

actually came to his father's funeral in 1940 escorted by police, who had unshackled him for the event.

After his father died, Bob joined the army. After basic training, he was shipped to the war in the Pacific. Bob served 4 years in the army; 37 months of which were in the South Pacific theatre. He was twice wounded, the more serious wound being to his head and requiring a metal plate. This wound and the malaria he contracted in the south Pacific would accompany him the rest of his life. He excelled on the battle field, and at one point was promoted to a field captain. But Bob often did not defer to authority (then or ever), would often go AWOL, and ended the war as a private.



Bob and kid brother Bill in the army

After the war, Robert went back to playing his trumpet, and had the opportunity to play with some of the more famous big bands as well as some of the rising Jazz greats. In fact, he played with Charlie "Bird" Parker for a short time in the late forties. After a short performing career, he decided to utilize some of his Veteran benefits to formalize his music training at Shenendoah College in Dayton, Virginia. (Later the college moved to its present day location in Winchester, Virginia). Shenendoah was an established Music Conservatory, and had just opened up a junior college. It was there that Bob met Arlene, a preacher's daughter.

To Bob, the choice between performing the trumpet and marrying and settling down with a family was a difficult one. But Bob was very taken with Arlene, as can be seen from the excerpt from the letter seen below. He reportedly serenaded Emmie with Spanish love songs.



Bob and Arlene at Shenendoah



SHENANDOAH CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC
Dayton, Virginia

27 May '49

Emmie—
This is by way of a "thank-you".
I've had two very nice months - n'
it's only the beginning, we've been
- almost inseparable from the advent
of our first date - n' for me it has
been Emmy all the way. I've seen
you day in n' out - n' I still want to
see more of you. Course - it's been
one foul thing after another for us -
but two foul things after each other
are bound to run into such
happenstances. 1.1.1