

Sabrena Pearman

Dr. Agar

Comp II

Mrs. Virginia Anderson

When World War II started, Virginia was graduating from high school and starting on her way to beauty school. The news of the war frightened her. She knew many men would have to go and fight. The losses would be great. One man in particular that Virginia feared for was Charles Anderson. The two had met prior to the war because they were family friends. It was love at first sight.

After falling in love with Anderson, who later became a prisoner-of-war in Germany, Virginia dropped her plans of becoming a beautician and began helping with defense work when the war started. She first worked at a federal cartridge factory where she helped in the production of .50 caliber machine guns. Virginia usually worked 10 hours a day for \$.48 per hour. The cartridge factory eventually closed up, and Virginia had to look for work else where.

Virginia's second job during the war effort dealt with the production of gliders. In the war, these gliders were used to glide behind the lines without the noise of a motor. In this factory, fabric was pulled over a wood frame. Virginia's job was to look for "stress points" on the gliders. There were two types of gliders produced, large and medium. Virginia earned \$.78 an hour at this job.

Even after Virginia was informed that Charles was declared "missing-in-action", she diligently tried to keep in contact with him. Virginia sent Charles V-cards, which were like free post cards, for the entire length of the war. She was only allowed to send one a month. Along with the V-cards, she also sent a letter everyday. Virginia put Red Cross Packages together with items such as "wool blankets, socks, shaving equipment, and chocolate, too." Unfortunately, Charles never received any of them due to his POW status.

Virginia was elated when she received a post-card from Charles stating that he was fine and being held as a prisoner-of-war in Germany. She received only a few of these throughout the year and a half that Charles was held captive. Virginia was relieved to know Charles was alive, but feared for his safety. She longed for his return and an end to the war.

Virginia was still working at the glider factory when The Europeans surrendered and the war was over. The news spread rapidly by radios, televisions, and theaters. Virginia said, "I couldn't believe it. Things just stopped. There were celebrations everywhere."

Life would never be the same for Charles or Virginia. When they were finally reunited, Charles looked nothing like what Virginia had remembered. Virginia said, "He was so thin. He had sunken eyes. He was restless and very nervous. He wanted to eat all the time, but he got sick to his stomach easily. I just wanted to make his life more pleasant." The two were married and their life together began. Virginia made five big meals a day for her husband. Virginia said, "Charles had an obsession about being hungry." Charles also has had bad dreams ever since the war and has never been able to sleep a full night. He also can never be left alone, and he always has to keep busy.

Not only did Charles's experience as a POW affect Virginia, it also affected their children. The children had a "stand-offish fear" of their father due to his terrible temper. Virginia can remember how the children would run and hide to escape a kick in the back side. The children also became very driven like their father, and they too could never sit still. Even though there have been some difficult times, Virginia and Charles are still happily married. They now reside on a ranch near Oral, South Dakota where they enjoy their children and grandchildren.