

This monthly article highlights one of our branch members. We hope that you enjoy knowing a little more about your fellow members and the interesting life they have had. If you have someone you would like to nominate or if you would like to help author an article, please email the editor, Ron Nakamoto, at [ron.nakamoto\(at\)yahoo.com](mailto:ron.nakamoto(at)yahoo.com).

Mystery Member



*Mystery Member in
uniform following
discharge in
February 1946*

Do you remember the television game show “What’s My Line?” In 1950, the panelists (Arlene Francis and later Steve Allen, to name a few) would guess a contestants occupation based on some personal history. Well, let’s play!

Contestant: “I was born on a farm in Floodwood, MN but spent most of my formative years in the city of Duluth. I grew up during the Great Depression, in poverty, in a fatherless home with my mother and three siblings. I started work when I was about seven, selling magazines, doing yard work and caddying for golfers. I had a paper route, walking several miles each morning, even in the frigid winters. While in high school, I worked part time in a variety of jobs up to a sales clerk at Sears. Who am I?”

Panelist: “Did you serve in the Armed Forces?”

Contestant: “Yes, I served in the Merchant Marines, the U.S. Army and Air Force.”

Panelist: “Tell me something unique about yourself?”

Contestant: “I have something in common with the former Dictator Saddam Hussein. We both appear on the same page of “Who’s Who in the World” (Marquis 6th edition, 1982-83).”

Panelist: From your humble beginnings did you receive much education?

Contestant: “I graduated from Harvard College and received my AB and MBA from Harvard

Business School. Who am I?” Not sure? As Paul Harvey was often quoted to say “...and now, the rest of the story.”

“When I was seventeen, I served as a deckhand on the Ore boats (actually large ships) traversing the Great Lakes carrying iron ore from the upper Lake Superior ports to the steel mills on Lake Erie. In the fall of 1943, when I was eighteen, I joined the U.S. Army and was assigned to the 34th Medical Depot, initially located in New Guinea and later

on the island of Leyte in the Philippines. En route to Leyte we experienced several Kamikaze attacks, losing three ships from a convoy of twenty- five. (Editor's note: Leyte is part of the Philippines Islands. Gen. Douglas MacArthur waded ashore on Leyte on 20 October, 1944, stating "I have returned.") At Leyte, our part of the island was secured but General MacArthur's forces were still fighting about thirty miles from us. (Yes, some of our guys witnessed the General sitting in a rocking chair on the porch of a native hut smoking a corn cob pipe.)

"The 34th was a huge depot geared to serve the entire Pacific with medical supplies, everything from aspirin to iron lungs with enough equipment to constitute a complete hospital. We also had tons of blood plasma. We always knew when a new campaign was imminent as we were alerted to pre-position whole blood and plasma from our giant refrigerators. The medical depot was organized into four departments, each under the command of a Master Sergeant. I was assigned to the Receiving Department, which processed hundreds of truckloads daily. The depot had its own stockade of 250 Japanese Prisoner of War soldiers to serve as our labor pool. When the head of my department was relieved of duty for medical reasons, I was placed in charge and rapidly (four months) promoted four times from Private First Class to Technical Sergeant, alas, one rank below Master Sergeant.

One day, I foolishly left my pistol lying on my desk while I dealt with matters elsewhere. When I was away from my desk, I saw a prisoner rush to my desk and grab my pistol. With unexpected calmness, I accepted the fact that I was about to be killed and that I had no one but myself to blame for it. Instead, the POW quickly handed me the pistol, just as my Captain came around the corner. He knew that the standard protocol for the unit was for all soldiers to wear their side arms at all times. The POW saw the Captain coming. He had risked his life for my benefit. I was discharged from the Army in 1946 at the age of twenty. I attended college on the G.I. bill and was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the Air Force Reserve.

"I worked for GE in New York City, Honeywell in Minneapolis, Hexcel Corp. in Berkeley, Desa Industries in Baltimore, Courier Terminals in Phoenix, Data Pathing Inc. in Sunnyvale (merged into NCR) and later co- founded my own consulting company. I served as an Accountant, Controller, Executive, Vice President of Finance and Co-Founder and CEO. While at Honeywell, I spent the last two years managing a department of twenty-six programmers running a Datamatic 1000 (\$2M) computer. "I met my wife Helen when we both were in college and working at the Boston Post Office during the 1949 Christmas rush. We went to a movie and out for cokes later. She had a great sense of humor, was very caring and was knowledgeable on every topic I brought up. We married while she was a freshman at Boston Teachers College. We had three children, two grandsons and one great granddaughter. Sadly, my wonderful wife died in 1988.

"I come from a long line of teachers. My mother taught eight grades in a one-room country schoolhouse. I've always felt teaching was an important part of an executive's job. It has been particularly rewarding to me when former employees called to say their

careers flourished from my guidance. “Over the years, I’ve been involved in a lot of volunteer work and social endeavors, mostly professionally related. I have served as the Branch 35 Treasurer and later as the State SIR Treasurer. I was President of the Mid-Peninsula Widows and Widowers organization and Vice President of Bloomington (MN) Civic Theater. I’ve also served on the board of the National Association of Accountants and Junior Achievement. And, I have been a long time member of the Stanford Singles and Mensa organization. At one point in my life I served as a regular panelist on a PBS TV discussion series and as the lead actor on a Philips Company “YouTube” commercial.

“I’ve played golf for many years, badly, though I did have four hole-in-ones. Now I bowl and play bridge, also badly. I used to play casino Blackjack very well. Occasionally, I write letters to the editor (San Jose Mercury News) on political issues and oddly, they publish almost every one. Back in the 1960’s when personal computer programs were simple games, I was writing serious business programs such as income tax planning and Monte Carlo tax estimating. My proudest programming achievement was a sophisticated General Ledger package of programs, which I’ve continued to use for the last fifty years.

I have travelled extensively across the U.S., Europe and Asia. In the process I have been fortunate to meet a large number of celebrities from boxing greats Max Baer, Joe Louis and Muhammad Ali, to Adlai Stevenson, Hubert Humphrey and Gov. Pat Brown in the political arena. I was kissed by Spot (“Our Gang” mascot), been in the same room with Winston Churchill, Harry S. Truman and John F. Kennedy and shook hands with Cary Grant, Shirley MacLaine, Susan Hayward and Clint Eastwood, (in fact, Clint and I dated the same lady.) I attended Louis Armstrong’s 50th birthday party on July 4th, 1950 and heard him jam with Weldon “Jack” Teagarden, famous jazz trombonist and George Shearing, famous blind British jazz pianist.

“My advice for the grandkid generation;

- Take a course in accounting, it is the language of business; don’t be left out.
- Take a computer programming course. Understanding any one of the many languages will give you a basic grasp of the “magic” that impacts every moment of our lives.
- On your first day on the job and everyday thereafter, think about how you can contribute to the company not yourself or your career. Good work always comes full circle.
- Always stay on the high slope of every new job’s learning curve. And move on when you have plateaued.

“If you have not guessed by now, then the jig is up as we are out of article space. My name is Hutch Hutchinson and I have been a SIR member since 1995.”



“... and now you know the rest of the story.”

Epilogue: In the preparation and interview process, I found Hutch to be responsive, alert and conversant. His eyes sparkle and his hands get animated as he barks and jabbars his stories. When asked how he has been able to keep so active and alert over the years, Hutch's response was, “Choose your ancestors wisely; other than that I have no clue.”