

A Good Map Reader

My last conversation with Peter Mozden, MD '53, professor emeritus of surgery

BY ROBERT M. BEAZLEY, MD, PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF SURGERY AND MEDICINE



Peter Mozden, MD '53

Peter Mozden, MD '53, my old friend and colleague who in 1988 convinced me to come to Boston University, was a pioneer surgical oncologist with an international reputation. Since 1949, when he began medical school here, he had maintained a deep loyalty and commitment to the Boston University School of Medicine and its mission. In 1989, I established the Peter Mozden Visiting Professorship and renamed the surgical oncology service the Mozden Service in his honor. Peter, in turn, started the Mozden Summer Student Fellowship and the Mozden Award, given to a graduating senior for surgical scholarship.

I visited Peter on the afternoon of January 3, 2011, a cold, wet, and gray day. He was quite ill, so I decided to keep my visit brief. Our colleague, Dr. David McAneny, was also visiting, and he and Peter began to discuss Peter's clinical status.

I knew a little about Peter's service in World War II and that he liked to tell stories. Hoping to change the conversation and perhaps learn a little more about him, I said, "Peter, tell us what you did when you were in the Army. Were you drafted out of college?"

"Well, not exactly, I got one year in but was not a good student," he said. "I had to take ROTC and did well, with a special comment about being a 'very good map reader.' I wanted to fly but the wait list was up to nine months, so I volunteered for the Army. After boot camp I was

assigned to Russian language school at the University of Wisconsin for about 10 months. Our teachers were old Russian officers; really strict. One weekend we were all invited to their dacha on the lake, where we were introduced to vodka. I got so sick that I have never touched the stuff since then! I got pretty good with Russian before I was shipped to France in '44."

"They don't speak Russian in France, as I recall," I said.

"That is right, but the Army works in funny ways," he replied.

Peter brightened. His voice was strong, with few pauses.

"What did you do in France?"

"Well, I was attached to the Ninth Army in the 458th Mechanized Reconnaissance Battalion, in a jeep with a machine gun, out front scouting the way for the Army."

"Peter, that sounds pretty hazardous."

"Could be at times."

Then he grinned. "I got to France in time to get caught up in the Battle of the Bulge. I was actually in Belgium while my brother Joe was caught, too, a few miles away. After it was all over we got to meet, which was a special treat. I remember Christmas Eve '44. We were ordered up a high hill to look out over the next valley for Germans. Well they were there alright, starting up the other side of the same hill,

shooting everything they had. I remember lying in the snow under my jeep at 10 below zero watching the German tracer bullets going overhead into the clouds. It was frightening, strange, and beautiful all at the same time. Some Christmas!"

"What did you do?" I asked.

He laughed. "We were ordered to get the hell off the hill. The big German push eventually failed, and we chased them back across France, Alsace, and the Rhine River. When we got into Germany, all the road signs had been removed or turned the wrong way. We made a lot of wrong turns and did a lot of backtracking. When the generals came up, they always told us how great a job we were doing—they didn't know we got lost a lot! Eventually we made it to the Elbe River and were told to stop and wait for the Russian Army coming from the East."

"Did you get to use your Russian?"

"Did I ever," he said with a big smile and a gleam in his eyes.

"Since I was one of the few who could speak Russian, I was needed

for all the meetings, negotiations, and parties. On the first night, all the officers were invited to the Russian side. The vodka flowed like water. We brought most of the American officers back in trucks loaded like cordwood. The next night was the Americans' turn and they broke out Kentucky bourbon. The Russians refused to touch the stuff, calling it 'baby's milk,' and drank their vodka instead."

At this point we were all laughing. The mood had totally changed. Peter's spirits were raised by memories of his youth.

Another team of doctors came in, and the spell broke. Shaking Peter's hand, I thanked him for his great story and for his service.

He said, "Good-bye, Bob."

I felt good that for a few minutes we had managed to snatch him back, to go to another place and see his sparkle once again, if only fleetingly. The next evening, Peter passed away. ■

In addition to his theater and campaign ribbons and medals, Sergeant Mozden received the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star for valor in action.

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→ In Memoriam

William R. Cranley, MD '68, clinical professor of radiology and associate professor of pediatrics, on May 18, 2013, at Boston Medical Center, where for four decades he cared for children and mentored two generations of pediatricians and pediatric radiologists. He was known and beloved for his leadership, his knowledge, his teaching, and his dry and unflagging sense of humor, but mostly for his dedication to the care of children and to the education of hundreds of medical students and residents at BUSM.

He received his bachelor's from Villanova University in 1964 and his medical degree from Boston University School of Medicine in 1968. He completed pediatrics and radiology residencies at Boston City Hospital (now Boston Medical Center) followed by a fellowship in pediatric radiology and serving as chief resident in pediatrics at Boston Children's Hospital. He also served as a major in the US Air Force.

Until his retirement in July 2012, Dr. Cranley devoted his career to pediatric radiology and caring for children at Boston Medical Center, where he served as pediatric radiologist, program director of

A gifted clinician, he was passionate about teaching and overseeing the work of medical students and residents. He received numerous accolades for his teaching and scholarship, most notably the Award for Teaching Excellence from the Society for Pediatric Radiology.

radiology, and vice chair of graduate medical education. He was a member of the BUSM Admissions Committee for two decades.

A gifted clinician, he was passionate about teaching and overseeing the work of medical students and residents. He received numerous accolades for his teaching and

scholarship, most notably the Award for Teaching Excellence from the Society for Pediatric Radiology.

Dr. Cranley leaves his wife of 39 years, Kathleen K. Cranley, two sons, and a daughter.

Merrill I. Feldman, MD, former chair of the Department of Radiology, on April 27, 2013. A distinguished radiation oncologist, he graduated from Harvard College and received his medical degree from Harvard Medical School. He completed his radiology residency at Yale School of Medicine. While on a fellowship at the royal Marsden Hospital in London, he began work on radiation therapy to treat cancer. On the staff of North Shore Medical Center in Lynn, he established the hospital's first cancer treatment center. In 1972, he began teaching at BUSM, ultimately rising to chair the department. A pioneering cancer researcher, Dr. Feldman was a member of the National Surgical Adjuvant Breast and Bowel Cancer Project.

A decorated hero of World War II, he received the Bronze Star, the Silver Star, and two Purple Hearts. In 2008, the French Consul General presented Dr. Feldman with