us all like kings. From their soldiers second class to their generals they are all marvelous to us.

You and Dad may have thought the French didn't really need us, but that is most definitely changed. They have needed us badly these last few weeks, and I feel we have saved the lives of many who would have died if we hadn't been here.

One incident I think of. I went out as a stretcher-bearer the other day (the regiment was short of stretcher-bearers) and we picked up a young junior lieutenant, age twenty-two. His leg had been shot away but a quick tourniquet around the stump kept him from bleeding to death. We didn't say a word till we got to the car that had the American flag on it. He then asked in slow, perfect English, "Are you an American?" I said yes and he replied simply, "Thank you so much that you are here," and then passed out cold....

I wish I knew what America is thinking now. I have had no news ... since leaving our base. I suppose all stories from this side are labeled propaganda but there are two simple facts for which I can vouch.

One: the Germans frequently and obviously fire on the Red Cross when there is no chance of mistaking it.... We have all begged the directors in Paris to let us take the Red Cross off our cars as well as the American flag. They have agreed to our camouflaging the top and removing the Red Cross there, but they want it kept on the sides—I think from a public relations standpoint.

Two: The French treat German prisoners who are wounded with the greatest care in the world. If I bring in four wounded—two French and two German—they are treated in the order of the seriousness of the wounds and no favoritism shown. I have had German wounded who spoke English and who have told me that they couldn't understand it.... Well, every nation has its ruffians and gangsters, but Germany seems to be a nation of gangsters, when in military uniform anyway.

In Berig, Kauffman grew close to a group of junior doctors, much like American interns, with whom he dined. On 10 June while they were eating together, the president of France came on the radio to announce that Italy had joined Germany in the war. There was a feeling of great bitterness toward Italy, and when the radio began playing "La Marseillaise" everybody jumped to their feet. "It must be the most exhilarating national anthem in the world," Kauffman declared to his family.

By 14 June German forces advancing from the north of France had reached Paris. French troops on the Maginot Line fought valiantly and refused to surrender, but the main German thrust outflanked them and took them from the rear. On 16 June Hitler's Army C quickly breached the demoralized Maginot defenses at Saarbrücken and Colmar, while the French army reeled into a headlong southern

retreat, slowed by the panicked exodus of civilians seeking safety in southern France. The roads were clogged, and German pilots in Heinkels roared over at tree level, strafing the helpless tide. More fervently than ever, Draper Kauffman prayed that America would intervene. It seemed as if his prayers had been answered when, during a power blackout, notices appeared at the Berig town hall announcing that the United States had entered the war. Apparently similar notices were posted in other towns. The French reacted with wild enthusiasm—and then, thirty-six hours later, came the grim news that it had all been a mistake and the United States had not declared war after all. “It was brilliant propaganda on the part of the Germans, if they did it,” Kauffman explained in a letter home, “because the enormous relief was followed by an even more enormous letdown.” And yet “the French never showed resentment to us.... I’d have thought they would.”

A few days after Kauffman left Berig news came that his doctor friends had all been killed. It seemed that they were in their medical tent marked with a huge Red Cross when German bombs were released their deadly cargo.

Despair overcame the French in the latter half of June as the German invasion advanced and pushed south. Kauffman joined the wave of French army units retreating before this juggernaut. The French used American ambulances for the last-minute evacuation of towns and hospitals because, as the French general explained, troops seeing an American ambulance going back up north to the front to get the wounded was good for morale.

Kauffman drove the last vehicle out of Baccarat, southeast of Nancy, and the last one out of nearby Lunéville before the bridge there was demolished by French forces hoping to slow the German advance. Then he was sent back north to Sarre Union to evacuate civilians who had been given two days to leave. It was tragic—the very old and the very young in carts, the rest walking and carrying what little they could and dropping much of it along the way. This was not the first time the old people had been forcibly evacuated from their homes because of the Germans. It was not surprising that they felt bitterness toward the Germans and also toward their own government for being so unprepared.

At one point Kauffman and three other ambulance drivers, to avoid being swamped by the flow of refugees, retreated to the top of Mont Repos, where the weather was perfect and the scenery breathtakingly beautiful. The passing cavalcade made for a pitiful contrast. As he explained, “It wasn’t just that the men were in tatters—cloths wound about shoeless feet . . . , blood-stained shirts, improvised bandages on head, arms, legs with blood showing through. The animals . . . trudged along as though each step were to be the last one, and in many cases it was, as there were eleven who had already been shot in our view. The most tragic, however, were the shoulders. That had happened overnight. It was not the sag of exhaustion, it was the complete slump of utter despair coupled with the blank expression of a chaotic bewilderment.”

The Germans had overrun the area and there was no hospital nearby. A French general sent for a volunteer to take wounded fighters through enemy lines to a hospital that had been seized by the Germans. So Kauffman loaded up his ambulance and took along another driver, a lieutenant by the name of Steel who had lived in Europe most of his life and spoke perfect French, German, and English. Upon their arrival at the forward French post, they were told that the German post was only a few kilometers up a winding road. They continued along at a crawl, so slowly that the white flags on the front and top of the ambulance barely flapped in the breeze, while Kauffman continuously dinged the bell and held the door ajar so as not to appear threatening to the enemy.

“I remember the cows browsing in that beautiful scenery,” he wrote, “and finally we came around a bend and saw something move. Jeepers! With no bravery whatsoever, I jammed on the brake and jumped out of the car, threw my hands in the air, and like a grade C movie yelled ‘Kamarad!’ About

dozen Germans had machine guns pointing at us, and there were about eight guns behind the ambulance, pointing at this potential Trojan horse, while we opened the doors. They found that yes, there really were badly wounded men. They actually let us take them to the hospital. But then, when we tried to make a second trip, we heard motorcycles charging up behind us and we knew we'd lost the game."

On 22 June, just six weeks after he had reported for ambulance duty, and one day following the armistice signed by the French and the Germans at Compiègne, Draper Kauffman and his codriver were hauled off to prison camp at Lunéville.

Several thousand Frenchmen and some fifteen Americans were in that German prison camp. When the captured men arrived they were given a questionnaire that included the query, "Have you ever been in Germany?" Kauffman checked no. The prison commandant, who spoke fairly decent English, sent for him one day. As Draper stood before him he looked down on the desk where there was a thick file. He could read his name upside down on the top page.

The commandant said, "Now, have you ever been in Germany?"

"No sir!"

"I suppose," said the German officer, "you are not the Draper Kauffman who went to Germany in 1930 while he was a midshipman at the U.S. Naval Academy and who in 1939 went back to Germany—specifically to Berlin—as an employee of the U.S. Lines Steamship Company?"

Somehow the German military had come up with striking details about Kauffman's most recent jaunt to the German homeland, including the fact that on Good Friday 1939 he was at the Four Seasons Hotel in Berlin, where the concierge had been able to get him a ticket to *Parsifal*, and had said, "How wonderful to see *Parsifal* on Good Friday!" When the concierge had asked how he liked the performance, the young American had replied, "I hate to say so, but I thought it was dreadful." On Easter Sunday, the commandant rattled on, Kauffman had gone out to Sans Souci by bus and been observed talking to a couple on a bench, who had said they were from Iowa. "You know," the commandant quoted Kauffman as saying, "if I were a bomber pilot with orders to bomb a place like this I don't think I could do it." Furthermore, the commandant continued, Kauffman had represented the U.S. Lines at a North Atlantic conference on the shipment of gold, which was flowing out of Europe and was enormously profitable for the steamship lines.

THIS INCREDIBLE German intelligence made a mockery of Kauffman's answers on the questionnaire. Everything the commandant had said was correct. When Kauffman finally agreed that he had been in Germany, the man burst out laughing. "He's doing this just to show me Germany's omniscience," thought the American. It was frightening. How many buildings had Hitler devoted to housing minute detailed records like these?

If the Germans were diligent at spying, they were masters at propaganda. In prison camp they showed a film of the German air force sinking five British battleships. Not until later did Kauffman learn that the entire battle had been faked.

A number of German guards had studied English and wanted to practice their language skills. During those sessions young Kauffman, who became known as a troublemaker, gave them a piece of his mind. "There's no way you're going to keep the United States out of this war," he told them, "and as soon as the United States comes in, it's all over as far as you're concerned. It was proven in 1917-18 and it will be the same thing all over again." The guards discounted what he said. They were firmly convinced that the world had reached a stage where it needed to be run by a homogeneous, efficient group of people, namely, the Germans. As proof of their superiority they now could point to the

demolition in several hundred days of Poland and France, not to mention the subjugation of Austria, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, and Holland. Draper Kauffman's outspoken declarations did not appear to worry them. But occasionally the suggestion of American involvement in the conflict seemed to send a very small cloud into their very blue sky.

The Americans were separated from the French, who had become dispirited, and, except for an occasional kick, the Germans generally left the Americans alone. The Yanks spent most of their time planning to escape, until one day a Frenchman managed that feat. The Germans put the names of all the French prisoners in a box, drew out ten names, lined them up, and shot them while the Americans were forced to watch, aghast. They then said, "If an American escapes, we'll draw ten of your names out of the hat and shoot you." That put an end to any American escape plans. Kauffman and his compatriots made a solemn pact never even to try.

In the United States, Draper's mother had received a typed postcard purportedly from her son announcing that he was safe, in good health, and being well treated by the German army. It bore no postmark or signature. This was at least more encouraging than the only news she had had before, which consisted of a brief newspaper clipping that listed his name among a number of men who had been awarded the Croix de Guerre. Because most of the people mentioned, she discovered, had been killed, Mrs. Kauffman had been racked with miserable uncertainty. Now it seemed that at least he was alive, even if he had been captured. At about this time, Capt. Roscoe Henry Hillenkoetter, U.S. naval attaché in Paris, sent Reggie Kauffman a message at sea saying he had heard his son was safe in prison camp.

The greatest annoyance in prison camp was boredom. But it gave Kauffman considerable time to think about his life up until that point and the family he had left behind. They were small as families went, a close-knit foursome—Draper and his sister, Betty Lou, eleven years his junior, and the mother and father.

Elizabeth Draper Kauffman (known as Elsa) was a charming, beautiful, witty woman who loved to travel, entertain, and tell stories. Her son, Draper, supplied plenty of material for her stories. When he was five his dad was a lieutenant junior grade with the Naval Experiment Station in Annapolis researching the structure of various fuel oils for navy ships. The family lived on the Naval Academy grounds. His mother often chuckled about the time her five-year-old, who spent every waking minute outdoors playing from dawn to dusk, was summoned into the house for disobeying her. He ran in and said, "Hurry up and spank me so I can go back out and play!" Draper was independent at an early age.

Draper and his mother were very close. Because his sister was born so much later and his father was frequently away at sea, for many years it was just the two of them at home together, wherever they happened to pitch their tent as an itinerant navy family. No matter how often they moved, Elsa Kauffman never let go of her firm intention to raise her son in the best possible way, which included making sure he received a good education. The very week he was born in 1911 she began saving twenty cents a week toward his college. In later years, strong-minded and ever resourceful, she took great pains to make sure that he applied himself at Kent School, and she searched for means to combat the near-sightedness that threatened to bar him from entry into the Naval Academy.

In 1917–18, when Reggie Kauffman was away at war, Elsa was stricken with a life-threatening case of flu during the epidemic that killed more people than did the war itself. She was living with Draper at the Peggy Stuart Inn just outside the main gate of the Naval Academy. She quarantined herself and arranged for a maid at the inn to give Draper his meals and take him to and from school. The maid would leave a tray for Mrs. Kauffman outside her closed door, though for quite some time she was too ill to get out of bed and fetch it. One day Draper asked the maid why the Navy Chapel bells rang all day long. "Them's all the funerals," she replied. It was unsettling for Draper to have h

mother so very ill. Elizabeth Kauffman did eventually recover. In order not to worry her husband she did not say a word about her illness to him until after he came home from the war.

Elsa Kauffman's personality made her a good match for her naval officer husband, who shared her zest for life and her sense of humor. He was a man of decision who always laughed about the man who was passed over for captain "because he never could decide whether to say yes or no when either would have done." Reggie Kauffman's own favorite approach to decision making he summed up with a chuckle: "So we compromised and did it my way." But his humor was not the mark of a shallow man. On the contrary, he was philosophical and deeply religious. And he truly loved the navy. Like many midwestern boys—he hailed from Miamisburg, Ohio—he had been drawn to the sea and was happiest aboard ship, happiest of all in command. There was no doubt about that.

He had transmitted that love to his son. While Draper was still quite young his father took him on several short cruises, which were a thrill for him. He looked up to his dad and wanted to be just like him. When he was about nine, his mother took him to meet his father's ship at Coronado, California, where the family had moved from the East Coast. Reggie Kauffman had become a snappy dresser in London during World War I after discovering Gieves and Company, maker of Royal Navy uniforms and top-of-the-line civilian clothes. When Elsa and Draper Kauffman headed down to the dock they found themselves standing next to a burly navy chief. When Reggie Kauffman came off the ship with a dapper walking stick from Gieves, Draper's mother commented mischievously to the chief, "That looks like a nice man coming down the gangway." "Listen lady," replied the chief with obvious pride, "don't let them fancy clothes deceive you none. That's Stormy Kauffman, the toughest destroyer skipper in the navy!" Draper never forgot that.

Although Reggie Kauffman had served on battleships and cruisers, his true love was the destroyer, small enough to "turn on a dime." You knew what made a destroyer tick—each mechanical part—and you got to know every member of her crew personally. It was Draper Kauffman's dream to be a destroyer skipper just like his dad.

He had big shoes to fill, for his father had a naval career that was growing more distinguished with each year. During World War I his first assignment had been as head of the armed guard on a troopship, the SS *Tenadores*, carrying American soldiers to fight in France, the first U.S. troopship to land on those shores. He was then ordered to a destroyer headed for Queenstown, Ireland, where U.S. ships served under the command of the Royal Navy. By the time the Great War was over—when his wife and son watched him step off his ship with that walking stick—Kauffman was a lieutenant commander and captain of his own destroyer. He had been awarded the U.S. Navy's highest medal, the Navy Cross, for distinguished service while engaged in the hazardous duty of patrolling and escorting convoys through waters infested with enemy submarines.

In November 1920 Reggie Kauffman was ordered to Washington, D.C., to head up the Bureau of Engineering's new radio division. During his three years there he was in charge of procuring radio equipment for the navy. He had been offered several civilian jobs, including one with an oil company at many times his navy salary, but he could not imagine giving up a career for which he harbored such a passion. In Washington the Kauffmans had three precious years of family life. Draper attended Saint Alban's School. In 1922, when he was eleven years old, his sister, Elizabeth Louise (Betty Lou), was born. By sheer happenstance, Wallis Spencer, the future wife of the Prince of Wales, served as one of Betty Lou's godmothers. The baby had been diagnosed with a life-threatening ear infection and her distraught mother had asked the minister to come and christen her. A close friend, Marianna Sanderson was called in as godmother, and the baby's father was summoned home and directed to bring someone to act as godfather. At this inauspicious moment Wallis, whose first husband, Winfield Spencer, had just left her in a drunken rage, stopped at the house to pour out her woes to Elsa Kauffman. Elsa to

her visitor, "I haven't got time to listen now, Wallis—but would you like to be Betty Lou's other godmother?"

Draper was to take a very dim view of his sister's godmother, the future Duchess of Windsor. Wallis Spencer had begun an affair with a handsome young secretary at the Argentine embassy and later that year, no doubt owing to the resulting scandal, was dropped from the guest list for a party given by the Italian ambassador. It was considered the event of the year in Washington. Wallis was livid. Having decided it was Elsa Kauffman's fault because the Italian ambassador was a good friend of the family, she stormed into the house, swept past Draper, and lit into his mother with a stream of abuse the likes of which his tender eleven-year-old ears had never heard. "No one has ever spoken to me like that in my life and that's the last time I'm ever going to speak to you!" Mrs. Kauffman snapped, and promptly showed Wallis out of the house.

Several years later Elsa Kauffman was visiting Wallis Spencer's cousin in England, Corinna Murray. "You know, Elsa," her hostess said, not aware of the earlier contretemps, "Wallis is seeing quite a lot of the Prince of Wales, so I've asked them over for drinks while you're here." To which Draper's mother replied, "Since I don't speak to her in my country, I don't know why I should speak to her over here," and found an excuse to absent herself for the evening. She confessed later with a laugh to her son, "I wish I hadn't been quite so principled!"

The Kauffman family had only three years together as a family in Washington, for in 1925 Draper went off to Kent School in Connecticut. When he was a sophomore the family left him behind and moved to Rio de Janeiro, where Reggie Kauffman was sent as a member of the U.S. naval mission helping Brazil, at its request, to improve the caliber of its destroyer force. Draper was fifteen at the time but his little sister was only four, and the family's sojourn in Latin America resulted in a story that Reggie Kauffman always told with amusement about his children's age difference. In his work with the Brazilian navy he came to admire many of the officers he met. But there was one problem: he was having a very difficult time persuading the Brazilian officers in a destroyer group to stay out at sea, even overnight. He argued with them, saying that in a professional navy officers often had to stay at sea for extended periods. He eventually was able to get a few of them to stay aboard his destroyer for almost a week. One morning over coffee in his cabin, one of the Brazilians noticed a picture of Draper and Betty Lou. "Ah, Commandante," he remarked admiringly, "those are two of your children?"

"Yes," replied Kauffman, "my only two."

"But there are many years between them?" the man said, surprised.

"Eleven years."

The Brazilian's face fell. "They keep you that long at sea in your country?"

Despite their age difference and the years of separation, Betty Lou adored her brother. He was so charming and funny with his young sister as he was with the rest of the world, and like so many others, she came under his spell. It helped, of course, that when she was small Draper took time to read to her, frequently *Winnie the Pooh* and *Alice in Wonderland*. He told her that he planned to be a writer, and that he had heard *Alice in Wonderland* was a good thing for aspiring writers to read.

During his years at Kent School, Draper discovered girls. When he was fifteen he sailed down to Rio de Janeiro for summer vacation and during the journey he and a Brazilian boy his age, Luiz, became fast friends. Luiz told him how much he was looking forward to his sixteenth birthday. "Why?" asked Draper. "Because I'm going to be given a girl for my birthday!" replied his friend. When Draper requested the same from his father, he was firmly told that a more North American way was to capture a girl's heart with flowers. He noticed that American ladies seemed crazy about



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