

Out Polo Village Way

Stranger in Own Country, Todd Drives to Succeed

With Help of His Wife UA Student Defeats Many Obstacles

By HAROLD KOTZKER

Students of Polo Village vary in nationality, origin, goals, interests and customs. One factor, however, unites all of them: a stubborn determination to succeed.

An example of the driving ambition to be found in the village is the case of William Todd, who lives at quonset No. 49. Todd is a living model of the movie version of the strong men of the southwest. "I'm going to be a mechanical engineer," says Todd, and you get the feeling nothing will stop him.

For an ordinary villager the ambition to be an engineer presents ordinary obstacles: the need to support a family while going to school, and to meet day to day problems. But for Todd there was far more. A stranger in his own country, he had to overcome language difficulties, and he had to catch up quickly in educational training.

His Father's Saga

Todd's father was an American adventurer who, some 30 years ago, ended up in Colima, Mexico, where he fell in love with a senorita, married and settled in the town to practice his profession of dentistry. Here William Todd was born. Four years later his father died. Todd's only heritage was his American citizenship. His father had registered the birth with the American consul.

"I would have stayed in Mexico, though," commented Todd. "I was raised in Sonora, and English was a strange language. But, in 1935, when I was 12 years old, we came to Nogales, Ariz., fleeing from Mexico, because of religious persecution. Here for the first time in my life I attended an American school."

Joined National Guard

Todd remained at school until he completed the eighth grade. Then, at the age of 16, he joined the Arizona National Guard. "They thought I was 21," chuckled Todd. "I guess I was pretty big."

On Todd's 17th birthday his unit was mobilized. For the next five years, until May, 1945, he saw active duty with the 158th Infantry.

"I was in Panama," recalled Todd, "right after Pearl Harbor. We had infantry jungle training. From January 1943 on I was to be with the Bushmasters, mostly in New Guinea and the Trobriands."

Todd was assigned to infantry intelligence. Already, however, he was beginning to demonstrate the driving desire for learning which was eventually to bring him to the University of Arizona. While in New Guinea, Todd determinedly set about learning the Kiriwina dialect, one of the Melano-Papuan family of Melanesian languages.

He mastered the language. Todd went on to study engineering and physics at the University of Arizona.

When Todd finally was discharged in May 1945, he carried home with him many usual trophies — a blood-stained Japanese flag, shells, weapons, and the like. But from the native chieftains he had known came the articles he prizes most: a kind of sceptre from which hang sea shells at the end



Mr. and Mrs. William Todd are shown with their children at Polo village, U. A. veteran student housing project. Todd, who is studying to become a mechanical engineer, was born in Mexico and served during World War II with Arizona's 158th Regimental Combat team. Mrs. Todd holds son, Dick, 18 months; daughter, Helen, three, is to the right; William Jr., holds forth at the head of the crib watching his three-week-old brother Michael. (Photo by Levitz)

of war to lure out their countrymen from the jungle. "Otherwise," explained Todd, "their fanaticism would carry them to suicidal attacks." One of the prisoners, who had learned English at the University of Tokyo, had become friendly with Todd. His name was Ogata. Once Ogata seized a grenade from a Japanese soldier's hands just as he was about to throw it at Todd. "Imagine how I felt to see Ogata defy the beliefs of his country for a former enemy. I learned a lesson in tolerance from that which I'll never forget," Todd says quietly.

Trophies of War

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Jobs He Has Had

Todd worked as field labor man in an agricultural area, paymaster on a carrot farm, service station attendant, taxi driver, and surveyor. He headed the surveying crew that laid the foundation of the Hughes plant.

"All those jobs, and the struggles we had, convinced me that I just had to complete my education," said Todd. "But what convinced me most of all was the attitude of my wife, Helen. There

founders of the "Alianza," a well-known Spanish organization.

Famous Cradle

Of equal fame is the cradle which the Todd family is now using for their youngest, Michael, who is two and one-half weeks old. The cradle, imported from Spain 50 years ago by Helen's grandmother, has rested very little in its time. It is family property—and any member connected with the Cervantes family, as Helen is, has a claim to it.

"Since our family has had the cradle," commented Mrs. Todd, "we know of at least 47 babies who have used it. And look at it—it's still almost like new."

Besides Michael, the Todds have used the cradle for Billie, now four-years old; Helen, three; and Dicky, one and one-half. "They're another reason why

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the natives, and in turn they acted
as guides for his outfit.

New Guinea Lesson

By 1943 the battle for New
Guinea had been won, but a large
Japanese force stayed in the in-
terior until 1945. "They had to be
mopped up," said Todd. "Wherever
possible, we were to capture, not
to kill."

Todd's outfit had been using
two captured Japanese prisoners



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of beads, showing the owner to be
the chief of 22 villages; two dag-
gers and a cane, made out of ebony
especially for him; and a mahog-
any pig.

Once a civilian, Todd deter-
mined to make up for the years
of education he had missed. He
secured a tutor and crammed.
By January 1946 the UA admit-
ted Todd, and he worked hard
for three semesters.

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convinced me most of all was the
attitude of my wife, Helen. There
was no limit to the sacrifices
she made to keep me in school,
working at all kinds of odd jobs
at the same time that our little
family was growing." Not that
Todd has not carried his share.
At present he works as an elec-
trician at Grand Central, on the
midnight-to-seven shift.

Mrs. Todd is a native Tucsonan.
Her grandfather came to Tucson
47 years ago, was one of the

founders of the "Alianza," a well-
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Dicky, one and one-half.

"They're another reason why
what I am doing is worth doing,"
said Todd, almost in a whisper.
"It hasn't been peaches and
cream. I spend mornings at school,
afternoons studying, sleep in the
evening and work all night—but
by January 1954 I will be an en-
gineer." He put an arm over his
wife's shoulder. "It's worth it."