



EDWARD "Ed" ALBERT PENICHE, also known as Eduardo Alberto Peniche Carvajal, 83, died on August 16, 2008 following a massive hemorrhagic stroke on August 10, 2008. He was a man of unbridled optimism, great intellect, a historian, with classic "old school" charm and had boundless love, admiration and respect for his wife of 54 years, Lois Dean (Baggett) Peniche. At 5' 5" tall, Ed towered with accomplishments and shared unlimited joy with all who were around him. The following is a condensed outline of his unbelievable life: Progreso and "the Yucatan" : Ed was born on June 28, 1925 to Ariosto and Amada Peniche in Progreso, Mexico, located in the hot, tropical and beautiful Yucatan Peninsula. He was the oldest of eight children, having 3 brothers and 4 sisters. In addition to going to school and enjoying his father's lifelong habit of reading, Ed enjoyed fishing and playing baseball and soccer. Paducah, Kentucky, 1940. At age 15 Ed came to the United States on a student visa, living with his aunt and uncle in the western Kentucky city of Paducah. The Spanish teacher, Lucille Robertson and her husband, took Ed under their wings, delighted in 1942 to have a native speaker around. World War II, 1943-1945. As Ed approached the age of 18, he registered for the draft (required not only of citizens, but resident aliens) and then did as many of his North American friends were doing, volunteering to serve in the U.S. Army for service in World War II. The Screaming Eagles of the 101st Airborne Division. Shipboard and headed to England, Ed heard a presentation by paratroopers in jump boots and red berets about the honor of serving in the 101st Airborne Division. Ed was impressed and decided to join the prestigious Screaming Eagles. The Miracle Inch. When he attempted to become a paratrooper, upon being advised that 5' 5" was too short, he said "Doggone it, and I was hoping to be a bazooka-man". The sergeant told his lieutenant "we have a bazooka-man here". Due to the weight of the gun and the return fire it drew, no one wanted to be a bazooka-man. The lieutenant barked "measure him again, I'm sure you were mistaken" and sure enough, Ed magically grew the needed extra inch and was on his way to destiny with history. The Normandy Invasion (D-Day), June 6, 1944. Ed's unit was due to land at Utah beach on D-Day. Ed was always frank in stating that the logistics of war is not always smooth as shown in the movies. His unit's transport launch was misdirected and did not land on Normandy's Utah beach until June 9, 1944. However, they saw action in Carentan, France a few days later. Hell's Highway Holland, September, October 1944. After getting attached to the "second of the five oh second" (2nd Brigade, 502nd Regiment, 101st Airborne Division) Ed and the 101st and others participated with the British in the mission to keep the main highway through Holland secure. The campaign was known as "Operation Market Garden" and involved fierce combat. The book and movie, "A Bridge Too Far", is centered on a British defeat during Operation Market Garden. There were also extensive references to the campaign in "Band of Brothers". The Battle of the Bulge, December 16, 1944 January 25, 1945. The 101st served in Bastogne during the Battle of the Bulge, the bloodiest military battle in US history. Ed's anti-tank team set up near the apex where two roads come together in Longchamps, Belgium, a village on Bastogne's northwest edge. This 19 year old Mexican from the tropics was able to enjoy his first "white Christmas" in a frozen foxhole from his position at the edge of the Luc Feller farm house. He ended up with frostbite, from which he suffered for the rest of his life but over which he never complained. The Christmas

Attack. At about 3 a.m. on Christmas morning German planes began bombing their position followed by the whirr of their Panzer tanks approaching the U.S. line up the hill. The fighting was furious. Fifty years later, in 1994, Ed's son Carlos listened in on an interview of his father standing on the very site at the edge of the farm house. His father's voice broke as he told the journalist that across the road to his left he heard the battalion commander order "fix bayonets" and Ed, in his still thick "Mexican" accent said that at that moment he realized that he was "serving with men of honor", implying that he had it easy because his comrades were moving forward out of the "safety" of their position to launch their counterattack. But of course, he was in equal danger since being a bazooka-man made him a prized and easily identifiable target. Multiple Wounds. On January 3, 1945 Ed's unit faced a fierce assault by a German Panzer tank unit. Again, there was heavy fighting. His team took out three tanks before they took a near direct hit, resulting in shrapnel hitting Ed in multiple locations with an especially severe wound to his left leg. His team, consisting of Sgt. Joe O'Toole, Private Darrell Garner and Ed, continued firing at German targets when their anti-tank weapon took a direct hit, destroying the weapon and severely injuring O'Toole and Garner. Ed suffered a concussion wound, bleeding from both ears and his nose. Heroism While Under Fire. Ed checked on his buddies and saw they were both still alive. In spite of his wounds, Ed, while under fire, left the "safety" of his foxhole and crawled up the hill to the back side where the command post (CP) was, letting the CP know so that medics could come to move O'Toole and Garner to safety. Messrs. O'Toole and Garner kept in touch with Ed off and on for the remainder of their lives. Ed received two Purple Hearts and the Bronze Star with Valor for his heroic efforts on that day. In late 1945 after the war, he was honorably discharged and returned to a hero's welcome in Progreso, Mexico. The Mexican Army, 1946-1952. Ed spent six years in the Mexican army as an officer. The highlight of his tour was serving as co-founder of Mexican Army Airborne School in Mexico City, for which he was honored in August 1998. A Career in the US Army, 1953-1970. In spite of his esteemed status in Mexico, Ed returned to active service in the US Army in 1953. While in training at Fort Campbell, Ky., not far from Paducah he let his mentor, Mrs. Robertson, (the Spanish teacher) know he was nearby. As fate would have it, Mrs. Robertson told her class that she knew a "cute Mexican soldier" serving at Fort Campbell and asked if any of the students wanted to be pen pals. Six volunteered but only one stuck with it. Her name was Lois Dean Baggett. Marrying the Love of His Life. They soon met, fell in love and got married on October 6, 1953. Before she knew it, Ed was shipped off to Taiwan where he trained members of the Chinese Nationalist Army in the use of anti-tank weapons. As a 19 year old, Dean left Kentucky for the first time ever, ending up in the so different world of being a military wife in a land far away. Taiwan (1954-55), Fort Benning (1956-57). In Taiwan, son Carlos was born. Ed, who had some hearing loss from the WWII concussion wound, suffered additional permanent partial deafness in both ears when a Taiwanese soldier fired an anti-tank weapon prematurely during a training session Ed was leading. Ed and family subsequently transferred to Fort Benning, Georgia where son John was born. California (1958), then Vietnam (1959-1961). Ed, who had both a knack and a passion for learning languages, was assigned to the Army Language School in Monterrey, California where he spoke only Vietnamese for one year. He and his young family joined him in Vietnam where he was a translator/advisor for the US MAAG military advisors who were assisting the South Vietnamese government in dealing with

the communist Viet Cong. Ed and his family spent three years in Vietnam picking up son Frank along the way. Washington, D.C./Northern Virginia (1962-1966). Given Ed's intellect, experience, diplomatic skills and his ability to deal with people of all backgrounds, he was next assigned to the US Army Defense School in Ft. McNair, serving with general and other high-echelon officers, government officials, ambassadors and diplomats. Panama Canal Zone (1967-1969). Ed worked with the School of the Americas branch located in the Panama Canal Zone. Over the years, with encouragement from his wife, Ed took a number of college courses, mostly at night, culminating in his obtaining his Bachelor's Degree from the University of Nebraska (being allowed to take a nine month temporary duty assignment to Omaha). Murray, Kentucky (1970-71). In early 1970 Ed retired from the Army as a Specialist 7 and relocated back into Kentucky. He attended Murray State University, obtaining a Masters Degree in Spanish and Latin American Culture. Lynchburg, Virginia (1971-1993). Ed then became a professor. He taught Spanish and Latin American Culture and Civilization at Central Virginia Community College for 22 years. He was consistently considered among the most popular and well respected professors at the college. With his world wide experience and his diplomatic skills, Ed helped launch the Piedmont Foreign World Council and later became the first non-business owner to serve as its president. In 1996 he was named Professor Emeritis at CVCC. Kingwood and Houston, Texas (1993-2008). In 1993 Ed and Dean moved to Kingwood, Texas so he and Dean could be near their son Carlos' family, including helping with Carlos' daughter Amada, who suffered from profound cerebral palsy. Ed continued his career as a professor, teaching at Kingwood College full-time for five years until 1998. In October 1998 he was presented Teacher of the Year award by then Texas First Lady, Laura Bush. In 2002 he and Dean moved inside Houston's 610 Loop and became next door neighbors to Carlos and his family and started gathering materials to write a book about his incredible life. Ed is survived by his wife Dean, son Carlos and his wife Angela, son John and his wife Suzanne, daughter in law Kaye Ferrell and grandchildren Ed, Cristina, Joseph, Will and Marc, brother Alfonso and sisters Ofelia and Socorro. He was preceded in death by his son Frank age 19, and granddaughter Amada, 18. In spite of his frostbite, cramps from his leg wounds, shrapnel which remained in his back and partial deafness, all service related, and the pain he felt over the tragically short lives of his son Frank and granddaughter, Amada, Ed Peniche remained joyous and upbeat and encouraged everyone around him to reach their potential and to enjoy life. He spent his last fully conscious day with Dean, attending a anti-tank team was attached mostly to the "second of the five oh second" (2nd Brigade, 502nd Regiment, 101st Airborne Division). University of St. Thomas luncheon. His family vows to go forward with his book. If you are interested in learning more about this incredible man, you should go to Kingwood College's website at <http://kclibrary.lonestar.edu/peniche.html> and [www.gearboxity.com/content/view/231/33/](http://www.gearboxity.com/content/view/231/33/). See also [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) and search "Edward Peniche". Friends, family, veterans and anyone interested are invited to attend a memorial and a reception to be held at St. Stephens Episcopal Church and School at 4 p.m. Tuesday, August 19, 2008 (1805 W. Alabama, Houston, Texas).