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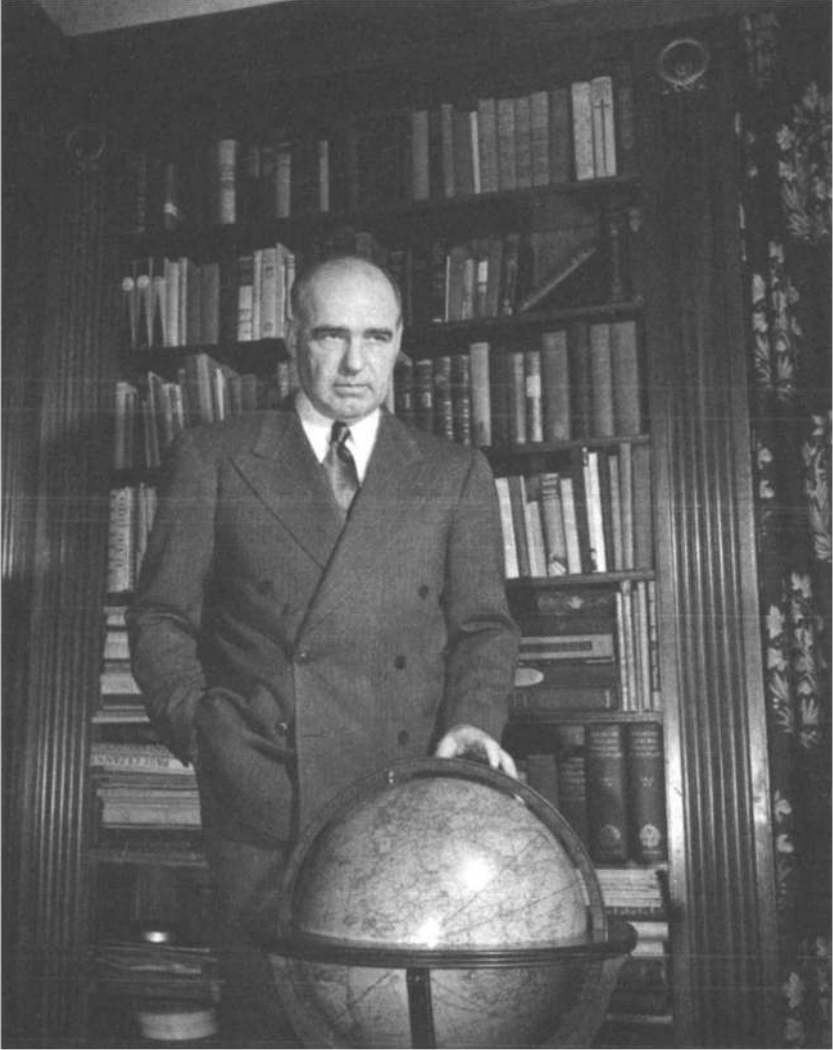
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Campaign photo of George Peddy taken at his Peddy Point home, north of Houston. *This and all other illustrations are from the author's personal collection.*

The Man from Tenaha: George Edwin Bailey Peddy

LARRY MCNEILL*

IF GEORGE PEDDY IS REMEMBERED AT ALL, IT'S BECAUSE HE RECEIVED 20 percent of the vote in the 1948 Texas Democratic primary for the U.S. Senate, and this in part caused the necessity of a runoff between Coke Stevenson and Lyndon Johnson.¹ That was the election in which Johnson became known as Landslide Lyndon.

My talk tonight is not about the 1948 election but about the identity of one of the participants. Who was George Peddy? The short answer is he was an idealist and he was a patriot. He had a gift for leadership, a flair for speaking, and I will touch on these tonight by discussing a few of the historical events in which he played a role and quoting from some of his speeches and correspondence.

George was not born to favorable economic circumstances. In 1892 his father died two months before George's birth, leaving George's mother with seven sons (the eldest being ten years old) to raise on a mortgaged farm five miles from the closest town, Tenaha, in Shelby County. The town was accessible to the Peddys only by a narrow winding dirt road canopied by a forest of pine trees. Trips to town were restricted to four or five times each year to lay in supplies. The farm was 200 acres, carved out from the Piney Woods that surrounded it on all sides. The Peddys grew cotton, corn, sugarcane, and peanuts, and the sale of these crops provided their sole source of income.²

The closest high school was in Tenaha, and when George had advanced through the curricula of the small schools near the farm, he traded personal labor in the employ of Dr. Jake Spivey and his wife for room and board at

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¹ *Texas Almanac 1949-1950* (Dallas: A. H. Belo Corp., 1949).

² C. D. Waide, "George Peddy's Life, a Story of Hard Work and His Neighbors at Tenaha All Speak Well About Him," *Houston Chronicle*, Sept. 24, 1922.



Tenaha Town Square, circa 1905.

that family's town residence. To finance his college education, he obtained a teaching certificate and taught at the Woods Post Office community school five miles north of Tenaha. He began his collegiate career at the University of Texas in 1913, and then spent another year teaching in Shelby County to raise sufficient funds to return to college.³ During the college year, he lived in B Hall, known as the poor boys' dormitory, washed dishes, and waited on tables to make ends meet.⁴

George Peddy became a statewide figure in 1917. He served in the Texas legislature while still attending the university, where he had been elected student body president. Though only a freshman legislator, his oratorical skills were recognized early on and utilized in the legislative fight over women's suffrage. George was identified as a significant contributor in the ultimate victory of that cause. He also took active part in the events leading up to the impeachment of Gov. James Ferguson.⁵

His career in the legislature, however, was cut short by the United States' entry into World War I. Although membership in the legislature exempted him from military service, he volunteered for the First Officers' Training Camp at Leon Springs and was commissioned a captain of infantry.⁶

³Ibid.

⁴Walter E. Long, *For All Time to Come* (Austin: Steck Co., 1964), 13; Waide, "George Peddy's Life."

⁵*Dallas Morning News*, Sept. 17, 1922.

⁶Evelyn Miller Crowell, *Men of Achievement* (Dallas: John Moranz Associates, 1948), 238; Gus C. Dittmar, *They Were First* (Austin: Steck-Warlich Co., 1969), 253.

It was in 1917 that Gov. James Ferguson's battle with the University of Texas, begun in 1915, exploded. Ferguson, determined to impose his will over the internal workings of the university, called upon the regents to meet with him in his office on Monday, May 28. Word of this reached UT president Robert Vinson and faculty member John Lomax, who understood that it was the governor's intention to force Vinson's firing by threatening to veto the university's legislative appropriation. Lomax contacted several state newspapers in time for the Sunday editions to headline that the governor had called a "Secret Session of the Board of Regents" to "discharge Dr. Robert E. Vinson."⁷ Students, reading the newspaper articles, formed committees to conduct a campus rally on the following day during Ferguson's meeting.

The *Dallas Morning News* described the rally as a mass meeting, stating:

George E. Peddy . . . who represented Shelby County in the last legislative session as a member of the House of Representatives, was the chief speaker of the morning. Mr. Peddy arrived from Leon Springs, where he is in the training camp, and appeared in uniform. Special permission from Colonel Scott, commanding the Leon Springs camp, enabled him to be present today.⁸ When Peddy ascended to the platform, cheer after cheer greeted him.

The *News* printed the entirety of his speech, and here is part of it:

Fellow students and friends: While acting as a Representative in the Legislature, I was called a Brutus because I was charged with praising the Governor to his face and then turning around and stabbing him in the back. What I have to do or say is done at the front, and I challenge the right of any man, whether he be Governor or the lowest citizen, to say, "Fire this man, or I cut off the appropriations." Better sweep this hill clean of all semblance of a University, close its doors and let moss grow over them, rather than let this institution be governed by the prejudices of one man against several men in its faculty.

In this morning's paper, I have not seen where the Governor has denied the report that appeared in the press of Sunday morning, and I thought that this had broken all records for nerve . . . because he is trying to take away the head of this institution, who, during the short time that he has been in office, has proved himself nationally recognized as one of the coming University presidents of the country, who has carried the fame of Texas to the North, East, and West. When the Governor tells us that because Dr. Vinson has stood up for right, he will veto the appropriations, I say, regents and students, stand up and show your backbone. Let him veto. I do not want a university in which one man says the faculty . . . must come when I say come, and go when I say go.

All you students have a duty to perform. Some months ago when the University investigation was in progress, the Governor said to the boys of the newspapers: "Tell

⁷John A. Lomax, "Governor Ferguson and the University of Texas," *Southwest Review* (Autumn, 1942).

⁸*Dallas Morning News*, May 29, 1917.

The 1918 Cactus

College Year



"THE TIME HAS COME WHEN ONE MAN CANNOT CUT OFF THE HEAD OF EDUCATION"

One Hundred Sixteen

TEXAS

Peddy speaking at UT rally, May 28, 1917.

the people that it is a fight on the part of the University to put down the Governor, because he is not a college-bred man. It is a fight of the Governor of Texas against the University of Texas by appealing to the people at the forks of the creek, saying I uphold rural education and do not approve a rich man's school."

The Governor says to tell the folks. Now, students, it is your duty to tell the folks, especially those at the forks of the creek. Tell the folks at home the truth. Tell them that one of the greatest educators in the South was forced to resign as a member of the faculty of this institution and go East. Tell them that we have one of the greatest college presidents in the country, who, because he stood up for right, must resign as demanded by the Governor. Tell them that because one man was a prohibitionist, he was forced to resign, and that now the board of regents must fire five men. Tell them that we will go out to the people with the Governor and tell them all that has happened here. As a favor to yourselves and a favor to the people connected with the University of Texas, as a favor to the people of our great State, let us prepare the ground, and then let the Governor spread anything that he chooses.

The *News* also stated:

It was his stirring address at the morning meeting of the students that is considered largely responsible for the large parade with the demonstration at the capitol. . . . [T]he students . . . formed a gigantic procession which marched from University Hill to the Capitol and passed the Governor's office, in which the board of regents was in session and thence through the business streets of Austin. All along the route of march they were greeted with cheers and the honking of automobile horns. The procession was led by three boys carrying a banner bearing the words, "We oppose a one-man rule." Next followed the Longhorn Band, the girls of the University, some 400 strong, and then six companies of University cadets.

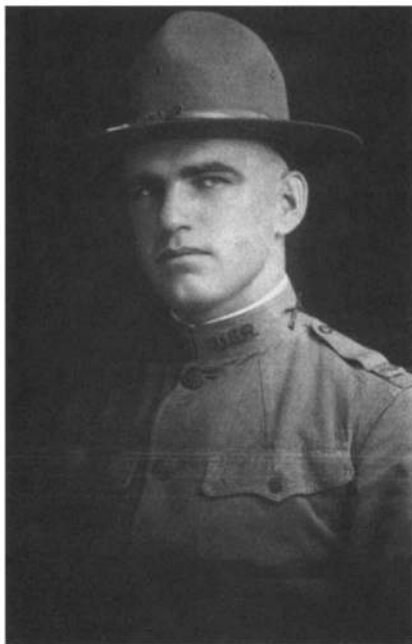
Mr. Peddy was in the parade, and it was there that the Governor accosted him from a window of the executive office. . . . When Representative George Peddy came by wearing the uniform of the United States Army, the Governor shouted to him, "Well, George, I see that you have come back to attend this." Mr. Peddy saluted and said, "Yes, Governor, I am here."

Governor Ferguson later said, "I asked Peddy . . . if he came here to take part in the demonstration, and he gave me an affirmative answer. This keeps the record straight as to him, and his coming to insult the Governor in the manner he did would cause him to be shot for treason, if he similarly insulted his superior officer."⁹

Ferguson was impeached in August of 1917 on a bill of twenty-one articles, and convicted on ten of them, including one for attempting to discharge faculty members without cause. He vacated the governor's office in late September but ran for re-election in the following year, losing decisively to William Hobby.¹⁰

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ June Rayfield Welch, *The Texas Governor* (Dallas: G.L.A. Press, 1977), 126.



Captain George E. B. Peddy, 1917.

By then, George was in France, where he received a letter from James W. Truitt of Tenaha, a Civil War veteran and former state representative from Shelby County in the 1890s.

The campaign for Governor [in the democratic] primary which [ended on] the 27th of . . . July, most certainly was one of the *red hot* kind. As you were so largely instrumental in the House of Representatives in making sure the investigation . . . which brought about the impeachment of Governor Ferguson . . . [occurred], it would have been very pleasing to your many friends in Texas could you have been here to take an active part in the canvass throughout the state, so sure were we you could have exposed him in his crooked course as Governor more effectively than anyone else.¹¹

After completing his war service, Peddy returned to the university to complete his legal education. In his final academic year in 1920, his *Cactus* yearbook entry read, "He is a landmark about the campus, and all sightseers are shown, along with the library, and the Womens' Building, 'the man who made the speech against *Ferguson*.'" ¹²

George excelled in his law school studies, qualifying for membership in Chancellors. He was also elected president of his law school class. During this time, he courted Gertrude Erwin. They were married on February 3, 1921. By then George was working as an assistant district attorney in Harris County.¹³ In this job, he had occasion to observe the techniques of the Ku Klux Klan and became an outspoken opponent.

In the 1922 U.S. senatorial contest, he actively supported Charles Culberson, the longtime incumbent. Another candidate, Earl Mayfield, was accused of being the Klan candidate. Senator Culberson and the irrepressible former governor Jim Ferguson, also a candidate, both opposed the Klan. Mayfield led in the primary, and Ferguson ran second, qualifying for the runoff. Despite George's participation in the fight against Ferguson in

¹¹ James W. Truitt to Capt. George Peddy, letter, Oct. 25, 1918, George Peddy vertical file (Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin).

¹² *Cactus* (Austin: University of Texas, 1920), 80.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 40, 115; "The Bulletin," Peddy Headquarters, Dallas, Oct. 25, 1922, author's personal collection; "Nominated to Make Race Against Mayfield," *Dallas Morning News*, Sept. 17, 1922.

1917 in the legislature, he endorsed Ferguson against Mayfield, managed Ferguson's campaign in Harris County, and made speeches on Ferguson's behalf throughout much of the state.¹⁴

As an aside, this turn of events concerning George and Jim Ferguson reminds me of something George Christian told me about my mentor at the law firm, Ambassador Edward A. Clark, who you may recall also served as president of this association in 1984. When Ralph Yarborough ran for the U.S. Senate in 1972, Mr. Clark provided significant campaign fund-raising services and publicly supported the former senator. When Yarborough lost the democratic primary to Barefoot Sanders, and before too much dust had settled, Clark became the campaign manager for the incumbent Republican in the same senate race, Senator John Tower. For this conduct, the Friday Club of Houston, known for its annual bestowal of tongue-in-cheek awards, presented Mr. Clark with its 1972 Flexibility Award.¹⁵

There is a significant difference between Mr. Clark's behavior and that of George Peddy. Clark always based his support on the candidate himself. Yarborough was a personal friend of his. John Tower spent part of his formative years growing up in Mr. Clark's hometown of San Augustine. For a while Tower's father was the minister of the church Mr. Clark attended in that community. George based his support on the issues.¹⁶ As far as he was concerned in 1922, there was one overriding issue and that was the Klan.

When Mayfield won the primary run-off in August, a movement arose of anti-Klan democrats, resulting in a September convention to nominate an independent to run against Mayfield. George Peddy became the nominee.

Here is a small portion of George's 1922 acceptance speech:

I love the democratic party, but I love democratic principles more. Someone has said that a "rose by any other name would smell as sweet." I say to you that democratic principles smell sweet to me whether they come under the name of "Independent" or "democratic". . . .

The holier-than-thou organization, the Ku Klux Klan, with Col[.] William Joseph Simmons [of Atlanta] at its head, delegates to itself all the Americanism that there is in the state and nation. In 1917 when America needed all Americans to fight for her upon the battlefields, there was no Ku Klux Klan in evidence. The Hebrew boy was a good enough American then to fight for his country and if need be, to die for it. When our country called[,], no questions were asked as to whether he was Jew or Gentile. The Catholic boy was a good enough American to fight for this country and to die for it, while some of these self-styled 100 percent Americans were holding high-salaried positions and sitting in finely upholstered chairs. If the Jewish boy and the Catholic boy

¹⁴"Nominated to Make Race Against Mayfield," *Dallas Morning News*, Sept. 17, 1922; June Rayfield Welch, *The Texas Senator* (Dallas: G.L.A. Press, 1978), 52; *Dallas Morning News*, Sept. 17, 1922.


¹⁵George Christian to Larry McNeill, June 14, 2002 (original in possession of author).

¹⁶John R. Knaggs, *Two-Party Texas* (Austin: Eakin Press, 1986); conversations between Ambassador Edward A. Clark and Larry McNeill.

were good Americans then, why is it they are not good enough now to participate in the affairs of the government which they fought to save from the iron heel of an emperor? Yes, and just as surely as that emperor . . . was shorn of his power on the battlefields of France, just so surely will this invisible emperor be shorn of his at the ballot boxes of Texas in November. And just as princes and counts went down with Emperor William of Germany, so will kleagles and cyclops and dragons and goblins, led by Earl Mayfield, go down with Emperor William of Atlanta.

The boys who fought on the fields of France were not questioned as to their religious faith. The Catholic soldiers of France and Italy fought side by side with the Protestant soldiers of England and America. The Jewish soldier fought side by side with them all. The patriotism of none was questioned. But when the war was over and the fighting was ended, a new kind of Americanism sprang into being. A new patriotism was born. The sire of that patriotism was unknown and unheard of when this country needed all its patriots to serve it unselfishly and bravely. If I must choose the brand of patriotism that smacks most of true Americanism, I choose that of 1917 and 1918, with the Catholics and Jews and Gentiles and Protestants of my country, working as one man, at home and abroad, to the end that liberty and freedom might not perish from the earth.

This campaign calls for the best there is in us. No one man can solve the problem for another. The conscience of the individual must be his only guide. I would not ask a man or woman in all Texas to do that which he or she felt was against the dictates of conscience. Our country and our government has a right to demand that we do that which is just and right to the light of our duty to the institutions that have made and kept this nation great. In the language of Daniel Webster: "With conscience satisfied with the discharge of duty, no consequences can harm you. There is no evil that we cannot either face or fly from, but the consciousness of duty disregarded. A sense of duty pursues us ever. It is omnipresent, like the Deity. If we take to ourselves the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the earth, duty performed or duty violated is still with us, for our happiness or our misery. If we say the darkness shall cover us, in the darkness as in the light, our obligations are



SPEECH
Delivered by
Hon. George Peddy
in
First Baptist Church
Fort Worth, Texas
Monday Evening, Sept. 25, 1922
Opening his campaign for
United States Senator

Advertisement for 1922 campaign.



John Knott drawing in November 6, 1922, *Dallas Morning News*, commenting on write-in vote issue by paraphrasing David Crockett's line, "Be sure you are right, then go ahead."

yet with us. We cannot escape their power or fly from their presence. They are with us in this life, will be with us at its close, and in that scene of inconceivable solemnity, which lies yet farther offward, we shall still find ourselves surrounded by the consciousness of duty, to pain us wherever it has been violated, and to console us so far as God may have given us grace to perform it."

If the people will it, I am ready to consecrate my mind and heart to their service. And if I am chosen to represent this great commonwealth in the United States senate, I shall carry to that high position a mind that I have tried to keep clean by right thinking and a conscience that has never been stultified. And with a will to be the servant of the people at all times and to guard well their interests. I shall ever be at my post of duty and all the powers that God may have blessed me with will be dedicated to an unselfish service to my country.¹⁷

During the campaign, Mayfield's forces obtained an injunction against the printing of George's name on the ballot in any capacity and that ruling was upheld by the Texas Supreme Court. George then conducted a statewide

¹⁷ "Nominated to Make Race Against Mayfield," *Dallas Morning News*, Sept. 17, 1922.

write-in campaign. He received approximately 131,000 votes out of a total of 395,000 votes cast, a surprisingly large showing for a thirty-year-old non-Democratic Party candidate in that era, even more extraordinary considering his name did not appear on the ballot.¹⁸ Tom Connally, who waged a successful campaign against Mayfield in 1928 for Mayfield's U.S. Senate seat, credited George's fight in 1922 as part of the reason for his victory.¹⁹

From 1923 to 1925, George served as a special assistant U.S. attorney in the Houston division of the southern district of Texas. During that time, John L. Wortham—namesake of Wortham and Sons insurance brokerage company, still in business today, and father of Gus Wortham, the guiding force behind American General Insurance company—wrote to a friend (surely with some hyperbole):

George Peddy has distinguished himself in the oil cases here—convictions in every case, about fifteen. It is the talk of the city that George overshadowed every attorney [in the case]; . . . many prominent citizens sat [through the entire proceedings]. Jesse Jones's wife told me that Capt. Hutchinson, the father of the Judge, sat by her. The Capt. said the Judge told him to come, that he wanted him to hear the greatest young lawyer in the country. . . . I want to say, which opinion is shared by the public, that [George] outclassed all of the defendant lawyers.²⁰

In 1925 George became affiliated with the firm of Vinson & Elkins, a twelve-lawyer firm at that time, founded by William Vinson and James Elkins in 1917. George became a partner in 1929, and he held that position until 1942.²¹

During the years of the Depression, George and Gertrude, who had no children of their own, began raising Gertrude's two nephews as their foster children. Also, during this same time period, when the salary for a county commissioner was \$1,200, George's income ranged between \$20,000 and \$50,000 per year at the Vinson & Elkins firm, the equivalent of \$285,000 to \$618,000 in 2005 dollars.²²

Of the three major candidates in the United States senatorial Democratic primary of 1948, George was the only one who served in both world wars. Coke

¹⁸ There was also some question as to whether Mayfield's name should appear. See *Staples, Secretary of State v. King*, 112 Tex. 61, 245 S.W. 639 (Tex., 1922). Mike Kingston, et al. (eds.), *Political History of Texas* (Austin: Eakin Press, 1992).

¹⁹ Gertrude Peddy to George Peddy, letter, Aug. 22, 1945 (original in possession of author): "Senator Connally . . . expressed himself as being not only willing but anxious to be of assistance to you because he said he owed you a debt of gratitude dating back to his original campaign for the Senate which he had never had an opportunity to repay."

²⁰ John L. Wortham to Luther Nichols, letter, Jan. 29, 1924 (original in possession of author).

²¹ Harold M. Hyman, *Craftsmanship and Character: A History of the Vinson & Elkins Law Firm of Houston, 1917-1997* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998), 224.

²² William (Bill) F. Erwin Jr. to Larry McNeill, interview, Apr. 2005; Inez Peddy Pool to Larry McNeill, interview, Oct. 26, 2000; *The Texas Almanac and State Industrial Guide* (Dallas: A. H. Belo Corporation, 1933); application of George E. B. Peddy for appointment to School of Military Government, Feb. 6, 1943 (original in possession of author); Personal Data Sheet, form OPB-2, United States Army, for George Edwin Bailey Peddy, Sept. 10, 1942 (original in possession of author); "Measuring Worth—Relative Value in U.S. Dollars," <http://www.measuringworth.com/calculators/uscompare> [Accessed Jan.-Feb., 2007].

Stevenson served in neither; and Lyndon Johnson was in the navy in the second for seven months, more or less.²³ Certainly, no one would have accused George of shirking his duty if he had failed to enlist in the Second World War. He was fifty years old in 1942. Moreover, to join the service would be at the cost of his highly lucrative law practice since Judge Elkins had decreed anyone volunteering would not find employment waiting for them at the firm if and when they returned from service. Yet knowing he was giving up sizeable income for the duration of the war and knowing it might not be available to him upon his return, George enlisted and reported for duty on September 26, 1942. His physical examination



Peddy in World War II.

measured him at 6 feet, 2 inches tall, and he weighed 221 pounds.²⁴

Lt. Col. Paul H. Brown conducted a comprehensive interview for George's appointment as a major and made the following militarily crisp remarks as to George's qualifications:

Excellent handclasp and impressive personality upon first meeting. Nice, deliberative, and rather melodious voice. Commanding. Fine vocabulary. Plenty of confidence and no egotism. Keen, clear, and comprehending mind. Is logical and convincing in his discussions and will attract attention and command the attention of any audience. Rather conservative and clearly presents picture of a man with sound judgment. Has a very keen, steady eye, somewhat friendly and piercing. Radiates character. Has plenty of ability to lead and initiate. Does not have to go in the service and is thoroughly patriotic. Motives of the highest type. A fine Christian gentleman. He can follow through and will drive hard. Is probably at his height in life's attainments.²⁵

From September 1943 through December 1945, George served overseas as a civil affairs officer and as a military governor.²⁶ A February 1944 letter

²³ Boothe Mooney, *Mister Texas: The Story of Coke Stevenson* (Dallas: Texas Printing House, 1947); Robert A. Caro, *Means of Ascent* (New York: Random House, 1990), 19–53.

²⁴ Hyman, *Craftsmanship and Character*, 201; Army of the United States, Certificate of Service, George Edwin Bailey Peddy, Mar. 26, 1946; WD AGO form no. 63, Report of Physical Examination with cover letter from Murray B. Jones, Sept. 9, 1942. (Originals for all in possession of author).

²⁵ Form OPB-2, United States Army, for George Edwin Bailey Peddy, Sept. 10, 1942 (original in possession of author).

²⁶ Army of the United States, Certificate of Service, George Edwin Bailey Peddy, Mar. 26, 1946.

to Bill Erwin, one of his two foster sons, summarized his early experience in Italy:

I have been Executive Officer in a large organization in charge of Military Government of three Provinces with a total population of 5,000,000 people. In this position I have had to do with every conceivable problem. Among them some of the most difficult and yet most interesting has [*sic*] been sheltering and feeding thousands of homeless men, women and children, problems in connection with gas, water and lights, issuing of passes for people to move from place to place, and on one night I personally supervised and directed the evacuation of 25,000 people from their homes in a danger area and the feeding of all of them from trucks for three days and nights.²⁷

In April 1944 he reported to England and Northern Ireland for additional training and was attached to the Fifth Infantry Division, known as the Red Diamond division (this division was assigned to Patton's Third Army the following August). George became chief of the military government staff section.²⁸

It was during this portion of his WWII service, particularly from September 1944 until the German surrender, that George probably experienced his most difficult work, his most satisfying, and the most dangerous. In February 1944 he wrote, "I will have an opportunity . . . to work right up with the troops which will be the realization of my greatest ambition when I came over."²⁹

This ambition was, in fact, realized, beginning on July 9 and 10, when George and the rest of the Fifth Division, in full field equipment, landed on Utah Sugar Red Beach in Normandy and began the trek across France.³⁰

On August 6, 1944, George wrote Gertrude:

The destruction is indeed appalling but of course we were compelled to do it in order to drive the Germans out. The individual French farmer or shopkeeper who was getting plenty to eat and all in all was getting along pretty well and had his property and livestock intact and in good condition could hardly be expected to wax enthusiastic over anything on the day after our guns and bombs have wiped out everything he possessed and in some cases killed the members of his family. For France as a nation, it is glorious to be free at whatever cost but as to the individual who happens to be in our path, it would require a super patriotism for him to enthuse when he has

²⁷ Author's personal collection.

²⁸ George Peddy to Gertrude Peddy, letter, May 4, 1944 (original in possession of author); Public Relations Officer, G-2 section, Headquarters Fifth Division, *The 5th Division in France* (Metz, France: La Lorraine Press, 1944) (original in possession of author); Army of the United States, Separation Qualification Record, WD AGO form 100 for George E. B. Peddy, Mar. 26, 1945 (original in possession of author); George Peddy to Gertrude Peddy, letter, May 15, 1944 (original in possession of author).

²⁹ George Peddy to Bill Erwin, letter, Feb. 22, 1944 (original in possession of author).

³⁰ Public Relations Officer, G-2 section, Headquarters Fifth Division, *The 5th Division in France*.

just witnessed the complete obliteration of all that he has worked and skimped and saved for during his lifetime and which parents and grandparents for generations before him had likewise worked for. It's easy to wave the flag and play with pretty words like "Do or die for freedom," "sacrifice all on the altar of liberty," "Give me liberty or give me death." I used to roll them off my tongue glibly and if anyone had questioned my sincerity I would have been ready to kill him. I was sincere but I didn't know what I was talking about. It's true I saw some of the destruction and death of the last war but it was absolutely nothing as compared to what I have seen this time. It just happens that I am more than ever impressed with the fact that most of the makers of pretty phrases, not only never had to make the personal sacrifices necessary to implement their phrases but also never even came close to the scene of such sacrifices. In some of the affairs of life, it is a fault to look so closely at the individual trees that we can't see and appreciate the forest, but in thinking about and discussing war, I want to see an end to the abstract phrase-making about it and to break it down into its component parts. There is a big difference between "I hate war" and "I hated to see 'John Jones,' who saluted me cheerfully and said Good morning sir an hour before, being loaded into an ordinary army truck along with a dozen or more of his buddies and carted away to be buried three thousand miles away from friends and loved ones." The term "umpteen thousand casualties" which one sees in the paper doesn't mean much but when you break it down to each of those boys, who didn't want to die, but wanted to live and love and be loved and have homes and families of their own and see, and enjoy the companionship of friends and neighbors; then you begin to understand if you are not totally depraved, you will try to cut out the idle mouthing of phrases and *do something* to the end that boys like those, in the future, may live normal lives.³¹

In his September 25, 1944, letter, he told her:

The biggest job has been the evacuation of more than 1,000 people from our front lines back to villages and towns in France and the procurement and transportation of food from the interior to feed them. This has been a terrific task especially since I have had to do it in constant rain and cold and under constant shell fire. I have been very lucky. Only four civilians have been killed in the entire operation.³²

He noted in a letter of September 30, 1944:

I had a very busy time of it for the last two or three weeks. This is my first day in the office during that time. I have evacuated 1450 people from the front lines and have placed them in small towns throughout our area and have brought in 7 truckloads of food for them. I spent all day yesterday bringing out horses, cattle and sheep and of course got the biggest kick of all out of that operation. For the moment, I haven't a single problem. The people are happy to be out of range of the guns for the first time in a month and I have enough food to supplement local supplies and feed them for at least three weeks. I have a good C. A. [Civil Affairs] Detachment of three officers and six enlisted men to do my legwork in the rear area and with my three

³¹ Author's personal collection.

³² Author's personal collection.

officers up front with the Regiments and my staff here at Hqs. [Headquarters] to take care of office details.³³

On November 1, 1944, he was promoted to lieutenant colonel, a week prior to the Third Army's initiation of its offensive to capture Metz.³⁴ In a December 2, 1944, letter, he noted he had entered more than 100 cities and towns with the first troops in the dash across France "sitting up and taking charge" of civil affairs, including Chartres, Fontainebleau, and Reims.

Passed over same ground as in 1918 seeing some old trenches still scarring surface of countryside. Entered Verdun with assault troops and went thru severe bombing first night in city. Evacuated over 2000 people from front lines under shellfire and fed them by bringing stores of food from army warehouses.³⁵

On February 18, 1945, he wrote:

We are fighting right now on ground which once resounded to the tramp of Caesar's Legions. Be it ever so little, it's worthwhile to say and do what I can to the end that fine young men may not die on this ground 2,000 years from now. I think perhaps the greatest evil in the world throughout history has been overemphasis on the matters and things of the moment and the corresponding neglect of those considerations which control the destiny and shape the ends of the millions who will walk in the same paths and fight the same battles and from whose throats the same bloodcurdling cries will ring out down through the ages and uncounted centuries of time.

My experiences have brought me to a deep realization of the inconsequentiality of one life or even one generation in the scheme of things. As you know, I have traveled fairly extensively for a country boy, even before I reentered the service, and I believe I have been a little better than the average student of history; but I never seemed to relate that knowledge and experience to the everyday affairs of life as I have since I [last] saw you. It might be explained simply by age, but I hardly think that is the case. Of course, repetition is an important element in learning, and I have been over most of the ground twice and a large part of it three times. I guess even the most obtuse mind imaginable would have absorbed just a little. Be that as it may, when I see a fine young man fall down and die on this battleground in the shadow of a castle or behind a wall which witnessed the death, the useless death, of other fair-haired boys two thousand years ago, I indict the leaders of every generation that has peopled the world during the intervening centuries for criminal neglect of their duties and responsibilities. This applies to the *good* leaders. The criminals who fomented wars for their own ambitious ends are another matter. And yet, in my heart, I think better of men like Alexander, Caesar, and Napoleon than I do of the appeasers and isolationists who have guided the destinies of Britain, France, and America since the end of the last war. To me, criminal neglect is more reprehensible than an affirmative wrongful act on the part of a high public

³³ Author's personal collection.

³⁴ George Peddy to Gertrude Peddy, letter, Nov. 4, 1944 (original in possession of author).

³⁵ George Peddy to Gertrude Peddy, letter (original in possession of author).

official. All of which brings me back to the proposition that it is not so important to try to solve any problem or correct any evil because of its effect on us or our generation as it is to cast our little mite into the hopper to the end that it may join with thoughts and efforts of other right-thinking people in this generation and those to come after us until finally there is enough sound grain to counterbalance the rotten and produce a loaf which, though far from perfect, will sustain and not destroy those other generations that will follow, one after the other, through the ages to the end of time.

You will not think that the thoughts expressed above cause me to value less highly the good things of life which you and I have been blessed with so abundantly. Nor will you think for a moment that I do not love being alive and am not deeply interested in those matters which will affect us and our friends and loved ones. All those considerations are just as important to me, if not indeed more so, as ever. In other words, it is not that I love and appreciate these less, but rather that I appreciate more fully than ever before our responsibility to those who will pass this way when we are gone.³⁶

When the army moved into Germany, George's duties became those of military governor, overseeing the operation of occupied territory. In one letter written in February 1945, he said:

Well, I am once again operating Mil.Gov. [Military Governor]. I have four towns or rather the ruins of four towns. There are three old women and a child in a basement in one town, 14 people in one, 10 in one and not a soul in the other. You know from the above that I am not busy at present. I don't expect to have many people to ride herd on so long as this sort of campaign continues. We are absolutely wrecking everything in front of us and even if the people tried to stay we would find nothing but corpses except for a few who might be in good enough cellars to carry them thru the terrific mauling we are giving all these places.³⁷

In another February letter, he noted:

As I told you in my last letter, we are back in Germany again and my work is beginning to pick up. I now have 8 towns in which there are app. 500 civilians. I think we will soon be running into more people and no doubt within a week or two I shall have more than I can find room for. This town has been mentioned frequently in the news. It was an important communications center and is a second T. Lo in the degree of destruction. There are over 400 dead civilians buried in cellars. The normal population is 7000 and I found 150 when I went in. I have now located over 1000 of the residents in cellars and tunnels about 3 miles from the town. They will not be permitted to return until our lines move forward at least 10 or 15 miles. They are all so happy to be alive and behind us and out from under our bombing and shelling that they gladly obey my orders to stay where they are until I give them permission to go *home*—or rather to the place their homes used to be.³⁸

³⁶ Author's personal collection.

³⁷ Feb. 18 (original in possession of author).

³⁸ Feb. 25 (original in possession of author).

Clearly, expatriating prisoners of war gave him satisfaction, as he stated in a March 13, 1945, letter:

I have been going in high since my last note to you. Have had to handle my first mass migration of French, Russian, Polish etc. German war prisoners and forced laborers. In the last three days I have moved out of my area more than 5000 who are now well on their way home. It is a joy to help them on their way. They are the happiest people I have ever seen.³⁹

By March 20, he was in his fifty-third command post since Normandy, had set up military government in fifty-seven German towns, and moved more than eleven thousand displaced persons out of his area, starting them "on the long trek back to their homes."⁴⁰

By March 25, 1945, he had established military governments in 125 cities and towns in Germany, and by March 30th, undertook his largest assignment, the initial governance of Frankfurt, Germany.

He wrote to Gertrude:

I am writing with my knee for a desk. That together with the rush of affairs in this once great and beautiful city accounts for the poor writing which will be a task to decipher. The worst is over, and I now have my forces functioning pretty smoothly. I have the larger Detachment here now which will be here permanently. It consists of 21 officers and 25 enlisted men and from now on they will do all my big work.

The first news stories from here reported the city deserted. That was *all wet*. Take it from me. I don't know yet just how many are here but a conservative estimate is 250,000. Normal population [is] 600,000. The task was and still is monumental. All principal officials are gone. Imagine Houston with 75% of all buildings destroyed—all officials gone and 250,000 people, a majority of them homeless and 15,000 foreigners wandering around like lost sheep and you get some idea of what I was faced with here. Of course, all utilities smashed—no lights, no water, no heat.⁴¹

On May 1, his division having been relieved, he had the time to write Gertrude a reflective commentary:

First of all let me tell you that you saved my life with your wonderfully sweet letters which came when I really needed them in the battle of the Ruhr Pocket. . . .

After 10 days of the most terrific pressure imaginable in the Ruhr, we were relieved and began a record breaking trek across Europe. I have traveled over 500 miles. . . . My Div. [Division] alone has captured 54,000 prisoners. One can travel but a short distance without seeing literally *acres* of closely packed prisoners. Surely it can't last much longer.

Conditions as regards the civil population, especially the foreign displaced persons, are extremely difficult. When I left the Ruhr, I was feeding in my area 75,000 of these people. I was feeding them captured German Army food. There is a definite

³⁹ Author's personal collection.

⁴⁰ George Peddy to Gertrude Peddy, letter, Mar. 20 (original in possession of author).

⁴¹ Author's personal collection.

limit to the length of time such foods will last. German civil population has not been permitted to hoard food stocks. I have made a careful survey everywhere I have been and when I tell you that difficult, yes desperate, days lie ahead in the very near future, I state it mildly. I waste no sympathy on the German people themselves but the person who doesn't see clearly the effect that chaos in this country will have on the rest of the world is blind, deaf, and *dumb*. I don't think a *desperately* ill body can be brought back to spiritual, mental and physical health by pin pricks, by goading, by insults, by kicking and cuffing about. If that sick body isn't worth saving, the only sensible course is to destroy it and put it out of its misery and thus remove a cankerous sore from the body politic of the world. Of course we *civilized* people are not going to adopt that realistic remedy. . . .

We plan a democratic way of life for peoples who can not live any sort of life unless we help them quickly to get on with the plain everyday business of keeping body and soul together. With all the help and encouragement we can give, they still will be unable to make the grade without direct relief from us in large quantities. Yet we are hell bent on pursuing a policy which will hamper and hinder to an immeasurable degree. I have protested continuously to my immediate superiors and in so far as I possibly could, I have liberally interpreted and applied our policies. . . .

The truth of the matter is, however, that I would love to have an opportunity to revamp and restate certain policies as I feel that in so doing, I could make a great contribution to our effort toward rehabilitation and stabilization in this part of the world. I am deeply interested in the long-range future of Europe but I must confess that I am more interested in the immediate problems.⁴²

He had not experienced the worst yet, however. That occurrence was the subject of a May 8 letter:

I must tell you that today I did a job which on the one hand gave me great satisfaction but at the same time gave me a closeup view of the most horrible sight that ever was viewed by mortal eyes. Yesterday morning one of my officers, Major Hooper, called me and told me he had found 120 starving Jewish girls in a shack, lieing [*sic*] on the bare floor with 7 dead ones among them, and that they hadn't had a bite of food for four days. I immediately got in touch with our surgeon and he made the 20 mile dash in nothing flat. He called back in a short time and told me they were in such condition that they couldn't take anything other than milk and eggs. Major Hooper was able to get a few eggs near-by but no milk was to be found. After trying every available source, I finally found 5 cans of powdered milk in our Hqs. mess and sent it up there. The Surgeon pulled in three of his best Drs. with six enlisted helpers and started to work on them. By working with them all night giving blood and blood plasma and a few drops of milk and small portions of egg every few minutes, they got thru the night with only two deaths. I told the General about them last night and he asked me to take him up there this morning as he wanted to see for himself. We saw them, he ordered the Inspector General to come up and make a full investigation and all of us spent most of the day on it. Here is the true picture. They are girls between sixteen and 25 years of age. They are the survivors of approximately 2,000

⁴² Author's personal collection.

girls who have been in a concentration camp in Poland for from 3 to 5 years. As the Russians advanced into Poland, they were marched into Silesia and from there they were marched during the last 30 days a distance of a little over 600 miles across Silesia and Czechoslovakia. They were left dead or dying along the route until finally these pitiful little things were abandoned by their guards when they were unable to go any further just four days before we arrived and found them. I can't describe them. One girl of 19 looks exactly as you would expect an emaciated dying woman of 65 to look. She will weigh not more than 45 lbs. We are sure she will not live thru the night. There are 30 odd in almost as bad condition. The Surgeon thinks that *with luck* he may be able to save half of them. The others are not quite so bad and a good proportion will live at least for a short while. I say that because 80% of them have tuberculosis and there is little chance of those who have it ever being able to leave their beds. I have seen a good many starving people both in Italy and over here but I was not prepared for what I saw today. It would be unpleasant, but I would give every penny I have in the world if every living healthy person in America could go up there and see those poor little girls. Even I, with all my experience, would not have believed this thing could happen had I not seen it with my own eyes. I hope that no person will ever in my presence say that the atrocities of this war were mere propaganda. In such case, anything is likely to happen regardless of who the person is or where he may be.⁴³

In a May 30 letter, he reported:

Just saw the enclosed pictures of one of the Jewish girls we rescued. Ten of them died and all the others cannot be recognized as the same girls. I collected new shoes and had a German dressmaker fit them out with new dresses. They think the Americans are all little gods. Their appreciation of what we did for them is most inspiring.⁴⁴

Periodically, George had time to write on the subject of international affairs, evidencing some of the positions that would become part of his 1948 platform. In July 1944, he wrote:

At the end of the War in 1918, I was positively sure in my own mind that there would never be another World War. I wish I could feel that way about this one, but at the moment I don't. I doubt that the peoples of the world are now far enough civilized to so order their relationship to and with one another as to establish and maintain universal peace.

Of one thing I am certain: unless and until such a world order can be established, our country must maintain constantly an army, navy and air force so strong that no bully among nations will dare start such a terrible business again. Here again there is danger of failure on the part of our people. I was terribly disappointed that congress didn't follow the advice of Secretary Knox and others of like mind and provide for Universal Military training. This indicates to me that the sob sisters of politics are still in the saddle. Every boy in America ought to have at least 1 year of military training

⁴³ George Peddy to Gertrude Peddy, letter, May 8, 1945 (original in possession of author).

⁴⁴ George Peddy to Gertrude Peddy, letter, May 30, 1945 (original in possession of author).



Gertrude Erwin Peddy, 1948.

and then with a large standing army we could quickly put an army such as we now have into the field and this fact known to all the world would of itself keep such a thing as this from happening again.⁴⁵

In a July 1945 letter to Gertrude, he said:

It is high time we get wise and quit trying to tell other peoples what kind of Government they must have. I notice that we are not putting any heat on Russia in this regard so why not leave others alone? We must confine ourselves to matters of strictly International concern as they affect the Peace of the World. If we would just do that and keep our nose out of other people's domestic affairs we might be able to promote International Good Will and World Peace.⁴⁶

Again in July 1945, but in a dark mood about conditions in Europe and having learned of Winston Churchill's defeat as prime minister, he wrote:

When we had the power to speak, as was the case 26 years ago, we temporized . . . and got no commitments whatever for those things which impelled us to throw our power into the scales. And now we, as sleep walkers, move thru the night that enshrouds the whole of Europe. Ignorance is a horrible thing at best but when oceans of blood has been the price laid upon the counter, what can be said of the stupid store keeper

⁴⁵ George Peddy to Gertrude Peddy, letter, July 15, 1944 (original in possession of author).

⁴⁶ George Peddy to Gertrude Peddy, letter, July 2, 1945 (original in possession of author).

who carefully wraps up a hunk of baloney and passes it across, smilingly confident that it is the priceless jewel purchased at so great a cost?⁴⁷

In August 1945, he wrote Gertrude:

I am in my office but have just this minute read the two *biggest stories* since D-day, one of them by far the most thrilling I have ever read—the Atomic Bomb and Russia's declaration of War. Query—Did the Bomb influence Russia's action? Anyway, surely the end is near. This breath taking thing changes all the roles of Warfare and all thinking on the subjects of War, Peace, Preparedness, Isolation etc. It doubtless will change the attitudes of that class of people who have smugly gone on their way—business and profits as usual while others did their fighting for them. "Sure nuf," every nation and every individual must realize that the next War is just as likely to strike the swivel chair artists and planners in the remotest spots on earth as it is to strike down the boys who heretofore have borne the brunt.⁴⁸

And in September he wrote:

It will be tragic for all mankind if we do not use our great power now to compel all nations to join us in breaking down trade barriers and in opening up the most secret recesses of trade and industry so that each will know at all times what is happening within the borders (hitherto sealed) of the others. I have no hope for permanent World Peace so long as there are sealed borders behind which there may be caldrons of witches brew for the destruction of other nations. I would not lend or give one penny to any nation until it gave cart[e] blanche to reporters and representatives of our govt. to travel without restriction and with free access to every phase of life within the borders of that country.

To my way of thinking, this is a prerequisite to Peace. We must be ever on the alert to protect ourselves against any country which insists that foreigners see only those things within its borders which is pointed out to them by the Govt. guide or which may be located in certain restricted areas to which access is granted. I have thought a great deal along this line. It was pointed up vividly on my recent trip to Berlin.⁴⁹

George returned to the United States at the end of December 1945. He was discharged in March of the following year as a recipient of the Bronze Star and the Croix de Guerre. Upon his separation from the service, he opened his own law office in Houston. He was a sought-after speaker, giving numerous talks about the international situation and proposing changes in policies of the United States he believed were antithetical to the establishment of long-term peace.⁵⁰

In the 1946 gubernatorial race, he campaigned on behalf of Beauford Jester, both by personal appearances and by radio broadcasts. The Houston

⁴⁷ George Peddy to Gertrude Peddy, letter, July 26, 1945 (original in possession of author).

⁴⁸ George Peddy to Gertrude Peddy, letter, Aug. 9, 1945 (original in possession of author).

⁴⁹ George Peddy to Gertrude Peddy, letter, Sept. 19, 1945 (original in possession of author).

⁵⁰ Army of the United States, Certificate of Service, George Edwin Bailey Peddy, Mar. 26, 1946 (original in possession of author); Announcement card: "George E. B. Peddy announces his return from active service in the Army of the United States and the opening of his offices, 620 Bankers Mortgage Building, Houston 2, Texas, for the general practice of law, April 15, 1946" (original in possession of author). See also George Peddy, "American Military Government Policy in Europe" (speech, Houston Service Club, early 1946; original in possession of author); George Peddy, speech to National Oil Equipment Manufacturers and Delegates Society (NOMADS), Dallas, Dec. 1946, vertical files (CAH); George Peddy, speech to Texas City Kiwanis Club, Dec. 3, 1947, vertical files (CAH); George Peddy, speech at District Convention of Parent-Teachers Association, Waco, Apr. 29, 1947, vertical files (CAH).



Peddy speaking at his campaign kick-off, Tenaha, March 6, 1948.

newspapers reported a favorable response to him, and he was mentioned as a possible candidate for the Houston city council as well as the state Senate.⁵¹

But George's interest remained focused on the international scene. From the time of his return from active military service in World War II until the 1948 campaign, he made eighty speeches urging a change in policy that would allow the restoration of a sustainable European economy, and arguing for the necessity of mandatory American military service in order to successfully counter the Russian threat.⁵²

In the announcement of his candidacy for the U.S. Senate on January 10, 1948, he said:

I have seen my personal friends and comrades die on the battlefield in two world wars. I don't want to see any more American boys have to pay the price they paid for peace, liberty and freedom. This is the most impelling reason for my candidacy. We must accept the responsibility of world leadership. We must redouble our efforts to create a strong United Nations organization to cope with world economic and political problems. We must, above all else, quickly restore our own military power.⁵³

⁵¹ George Peddy, speech for Beauford Jester, radio station KPRC, July 23, 1946, and George Peddy, speech at KTRH, Aug. 19, 1946, vertical files (CAH); *Houston Chronicle* (clipping).

⁵² "The Man from Tenaha," *Houston Post*, Apr. 4, 1948.

⁵³ Announcement of candidacy, Jan. 10, 1948, press release (original in possession of author).

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HEAR

GEORGE PEDDY

CANDIDATE

U. S.

SENATE

TONIGHT
KPRC
7:30 p.m.
 950 on the dial

(Political Adv. Paid By Friends
 of George Peddy)



[Left] Newspaper ad from *Houston Post*, May 11, 1948. Peddy made significant use of radio broadcasts.

[Above] The candidate campaigned in the same wardrobe he wore as an attorney.



Another John Knott political cartoon: LBJ in his helicopter, Stevenson on his horse, and Peddy in his car.



Audience at Peddy's campaign kick-off, Tenaha, March 6, 1948.

Ladies and Gentlemen, accompanied by visual glimpses of his campaign, here is a four-minute recording of one of George's radio addresses, recorded at the KTSA studios in San Antonio and not heard publicly since the year of its recording in 1948.⁵⁴

Sadly, in 1951, George Peddy was leading the Texas Crusade for Cancer when he himself was fatally stricken with the disease. He was fifty-eight.⁵⁵

In a *Houston Post* editorial written about Peddy after his death, that paper noted, "He was deeply concerned with the welfare of government, and strove in season and out for measures to improve it. His interest was patriotic more than political, and it was so strong as to impel him to volunteer in both World Wars."⁵⁶

In closing, we have here tonight a relative of George Peddy. He is the grandson of Julian Peddy, George's nephew, and his name is Lt. David Hubbard, currently serving in the United States Air Force reserves. David, please stand and be recognized.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it has been my honor and my privilege to serve as the president of this organization. Thank you.

⁵⁴ This is included in a PowerPoint presentation that can be viewed at the TSHA Web site. The radio broadcast and campaign slides can be found at <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/about/meeting/Highlights2007.html>.

⁵⁵ "Peddy named '51 Crusade Chairman," *Texas Cancer Triangle*, official newspaper of the American Cancer Society, Texas Division, Inc., 2 (Dec., 1950).

⁵⁶ *Houston Post*, June 14, 1951.