

# CROOKED SIDEWALKS *Too*



*More* LIFE LESSONS LEARNED  
RONALD P CARR

*Every life is a story, each story part of our journey, developed from infancy through adulthood based on choices we make, or don't. It's life's lessons that help us grow, gain experience and wisdom, and move us along our journey.*

## **CROOKED SIDEWALKS TOO**

By Ronald P. Carr

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*More* LIFE LESSONS LEARNED

RONALD P CARR

## What Others Are Saying About Crooked Sidewalks Too

*“Crooked Sidewalks was an interesting find in autobiographical and motivational books. Both entertaining and relatable, I found myself personally engaged in the story telling of a number of the chapters, like Push Through the Stall and It’s Just A Penny, just two of the many lessons learned. I was also fascinated by the various military stories and the leadership lessons learned, but what I appreciated most, was the author’s genuine transparency and humble honesty, which for me, validated even more the wisdom of the stories shared.”*

Phil Stolberg - COO, Marketing and Fundraising Professional

*“I was delighted to read this follow-up book to **Crooked Sidewalks**, and fully enjoyed all of the author's additional adventures in his life. **Crooked Sidewalks Too** is a fascinating and entertaining read. Over his lifetime, the author put himself into positions to enjoy new adventures, gaining the full living-in-the-moment experiences. Through his writing, the author also invites the reader into his world, to share his life lessons learned. He also shares his sense of humor, love of life and unique adventures, while allowing us to see his humanity. I’d love to be a small bird on his shoulder to see and enjoy the future adventures he continues to encounter. I highly recommend **Crooked Sidewalks Too**, as a great read and an inspiration for capturing my own stories and sharing them.”*

Netta Roberts - Educator/Counselor

*“I enjoyed reading the engaging chapters of Crooked Sidewalks Too, a compilation of personal narratives from the author's lived experiences. The stories are altars – documentations of where and how*

Ronald P. Carr

*God used experiences to make His presence known to His follower, Ron. In this way, the author communicates to his readers the power of each of our own stories and the importance of documenting them to share how our daily encounters with God alter the course of our lives and focus our narratives on Him."*

Valerie Osland Paton, Ph.D. Professor, Texas Tech University

*"As it turns out, the author and I both served in the US Navy at about the same time, and I was drawn to the similarities of our separate assignments and career experiences. Now, the author is writing about many of those "life experiences" in his books which, I can definitely relate to. A reader will find his stories not only interesting, introspective, and in some cases provocative, they will enjoy getting underway with him as he weaves his personal philosophy on "life's lessons learned" into each of his stories. "Crooked Sidewalks Too" offers those insights and lessons learned to each reader in a personal way. I highly recommend the read and the voyage."*

Marvin Rice – Captain, US Navy, (ret)

*"The author provides an easy read with enlightening stories of personal experiences. When you walk the Crooked Sidewalks, you'll be entertained, but you'll also get a glimpse into the character and priorities of the author. God has blessed this man and I'm proud to call him friend."*

Verne Wold – Telephone Executive/Entrepreneur

*"The author's zest for life and his appreciation for life's ups and downs shine through each page. I found my own reflection and sense of gratitude deepen."*

Jesse Nelson, Ph.D - Educator, University of Oregon

*Crooked Sidewalks Too*

*“If you enjoy real life adventures and intrigue, with a heavy sprinkling of humor, you will enjoy Crooked Sidewalks Too.”*

Captain R. Mick Carr - Captain, US Navy Reserves (ret)

*"This book is a carefully prepared, thoughtful and intuitive look at the author's life lessons, which most of us can relate to. The author's telling reveals how life's opportunities can seem bleak and overwhelming or joyful and pleasurable and that with each one, the Lord is with us.*

*As with all of us, our lives are filled with possibilities, failures, successes and conditions that we do not control. This author delivers his experience with heartfelt commentary, insightfulness and warmth."*

Roy Younquist – Financial Executive

*“This author’s writing is clear, personal and heartfelt.”*

Michael Taylor, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Practice, Emeritus

Licensed Clinical Social Worker

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# Playing Texas Stadium

*“I’ve learned that something constructive comes from every defeat.”*

Coach Tom Landry

At the time, it was one of the most prestigious football stadiums in the country, Texas Stadium, located in Dallas, Texas, and the home of the World Famous Dallas Cowboys football organization. One of its most unique and recognizable features was the open roof that would allow in all the warm rays of the sun to light the stadium giving the sense of an open arena. When asked about the open roof, it was bragged that the Cowboys was God’s favorite football team, and the open roof was so He could watch the games from Heaven above. At least, that is the way the story goes.

It is a reasonable assumption to believe, at least in my mind, because of the numerous Super Bowl games won by the Cowboys, and by the many talented and NFL Hall of Famers that came from so many Cowboys players. This includes All-Star quarterback Roger Staubach, Troy Aikman, Deon Sander, Tony Dorsett, Michael Irvin, running back Emmitt Smith and the incredible Coach Tom Landry, just to name a few.

It was a grand stadium where history, traditions and stories of legends were generated and many of football royalty are still talked about today. Although my name is not included in any of the above, I have my own memory of the one time I played Texas Stadium, and I will never forget it.

Some years back, when my family lived in Dallas, Texas, I was called by a friend who invited my wife Jan and I to join her at this special fundraising event for a local charity supported by the Dallas



Cowboys. This charity served youth sports, education and mentorship to children in the Dallas area. On occasion, to the best of my financial ability, I enjoy participating in fundraisers, not only for the specific purpose of supporting local charitable organizations, but also for the benefit of meeting other people, perhaps even rubbing shoulders, in this instance, with Cowboys players and staff members, but also for the opportunity to get down on the field for some fun.

Upon arrival at Texas Stadium's event reception area, guests were invited onto the field to participate in a throwing challenge with the then current Dallas Cowboys star quarterback, Steve Pelleur. It seemed simple enough, and heck, why not? It would be fun just to be down on the grass, the "hallowed" stadium field, and to accept the challenge to throw a football through a target against QB Steve Pelleur. I'm in. Let me set the stage.

At one of the goal posts, a hula hoop was hung as the target. Then, guests that wanted to participate would line up and each would take their turn at the five yard line and try to throw the football through the hoop. Dallas Cowboys quarterback Steve Pelleur would then step up and also try to throw the ball through the target hoop. Any guest who was able to successfully throw the ball through the hoop, followed by Steve, and in the event that Steve missed, the guest's name was then put into a bowl for a drawing to win a prize. The big prize was a Dallas Cowboys autographed football signed by all the team players. That may not be a big deal to a lot of people, but for those of us who really enjoy owning sports memorabilia, it was a great incentive to step up and take the challenge. Okay. That included me. However, I knew it would be a challenge. After all, this was the starting quarterback for the famous Dallas Cowboys team. It wasn't about luck. It was about purpose and intent. I needed to prepare myself, as best I could, and I didn't have much time.

As I watched guests line up and take their turn to toss the ball from the five yard line, a ten yard throw to the target, I had an idea. It had been years since I'd thrown a football, or even a baseball. I knew I could do it if I warmed up properly and got my right arm loose enough. That way, I would at least be competitive.

I noticed someone was needed to shag balls once they were thrown, and return them back to the starting point for the next guest challenger. I quickly volunteered and took my position behind the goal post. As someone threw a ball, I would chase it, pick it up and throw it back to the receiving team staffer. As I did this, I could feel my throwing arm warming up and I was developing my former confidence in handling the ball. This went on for about thirty minutes as each participating guest took their turn.

Finally, when I saw there were only two people left to take the challenge, I walked over and got to the end of the line, waiting for my turn. This was going to be a challenge for me because Steve was already warmed up and throwing well. I understood that when it was finally my turn, only two individuals had beaten Steve, and their names were going into the crystal bowl for the drawing for the signed football. Now, it was my turn. Time to step up!

As I walked up to Steve and was handed a football, I commented: "Steve, you're killing everyone at the five yard line. Let's change it up and move back to the ten.." Something had to change. I knew that once I was warmed up, all I had to do was make a good throw toward the hoop, like I knew I was capable I would be successful in getting the ball to where it needed to be. Now, to get my name in the bowl for the drawing, it was up to Steve to miss. It was my hope that the change to throwing from the ten yard line was enough to tip the scales in my favor. Steve was a great thrower and an excellent quarterback, so this change was my "Hail Mary" opportunity.



*I just threw the football through the hoop from the ten yard line at Texas Stadium, a perfect “bulls eye”, even if I do say so myself.*

We both strolled back to the ten yard line. I stepped up, gripped the ball, cranked back and through a bullet almost dead center through the hoop. It wasn't perfect, but I did my part. The cheers of the other guests confirmed it was a good throw. At that point, I was happy with my effort, win or lose. It was very satisfying. Then, Steve stepped up, picked up a football and prepared to make his throw. All eyes were watching. As expected, he gripped the ball, drew back his arm, took a step and launched the ball at the target. It took less than two seconds for the ball to reach the goal post crossbar. His ball struck outside the

target hoop. I'd won on the field, but I still hadn't won the prize. That was yet to be determined. My name was added to the bowl for the drawing that would take place following dinner and the fundraiser. I guess I could even refer to the drawing later as the name of the winner would be drawn from the crystal "super bowl" of the evening. Pun intended.

The dinner and fundraiser took place up in the clubhouse overlooking the stadium. The festive atmosphere and meal were excellent, and the presentation and charitable "ask" were as professional as any fundraiser I've attended. The story of the youth programs supported by this event and the Dallas Cowboys were well presented, and a substantial amount of money was raised that night to support a wonderful organization and the young lives that were impacted. It was a good evening all around.

The last part of the event that several of us were waiting for was the drawing of the name from the "super bowl" of those players that had succeeded in the football throw. There were only a few names in the bowl, so I felt I had a good chance to win. Regardless, win or lose, it was a wonderful evening and the charity of the evening was the kind you felt good about supporting, and that was good enough.

The Master of Ceremonies hyped the challenge and created an atmosphere of anticipation, at least for a few of us. The name was drawn, and for just a moment, I had to sigh and realize the name called wasn't mine. Oh well. I'd participated and had a great time. The man whose name was called and who'd won the football drawing was an older gentleman. As they brought him up and presented him with the signed ball, we all learned he was the football coach at the local high school and had been there for more than thirty years. When they shared his story, I was even more delighted he had won it. I was glad it was going to such a deserving, and probably under-acknowledged, servant leader at the school. For years, his work impacted the lives of thousands

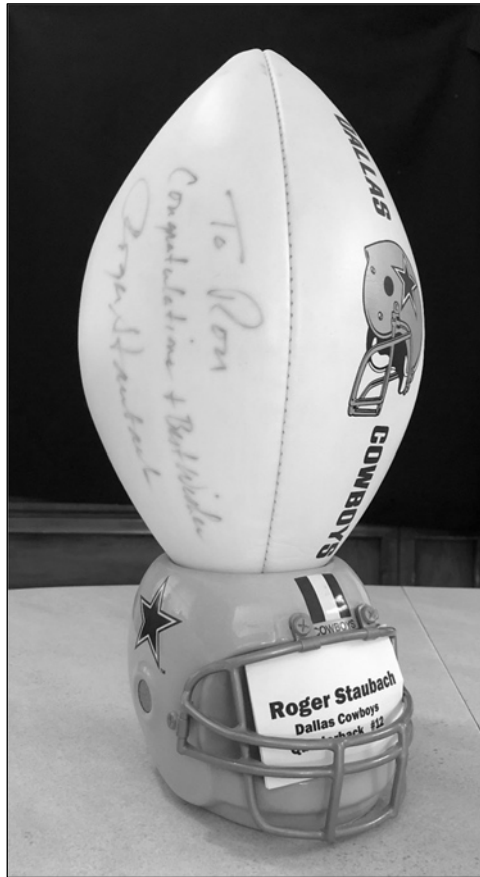
of young people at the high school and the community where he worked. He too had beaten Steve Pelleur in the challenge, and he'd won the drawing fair and square. It was a very good ending. Then, something amazing happened.

After the event was over and people were preparing to leave, I was surprised that the coach who'd won the drawing sought me out. As he approached, I offered my hand to congratulate his win, both for beating Steve and for winning the drawing. I was somewhat stunned when he smiled at me and, to my surprise, tried to hand me the football. I didn't know what to say and the blank look on my face showed him I didn't understand. He explained: "This is really your ball. I beat Steve at the five yard line, but you beat him at the ten. This is your ball!"

Now, I'm mentally scrambling in my mind as to what to say, but it quickly came to me. I wanted to, but couldn't accept the football. "No, coach, this is really your ball. You won it fair and square, according to the rules. However, it really was always your ball. For your career and service to the young people you've served over so many years is acknowledged by the win you had this evening. It is YOUR ball. Congratulations, and thank you for your service." That exchange became the new highlight of the evening for me, and I will also never forget it. It was a generous offer from the coach, a defining part of his character, and why he deserved to keep the ball. Choosing to not accept it from the coach was the right thing to do, and the feeling it gave me inside was especially good and warming.

I always enjoy re-telling this story because it is fun to share, and it brings back a wonderful memory of a really uplifting experience. When I can, I like to work it into a conversation and announce, in a subtle and tongue-in-cheek way, that I had once "played Texas Stadium." The most common reaction was the surprise on people's faces and their interest to learn more. They assumed I played football for the famous Dallas Cowboys, or at least a competing team. In fact, I did NOT, for

either. Playing Pop Warner football in my teen years doesn't qualify. So, I don't make that claim. However, it is fun to think back to that wonderful experience and the memory of the evening. It was very enjoyable and satisfying in so many ways. It was all for charity, and I ended up with a memorable lifetime experience. It makes for a good story, a totally "cool" experience, and in the end, everybody won. Go Cowboys!



# OCS OOPS!

## *Naval Officer Candidate School*

*“Even if you’re on the right track,  
you will get run over if you just sit there.”*

Will Rogers

Many times throughout my many years, I’ve made the statement: “Life happens.” This decree often occurs in the aftermath of an “Oops moment.” When those times come, you just have to accept that it happened and move along. There is no point complaining about it, trying to blame it on someone else, or even trying to rationalize why it happened. Those reactions just don’t make it go away. If anything, the wrong reaction can burn the memory into the brain for a long time, or even forever. The best thing to do is to acknowledge it, handle it the best you can and try to forget it. Even still, it is sometimes fun to remember that it happened, how you survived, and how you can now laugh about it. Looking back, you realize it wasn’t the end of the world.

Every new experience creates the opportunity for such a memory, which could be a growing or learning moment. Then again, maybe it wasn’t. My time at the Navy Officer Candidate School in Newport, Rhode Island, many years ago, provided a number of incidents that added to my vast treasure trove of “what was I thinking” moments. Here are just a few of those stories for your consideration, in hopes that you might benefit from my mistakes.

My first embarrassing moment was when I arrived at the school in mid-summer to begin my Navy training to eventually be commissioned as a Navy officer. During the week prior to arriving in Newport, I got

a haircut. That was my first dumb idea. I would learn on the first day they didn't care what my hair looked like as they marched us to our first in-processing station, staffed by very busy and well-trained, or not, Navy barbers who shaved our hair down to the nubs. It wasn't pretty.



Secondly, I wore a two piece, all black business SUIT, thinking I would make a professional impression on the trainers that would be welcoming me and other recruits. When we exited the buses and were immediately put into company formation, it was clear this menagerie of recruits came in all shapes, sizes and stages of dress. I realized right away that out of the four hundred plus new recruits arriving that day, I was the ONLY one in a SUIT. I had flown all the way from the West



coast to the East coast, and rode the bus down from Boston, Massachusetts to Newport, Rhode Island in a SUIT, in the middle of a hot and humid East coast summer. And now, my reward was to get to continue to wear that SUIT for the rest of the day while we went from check in station to check in station until we were finally assigned our rooms for the next few months. Fortunately, that only took six hours. What was I thinking? I'm really pretty certain I wasn't thinking up until that point. Ugh!! My first OCS Oops!

Another memorable moment came during a Pass In Review (PIR) event, where all recruits were lined up with their individual companies, mine being Bravo Company, and marched in formation around the Parade Grounds in front of a stand of reviewing officers. We were still lining up and waiting to start. Our uniforms were pressed and immaculate in their presentation from the shined bill of our hats, down past our brightly polished brass belt buckle, all the way down to the beautiful shine of our permanently shiny Corfam Black Oxford uniform shoes.

Well, not exactly.

For some reason unknown to me, I forgot to put on my uniform Corfam shoes as we normally do, and mistakenly put on my not-so-shiny pair of Boon Dockers. These uniform "work" boots were shiny, sort of, but were not the shoes to wear for a Pass In Review. It was too late to go and change shoes. I was stuck. As would sometimes happen, an upper classman who was responsible for our appearance was walking along, checking each recruit. Suddenly, my Boon Dockers were spotted and I became the recipient of his nurturing and corrective words. Looking down at me, directing his most commanding voice at an elevated decibel level, "***What the Hell is that? What are you thinking?***" I snapped to attention as his tirade continued. I had no excuses. Admittedly, I was not in the proper uniform of the day, and this was completely unsatisfactory. I was at a loss for words because I

knew I'd been caught. No way of getting out of it. I thought, "Oops, it's over for me now, except that he asked me again, "***what were you thinking?***" At that moment, I surprised even myself with the words that tumbled out of my mouth.

Here come the words. Standing at attention and staring straight ahead, and in my most humble tone of voice, I began my apologetic attempt to respond to his question, to the best of my ability within the chaos of the moment. At this point, I had nothing to lose. My discourse began.



*Pass in Review of all Officer Candidate Companies  
on the base Parade Grounds.*

As best as I can recall it, and in my own parade booming voice, although it being somewhat higher in tone, I said something like, "***Sir, yes sir. I have no excuse, Sir. When I was getting dressed this morning, Sir, I knew we would be marching on the grassy Parade***

***Grounds, which at this time in the morning, the grass is always wet, Sir. So, I decided I could save my dress shoes by wearing my boon dockers on the parade grounds, Sir, and while marching in formation, Sir, I would slide my feet along the grass, getting my boots covered in water, which from the distance of the reviewing stands, Sir, my shoes would be looking as shiny as any other shoes in formation, Sir!. I'm sorry, Sir! It won't happen again, Sir!"***

Much to my surprise, for a brief moment, there was dead silence. Not a word as the upper classman stared me down. I knew the proverbial "it" was about to hit the proverbial "fan." Suddenly, the senior classman busted out laughing, no longer able to contain himself. He did a double take, smiled, and shook his head as he walked away. Frozen in place, I think I heard him mumble something like, "*Now, I've heard it all.*" It was over. I had survived my second OCS Oops.

On another similar morning, we were again making our final preparations prior to the start of the PIR event. The drill was the same. We were checking uniforms to make sure everything was just right. The reputation of our Bravo Company and its leadership would be on display, and we wanted to make sure our appearance was clearly on point and "squared away," another frequently used military phrase. It meant that our uniforms were immaculate, completely void of lint, dirt, dust, wrinkles or smudges. It also meant our marching was precise and on cadence and the company's response to commands were appropriately instant and impressively executed. We were on display for the whole world to see. We got it right, or we would hear about our less than stellar showing later, followed by additional marching sessions to improve our performance.

Fortunately, the Oops of the day came for me during these preparations. Today, we were all carrying our M1 Garand rifles, known during WWII as "a soldier's best friend." Weighing in at nine and a half pounds, an M1 was assigned to each officer candidate for the

duration of their training. In the beginning the M1s were heavy and awkward, but over time, we became used to the weight and learned to handle them easily and appropriately. Oops, again. I digress.

Looking down, I realized I needed to re-tie one of my shoes. Instead of placing my M1 down on the pavement, I had learned that it would stand on its own, upright and balanced on the butt of the stock. That worked for me, and it would only take a second to tie my shoe. Today, however, I must not have been on a level part of the sidewalk, and while I was kneeled down, working on my laces, I suddenly heard the loud “crack” of an M1 rifle hitting the ground. Much to my surprise and horror, it was my M1. I reached for it as quickly as I could, but before I could even stand, there was another senior classman in my face, giving me “what for” because I had in essence, dropped my weapon. If there was a cardinal sin for PIR preparation, I think this was one of the most egregious. It was too late. Everybody heard the “crack” of the rifle as it hit the concrete.

Before I could recover and pop to attention, the upper classman was in my face. ***“What the hell just happened? How did you manage to drop your rifle? Are you a complete idiot?! Do you have any idea what you have done?”*** For the sake of this writing, I’ve censored the barrage of profanities and demeaning comments. I knew I had made a mistake. I was prepared to stand at rigid attention, stare straight ahead and into space, and accept the verbal beating I was beginning to endure. However, the upper classman finished his tirade with a question, giving me the impression he actually wanted an answer. He said again: ***“What the hell happened?!”*** So, I responded. Here come the words.



***“Sir, yes Sir. I am so sorry, embarrassed and shocked, Sir. In all honesty Sir, I don’t know what happened. Over the past many weeks, I have been training my rifle to stand at attention, Sir, and was having great success. Once placed in position, my rifle would stand alone, at attention, with no assistance further needed from me, Sir. So, in a moment of weakness, I trusted it to stand as ordered while I kneeled down to quickly re-tie my shoe, Sir, a gust of wind must have pushed it off its balance. That is the only thing that makes sense, Sir!”*** Those may not have been my exact words, but they were something like that. It must have been my lucky day, as the upper classman just shook his

head and walked away. There was no further discussion or “dressing down” of my character and ineptitude. He just walked away.

I should mention that I was not the only person to have at one point dropped their rifle. It happened more often than you might think. But, I never let it happen to me again. We completed the Pass in Review and life went on. That’s the story of my third OCS Oops..

My next OCS Oops happened again one morning as we stood in our morning formation prior to heading to class. We were all lined up and ready to go, just waiting for the order to head out. We were wearing the uniform of the day, which consisted of a long-sleeve khaki shirt, matching khaki brown pants with brightly polished brass buckle on a khaki web belt, polished black uniform shoes and a khaki uniform hat in the shape of a cloth envelope. There was probably an official name for the hat, but everyone just called it the “P-hat.” In this G rated book, I can’t tell you what the letter “P” stood for, but it rhymes with “miss.” You can figure out the rest. One more very important part of the uniform is the black necktie, which instead of just hanging down, was folded under the second button and disappeared inside my shirt. When done properly, it looks really “smart” and sets off the uniqueness of the uniform presentation. This time, the “Oops” was not my fault. Really!

As I stood in formation, at attention and staring straight ahead, I noticed that something flashed in front of my eyes, pretty close to my face. I didn’t react, but waited for a chance to look down and see what it was that had just missed me. Did I mention that the Navy Officer Candidate School was located on the shores of Willamette Bay, a significantly huge body of ocean water? If not , I probably also didn’t mention the epidemic level of seagulls that blessed the skies with their beautiful white or gray bodies as they flew or glided their way over the area. However, when a gull has to go, it has to go, without consideration of the target of their intentional and unwarranted release. Bulls Eye! Me!

I finally looked down at my shirt, and Jonathan Livingston Seagull, or some distant relative, had just “blessed” me with a huge, white and disgusting deposit of Seagull discharge. I don’t know if it was a “christening” or an “initiation”, but I wasn’t happy. I also wasn’t angry. I have often heard on many occasions, and have even commented numerous times myself that “Shit Happens.” Pardon my language.

Yes, life does happen and it comes at many of the worst and most inconvenient times. Score one for Jonathan Livingston. However, all there was to do now was deal with it. As the rest of the company marched off to class, I returned to my room to change my shirt and try to catch up with my shipmates. Fortunately, we always had extra clean and pressed uniform parts available for such occasions. The large spread of the bombing debris had only accosted my shirt. Thankfully, it missed my tie, belt, pants and shoes, so all I needed to change was my shirt. With that mission accomplished, I headed off to class and to explain to the officer instructor why I was late. After sharing my story, everyone had a good chuckle and no demerits were assigned. Mission survived.

Not all OCS stories were Oops. Our purpose there was to be trained in preparation to someday being commissioned as a Navy officer and be sent off to somewhere around the globe in service of our country. Graduating was the goal. I had one more hurdle to pass before receiving my commission. It was the final exam of our Navigation training, and for me, would be my greatest challenge. I had worked harder in this class than the others because this subject did not come to me easily. The test was a written exam, and one question in particular, required the use of a Nautical Almanac to determine the answer.

I don’t remember the specific question, but it started with finding the appropriate answer, a number, located within the Almanac Tables. The calculations started there and each new number was based on each

previous number. If I didn't get that right with that first number, it was never going to work out.

The rest of the test had gone well, but I by-passed this question in order to complete the rest of the exam. If I had time, I would go back to this question and work through the answer. With the rest of the exam completed and confident in my answers, I returned to the final and challenging question of the test.

I searched the Almanac Tables and determined the starting number. I continued the process of looking up latitudes and longitudes, dates, times or whatever else was available, following each new number, and eventually leading to the final answer. With less than ten minutes remaining to complete the exam, I started back at the original number of the question to check my work, suddenly realizing I had chosen the wrong number. Instantly, I was filled with panic, and with it, fear of failure. If I did not achieve the required minimum score on this exam, I will have failed.

My heart was pounding, my mind was scrambling for answers, and I was just trying to hold it together. The panic sensation was huge, greater than any experience I'd ever had. What was going through my mind was, *I cannot fail. I must figure this out. What did I do wrong?* With only minutes to spare, I took two large breaths of air to try and calm my nerves and kept telling myself, "You can do this. You must do this. Relax and trust your work." So, I forced myself to settle down and pushed the panic aside. I didn't have time for it right now. I put my head down, focused on the problem, and started at the beginning with a short, one word prayer. "Help!"

I went all the way back to the first step of the problem, verified the starting number. and BAMB, realized, much to my relief, that my first attempt was correct. I had started with the "right" number in the first place. It was when I went back to check my work, I had looked at the wrong table and saw a different number. It was that Oops that threw me



into the panic that almost torpedoed my calculations. The instant relief was amazing. I hadn't failed, but had done the work correctly with my first attempt. Still, to be sure, I quickly followed the steps again to confirm my calculations were complete and correct. **Yes, they were!** I finished on time and had succeeded in my final Navigation exam, confirming that I would soon receive my commission. Mission accomplished. Thank God! Literally!

On many occasions, I have confirmed and accepted that "life happens", and it does. We can always do our best, but sometimes, things are out of our control. However, in this specific final test to complete my officer studies and preparation to lead, everything turned out as it should. OCS prepared me to succeed in this very important step of my navy career. If I had not been able to control the panic, calm myself down, or focus my efforts to complete the assignment, things would have changed.

Over the years, when someone has asked me about my military experience, I would often reply that I could write two movie scripts. One would be a comedy, and the other would be a tragedy. There was plenty of material to accomplish both. The good news, as I have been reassured on a number of occasions throughout my life, "failure is not terminal." However, "fear of failure could be." In fact, we can learn from our failures. The key is to always get up, accept the lesson learned, and try again. I have never forgotten the power of the panic I experienced in that final Navigation exam. But, as new challenges came my way and tried to sink my careers, I've learned to accept them for what they were, lean into them, learn from them, and move forward. As we say in the sea service, May you always have "fair winds and following seas." That is our way of wishing you the very best in life. So, on that note, have a great one.



*Jan came to Newport, Rhode Island for my commissioning. My Company Officer told me if I didn't marry her, I was crazy. It was already part of my plan and turned out to be the best decision I ever made.*

## About the Author



After graduating from the University of La Verne with a degree in Biology, Ron entered his second summer of training at the Navy Officer Candidate School in Newport, Rhode Island and was commissioned an Ensign on November 5, 1971. After Viet Nam service aboard a Navy Destroyer and later an Aircraft Carrier, he ended his active duty commitment. Yet, three years later, he resumed service as an officer in the US Coast Guard Reserves and eventually retired after twenty two years of service.

In civilian life, Ron was a uniquely skilled writer, establishing himself for over 30 years as a Marketing, Public Relations and Fundraising professional for government and non-profit organizations. Ron distinguished himself as a nationally recognized Certified

Fundraising Executive (CFRE), and is credited with raising tens of millions of dollars in funds, in addition to acquiring tens of thousands of dollars in gift-in-kind donations, for non-profit organizations.

Early signs of a developing talent became evident in his early childhood as he began to distinguish himself as an engaging story teller, creative spirit and skilled communicator. Ron's trained listening and discerning skills, along with his sensitive and caring demeanor, helped him to share his personal stories with humor and realism in order to engage his readers in a personal and meaningful way.

Ron has published two books, *Blessed With Cancer* and *Crooked Sidewalks*, as well having composed an original song called "**From One Rose**", arranged for symphony by Emmy Award Winning Hollywood composer, Bruce Broughton, and premiered in May of 2022 by the Oregon Symphony in partnership with the Portland Rose Festival Foundation.

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