



**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15TH, 2020 MORNING MESSAGE**

**TRANSITIONAL PASTOR TED LAND**

**BRADENTON, FLORIDA**

### **Greetings in Christ Jesus!**

The wind blew and the rain fell. Tree limbs and whole trees fell in some places. There was flooding in others. And Tropical Storm Eta passed by.

I think it was Paul Dellgatto, or maybe Steve Jervey that I heard say that this was the largest number of hurricanes on record. It wasn't the weather reported named Cantore, I am sure.

In the weekend after Veterans Day, I am reminded of a couple of tropical storms that were weathered by a couple of soldiers during World War II.

Corporal Clyde Smith (US Army) was my father-in-law. He left a wife and two or three children at home in Raccoon Valley when his time came to be drafted. He was assigned to the Military Police. He spent most of his time in the service in Florida. He was assigned as a guard over the Prisoner of War camps that were a poorly kept secret during the war, and a forgotten one all these years later. Most of the prisoners were German. A few were Italian. They stayed in what had been Civilian Conservation Corps Camps before the war was declared. They did work that would have been done by farm boys who were in the service. They picked oranges. They cut tobacco. They made turpentine in the piney woods.

Corporal Clyde Smith was assigned to a detail that took a number of P.O.W.'s to Miami after a hurricane had blown through Dade County. Their task was to prop up an

orchard of avocado trees that the storm had blown over. His first hurricane, and his first avocado.

Technical Sergeant Theodore Land was in the Pacific, in the Signal Corps, assigned first to the Air Corps, and then as a code clerk to General Douglas McArthur. He was on Okinawa when s typhoon blew through. The way he explained it to me, a typhoon is a hurricane in the Pacific. The tent he shared with another G.I. blew away, and his collection of sea horses was lost to the storm, He had carefully preserved them in alcohol in glass pill bottles. He told of running from his tent to nail a tarp on top of the radio shack, and while he and his tent-mate were doing that, their tent blew away.

Years later, a half century after World War II had ended, and thirty years after my father's death, I was at a Men's Luncheon with the weekly gathering of guys from First Presbyterian Church of Arcadia. A tropical storm had blown through the day before. John White, pushing hard up against ninety, told us about the first tropical storm he had weathered. He was in a tent, on a beach on the island of Okinawa. He and his buddy were holding their tent together to keep it from blowing away, when the roof on the radio shack started flapping. Two soldiers from another tent ran out, and while the big guy spread-eagled on the roof holding down a tarp, the little guy ran around with hammer and nails to secure it. While they were doing that, their tent blew away.

"Did the big guy have dark wavy hair?" I asked John White. "Sure did," replied John. "That was my daddy."

Legend has it that by then Master Sergeant Theodore Land returned from the Pacific Theater of War by ship in San Francisco on February 13, 1946. The WAAC non-com he had married more than two years earlier was there to meet him. They celebrated Valentine's Day at the Mark Hopkins Hotel. On November 14, 1946, their first of four sons was born.

Thank you, all you kind folks from Palma Sola and Westminster Presbyterian Churches, for your birthday cards, calls, emails, wishes.

God blessed me with wonderful parents, with a loving Christian home, with protection through all the storms of life, and with the joy of loving and serving God's people.

When someone asks me, "Are you a veteran?" I answer, "No, but my parents were." If they ask, "Were you in the service, I smile and say, "Sort of."

Your Transitional Pastor,

Ted Land