DORIS

An interview with Les Cramer

by DORIS LITSCHER GASSER
Feature Writer

"I enlisted in the Army Air Corps. I wanted to be a gunner, but I was what they called "color instinct" so I couldn't become a gunner so I ended up as a flight engineer. I started out in Mississippi and on to Burbank, Calif., near Hollywood, where I went to Lockheed Aircraft School and worked with B-17 Flying Fortress bombers. We made cross country flights. We flew inspectors and some of the high-ranking officers. I was in the Fourth Army Air Force. Then I went to Columbus, Ohio to Lockburn Air Base where they were training B-17 pilots. And then I went back to Lockhead Air Craft in California to a replacement depot and was told, 'you're going overseas.' But the only water I went across was Oakland Bay."

"I was a buck sergeant. That was a good rank to have because it gave one just enough authority to keep me off of KP and duties I didn't want. I was in the Army Air Corps three and a half years. I was in Hamilton Field when the war ended. There was a Navy base there, too. I was discharged in Sacramento, Calif. in 1945. I don't remember much of a celebration when the war was over, but there was a lot of vandalism. I was going to hitchhike home but they transported us by train. We had a sleeper and a dining car."

It was while Les was stationed in Lockburn Air Base that the news came from overseas that his cousin James Cramer II, had been killed crossing the Moselle River in France. Les was given a leave to go home for the memorial. James became the local VFW post namesake.

Homecoming was great! Les had met Marlys when he had been home on leave and through their correspondence their romance grew into full bloom.

Marlys recalled, "Les came home in 1945 and we were married in 1946." Marlys died several years ago.

Les' cousin.. James Cramer VFW #7964 Namesake