

1-2-2017

They Don't Call People 'Harvey' Anymore

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Recommended Citation

McGraw, Mark D., "They Don't Call People 'Harvey' Anymore" (2017). *Creative Works*. 67.
https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/creative_work/67

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This is the photo of him that I grew up with. I have a gauzy recollection of going for a walk with him around the neighborhood where he lived the last years of his life, but that may just be a memory attached to another photo I've seen. Harvey Dan McGraw was my grandfather. He died when I was four years old.

He was a short man with a winning smile from a small town in Arkansas who attended the Baptist seminary in Ft. Worth. He met Janice Clonts there, courted her with a borrowed guitar and married her in 1936. I grew up knowing that Harvey served in World War II as an Army chaplain and then as a minister of education and music in Baptist churches in DeRidder and Pineville, Louisiana. His greatness and goodness were the stuff of family legend. My father and uncle told me that they had never heard Harvey McGraw say a bad word. They said they had never seen him get angry. My dad told me that my grandfather, decades after having lived in Texas and Louisiana, could sit down next to any stranger, introduce himself as Harvey McGraw from Arkansas, and be fast friends within a matter of minutes.

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I had always heard that he had Parkinson's, and that his health problems were related to "shell shock" (my grandmother's words) during his World War II service, the details of which he had never related to any of his three children. For years I had intended to request his military records to find out where he had served in the war, but I was always too busy. At some point, though, and I don't remember what prompted it, my Uncle Dan sent me some photos, a medical examination report, and the only record we had of his military days: a form titled "Military Record and Report of Separation - Certificate of Service." The medical forms my Uncle Dan sent me summarized examinations of Harvey McGraw in 1954 and 1957. The findings and diagnoses described a different man than the one I had always heard about. They cited encephalitis resulting from influenza that he had suffered when he was twelve. The examination concentrated on a Parkinsonian tremor in his left arm and an anxiety that caused his speech to run together. Anxiety was mentioned several times in both examinations. Was this anxiety a result of his combat experience or was it a storm of hereditary mental illness bearing down on me and my kids?

The one-page record of military service stated that Harvey McGraw participated in the campaigns at Normandy and Northern France. He deployed to Europe in April 1944 and redeployed back to the U.S. in late January and early February 1945. There was no mention of his unit. Of course, there had been famously hard fighting at the Normandy landing, but it soon turned into an administrative process of disembarking troops and equipment. Had he crossed that beach with the troops under fire or offloaded after the area had been secured? And what was going on in Northern France when he redeployed back to the states in early 1945? I knew VE Day, the day the war officially ended in Europe, was in May, three months after he had been sent to the states. I couldn't imagine a combat unit being rotated back to the states before then. He had to have come back from Europe separate from his unit. I suspected that he had experienced something terrible and had not held up well.

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I thought if I could get more of his records from the Army, including what unit he had been in, with my understanding of the military, I could piece together what had happened to him in Europe. I helped my dad fill out and send in the Standard Form-180 Request for Military Records from the National Archives. We waited for several months.

I live with my grandfather's spirit in Arkadelphia, Arkansas. I teach Spanish at Ouachita Baptist University, where Harvey McGraw graduated in 1932. College was where Harvey became an adult and he loved the years he spent at Ouachita. For the rest of his life, he would say the name of the school, pronounced "WASH-uh-taw," whenever he sneezed. He was a popular, active student. Because only one building still exists from his days on campus, the pictures of Harvey at college seem disconnected from anything I know here, posed in front of unrecognizable buildings, suspended in a black and white youth in a part of the country so poor that the Depression must have arrived and made itself at home without anyone noticing.



Soon after we moved here in 2013 my wife and I renovated an old home near the campus and; as I mow the front yard and weed-eat along the sidewalk, I often wonder if he had ever passed this way as he headed into downtown or to the train station. The Ouachita students I teach now are nice kids, mostly from Arkansas, most with spiritual leanings, a few from small towns in the Ozarks like Altus, where my grandfather grew up. The center of gravity of campus life here is a song-and-dance show in October called "Tiger Tunes." When the football team scores, the little school band plays, "Will the Circle be Unbroken."

About the time I had forgotten about my father's request for my grandfather's military records, my folks received a thick package of photocopied papers, which they then copied and sent to me. I was just

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hoping for information about his World War II combat unit, but what my dad received was about seventy pages, which included promotion certificates, physical exams and reserve officer questionnaires. I pored over the documents and much of my grandfather's military and personal life unfolded before me. As a college student and national guardsman, Harvey McGraw was a hard charger who liked the Army. He served in an Arkansas National Guard Anti-Air machine gun unit in the late 1920's, practical experience which surely gave him an advantage as an Army ROTC cadet at Ouachita, where he served as Cadet Major and Battalion Commander his senior year.



He applied for appointment as a Lieutenant of Infantry in January of 1931, and in the form where he had the option to request assignment in Special Services or Service with Troops, he selected Service with Troops. He was sworn into the Infantry Reserve in May of that year. The officer who was his boss for a six week apprenticeship at Camp McRae, Arkansas wrote, "He is a thoroughly efficient and capable young officer." He weighed 138 lbs. and was twenty-four years old at his commissioning physical exam.

After graduation from college he maintained his affiliation with the Army Reserve while he pastored little churches in Arkansas, Oklahoma and East Texas and attended classes at the Southwest Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth in his spare time. He was promoted to First Lieutenant in 1936. By the time he filled out a Reserve Officers Questionnaire on the day after his 34th birthday in 1940, he was serving as the Director of Education and Assistant Pastor at Trinity Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas. My aunt Marilyn was three years old and the "Baby - Prenatal" who was also listed as "child" was to be my

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father, David. The form is printed in Harvey's hand in neat but ornate all-capital letters with curls at the tops of "C's" and at the bottoms of "S's." He writes our last name with two sharp underscores below a small, elevated "c."

Where he writes the name of my grandmother under "Person to be notified in an emergency" the ink is darker and thicker and his inclusion of the "Mrs." next to her name causes the words to spill beyond the space provided. The next block of the form poses the question, "Are there any reasons why your orders to active duty, in the event of a national emergency, should be deferred?" Harvey McGraw, in all-caps print fairly shouts, "YES. HAVE TWO DEPENDENTS - ANOTHER EXPECTED IN OCTOBER (NEXT) - (ALSO) PROFESSIONAL DUTIES IN CHURCH. IF NECESSARY I BE CALLED - WOULD LIKE TO GO AS CHAPLAIN." The Army was generous with its math but not Harvey's status. In a block marked "RESERVED FOR USE OF WAR DEPARTMENT" the number of dependents was listed as "three" and Harvey was classified as Status I: available for activation.

Harvey was 35 and the Assistant Pastor of the First Baptist Church in Henderson, Texas when he was called to active duty in 1942. The sedentary lifestyle of a father, husband and minister had Harvey's weight up to 163 pounds on his 5' 6 1/2" frame when he underwent the physical examination at Ellington Field, Texas. The only previous illness cited is "usual childhood diseases." He was found fully qualified for active duty as an Army Infantry officer. In April 1942 he was assigned to Camp Hood, Texas, for duty as Special Services Officer, which would have put him in charge of organizing athletic tournaments and recreation for the troops. His young family moved with him and rented a small home in nearby Killeen. As Harvey was settling in at Camp Hood, Japanese forces were starting an all-out assault on American and Filipino troops at Bataan and Erwin Rommel was preparing a German armored offensive that would later stall out at Tobruk, Libya.

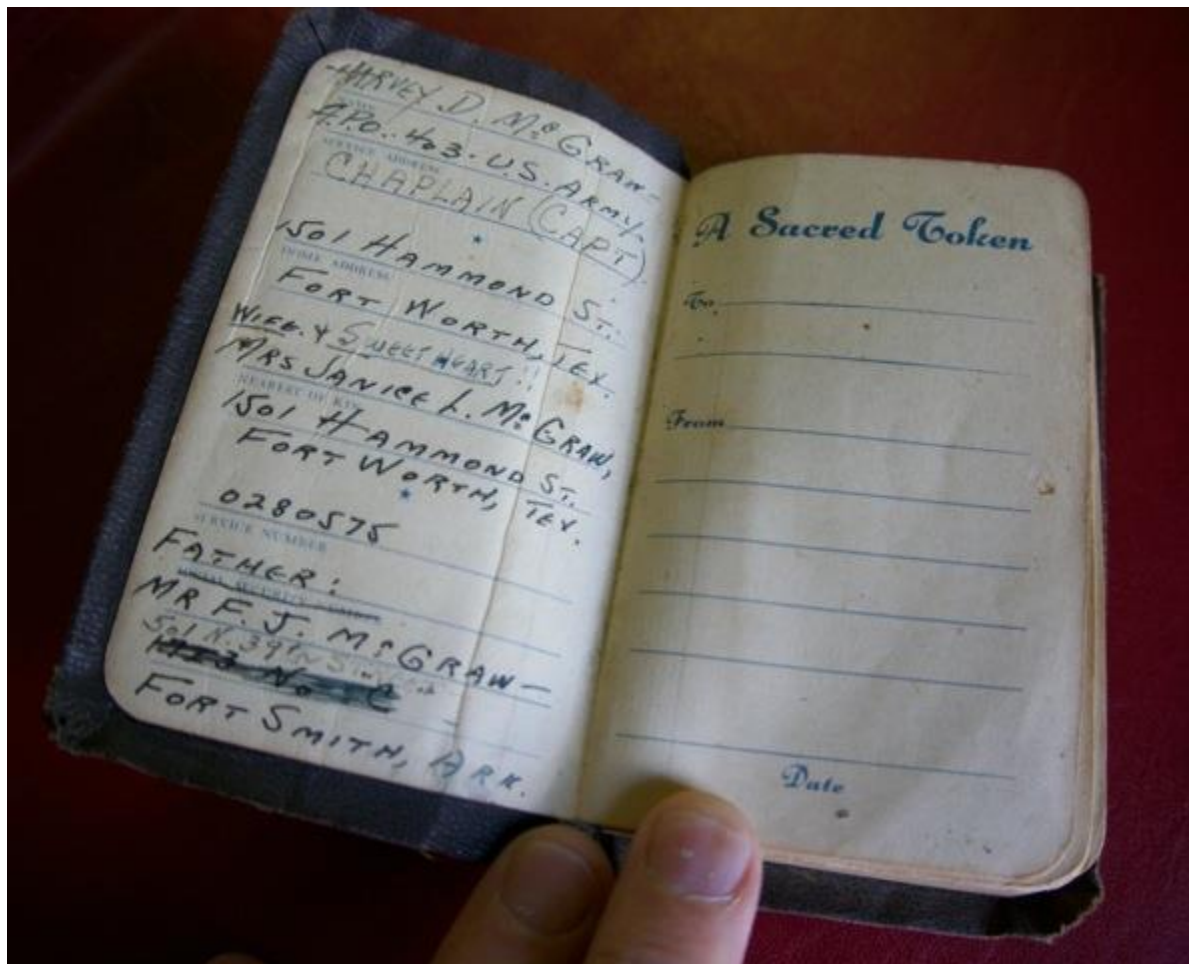
At Camp Hood, Harvey immediately sought a transfer from the Infantry to the Chaplain Corps. Letters of recommendation included those of the pastor of First Baptist Church of Henderson, Texas and Harvey's Professor of Old Testament Interpretation at the Southwest Theological seminary. Professor R.T. Daniel wrote, "I have known Rev. McGraw intimately since September, 1933, and I am certain that his standing as to character, ability and willingness to work are unexcelled. He has not graduated from the Seminary, but he has done about three years of work toward the Th. M. and M.R. E. degrees. His record is about average. He would be a useful man in the religious work among the armed forces."

His request for change of branch was approved by July and he attended a six-week long Chaplain's school at Harvard in August and September of 1942. He was promoted to Captain on February 8, 1943 and by March of that year was assigned to the 2nd Cavalry Regiment at Ft. Jackson, South Carolina, for duty as Regimental Chaplain. His family accompanied him, renting a little house near the base in Columbia, SC.

While at Ft. Jackson, Harvey was admitted to the hospital with "complaints of nausea, vomiting, and abdominal discomfort especially in morning since 1937. Nervous tension increases severity and frequency of complaints." He was diagnosed with gastroenteritis. For Harvey's condition, which started in 1937, not to be mentioned in his pre-induction active duty physical examination in 1942 is a mystery.

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Was it considered by either him or his examiner to be a manageable inconvenience and therefore not documented? Had there been much room for medical exemptions at a time when nearly every grown man in the country was being mobilized for the war? Did Harvey believe that his age and the possibility to transfer to the Chaplains Corps would keep him on the margins of the most stressful service or did he believe that the chaplaincy was where he thought he could best serve? For routine training and garrison Army life with home and family at the end of each day to produce enough nervous tension to cause him to be seen at the hospital should have been a red flag, but Harvey McGraw nevertheless embarked for Europe with his unit after it was organized as a task force and redesignated as the 2nd Cavalry Group (Mechanized).



In July of 1944 my grandfather embarked in England with the staff of the 2nd Cav on a LST, a flat-bottomed amphibious ship that offloaded cargo and soldiers by running itself aground on the beach. His ship was part of a convoy of thirty-one vessels. They disembarked at Utah Beach on July 19, six weeks after D-Day, and were attached to VIII Corps of Patton's Third Army. In August the unit participated in Operation Cobra, helping to punch through German lines that still hemmed in forces around the Normandy region. According to official unit history, the 2nd Cav earned the nickname "Ghosts of Patton's Army" for their ability to materialize at different points behind German lines while doing reconnaissance. In August, reconnaissance squadrons took fire from German machine guns and 88 mm

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anti-tank guns while screening and patrolling for their parent units. Units of the 2nd Cav not only withstood occasional air attack from Luftwaffe ME-109's, but also friendly fire from Allied P-47's in France. In September 17, 1944, the 2nd Cav was defending at Nancy along a north-south line that ran about 300 miles east of Paris when they were attacked by a depleted, but still vastly numerically superior German 5th Panzer Army. They held. In October and November the 2nd Cav made its way through northeast France, taking Luneville, Igney, Frontiere and Moncourt. Since the two subordinate units (reconnaissance squadrons) of the 2nd Cav had no chaplains on their staffs, it would have been Harvey's job, along with his Catholic counterpart on the regimental staff, to visit and minister to the sick, wounded and dying troops in the field and in the hospital. As his unit was preparing to attack Freyming, the last French town before crossing the border into Germany, Harvey was evacuated to the 28th Field Hospital and then on to the 203rd General Hospital near Paris. The chaplain who had learned enough German language from his neighbors in Altus, Arkansas, to list that capability in a reserve officer questionnaire before the war, never set foot in Germany.

At the 203rd General Hospital near Paris, the final diagnosis handwritten and signed by a Medical Corps Captain on December 19th, 1944, was, "No disease. Ill-defined condition of gastro intestinal track (*sic*) manifested by pain in abd. nausea (*sic*) + vomiting."

An Army medical examiner in Europe at the end of 1944 could be forgiven for being hardnosed and incredulous. My grandfather's condition, essentially manifesting itself as an upset stomach, had to have seemed frivolous compared to the horrific wounds and injuries that Army medical authorities would have had to deal with, especially since D-Day. It is sobering to me to think how bad his symptoms must have really been for his commander to medically evacuate him from the field.

Although the diagnosis at that hospital was "No disease," Harvey was evacuated from that hospital back to the states in January 1945. After eight days at Mason General Hospital in Brentwood, New York, he was sent to the hospital at Camp Carson, Colorado. He would have been evacuated with some of the 46,000 soldiers wounded in the Battle of the Bulge, a colossal last-gasp German counterattack, some of the most horrific ground combat in history.

He would spend the spring of 1945, 105 days in all, as a patient at the Camp Carson Hospital Center in Colorado. An undated final summary reads,

"overseas ten months, in ETO (European Theater of Operations). Admitted ASF Convalescent Hospital, 1945 April, from Mason General Hospital, Brentwood, New York.

Chief Complaints: 'I feel fine. I have occasional flare-ups with my stomach.'

Present Illness: Officer dates onset as 1937. At that time, he used to have nausea and vomiting every morning after meals. He has had this condition off and on since that time. He went overseas to the ETO in April 1944. He was in combat area approximately five months. He became progressively nervous and tense, with symptoms of anxiety. His gastric complaints became progressively worse, with nausea, vomiting and abdominal pains. Finally hospitalized on

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the 9th December 1944: evacuated to the Zone of Interior 9 February 1945. Was at Mason General Hospital, five days, and transferred to this hospital.

Final Diagnosis: Anxiety State, Moderate.

Manifested by: Nervousness and occasional nausea and vomiting.

Precipitating Stress: Ten months overseas, five months combat duty. Aggravated. LD (Line of duty) Yes"

This report stated that Harvey's condition was in the line of duty, aggravated by his military service. Harvey was sent to a base in Omaha, Nebraska and later transferred to Camp Crowder, Missouri for the purpose of undergoing a medical disposition. The medical board was convened at Camp Crowder on October 9, 1945, over a month after the Japanese surrendered on the deck of the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay and five months after Nazi Germany surrendered its armed forces in Europe. The board, composed of three medical corps officers, determined that Harvey's condition was "mild, chronic neurasthenia gastrica manifested by gastric upsets with vomiting whenever under pressure, tension and tremulousness."

Because Harvey admitted that he began suffering from anxiety-related nausea and vomiting in 1937, the board determined that Harvey's condition was EPTS (Existing Prior to Service) and therefore *not* incurred in the line of duty. The "Line of duty" determination is critical because if the member is disabled while on active duty then the military owes him or her some compensation and medical care, the idea being that the soldier, sailor, airman or Marine should be discharged from the service in about the same medical condition as when he or she was inducted, with allowances for fair wear and tear.

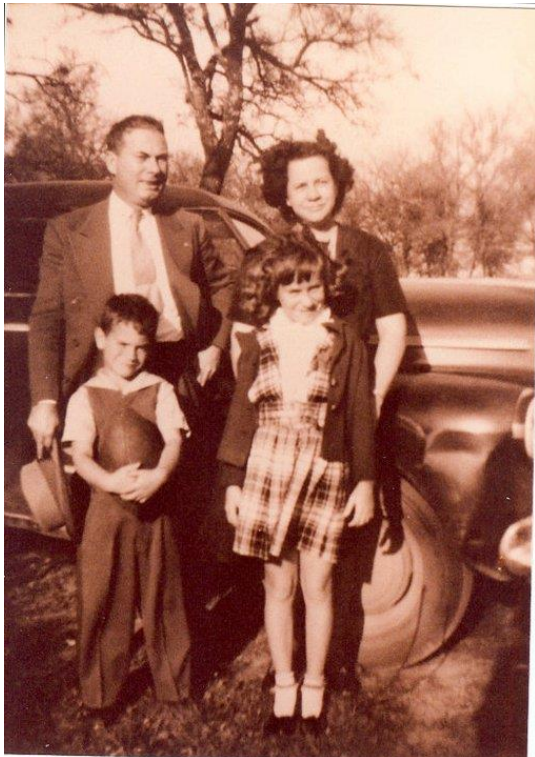
Next to block 17 "Date became incapacitated for military duty" is typed "1 Oct 45." The board declared that Harvey's incapacity was "not incident to service, did exist prior to entry on active duty was not permanently aggravated by active duty. No degree of disability for military service, recommended for general service and qualified for overseas." The form ends at blank 34 with the words "The board recommends that: Capt Harvey McGraw be returned to full military duty (FD)."

Why on earth did an Army medical board take a man who had been evacuated from combat in Europe and then spent the ensuing ten months as either a patient or on convalescent leave and officially declare him ready for full and unrestricted military duty including overseas assignment? Did they do it so they could send him back to the war? No, they did it so they could promptly discharge him. The determination that he had become incapacitated for military duty on October 1st of 1945 (eight days before his medical board) was a convenient fabrication disproven by pages and pages of Harvey's previous official medical and military history. Three days after the board's findings became an official Army decision, Harvey received orders that returned him to inactive status by means of a militaryspeak double-negative: "not by reason of physical disability." By the end of 1945 the U.S. armed forces was frantically trying to demobilize a force of 12 million soldiers down to its post-war endstrength of 1.5 million. Part of that reduction had to have included attempts by the Army to divest itself of financial and medical responsibility for any disability it could declare EPTS. So, along with approximately ten million

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other discharged servicemen, Harvey went home after World War II, back to his family and ministry in Texas. He had long since been replaced at First Baptist Church, Henderson, but my Aunt Marilyn told me he found work in churches in Fort Worth. During his time in Fort Worth he also went back to classes at the seminary and graduated.

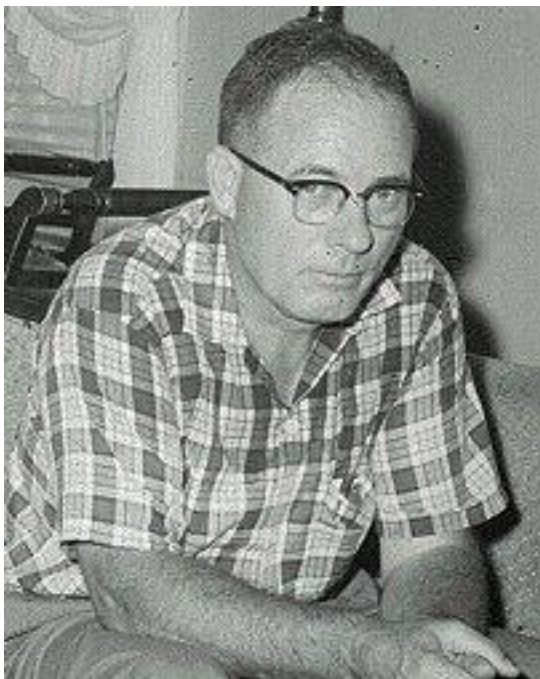
To be discharged from the military is as final as it sounds; a mutual and definitive goodbye between the individual and the institution. I was surprised, then, to come across the findings of a second medical board at the bottom of the stack of reproduced military records. I have no idea what would have occasioned a second medical board. My Aunt Marilyn believes he may have attempted to go back on active duty in the Chaplain Corps, a possibility that made sense when my father told me that he occasionally overheard Harvey tell my grandmother that he never felt so useful as when he served as an army chaplain. In May of 1946, at the age of 38, months after having been discharged from the Army, Harvey travelled back to Camp Carson, Colorado, for another board chaired by three medical corps officers similar in rank to those who had convened his previous board. The findings of the second board diagnosed Harvey with "Anxiety state, moderately severe, Improved." In the blank for "Line of duty" was typed "Yes." The blank designated "Date became incapacitated for Military duty" was "Dec 44" which corresponds to when he was evacuated from the battlefield in Europe. The board also states "Incapacity not incident to service, did exist prior to active duty, was permanently aggravated by active duty. Degree of disability for military service partial and permanent and placed on permanent limited duty." I am gratified that a second medical board was convened. It seems to me that the Army had righted a previous wrong. It was as if this medical board admitted, "You were a little broken when we got you, but what you went through in the Army broke you a lot more." The next few years would prove just how broken he was.



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Harvey ministered in Baptist churches in Fort Worth until 1948, when he was recommended by B.B. McKinney, the writer of many famous Baptist hymns, to take the job as Minister of Education and Music at the First Baptist Church in DeRidder, Louisiana. Within a few years, Harvey was detached from First Baptist Church to start the Ludington Chapel, a mission church under the administration of First Baptist, DeRidder. Uncle Dan told me that his father loved the chapel ministry since he could interact more personally with a smaller congregation. Uncle Dan told me it could take his father an hour to walk a city block in the small downtown. People would stop their cars and come out of dry goods stores and barber shops to hail "Brother Harvey," to shake his hand, pat his shoulder and chat about town news. My father told me that Harvey was not a dynamic preacher or an extraordinary church music leader, but that he had an exceptional gift for connecting with people one-on-one. They valued his genuine fellowship, were attracted to him, and willing to confide in him. Within a few years of arriving at DeRidder, his health started to decline, impacting his ministry there. A Veterans Administration psychiatric evaluation from 1954 includes Harvey's admission that he stopped in mid-sermon and cut short a Sunday evening service because he "began to feel as though he were going to explode." By this point Harvey had developed a tremor in his left arm that the evaluation terms as "rhythmical" and "quite coarse at times."

Three years later, when he was 50 years old, Harvey was seen by another VA doctor for a psychiatric and neurological examination. The tremors and vomiting were worse by then. My father and aunt remember from their time living at home that it was a rare night that he didn't have to go throw up his dinner. His speech was rapid and ran together at times. The doctor posited that Harvey's health problems might be related to encephalitis resulting from his having contracted and survived the flu pandemic that swept across the country in 1918. He was diagnosed with "Anxiety reaction, chronic, mild to moderate, secondary to and a part of his residuals of encephalitis."



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By 1957, Harvey was the Minister of Music and Education at College Drive Baptist Church in Pineville, where he and his family had moved from DeRidder in 1954. The church was just two blocks from Louisiana College. My Uncle Dan told me that the charm that made Harvey popular in his college days made him highly effective engaging the students at College Drive. But a cabal, organized by a professor who served as a deacon, saw Harvey's tremor and rapid speech as unsettling and distracting when he spoke from the pulpit and led the music. Their opposition to his continued service came to a head at a church business meeting. Harvey was forced out of the ministry at age 51, two years younger than I am as I write this. My Aunt Marilyn was in college by then. My father was about to graduate high school, and my Uncle Dan was in elementary school. My grandmother found a job as a case worker with the state welfare agency. Harvey took care of the home and prepared many of the meals. He never again worked in full-time ministry.

If he was bitter about being ousted from College Drive Baptist Church, he never let it show to his children. The family immediately joined the nearby First Baptist Church of Pineville and Harvey threw himself into volunteer work there. He, the former minister of music, became a faithful tenor in the choir. He became the unpaid director of Training Union, the byzantine array of classes and programs for all ages on Sunday and Wednesday nights. Far from the stage-lit pulpit he visited the shut-ins and the widows. In his own infirmity he ministered to sick. And he, carrying his anxiety on his trembling left arm like a shield, withstood the sidelong glances and jerked thumbs that would have been directed at a househusband in the gossipy small-town Deep South of the 1960's.

And I wonder if I would have had the strength and the faith to do what he did. He seems to have carried on for the good of his family and out of a keen sense of personal mission. He swallowed his hurt pride and stayed active as a lay minister in order to put his own stamp on the narrative that families in that time needed to make sense of an obscene, violent and unfair world: that anxiety is Parkinson's, that a man can come home from war and lie down in his bed and close his eyes and not pick at the psychic scab of horror, that church is about healing the broken, not marketing itself to the well-heeled. And I have no doubt that the suppression and internalization of his disappointment and downfall hastened the final unraveling of his health and brought on his death from a massive stroke at age 61 as he showered to get ready to go to the Men's Prayer Breakfast.

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The original question I had about Harvey McGraw: whether his anxiety was purely psychological or a result of the 1918 flu or the trauma of World War II, I still cannot answer. But I don't care anymore. Harvey McGraw's case may be as good a proof as any that our perceived boundary between physical and mental health is artificial. Anxiety? Encephalitis? PTSD? Can I separate any one of these from the others? I confess that I cannot. So my research project has been inconclusive but I believe that whatever I may have lost in certainty I have gained in having a grandfather who is truly and deeply heroic to me. I know him better now, a sweet guy from the Ozarks who loved softball and church music and treasured his family above all things. I hurt for him when I think about how he was forced out of the ministry as his health crumbled. But I would want him to know that his steadfastness taught his children that that church was not the Church. And I would want him to know that they, now all older than he was when he died, have all kept the faith and passed it on to their children.

And I love him better, too, this man who I am told took me for walks in the pine woods as the last flames of his life flickered, this man who I am told I called "Granddaddy." As someone who knows firsthand the tribal military, I anguish over how he must have been treated by the doctors, by the Army and by his fellow soldiers as he was shuttled from base to base and hospital to hospital through the year 1945, having to tell his story and relate his symptoms over and over in exam rooms and before medical boards. He must have been regarded as a shirker and a malingerer in a society where pecking order is determined more by physical courage than even rank. I would want him to know that three of his grandsons saw combat and that we were as brave as we had to be.

I would want to hug his neck and call him "Granddaddy." And I would want to tell him that I know he was brave, too.