



I don't have a picture of my first knife as is disappeared mysteriously one day. This is my hunting knife set up that has been with me for several decades. (Mark Rackay/Special to the Montrose Daily Press)

There's no greater experience

There's no greater experience than receiving the first knife

During the course of a lifetime, an outdoors person will experience many firsts, some they might never have wanted to experience. As for a boy, there is no greater experience than receiving your first knife. The first knife serves as a rite of passage for a boy.

The ownership of a knife carries many responsibilities and sends a message that the young boy was finally old enough to shoulder them. With the presentation of the knife came the usual lecture about knife safety and the warning to "not cut yourself."

My grandfather presented me with my first knife on my ninth birthday. It was an Imperial, complete with three blades. My grandmother was not happy with the gift and let my grandfather know her feelings. "Land sakes, you give that boy a knife? He'll just cut himself with it. You make sure you teach him how to work it," my grandmother warned.

My grandfather took me outside and explained knife safety to me. He said, "A dull knife is more dangerous than a sharp one, so



Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

keep it sharp. Always cut things away from yourself. And don't cut yourself, but if you do, don't bleed all over your grannies rug or I'll never hear the end of it."

I can recall only a handful of people who still had their first knife in adulthood. These people have all kinds of sentimental stuff, like merit badges, old baseball mitts and their baby pictures. They really give me the creeps. Most first knives are lost to the ages, and mine was no different.

I had the knife for a week or so, carrying it with me wherever my PF Fliers took me. When I wasn't carrying it, I was sharpening the three blades, remembering that my grandfather said a dull knife was dangerous.

The blades were half their original size now, but razor sharp.

Remembering to always cut away from my body, I forgot to send that message to my left hand that was holding a stick I was whittling on. The large blade put a pretty good size cut in my index finger. I did what all 9 year olds do; run through every room in the house and bleed all over my grandmother's rug.

The next morning I could not find the knife. I had left it in my pocket but it was gone. I questioned my grandmother about it being lost and she offered, with a casual disinterest, "Just retrace your steps boy; it will turn up."

I never found the knife and my grandmother remained a suspect in the mysterious disappearance of the knife. The mystery was never solved and remained a family controversy for years.

A person who loves fishing will tell you about their first filet knife. Mine was a gift for my 11th birthday; a wood handled filet knife made by Normark, called a Rapala.

It was a beauty with a leather sheath and it

accompanied me on many fishing trips.

One day I was cleaning a bunch of bluegills at the fish-cleaning station behind the garage. I had the knife on the edge of the table when it suddenly fell. With my lightning fast reflexes, I managed to catch that knife before it hit the ground.

I don't know what possessed me to grab for a falling knife, but I got it all right. Long cuts across three fingers and blood everywhere. The fish cleaning station looked like a crime scene. Good thing there was a hose nearby. I still have that filet knife but it is retired to a box in the garage.

Most hunters will happily tell you about their first hunting knife. Mine was a Buck fixed blade with a black leather sheath. My outdoor mentor, Mr. Castor gave it to me when he took me on my first deer hunt. I did not get a buck that first year, but Mr. Caster did.

Mr. Caster let me take part in field dressing his deer as part of my outdoor education. He regularly did things like that for me, like letting me clean all the fish

we caught. He was very kind that way.

As I was working on the deer, I did the inevitable with my new hunting knife. I cut myself. Mr. Caster was upset because blood got all over him, the deer, and me, and the front seat of the truck.

Ask any police officer with hash marks down their sleeve about their first duty knife. For most of us, it was a Spyderco and I bet most still have it. I carried mine for years.

I once used it when our team was making an entry through a window. There were curtains hanging down in the way so I went at them with my Spyderco. I got the curtains cleared so the team could safely enter but lost a portion of a finger in the process, leaving me with another scar for the collection.

My first automatic knife was a slick pushbutton job made by Pro-Tec. It had a recessed button that threw the blade open with a spring, but did not have a safety latch to keep it locked closed.

This slick little knife came open in my front pants pocket, and with its

powerful spring, thrust the blade into my thigh. The cut was dangerously close to certain areas of the human anatomy that should never see an automatic knife blade. This knife was immediately retired, in as new condition, to the box in the garage.

My kids gave me a new knife for my last birthday. The knife is a really cool front opening blade made by Microtech. It is very easy to operate and came with a razor sharp blade. My wife was not happy about them giving me a knife and openly voiced her concerns to them. She was mostly rambling on about her rugs.

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