

# The Long Commute Home

## Operation Fairbrother

When I was a youngster, I remember my Dad getting a phone call from a couple who summered on Plum Island, named Benny and Irene Fairbrother. They had come to the island to check up on their cottage and wanted to stop in for a visit. Since their cottage was a stones throw away, that meant they would be over for a visit at any minute.

Well, you can well imagine the state our small, renovated cottage, housing 11 people could look like on any given day, despite my Mom's best attempts to keep it looking presentable. My father started bellowing out orders to clean this or move that. He soon had us all marching to his tune. He constantly reminds us, to this day, that he drove a tank as an Army sergeant in World War II, under General Patton's command. So it is only natural that my father would give a name to the maneuvers he was putting his 'troops' through.

We managed to shove anything unsightly into closets or ran things upstairs out of view of company. We swept and wiped and ran around like commandos. We were able to shove and cram and sweep and dust in time for the neighbor's visit. I'm sure our neighbors were amazed that a house full of 9 children could be kept in such order. If they only knew what had taken place five minutes earlier.

From that day on, whenever the call went out, whether it was the Fairbrothers stopping in unexpectedly or someone else, the call was the same, "Operation Fairbrother!" We all knew what to do. I must say, as kids, we were as combat ready as any wartime battleship!