I. Dwayne Harris Surviving Gunman's Attack

II. Deaths of Gordon & Esther Marie Shumate III. Life Sketch of Dr. Galen Homer Coffin, Part 1

Wendy Harris & gupill@gmail.com March 11:
The Official Story by Dwayne Harris

It was Wednesday noon- I had just arrived home for lunch after having negotiated all morning for a piece of equipment that could unload 5 shipping containers that were to be arriving at our hanger construction site in the morning. I was heating food up for lunch when I heard a knock on the outer door of the house we live in. It was the neighbor from across the street and he told me to call the police because the house one down from ours was being robbed. I had the phone number for the local police station in my phone from January when we had been robbed while gone over Christmas. I called the police number immediately and they said they would send some officers over right away. As I looked down the street I could see 4 or 5 guys down at the corner watching the house, and my neighbor and his friend were standing with me watching from the other way. I thought the residents of the house that was being burglarized were not home and I did not know till later that they had been tied up in the house at gunpoint. We heard some banging around and the watching neighborhood started to arm themselves with clubs and block off possible escape routes. I walked down the street right in front of the house and saw three guys come out of the front door crouching down and head towards the back of the house. As the first two guys started to climb over the back wall they were surprised by the neighbors that started yelling at them. The two robbers then climbed onto the roof of the houses and started jumping from roof to roof of the neighboring, close houses. I ran down the street parallel to them to cut off their escape where they would have to come down. As I rounded the corner of the block the first robber was just jumping off the roof and when he hit the street I saw he was carrying a small 22 revolver. I was close at that point and he fired one shot into my face at a few feet distance. I grabbed his arm and the next shot missed me but as the struggle continued just before I threw him to the ground he fired one more shot that went into my chest. I proceeded to take the pistol away from him and threw it out into the middle of the street away from us and started calling for someone to help me hold the guy down. The neighbor from across the street came around the corner with a big rock in his hands and proceeded to throw the rock against the guys head. I released my hold on the robber and he did not get up for a few moments. I yelled at Bob, a short-term volunteer with us from Kansas, to get the truck out and take me to the hospital. By this time the robber that had shot me was getting back up. There were half a dozen men from the neighborhood standing there with clubs and they knocked the guy down again. He got back up and proceeded a few more steps and then collapsed. Sure that the robber would not escape, I walked back down to our house where Bob was getting the truck ready and two police men were coming down the street towards us. I pointed them to the end of the block and climbed into the truck while Bob locked up the house. I called Wendy and told her to meet us at the CVAH Adventist hospital but she informed me she was just rounding the corner towards home so we stopped and she got in and we drove over to CVAH.

The Rest of the Story
by Wendy Harris

Around noon on Wednesday, March 7, I was heading home after taking care of some business in town. I called Dwayne with a quick question and learned that he was home. I told him I'd be home in a few minutes, thinking I could join him and Bob since they'd probably be eating their sack lunch at home before going out to the project. I remembered one more stop I had to make, and providentially I was delayed about half an hour, missing the whole drama that was going on unbeknownst to me, and saving me from witnessing the traumatic scene. I texted Dwayne that I had been delayed but I was on my way. As I was nearing home in a trice, I got a call from Dwayne that sent my heart beating. In a
garbled voice he said "meet me at the hospital now"! I said "where are you, I'm almost home!" He told me they were just pulling out so as I round the corner and saw the truck coming my way, I jumped out, paid the tricycle, and ran and jumped in the back of the truck and we drove off towards the hospital. Dwayne was hunched over in the front, passenger seat with his hand under his mouth catching the blood while Bob drove. I could not get to Dwayne from the back of the truck but I leaned over the bar and tried to see his condition. He told me he had been shot in the face by robbers and Bob tried to explain what he knew of the situation. He said he was ok and his pulse felt strong and though his face was all bloody and his hand had a pool of blood, it didn't look like it was continuing to bleed a lot, so I calmed down. It was just 15 minutes drive to the hospital. I texted a few doctor friends on the way (and at the same time other friends and family). I knew all the doctors were in a meeting because I had just been there earlier that morning, then so I didn't call immediately. But when we got to the E.R. there was only one resident and I didn't know her. Dwayne started to point to his chest and have trouble breathing. That's when we found there was a bullet wound in his chest. I immediately started calling the doctors. They had just gotten my text and were shocked! They stopped to pray and then when they got my call they all came running to the E.R. Dwayne was starting to show signs of shock with a pale color and sweating. I started to get worried, but praise God it didn't last long. As soon as the doctors arrived there was action everywhere and Dwayne was looking better already (I even have wondered if God was already answering the prayers that were being lifted up for him around the country as my text was being passed around like wild-fire). The ENT specialist for this area just "happened" to be around and was heading for the meeting when one of the doctors grabbed her in the hall and brought her to the E.R. The pulmonary specialist just "happened" to be on his way to the hospital and was only one hour away (he lives four hours away). They took Dwayne into surgery within an hour of his arrival (as best I can remember). The ENT surgery found the bullet had passed just in the right place so there was no major damage and had come within one centimeter of the spinal cord! By the time she was finished, the pulmonary specialist and assisting surgeons were able to continue the surgery into the chest. They found the bullet once again had come within one centimeter of hitting the main vessel in the heart and had only clipped the lungs. They placed a chest tube and drained 900cc of blood out of the chest cavity. They left the bullet where it had lodged in the tissue because there is no risk of infection or problems with it there. Three and a half hours later he was done with the surgery and I got the news that all was well! I wasn't at all worried during the surgery or surprised at the news. I just felt everything was going to be ok. I was out doing errands during most of the surgery. The container vans for the hangar construction were supposed to arrive the next day and the truck drivers needed to be paid so Bob took me home and I grabbed some things at the house to stay in the hospital and then we went to the bank before heading back to the hospital. In ICU I found Dwayne with tubes all over the place. He could nod his head yes and no and was obviously completely coherent. He was weak and could only squeeze my hand a little but as the hours passed he rapidly gained strength. His vital signs stayed stable from the time he arrived in the hospital until now. That is another thing that kept me calm. We serve a very powerful and great God and everyone around here agrees that all the pieces of this story are not a coincidence.

One thing I have learned through this experience (among many) is the power of intercessory prayer. As the news spread around the world, I was encouraged to know that many people were praying for Dwayne. We continue to feel the prayers as Dwayne’s recovery has been so smooth. We are so grateful to God and all of you, words cannot express. I hope that after this experience we all will learn to pray more and with more confidence and faith for people in need that God brings into our lives. To be continued...
Sharon (their daughter) and I are exhausted, but so very thankful for our faith and for the God of renewal and peace at work in us. They are both awaiting a better place and we so look forward to standing with them in the earth-made-new proclaiming in a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain!” What a glorious day that will be! We hope and pray that you will be standing there as well.

We had settled on a Memorial Service for Gordon on Sabbath, June 23. It will now be a service for both Gordon and Esther Marie. I'll be sending out official notification with all of the pertinent details, but wanted to alert you to this date now. I'm trying to send this email to people in different areas that knew Gordon and Esther Marie. Perhaps you would be so kind as to pass this information on to others in your area that would have an interest.

Bill & Sharon Sackett
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III. Life Sketch of Dr. Galen Homer Coffin [Part 1]

Kathy Marshall <colorcat3@comcast.net> March 07:

Memorial services for my father, Galen Coffin, were held in Portland, Oregon, Feb. 18 and Singapore Maranatha Church, Dunman Rd. Feb. 25. Here is the text of the Life Sketch that we linked with slides from his life that was used at both services. We miss him so very much.

Galen Homer Coffin was born on July 28, 1920 in Lafayette, Indiana to Day Dean and Edyth Gruber Coffin. His father had just graduated from Loma Linda Medical School and was interning in Lafayette. The next year the family moved to New England Sanitarium and Hospital in Stoneham, Massachusetts near Boston. At the age of 4 his parents left for Hong Kong, the first leg of their journey to Nanning, South China. Galen's dad was to be the sole doctor at the remote mission hospital and school of nursing.

From Hong Kong they traveled by river steamer to their new home. Throughout their 14 years in Nanning their method of travel back and forth to Hong Kong was by river boat. The trips could take anywhere from 4 to 24 days. Their accommodation was a 5' X 5' X 5' cabin. Galen's father was 6' tall and had to sleep corner to corner with the family squeezed around him. The boat’s crew made a large pot of plain rice each day for everyone on board. Galen's mother bought greens and duck eggs along the way as they traveled, cooking them over a little clay charcoal stove to supplement the rice. This was the beginning of Galen’s taste for simple meals.

At times the boat travelled so slowly they could get out and walk the shore faster than the boat moved. Sometimes they encountered rebel gunfire from the shore during local warlord skirmishes, before they could establish their neutrality. Once their boat got stranded on a sandbar and sat listing until days later the water rose higher again.

Galen's parents began language study when they arrived in Nanning and after several weeks they could say a few sentences. But Galen didn't even try to speak Chinese. After the family had been in Nanning a month, Galen suddenly began chattering away in Cantonese with his Chinese playmates. This fluency in Chinese served him well through out his life.

Two years after they arrived in Nanning, Galen's brother Harold was born. When Galen was 7, one of the hospital staff who was caring for her orphaned granddaughter passed away, leaving 7 year old Sui Wan alone. The Coffin family was delighted to add a girl to the family. Their mother had a degree in elementary education and home schooled her boys when they reached school age.

Galen's Dad wrote back to the US and asked someone to send them some used musical instruments. When the shipment arrived they parceled out the instruments around the mission and formed a small band with Galen taking up the saxophone.

Galen was very inventive even as a boy and later talked of hurrying through his studies so he could rush out to the workshop and make things.

One of the many things he made was a little electric fan. He hand wound the magneto, used scrounged parts of a toothpaste cap and cut sheet metal fan blades. His pet monkey, JoJo, was the star of an experiment when Galen wired up the monkey's banana to a hand cranked magneto to test the conductivity of bananas. He discovered JoJo did not enjoy the shocking banana, but was smart enough to realize that he could sneak a bite when Galen wasn't cranking the handle!

When Galen was ready for 8th grade in 1934, he went to Far Eastern Academy (FEA), the boarding school for missionary's children in Shanghai, China. He had the distinction of being the fastest runner in the school. While there he
took saxophone lessons from a 'white' Russian, as non-communist Russians were called in those days. He continued blessing folks with his saxophone talent through his lifetime and even recently for his Village church family. During his junior year at FEA, a new girl named Beth Armstrong arrived late from Singapore in the midst of a boy's dorm challenge to see who could grow the best beard. Her first words about Galen were, "Who is the guy with all the hair?" The two of them soon became acquainted and thought each other were pretty special. Their friendship continued when Galen graduated in 1939 and enrolled in Walla Walla College.

One day he ran across someone in College Place selling a Harley Davidson motorcycle for $25. The price was right, but it was completely disassembled, forcing Galen to bring it home in a wheelbarrow. Some weeks later he had rebuilt the motorcycle, replaced a small broken part and was riding it around campus. After using it a few months he sold it for $50.

Galen worked very hard at a variety of jobs during his years at Walla Walla College. He toiled in the dairy barns shoveling feed for twenty cents an hour, which he did not like, then ran the PA system for concerts and services at the college, qualifying him and Beth for free admission to events. He spent one summer in the steam tunnels at the College installing insulation, and rode his bike to a job outside of town at a nursery.

In those days the mail to China went by ship and could take 6 weeks one way, so the news was quite old by the time a letter went and the answer came back. In 1940 Galen and Harold learned that their parents had moved from Nanning and were living in Canton. Their Dad and another doctor were staffing the mission hospital there.

December 8, 1941 their parents were informed by Japanese soldiers of the attack on Pearl Harbor and were told they would be under house arrest. For fourteen months they continued under house arrest, able to leave their own yard only with written permission. They spent their days walking in their fenced yard, reading and playing word games. Eventually, they and all their household belongings were moved to a compound a few miles away with 56 other people.

Seven months later Galen's mother had the opportunity to return to the US. Her departure from Canton occurred about the same time as Galen and Beth's wedding, September 20, 1942 at the old Central Church here in Portland, Oregon. After a lengthy boat trip west via Goa, India; Cape Town, South Africa; up the coast of South America to New York City and across the US she was reunited with her sons at Walla Walla College. She rented a small house in College Place to be near her sons and new daughter-in-law while waiting for Galen's father to be released from internment camp and return from China.

In 1943 Galen graduated from WWC with a Physics major and Math minor. He had planned to be a teacher, but the semester of student teaching changed his mind and he enrolled at WWC a fifth year to complete his pre-med requirements. This gave Beth a chance to graduate in 1944 with a degree in Elementary Education.

Before Galen could get to medical school, he was drafted and scheduled to join the research staff at Oakridge, TN, working on a highly secret project. Since Beth had been born in Tokyo, Japan, it took several months of investigation for the government to establish that she would not be a security risk. Eventually, Galen took his military physical, but was medically rejected for a fluke asthma attack he had during the months of delay. They were thankful for the asthma attack when they discovered later that the Oakridge facility was where the atom bomb was developed. [End of Part 1]

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