Hello Milfoil . . .

This is

Wee Willie.

Presented to
2nd Air Division (USAAF) Memorial Room
Norwich Central Library

Given by

Phillip Day

in memory of

Edward L. McGuire, Jr.

"This Memorial is dedicated to the memory of all
Americans of 2nd Air Division USAAF
who lost their lives, in line of duty,
7 November 1942 – 8 May 1945"

American Fur
phil Day RM Donatio
1

Hello Milfoil . . .

This is

Wee Willie.

Us B-24 types letter stick together
Your work helped inspire me at the
end

Thank You
Ted McGuire

Edward L. McGuire, Jr.
Shreveport, Louisiana

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There is no way to overstate my indebtedness to many people who have helped with this effort. First as always, my loving friend and wonderful wife who lived through, and endured the worries of so much of this phase of our life together. The greatest gift God gives a man is a good wife.

Second: The men who served with and under me who were so competent, honorable and brave; and who never flinched or held back, even when I took them into some pretty scary situations. I am very proud to have served with them.

Third: I especially want to thank Sara Day Olson for her invaluable help in patiently reading through manuscripts with me and making suitable corrections and constructive suggestions.

Virginia Sibley Walker needs thanking for her enthusiastic interest and patience in deciphering my terrible penmanship and typing those efforts so that others could help.

Last and far from least, the combined efforts of a wonderful team; Margaret Jones, co-owner of "A Pair of Potters"; Mary Fielder, President of P.B.S.; and Bobby Mitchell, Vice President of P.B.S. These three gave of their time and skills without stint. Only through the skills of Bobby was it possible to make most of the pictures usable. Margaret did all of the typing, sometimes from my script. Mary Fielder gave of her printing skills and excellent ideas through the layout.

As we used to say, "All I did was fly the thing, all the rest did the work!"

Edward L. McGuire, Jr.
Shreveport, Louisiana
March, 1983

PROLOGUE

For years my children and friends have asked me to record my "war stories" (memories) of what happened during the period I served with the 409th Squadron, 93rd Bomb Group (H) in England from September 1944 to May 1945. At long last with the aid of what records I have I will try to let you experience through my eyes what some of it was like--good and bad.

My records consists of: "Certificate of Service" from the 93rd Group which lists the names of the targets I bombed, quite a few hand-outs of the "mission of the day" which were supposed to have been destroyed, but I am, and always have been, a pack rat of the first order; my Form 5 (record of flying time and dates of each flight); and copies of letters and special orders.

This book will include:

The beginning of my military career, to Langley and ready for overseas.

36 Combat missions and events to the end of my military career in 1953.

A section on "Drinking, Living and Such."

Flying Incidents

A collection of photographs, etc.

This is to Certify

that CAPT. EDWARD L. Mc GUIRE JR. of 409 th Squadron, 93 rd Bombardment Group (H) A.A.F. has completed with honor to his country, comrades and himself, 36 bombing missions over enemy territory as herewith listed.

1.	LIPPSTADT	5 OCT 44	19.	MAGDEBURG	14 FEB 45
2.	HAMBURG	6 OCT 44	20.	OSNABRUCK	16 FEB 45
3.	OSNABRUCK	12 OCT 44	21.	SIEGEN	19 FEB 45
4.	KAISERSLAUTERN	14 OCT 44	22.	NUREMBERG	21 FEB 45
5.	COLOGNE	17 OCT 44	23.	HESPE A/D	21 MAR 45
6.	HAMBURG	30 OCT 44	24.	KITZINGEN A/D	22 MAR 45
7.	MERSEBURG	4 NOV 44	25.	MUNSTER	23 MAR 45
8.	FORT L'ASINE	9 NOV 44	26.	STORMEDE A/F	24 MAR 45
9.	HAMBURG	21 NOV 44	27.	WILHELMSHAVEN	30 MAR 45
10.	BINGERBRUCK	25 NOV 44	28.	BRUNSWICK	31 MAR 45
11.	BIELEFELD	26 NOV 44	29.	WESENDORF A/D	4 APR 45
12.	NEUNKIRCHEN	30 NOV 44	30.	BAYREUTH	5 APR 45
13.	KAISERSLAUTERN	28 DEC 44	31.	LACOUBRE	14 APR 45
14.	EUSKIRCHEN	31 DEC 44	32.	ROYAN	15 APR 45
15.	HAMBURG	3 JAN 45	33.	LANDSHUT	16 APR 45
16.	NEUNKIRCHEN	5 JAN 45	34.	KROCEHLAUY	17 APR 45
17.	BRUNSWICK	31 JAN 45	35.	MUHLDORF	20 APR 45
18.	MAGDEBURG	3 FEB 45	36.	REGENSBURG	21 APR 45

W. Murray G. Grant

MURRAY G. GRANT, LT COL. AC,
Squadron Commander

Therman D. Brown

THERMAN D. BROWN,
Lt. Colonel, Air Corps,
Commanding.

1934 – Boston Back Bay Esplanade. Boston University R.O.T.C. Cadet Edward L. McGuire, Jr.

2nd Lt. Inf. Res. E. L. McGuire, August, 1940, Northern NY Moneurars, "G" Co., 26th Inf.

September 1941 – Shreveport Downtown Airport. Mary Evelyn Bell and Ted McGuire.

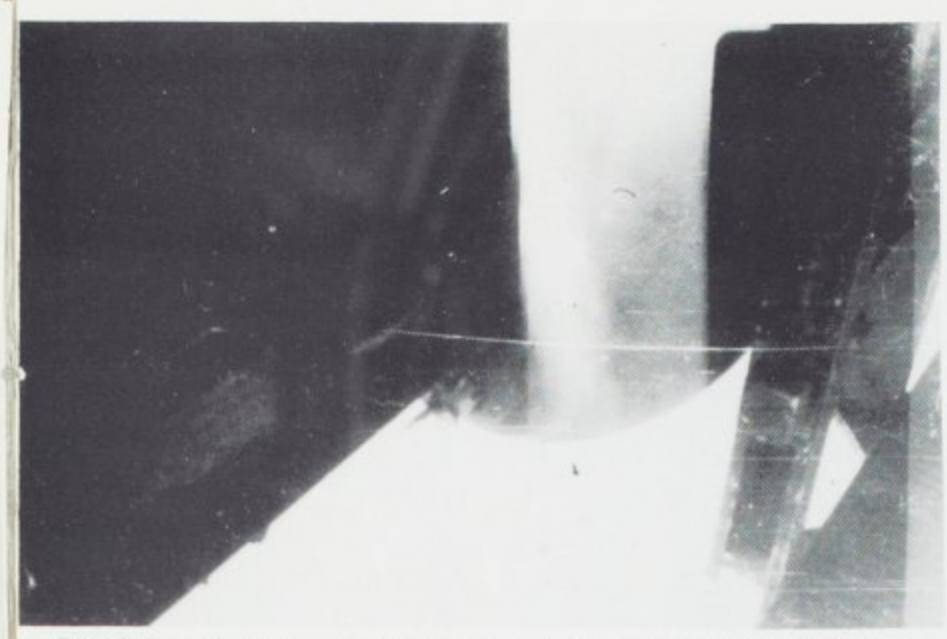
September, 1942 – Instructor Pilot, Moody Field, Valdosta, Georgia

May 28, 1942 – Photo for graduation. Flying School, Valdosta, Georgia.

March 1945 – Captain Edward L. McGuire, Jr., dressed for a mission.

March 1, 1945 – "Wee Willie", enroute to Augsberg, in a hot box of deadly "88" flack.

August, 1944 – Full crew on ramp, Charleston, South Carolina. Front row: Ellers, tail gunner; Sjazna, nose gunner; Powell, waist gunner; Leach, flight engineer; South, radio; Gardner, ball turret/waist. Rear-standing: Dondero, bombardier; Hanf, co-pilot; McGuire, pilot A/C; Sill, navigator.



Bomb bay doors open, the business end of a 500 lb. G.P. just before "Bombs Away".

All the birds came home today – a good day!

"Home away from home."

Well "tucked" in.

Lt. Hanf (Jr.) and a "paddle blade".

In the "Horror Hole" (flight deck) of a B-24 on a mission. Jr. to right, Ted on left.

Lt. Hanf and Capt. McGuire hold a meeting just before take off.

Two shots of B-24 starting to spin in over East Anglia – Twenty seconds to live.

3 March 1945 – This B-24 pulled up too close and too abrupt in forming up. In Photo 4, the plan has pulled up and slightly above the lead ship. In Photo 5 it has stalled and started its first turn to the left while the lead does a steep turm to avoid. Not 15 seconds later that ship and crew were dead. There was no possibility of recovering from a spin with a plane loaded with gasoline and bombs once the spin really started. I forget the pilot's name, but I think it was his fourth mission. This incident happened in the forming area over East Anglia in good weather. It shows that anti-aircraft fire was only one hazard.

Everything checked, one last stop, and away we go.

Capt. McGuire thrown into water tank, traditional celebration of end of tour, missions completed.

March 1946 – Major McGuire, Mary Evelyn McGuire, Edward L. McGuire, 3rd, at 852 Kings Highway, Shreveport, Louisiana, separated from active duty.

HEADQUARTERS
NINETY THIRD BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) AAF
Office of the Group Commander
AAF Station 104, APO 558

W E L C O M E

You are now members of the 93rd Bombardment Group (H) and we welcome you most heartily. I know that you have all been looking forward to the time when you could put into actual practice what you have learned the past several months. You have what it takes or you wouldn't be here.

We have one purpose - to bomb the target. All of our training and energy must be directed toward this end. During the next few days, combat personnel who have proven themselves in battle will give you many pointers. Pay attention to these instructors. They know the answers to your questions and will give you all the help you need to fly your airplane over the target, drop your bombs, and get home.

You will be assigned to one of four squadrons. Each has a wealth of battle experience gained in bombing the Hun for the past two years. They all have enviable records which I expect you to maintain and improve. This is the big league and requires the best you have in you. You are now playing for keeps.

I will personally meet you in a day or so. Each of us is proud of our organization and we hope that you will be also.

Good Luck!

Leland G. Fiegel

LELAND G. FIEGEL,
Colonel, Air Corps,
Commanding.

HEADQUARTERS
NINETY THIRD BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) AAF
Office of the Group Commander
AAF Station 104, APO 558

MEMORANDUM:

11 September 1944.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR NEW COMBAT CREWS

1. The 93rd Bombardment Group is one of the first original Big 5 Groups to arrive in this theater in the Fall of 1942 and is the oldest Liberator Group in the ETO. It has completed well over 200 missions. It was first commanded by GENERAL EDWARD J. "TED" TIMBERLAKE and participated in the first big American bombing raid on Lille, in October 1942. Since this first mission it has been outstanding in its travels and destruction of important enemy targets. It has been to the desert three times; assisting in the advance of the 8th Army through Libya, the Tunisian Campaign, invasion of Sicily, invasion of Italy, the first raid on Rome, the now famous Ploesti job, the longest haul up to the time to Wiener-Neustadt, and has pounded the homeland of the Hun from the Rhine to Poland. The Pas-de-Calais bears many marks of bombs dropped by this group and its work before, during and after "D" Day has played an important part in supporting our Army's advances in France. The fight still goes on!

2. When new crews arrive at this station first pilots will report to Station Adjutant in Headquarters building for assignment to squadrons. A squadron officer will be on hand to take officers and enlisted men to their living sites and provide for the first meal.

3. Laundry and Dry Cleaning: Dry cleaning goes out twice every other week and should be turned in by both officers and enlisted men to the Squadron Supply room. Laundry will also be taken care of at squadron supply rooms and goes out once a week. See your squadron supply officer for laundry schedule.

4. Personnel Activities: The Station personnel office is located north of the 409th Squadron Headquarters and is available to take care of any personnel problems, records, pay, and decorations. All new crew members should make certain that their insurance and allotments are in order.

5. Post Exchange: A modern Post Exchange is located in the old communal site and the following schedule is issued for your convenience:

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday: 0800 hours to 1130 hours;
1230 hours to 1700 hours.
Tuesday and Friday: 1300 hours to 2100 hours.

Pick up your Post Exchange ration cards from your squadron orderly room. Films will be received for processing at the Post Exchange each Saturday morning.

6. The following liberty run schedule is now in effect for personnel at this station:

OFFICERS

From Station to Norwich		From Norwich to Station	
1250 hrs	Ground Officers Mess (1 Truck)	1430 hrs	Bell Hotel (1 Truck)
1250 hrs	Combat Officers Mess (1 Truck)	1700 hrs	Bell Hotel (1 Truck)
1810 hrs	Ground Officers Mess (1 Truck)	2200 hrs	Cattle Market (1 Truck)
1810 hrs	Combat Officers Mess (1 Truck)	2300 hrs	Cattle Market (2 Trucks)

ENLISTED MEN

From Station to Norwich		From Norwich to Station	
1300 hrs	Guard House (1 Truck)	1430 hrs	Bell Hotel (1 Truck)
1815 hrs	Guard House (7 Trucks)	2200 hrs	Barracks St. (2 Trucks)
		2300 hrs	Barracks St. (2 Trucks)

SCHEDULE FOR ARMY BUS

From Station to Norwich		From Norwich to Station	
0845 hrs	Station Hq (1 bus)	0930 hrs	All Saints Green (1 bus)
1415 hrs	Station Hq (1 bus)	1515 hrs	All Saints Green (1 bus)
1815 hrs	Station Hq (1 bus)	2200 hrs	All Saints Green (1 bus)

On the 5th and 19th of each month the 0930 hour trip from Norwich and the 1415 hour trip to Norwich will be cancelled.

7. Station Bus: A bus will run around the perimeter track, to be at each point on the perimeter every twenty minutes. Another bus will run between the Ground Officers' Mess and the WAAF Site Mess for all personnel on the station between the hours of 0700 and 1700. Two busses will run during meal times.

8. Post Theater. The only 35mm moving picture projector in this Division is located at this station and up to date movies will be shown at the following times for officers and enlisted men:

ENLISTED MEN: Daily at 1730 hours. Monday, Wednesday and Friday 2000 hrs.
OFFICERS : Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday at 2000 hours.

Matinees are shown from time to time and announcements will be made on tannoy and in schedule.

9. Air Raid Warnings: "Air Raid Warning, Purple" indicates enemy aircraft in the vicinity.

"Air Raid Warning, Red" indicates enemy aircraft in the immediate vicinity and all personnel will take cover.

"Crash Warning" indicates station under attack.

"Air Raid Warning H.D." indicates flying bomb headed in the direction of this station.

"Air Raid Warning, White" indicates all clear.

10. Finance: Money in the amount of ten dollars ($10.00) or in higher even amounts may be radioed home from this theater. Money will be collected at the unit orderly room or at the station personnel office. Money orders can be secured from the Station Post Office each Monday morning, after forms at orderly room have been filled out. War Bonds can be purchased at any time.

11. Personal Appearance: Officers will wear ties at all times unless flying and enlisted men will wear ties with class "A" uniform at all times. Khaki trousers will not be worn except by personnel participating in athletic contests and mess personnel on duty. Mixed uniforms will not be worn at any time. In other words, fatigue trousers with khaki shirts. Flying clothing, except jackets, will be worn only when participating in flying. Crew members are warned against marking, defacing flying jackets, as such action constitutes loafing of Government property. Sweaters will not be worn as outer garment. Officers will wear class 'A' uniform to picture shows, stage shows and to mess or club in the evening. Battle jackets may be worn by officers with authorized insignia, as part of the official

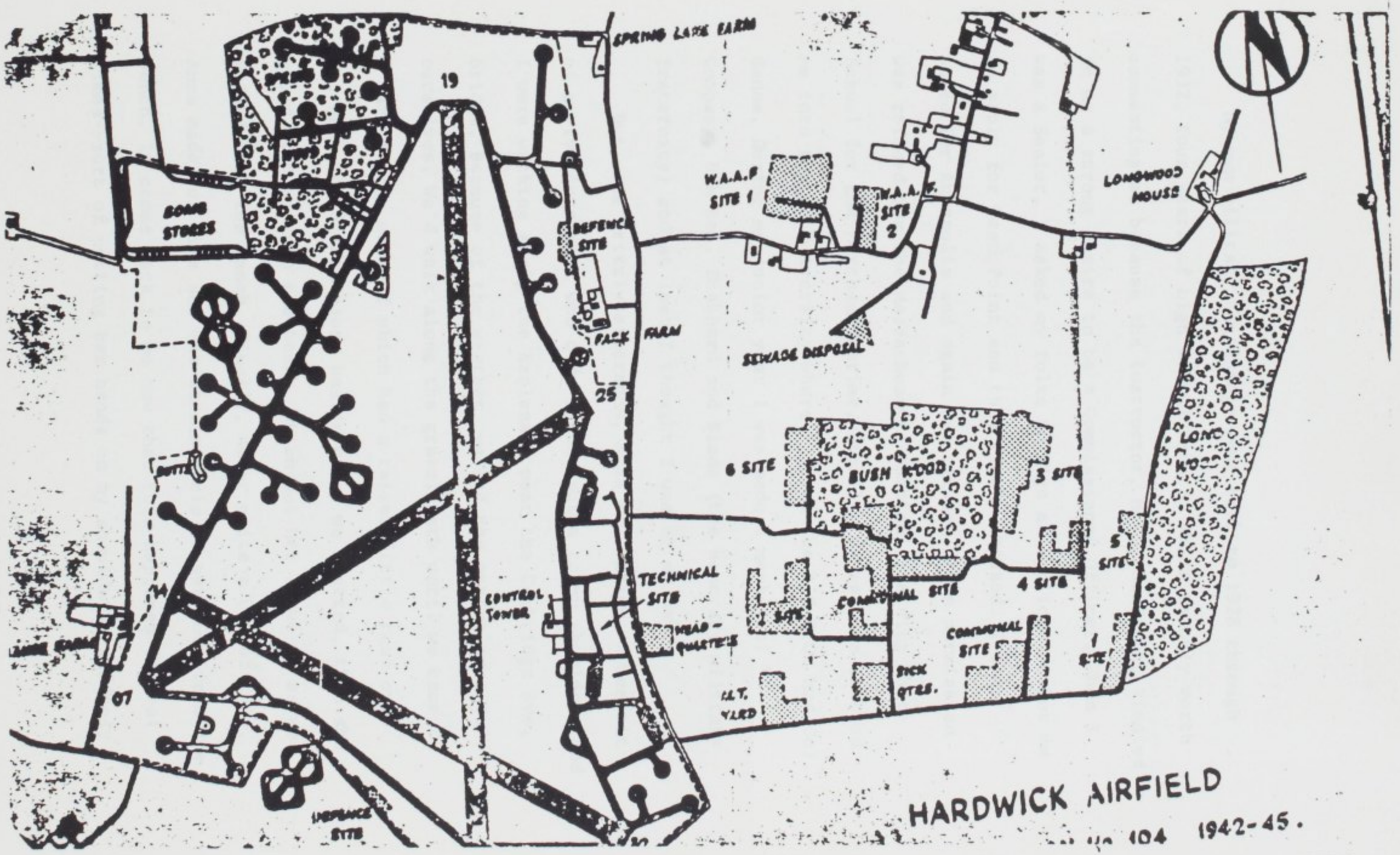
niform. Hats will not be worn in mess halls. All rules of military courtesy will e carried out on this station, special attention being called to saluting between unior and senior officers and between officers and enlisted men.

12. Station Regulations: Officers and enlisted men will familiarize themselves with station regulations, copies of which may be obtained in squadron rderly rooms.

By order of Colonel FIEGEL:

John R. Philpott

JOHN R. PHILPOTT,
Lt. Colonel, A.C.,
Executive Officer.



My own military beginnings went back to 1928 through 1932, four years of high school cadets, which is only worth commenting on because the instructor, Major Danforth, kindled in me a strong desire to be a Commissioned Officer. When I was a Senior, I asked my folks to sign an application for me to apply for West Point and they flatly refused. I then asked for Annapolis and again was refused, then permission was refused for the Massachusetts Nautical Training Ship School for the Merchant Marine. Finally, my parents entered me into Boston University where I found the R.O.T.C. and Col. Ganoe. During my junior year I was made a member of "K" Company, 6th Reg. Scabbard and Blade (the honorary military fraternity) and at last I thought I was on my way.

But, one drizzly afternoon, Anna Mac Andrew, a wee bit of a vivacious girl who didn't come quite to my shoulder, and I were walking along the Esplanade near the Cambridge Ave. bridge. Because of the weather, we had the entire area to ourselves. We'd walk along the gravel path until we came to a park bench, each of which had a raised little roof over it. Anna would walk along beside me as we chatted, then she would step up onto the bench, which put her above me as we walked past the bench. Finally, after quite a bit of this, Anna made out like she was needing help to get down from the bench. It comes back to me now that this happened several times--sort of putting her hands on my shoulders--suddenly

she slipped both arms around my neck and kissed me! On the lips!! And lit every light on my central panel. No more studying--let's go dancing or necking or necking and dancing.

I ended my Junior year on Final Probation, in other words, practically flunked out and in disgrace. Col. Ganoe ordered me to resign from the R.O.T.C. as I was not meeting the standards of the regiment.

At the end of my Senior year, I actually attained a 4.4 average (4.5 was Dean's List), but I had become a hermit to do it and it was too late for the Infantry Commission. After graduation through Major S.C. Thompson (one of the R.O.T.C. instructors) personally arranged for me to go to Fort Devens in the CMTC, Civilian Military Training Camp, that summer as a "blue" student and that permitted me to be a member of the enlisted reserves from which, by correspondence courses, I finally was commissioned a 2nd Lt. in the Infantry Reserves in April, 1940.

After maneuvers with the First Division in August 1940, I applied three times for duty with the Quartermaster Corps, Construction Division.

During these maneuvers (2 August 1940) with the Big Red I in "G" Company, 26th Infantry under Captain Moscatelli, I learned a terrific lesson that lasted forever. We were rolling (in trucks) along a road. Major Lord's C & R car pulled out of the column and out into a field to our left. Every officer

in the batallion ran to the C & R car where Major Lord was getting some information over the radio (which wasn't working too well) but eventually the major leaned down and gave the captains their orders. Naturally we (mere lieutenants) out on the fringes could hear little if anything. All I remember is that Capt. Moscatelli turned to me and gave me an order which I neither heard nor comprehended, then or now. Being extremely eager however, I snapped a salute and turned and ran full tilt from the C & R car to the truck which carried my entire platoon, jumped up into the cab and yelled "All right, let's roll!" The driver pulled out of line and charged down the road at full throttle past this long column (the whole regiment in fact) for about ten or twenty minutes. Then my Platoon Sergeant Wilson turned to me and gently asked, "Lieutenant, where are we going and what are we supposed to do?" I believe my mind and life were a complete blank for about two days. I have never recalled anything of that period. It was a one time lesson, believe me, and it paid off forever after!

In 1941, before I went on duty and as soon as some of my friends heard where I was headed, they came by to say goodbye and everyone said "Be careful down South there. Those girls will snatch you before you know they are near you." I said, "Well, I haven't had any trouble so far and I'm not afraid of southern girls." Each time my friend would

shake his head and mutter something like "you can't tell a d--- fool anything." But they didn't know the half of it. The first pair of serious brown eyes I looked into (real close) had me sacked up before I knew what was going on. But now, forty-almost three years later, I'm still well satisfied with the same one.

In February, 1941, I was ordered to duty with "Air Force troops" at Tallahassee, Fla. At that time, I really did not know there was an Air Corps, but I knew a great deal about trench warfare, World War I weapons, the responsibilities of an officer, and a lot of basic training in leadership. The field was under construction. Only two buildings had been accepted by the government. About 18 or 20 of us were on the same orders and we all had to live and eat in town. That was no hardship, to say the least, as the Florida State Teachers' College was there with 4,000 female students, 3000 of whom were well above good looking and probably 500 were utter knockouts. I remember it because it was quite a problem to get a "night off" to write or study or just rest--but we survived it.

The first order of business was an interview with Col. Wuest. What he said to me was, "Well, young man, what can you do for the Air Corps?" and being nothing if not truthful I replied, "Well, Colonel, to tell you the truth, I didn't know that we had an Air Corps until last week. I am a 2nd

Lt. of Infantry and have done only field duty. In civilian life I was a roofing contractor, a licensed rigger in Massachusetts, I have taught small boat handling, sailed a schooner down from Nova Scotia with one other fellow and I am a pretty good rifle or pistol shot." The Colonel looked at me a few seconds and then said, "I have just the job for you. You will be Post Utilities Officer charged with the maintenance and upkeep of the buildings." I jumped up, happy as a jaybird and said, "Yes, Sir, Colonel--I can sure do that."

The colonel smiled and said, "That's good. You'll have your orders in the morning." I went out so happy and feeling like I'd gotten home. And in the morning I had my orders, "Asst. Air Corps Supply Officer under a certain Captain Harold D. Orr. Captain Orr had a voice that, in a whisper, would carry upwind about 2,000 feet. He had the loudest voice of any man I have ever heard in 68 years. It wasn't just loud, it sort of picked you up and bounced you once or twice. There were four of us assigned to Orr at the same time, and of course, nobody knew anything. I vaguely remember sitting in a chair tipped back against the wall outside his office with two big packing cases. One was full of Air Corps regulations and the other was empty and I read those regulations day after day and dropped them into the empty box. I learned an awful lot and had a sore base of operations. After

a week or so it came my turn to face my leader. Captain Orr let out this utterly shocking roar, though I was in plain sight not over ten feet from him. I went into his office, stood at attention, saluted and reported. Now, this was our first real meeting, I believe. Captain Orr looked up at me and reeled off something. It was so loud that I really could not understand what he said. Finally he stopped and flipped his hand for me to leave. I figured there are some good things about being a second lieutenant, and my mind went back to northern New York and that horrible day. I took off my hat and laid it on Captain Orr's desk. Then I sat down in a straight chair across the desk from him, looked him in the eye and I gave him the word in a low, quiet voice. "Captain Orr, a year ago I went off half cocked because I didn't understand my orders and I am never going to do that again. You don't have to shout at me, Captain Orr. What you've got to do is make me comprehend what it is you want me to accomplish for you. Then you can relax. I will get it done if I live. But until I know where I'm going and what I'm doing, I'm not going to move." Captain Orr had been looking at me all through my remarks in a completely astounded way. He'd never seen or heard anything like this before. I stopped talking. Orr and I sat looking at each other, eye ball to eye ball. Suddenly he leaned down on his elbows on his desk and in a very low pleasant voice said, "Lieutenant, what I

want you to do is . . . " and he listed it out. It wasn't anything important or difficult, but he never ever roared at me again and through him I entered another world, first as a ground pounder and then as a fly boy. But to this moment, 11:55, 24 Oct. 1982, I never forgot Sgt. Wilson and the question, "Lieutenant, where are we going and what are we supposed to do?"

But, back to the story, the first chore was trivial and produced no results and I went back to sitting all day long grabbing a handful of Air Corps Regulations out of the packing case on my left, reading them and dropping them into the packing case on my right.

Then one warm muggy Tallahassee morning, GOD came to the field in person. The status of General Hap Arnold in the Air Corps had to be seen to be understood. So here he comes on a personal inspection trip. The entire base personnel are standing like statues, the band is ready and nervous, and old Colonel Jacob Wuest is out front to meet his MAKER. As I said, it was a warm morning, which hadn't meant too much to us ground pounders and there were some pretty high pine trees a short distance from the end of the east-west runway; which also meant nothing to us. Here came this enormous bird with two engines! It was a DC-3 or military C-47. To us in those days it had the impact of a Concorde. The plane sort of wiggled right and left and finally got on the runway in a

sliding left technique. Actually as I learned myself years later, the hot air rising from the runway and the height of the trees that had to be cleared required some pretty skillful sideslipping to get on the runway.

So picture over a thousand men and officers at attention, the band ready for the downbeat and the Colonel so proud out front, and this big airplane taxied up, the door on the plane banged open and General Hap Arnold came out of the door, pointed back at the pine trees and bellowed, "Get those g--d--- trees out of there." You could have heard him in Wakulla Springs.

Now this was about eleven o'clock in the morning as I remember. Then there was a special lunch in honor of the day. As I learned later, about one o'clock, Col. Wuest was roaring at Captain Orr, "Get those g--d--- trees out of there." About two o'clock, I was in Captain Orr's office and he was saying, in a cross between an ordinary conversational voice and his normal roar, "McGuire, get those g--d--- trees out of there." About 2:30 I'm sitting in my car on the east end of the east-west runway with some rated pilot from the 53rd Pursuit Group who was explaining about rising air on a hot runway, angles of glide, etc. So in a while, I comprehended the problem, but, the trees are private property on private property and I am only a lowly second lieutenant. Finally I dropped the pilot off, drove off the base and onto the property next

door, parking in the man's yard. Now, remember this was a long time before war was declared and anyone got patriotic, but it was the tag end of the depression. Without going into details, I convinced the man that it was a good deal to get his trees cut at no cost to him and he could sell the timber best that way, then to talk the local W.P.A. Office into making a project of cutting the trees, since it would aid both civilian and military flight operations.

I gave these results verbally to Captain Orr who rushed the results to Colonel Wuest, who telephoned Washington, immediately got a verbal O.K. about 6 p.m. and a teletype the next morning and four or five days later the trees were gone and of course as they used to say, I was "noticed favorably."

Not long afterward we had a "fly" problem, well, that's too mild. It came to an explosive end when we had rice pudding with raisins. The only way you could eat it safely, was to hold the dish of pudding in your left hand, kind of shake it to and fro, and whatever did not fly out of the dish was presumed to be raisins. I really don't know the details, except about half way through noon mess there was this terrific verbal explosion at the ranking officers' table and about one p.m., Orr was saying, "McGuire, get rid of those g--d--- flies."

I had had very little training in "flies", but I was

Irish, so I started by just driving around the base trying to identify any concentrations of flies. The field was still under construction and they were building the main runways, which stood up above the regular land quite a bit, so there were cuts and fills, but mostly fills. To hold the fills until vegetation took over, they dumped some kind of sludge from the sewage plant about three to four inches deep. All those responsible swore the sludge was inert. I didn't know what to do but stopped my car, got out and walked up and down a bit thinking and pondering. At last purely by chance, I walked over to the edge of the fill and idly kicked the surface with my heel, and what do you know--a stream of flies like a column of black smoke arose from the hole. I couldn't believe my eyes. Those engineers and chemists and captains and (I think, a major) were all wrong. Eventually it came out that the sludge was inert when first put down, but after a solid dry crust formed over the sludge, in the blazing Florida sunshine, it became maggot heaven. Literally, a couple of miles of runway banks from twenty to forty feet high were incubating flies. And, guess who brought honors to Captain Orr and no hurt to himself.

The base was allotted two officers to the Air Adjutant School at the War College in Washington and Lt. Mc Guire (via Captain Orr's persuasion with Col. Wuest was one of the two sent for the course.

I came back to Tallahassee as Assistant Base Adjutant, working across an enormous desk for a very fine officer and man, then Captain and later General William G. Lee--all day long, every day. We eventually developed a rapport especially after I shared information from Grace Morgan Shorter, who was a long distance telephone operator. I had become friends with Grace while rooming in the same house in Washington, when I was taking the Air Adjutant's course.

Sometimes earlier, Captain Lee had installed a telephone in my room in the BOQ, "so I could handle any emergencies that might pop up after hours." Grace would call about midnight every few nights and we would have chats of an hour or two (for free). This was certainly a pleasant addition to my life. The first time I told Lee something Grace had said (which was at variance with the news), I became a VIP!

Each morning, about mid-morning, Captain Lee would casually ask if I had "heard anything from Washington or talked with my Washington friend.

So it all began to get real good, you might say. There were educational examinations for Regular Army Commissions to be given. I told Captain Lee of my life-long desire and he was most helpful and loaned me a few books, gave me priceless guidance and in every way he could, helped me along. I took the exams, at Camp Blanding, Florida, one full week of day-long exams on many subjects. To my surprise, I

received notice that I had passed the educational require ments. After the war was declared, I received a letter stating there would be no more Regular Army commissions awarded through the program (whatever it was) until after the war ended.

Now it is early summer 1941 and the big manuevers are about to begin. Colonel Wuest and Captain Lee both told me that I would not leave Tallahassee (Dale Mabry Field) for manuevers.

Then, out of the blue, Captain Scheinwald stopped by my door and said, "McGuire, be on the ramp at 0500. You're taking a convoy to the Shreveport, Louisiana Manuevers Area." So at five in the morning, on a big lonesome area of concrete, I am facing three semi-trailer gasoline trucks, each towing a four wheel tank trailer and three big semi-trailer vans, known then as mobile repair shops. Major Fleming is there, Schein-wald and a couple of others and an all metal thing I can only describe as a station wagon with no springs, and 32 or 34 enlisted men including three sergeants. I am given a wad of orders and told to take the unit to Shreveport, Louisiana. As usual, the Major snapped, "Any questions," and I replied, "Yes, sir. When I go out the gates, do I turn right or left?" I thought the major would explode, but he caught himself and snapped, "Turn left!" I saluted, got myself and my men aboard and away we went, very sedately (Army-style, on base). We

rolled about an hour during which I discovered that somebody had planned the movement down to the last mile and hour. At 20 mph we would stop every 50 minutes for ten minutes, etc. Thank God for two things. They had gone through the Air Base Group and selected men who had been civilian heavy truck drivers just a few weeks before. Also, they had left out all the orders pertaining to the movement after we passed the Florida state line. Also, there was no road map. So I gathered my men and said,(more or less), "Men, a few months ago, I was driving trucks myself and I d--- sure don't want to crawl along at 20 mph, shifting gears for fun. I would also prefer one stop mid morning and one mid afternoon." Boy, those men cheered and were my buddies right then. I said, "Let's use about 40 to 45 as a control speed, space out about a quarter mile apart and enjoy the ride. We got a road map from a nearby gas station, and away we went. I found out later, some First Lieutenant was supposed to take the unit out, but Captain Orr believed that McGuire would get it done. The plans called for seven or eight days for the trip. The men had money in lieu of rations for the trip.

That night we pulled into Maxwell Air Base, Ala. where the OD happened to be a friend and I got the men supper and breakfast and a lunch to carry. Off again and, at sunset, we were on Meridian Air Base, Miss. The OD had been at Tallahassee and I mooched supper and breakfast for the men. Third day

we got to Monroe, La. There's nothing there so they had to buy a meal. We rolled the rigs off the road and laid down on the ground and sacked out. In the morning we had breakfast at the place in the fork between old 80 on the east side of Monroe. We rolled out about noon on Saturday. We arrived in Bossier City and I am totally astounded there are no teepees or buffaloes on the west side of the river. I telephoned Manuevers Headquarters, they can't believe we're there. "You're not supposed to be here until--I forget, Friday or something." Since I have three gas units and three repair vans choking up the main street (Barksdale Blvd.) of a place I never heard of, Bossier City, the Manuevers Headquarters ordered me to take my outfit to Fort Humbug and take command.

I have never forgotten the tremendous impression Shreveport made on me that morning. We came up and over the Texas Street bridge and there was that enormous cross at the head of the main street of the town. I was twenty seven and pretty naive, but I knew it couldn't be a bad place to live with that theme dominating the every day and commercial aspects of every day life. Also, though the full meaning was yet to be learned, the beautiful courthouse framed in the beautiful live oaks gave a feeling of orderliness and stability I had never felt in any other town. Sitting here, writing this, near the end of the trail, I can recall those feelings very vividly, and I noticed my men seemed impressed, too.

But it never crossed my mind that I would spend the greatest part of my life here. Thank God.

Somehow we got to Fort Humbug, which was the National Guard Armory. I lined my men up. Sgt. Parker (an older man) offered to keep watch on the equipment, another sergeant (whose name escapes me) had an uncle with a grocery store, about where the new fire station is, and he told Parker he'd be handy to back Parker up. I told the rest. "OK, the rest of our outfit is going to come here in a few days. I want you all to find mops, brooms, hoses, anything you can. I want you to wash the ceilings, wash down the walls, the floors, steps--everything. Then clean yourselves up, dress out in Class A uniforms, line up and let me check you over. Then I don't want to see you until Monday morning." You talk about an enthusiastic bunch. I doubt if it was four p.m. when the place was spotless, the men in their best, and on their way. The Third Sergeant, Sgt. Vaughn was about my age and plenty tough and competent. I said, "Vaughn, you're my second in command. Now we know the liquor dives will eventually give troubles. So, why don't you and I go out and locate some of them." "Sure thing, Lieutenant, but I don't drink." "That's fine with me. Neither will I tonight. We're just scouting." And that's what Sgt. Vaughn and I did that first night in Shreveport. Neither of us had a drink although we could have been out within half an hour if we'd

accepted half the offers. In almost every place, the Glass Hat, the Burnt Match Bar and on and on, there would be one of our team. "Hey, Lieutenant. Let me buy you a drink." I'll bet I could have been elected Mayor if I wanted!

There was confusion when the Air Base Group moved in. I heard Captain Orr bought a box of cigars and went around like I was his son, but his association with me was soon to end. I was made a DP Officer and quartered with 2nd Lt. John Fulton B. Mitchell IV in a two-man wall tent out on the Municipal Airport. A DP Officer was supposed to be a major with six or seven Master Sergeants from each arm and service and the theory was that this highly qualified team would go find a suitable piece of land for a temporary airfield, negotiate with the owner for its use and have stand-by alternate fields ready for the airborne units if they had to relocate during the manuevers.

So, here we are. Instead of a major with experience, we have a pretty green second lieutenant with tremendous Irish luck. Instead of six or seven highly skilled sergeants from all Arms and Services, I've got two privates who have not been in the army long enough to draw a pay check! Then they alter my duties and I'm given a C & R car (there were no jeeps at this time) and a driver named Herbert. I'm ordered to do a triangle course from Fort Humbug with requisitions to Barksdale, to Downtown Municipal Airport. Picking up requisi-

tions and parts and expediting them to where they were needed. We'd come north up Market Street, over the viaduct, turn right and cross the Red River on the Old Bridge--Barksdale Avenue to Barksdale, back out and over the Texas Avenue "new bridge", right over Cross Bayou bridge and out to the Municipal Airport. Around and around. It would drive you crazy except for the alternatives and the freedom. I had just one problem with Herbert, though. We'd come north over the Market Street viaduct, and I'd say, "All right, Herbert, take a right." Full tilt--straight ahead. In the middle of the next block, "Ah, you say, 'Take a right', sir?" After some profanity and turning and working around, eventually we'd go over the bridge. After a week of this, I went to 2nd Lt. Rube Ross (Motor Pool officer) and asked him what he thought was going on. He grinned and asked, "Did you study French?" I told him three years and he said try French on him.

So, I racked my brain and finally came up with the four words Allons (forward), Arrette (stop), A Gauche (left), and A Droit (right). Man, he was a great driver when you could talk to him! No more troubles.

Two or three weeks later, after using A Droit several times a day, came the fatal day. Major Fleming wanted to go to Barksdale and he commandeered me, et al. I don't remember how we got started, but we came steaming up Market and I sang out "A Droit". Herbert whipped us around the corner just

fine and in a few seconds Major Fleming (a World War I retired but very fine officer) turned slowly toward me and said, "Lt. McGuire, what did you say to that man?" It had become so routine I wasn't aware of the Field Adjustment (the term used for experiments in those days). It took a minute to realize what the major was referring to. Then I said in a tone and manner that bespoke "what the h---" doesn't everybody. "Oh, sir, I told him to take a right in French, sir." The major nearly went apoleptic. He roared, "In French! He's an American soldier!" It turned out we had about eighty Cajuns in the outfit, and starting that night, Lt. Olson gave a course in English to them all the rest of the Louisiana Manuevers and as long as I was associated with the Group in the Carolina manuevers.

Another item pops to mind. Among these Cajuns were surely the finest on the spot cooks in the world and they gradually drifted into the Mess or more accurately into food preparation. In short order, for several hundred miles in all directions, the quality of food in the 41st Air Base Group Mess became very well known. People would contrive all sorts of reasons to be at our outfit at noon mess. Now the Army has spent more time and energy and money on the preparation and handling of food than any other thing in the world. There is a tech manual at least ½ inch thick on the care and upkeep of the meat block alone, honest. But here we were in the middle

of a hay field and some pine woods at a place later called Mexton. So what to do for a meat block? Take a saw, cut that tree off at a comfortable height and Alors a meat block. When the cook needed some meat, he'd take his butcher knife, walk over to the next tree where the half or quarter of beef hung (screened of course), whack off what he needed on the "meat block", re-hang the balance, wipe his knife off on his really filthy apron, stab the knife into the tree the meat was hung on and go back to his stove. Nobody looked. Nobody dared and nobody got sick or anything. "Dis Army life, she good, no?"

Well, my screwy memory has slipped in accidently--so, back to Shreveport.

On the evening of September 5, 1941, Lt. Reuben Ross and I were supposed to take about 80 men of the Air Base Group to a party at the First Presbyterian Church, but Major Fleming decided to send us on some worse job and he had Lt. Olson take the men. When Rube and I finished our chore, we headed back to Fort Humbug and as we passed the church, one or the other said, "I wonder how Ollie made out." We immediately drove to the church and entered this big ground floor room, maybe a gymnasium and found a dandy party going on, so we joined in. I made a date to go sailing on Cross Lake with some gal. Then there was a bunch around a piano, singing and having a great time. I couldn't read a note of music, then

or now, and really couldn't carry a tune in a bucket, but I fervently believe I am supposed "to brighten the corner and make a joyful sound." So I'm putting forth the best I've got (probably off key) and this little head of brown hair in front of me turned back toward me with a look like, "My God, do you hurt that much?" And I had met my fate. Edward L. Mc Guire formerly of Massachusetts had met and surrendered to Mary Evelyn Bell until Death us do part. The details dragged out a bit, but the die was cast just that fast. It wasn't until years later that I remembered I had not kept the date with someone to go sailing--how about that? Anyway I met her right there in the church bargain basement, right in front of her mother.

Two things were most remarkable. First was, it only took three weeks courting on Mrs. Bell's front porch swing and the Washington-Youree Hotel Zephyr Room for two of the most conservative people to decide to marry! (We're still amazed at ourselves, but not the least bit sorry.)

And the second thing was how we were so smart! I left the Catholic Church and she left the Presbyterian and we both became Episcopalians. So, if anger flared, neither could say they had given up more than the other. From our first night of married life, we have ended every day together, lying in each other's arms and saying the Lord's Prayer out loud together. There is no way to remain angry or resentful after

that, no matter how bad the day or the problems have been.

Now, the hand of Fate begins again. The girl has said yes. I'm a 2nd Lt. Inf., making $125.00 per month, so I was not over-weight, but how to provide for this Angel who has joined me when I can't provide for myself? At this point, I heard that a law had been passed permitting Flight Training in Grade. Prior to this, you had to resign as an officer, become an Aviation Cadet to take Flight Instruction. I immediately went down on Market Street, next door to the old Columbia Cafe and sent a private Western Union telegram direct to General Hap Arnold, Washington, D.C., requesting Flight Training in Grade and giving my name, rank, serial number, organization. Boy, did I ever get results! About three weeks later in Maxton a great big B-18A flew in just to haul me to Tallahassee to get myself to Maxwell Field as fast as possible. So when war was declared December 7th, I was enrolled in Class 42-F Pilot Training and in another world. I did not get my wings because I "loved" to fly. I became a pilot because I had to have wings to go to Command and because I needed the money.

Five of us became buddies, Davis, Buchanan, Hickman and Chloe, all previously commissioned and going through flight training in Grade. It never occurred to us that there would be officers who resented what we were doing and would hold it against us, but we sure found out. Davis, Buck and I

roomed together in one room. Buck, near the door, would open the door and window after we all got into our beds, turn out the one light bulb hanging down and get into his bed. Next night it was my turn, same thing, third night H.C. would go down the list except for the light. He got into bed and shot the bulb out, which put the light out just dandy. We three also made a pact that we would keep a bottle of White Horse on a folding card table in the center of the room. First one that noticed the horse's belly was out of liquid, got the next bottle. We were each in our full uniform, Sam Browne and insignia of our branch. I was Infantry with crossed rifles, Davis was **Calvary**. Theoretically we were confined to the Post after Taps, same as all the Aviation Cadets, but, we would leave on dates and enjoy the good life until mid-night to three in the morning. When we came back we would be met by the barracks guard made up of washed-out Cadets armed with **Springfields** and bayonets. They would challenge us and we would reply using the name of the 2nd Lieutenant in charge of the barracks. The guard would shift his rifle from **high Port Arms Challenge to Rifle Salute and say, "Pass, Lt."** Next morning at Reveille, the Lieutenant (beside himself with rage) would shout at the formation. So many officer candidates came in after hours last night and used my name. I want the guilty parties to step one pace forward. And do you know, I **can't remember anyone stepping forward a single time!**

Just before we shipped out of Maxwell for Dorr, the ones going through in grade were ordered to report to the round stone gymnasium after dark by a psycho named Captain Luper. He and quite a group hazed us for a couple of hours. I heard after the war that he had been cashiered. All I can say is, he was lucky to live.

Even in the Army, all good things end. We were sent to Dorr Field, Arcadia, Florida, which is as flat as the floor and maybe four inches out of water. War had been declared so things are different. Well, a bit. There were the five of us, buddies again, plus a fellow from Rhode Island named Dolan. Very serious type (doomed from the first.) We would train on the Yellow Terror, otherwise known as the Cotton Pony or the PT-17. We were Cadets in the daytime and stood O.D. duty at night. Well, I had the only gun on the post, my personal officers' model Colt 38 cal. When this came to light, whoever was Officer of the Day came to me and borrowed my .38. My instructor was A.J. Mertens from somewhere around Chicago and he, like all of them, was a civilian. That gave us a bit more courteous treatment. When we started on the Cotton Pony, the first thing Mertens did with each of us was to take us up (he in the front cockpit and the student in the back). The cockpits were equipped with gosport speaking-hearing tubes. He took us up a couple of thousand feet, then asked if we were buckled up. Then he slowly rolled the plane on its

side then upside down. I don't know about the others, but I thought I had the seat belt snug. When we rolled over the little slack allowed a drop of perhaps ½ inch or so. I know I clawed the sides of that cockpit for all I was worth. Talk about scared. No more inattention to Mr. A.J. Mertens. Every mumble was listened to as if our lives depended on it. **After the first flight, Mertens told me, "I love to Split S and I love to spin, so if your're going to succeed with me, you are going to become very proficient in executing those two manuevers." And I did, I really loved to Split S and** would spin either way immediately on Merten's request. I got real good on snap rolls, but I never did a really good slow roll ever. At the end of the course, Mertens and the Check pilot passed me in Primary Training, but I needed a few hours more to complete the requirements, so they gave me a PT to go up and put in a few hours doing what I pleased in the immediate area on my own. I climbed upstairs a ways and saw this herd of cattle some distance from the field and thought, "OK, boy, I'll play with these." I dove down towards the north to the middle of the herd and they scattered right and left, I pulled up and chandelled right and got all those galloping back towards the west, then down the middle again, chandelled left and had them stampeding east together again. Well, this was swell fun and passing time quite well until I pulled out of one run and

saw the maddened eye of a rearing bull looking at me over the top of the wing. That was way too low and a bit dangerous so I quit that game then and there. Then I climbed to probably 5000 feet and could see so far--my goodness, I'd never seen so far before. Every time the instructor had taken me that high I was working like a coolie on Split S's or spins. So I decided to see if the world really was round or something. Now down in the cattle country of Florida they normally had a grass fire going all the time and they covered very large areas. So stupidly I started to fly out over Lake Okeechobee and blithely flew into this cloud of smoke. All of the sudden I became acutely aware that I couldn't see anything through that smoke, no sky, no ground, no horizon or anything. I not only did not know the words "instrument flying", I had no instruments to do it with! My God! I died a thousand times before I gingerly turned a bit and finally edged out to where the smoke was thin enough to see the horizon and get back to Dorr Field. I was a much better cadet than I had been four hours earlier. I always retained the deepest respect for instrument flying and eventually became very proficient at it, but I never again tried herding cattle at ten or fifteen feet off the ground. I never told anybody what had happened either, but I sure felt closer to God from there on.

We finished Primary and poor Dolan washed out. He was

so conscientious, too. He got great grades in the ground school, whereas, they had to hold a special exam for Davis, Buck, Hick, K.D. and Me. What figured from the beginning was that if we could fly, they wouldn't worry if we could read or write.

Next was Basic Training at Bush Field, Augusta, Georgia. The five of us were still together. Only those who went through flying training in those days can imagine the mental turmoil. This was where we made it or not. We would be flying BT 13s and BT 15s. I can't remember the slight differences between the two models, but after the Cotton Pony, they were enormous, real flying machines--and the number of instruments! My goodness, no one could keep track of all those, and the landing flaps, stick control, enclosed glass greenhouse where you could hear yourself and a radio yet! Wow! We were in big time now. I'm going to skip all but one incident, although this is where we got our basic instrument training. Getting into that cockpit that had been sitting closed up for hours in that hot summer sun and well cleaned out with Varsol beforehand, boy, that would really check your upchuck valve--I kid you not!

Back to the story--Mary Evelyn and I had decided to get married before I started advanced training and now Lt. H.C. "Stinky" Davis somehow conned a preacher's daughter named Bonnie into sharing his adventures.

We were still second lieutenants taking flight training and the instructors, etc. still hadn't figured out whether t o treat us as Cadets or as commissioned officers. I had always had a very dim view of athletics, particularly early in the morning. The training outfit prescribed one hour of intensive calisthentics in the morning before breakfast and two hours of games, running, etc. in the afternoon after flying. I just plain revolted. I thought it unseemly for officers to be agitating their innards and sweating before breakfast. So I said (to myself) to h--- with it. Each morning I would dress leisurely and walk to the Officers' Mess and have my breakfast. Every day the head of the physical training section, a Lt. Matheny would come in for his breakfast shortly after I started. We would greet each other civilly, sit across from each other and make some small talk. Every day, after some of this Matheny would look at me and say "By the way, aren't you supposed to be taking PT?" I would very casually answer, "That's right, would you please pass the butter, jam or whatever." I don't remember how many days we were there, but so help me, every day we went through this idiotic ritual, went on eating and enjoying each others company.

Another hilarious incident had to do with the afternoon track effort. All hands had to run around this perimeter track, a total of two miles as a wind up to two hours

of PT. This also found small favor in my eyes. I hadn't done this sort of thing with the Big Red One, so in short order, as this panting, straining mass went by the rear door of our barracks, yours truly did a two needle turn to the left, between the parked cars and into the barracks. When the less gifted would finally stagger in, they would be greeted by one 2nd Lt. Inf.--all shaved, showered, cool, dressed and ready to go to town. Now, most of the five were (to some degree) amused by the whole thing. Later I realized that Davis was getting a bit irritated, but I didn't know it until it was too late.

One afternoon (for no conceivable reason), I decided to run the three turns around the course, even though it would probably kill me. When the running mob passed behind the barracks, for the first time, McGuire stayed in the ranks running. At the same time, Davis decided that if McGuire could get away with it, so could he. So he made that two-needle left turn out of ranks and between the cars headed fo r the rear door of the barracks. But a small hitch developed. H.C. dropped between a couple of parked cars (he told us later) and looked towards headquarters. He saw officers' pants approaching, and being a true brother of the "five", he gently opened the back door of the car, while keeping down and out of sight, he slithered his way in and lay on the back floor. Moments later, Davis realized he was looking

into the face of the Commandent of Cadets. Davis was confined to the base, school rooms, flight line and mess hall for the duration of our stay. He was an excellent pilot or they would have shot him on the spot. Meanwhile you know who ate breakfast in dignity and never missed the afternoon PT although it nearly killed me.

Poor Davis had a date with Bonnie, and of course couldn't keep it. He was utterly furious that I had done this so many times with no problem, but the roof fell in the one time he tried. Then he had to get me to one side and explain how he felt about Bonnie. He didn't trust the other guys around her (a wise belief, I think) and, since I was engaged, he trusted me. Bonnie and I had a very unusual date at the Bamboo Room. She talked about Stinky (as if there was much about Stinky that I didn't know) and I talked to her about Mary Evelyn. Well, it all worked out. I married Mary Evelyn and we've enjoyed forty years together. Herb and Bonnie married and he, the best pilot of us five, bought it at Alamagardo in a B-29 just before Christmas in 1944.

Rather than end with that, here is another story. While putting in some extra time, I spotted a man down there plowing a field. A quick look around for anyone watching, peel off and come down on that dusty dry field head on toward the poor mule and man, down a bit more and just touch those wheels in the dust and pull up over them; and the mule

went one way, the man the other. I would have washed out any cadet I caught doing that, but, by Joe I did it. It added its touch to the broth called flying

At the end of Basic Training, when I passed, I'd probably get rated as a pilot and Mary Evelyn and I could get married. The very last thing was so many landing and takeoffs after dark. Four ships were used at a time, one in each quadrant. Each ship had an assigned altitude. I don't remember exactly my course, but let's say I'm in the northeast quadrant and assigned 2500 feet. Very soon, after sunset, we start. One after the other takes off, reaches assigned altitude, radios in. Then the tower Control orders first one then another to come in, land, taxi a few feet and take off again. He goes back to his altitude, radios in, etc. Now, I just had to get this done this night or all our wedding plans would be totally demolished. After a few passes, the engine on my ship begins to fail a bit. The tower calls but I give an evasive answer and this goes on until the best I can do with the prop in low pitch is to come in to land and instead of landing I would hit the landing gear hard enough to bounce back up to where I could painfully regain my assigned altitude. At last it was over and we landed and taxied up to the line. A man named Sandburg was the head of flight training and he met my plane and before I could shut the engine off he came up on the wing, ordered me out of the

cockpit, climbed in and did an engine check. I don't remember the details except the engine was in non-flying condition. He took me aside after shutting the engine down and wanted to know if I realized the engine was faulty and I told him yes. Why hadn't I landed when the tower questioned the way my engine sounded. I told him of my wedding plans, that if I didn't complete this run this night, I couldn't get to Shreveport in time for the wedding. First he unloaded some very high quality profanity, then he stopped and ordered me to be on the flight line first thing in the morning. I was, he was, and we went into the blue for about an hour while he checked me on just about everything. We landed and he stood there looking at me and asked, "Didn't you realize you could have lost your life?" I don't remember my answer except it was along the lines of I was going to do all I could to accomplish what had to be done. He turned me loose and I had passed Basic Training.

There was another lesson we all got in Basic. About half way through we each had to do a cross country (three-legged) by ourselves. Lay out the course, get the weather, winds, etc. and prepare the whole thing. Somehow, we all got the idea we were going to the same place. Imagine our horror when we were airborne at about 3000 feet over the field and preparing to take heading of the first leg to see everybody going in all directions. That was a large shock. Some hours

later when we had completed the problem and landed, the instructors gathered us in a big room and Mr. Sandburg said, "I understand that some of you were surprised to see other planes disappear in the blue. Let that be a lesson to you. You'll be military pilots and where some other plane is going does not concern you. You plot your course and complete your mission. You are the pilot and the responsibility is totally yours."

When we graduated from Basic Training, we knew that barring some terrible problem, we would become rated pilots. I flew to Shreveport where Mary Evelyn had arranged for me to stay in the home of one of her friends, Juanita Odom, who brought me a demitasse of coffee to wake me up! That was the only time in my life that I was served coffee in bed before breakfast. She and her husband, John, were good friends to us. Mary Evelyn's brother, Thornton, was best man. Here comes my first shock. We came out of the First Presbyterian Church (which I was told was full, but I only saw one girl in the church that morning), someone was supposed to be there to take pictures and was not there. This gentle beautiful bit of angel dust I had just acquired, stamped her foot and said "Damn!" And I nearly fell down.

At the reception in Mary Evelyn's home, I was standing in front of the fireplace, sort of bewildered that things had gone so far, I guess, when Mary Evelyn's Uncles, Will Bell and

Foster Schuler came straight up, face to face with me. I had met Will once, I think, but I didn't know Foster at all. I found out later that he loved to play practical jokes on the other guy. With a stern look on his face, Foster glared at me, fixing me with his fiery blue eyes and wagged a finger in my face. In a gentle voice he informed me, "You treat this young lady right, you d--- Yankee, or we'll take a horse whip to you!" All I could do was get into a position of attention and say, "Yes, sir! Yes, sir!" Long years after I repaid him with another joke, but it has always been sort of an enjoyable touch.

In the afternoon we drove to Mrs. Jones' camp on Lake Bisteneau for a one night honeymoon. Next day on the train, "Tired and dusty, going to Gusty". In Augusta we got my car and gear and rolled to Moody Field, Ga. for twin engine Advanced Training. I remember we spent the first few nights in a corner room of some hotel and there was a big neon sign on the corner that flashed on and off every half a minute or so. I can't remember it interfering with our sleep.

That good luck was still rolling and I somehow got the use of a small house that belonged to a flight surgeon attending a school at Brooks. So we moved into this little two bedroom house complete with beds, bedding, dishes, etc. There was no bedstead however, but the owner had set the bed up on four bricks on end. I decided that was a bit

precarious and laid the bricks flat. For about two months or more, we lived in utter bliss, even though Buchanan, after looking at the bed, wanted to know if I was "afraid of height!"

There was only one incident in advanced. We were flying AT-17 (twin engine trainers) and were sent out on quite a few three legged cross country flights. It was July and plenty of thunderstorms would develop just about every day. A Cadet named Rockwood and I were sent out one particularly active afternoon and after a bit we became aware of being trapped like we were in the hole of a doughnut. In every direction were these nasty looking storms. I was flying as pilot and said to Rocky, "I just remembered a tactic from the 1st Division." He said, "What's that?" I said, "The good old American tactic of "let's get the H--- out of here!" He enthusiastically agreed and I started to spiral down over a big freshly cut wheat field just west of Americus, Ga. In short order I had the plane on the ground, engines shut down and we had secured it as best we could when the full force of the storm hit. We were flying in our coveralls and little else. I had my cigarettes, but no matches, a wet handkerchief and little else--Rocky was the same. While we were taking stock, a fellow in a beat up old truck came along the road and offered to help. He took us a few miles south on this dirt road to a house where there was a telephone. Rocky called the base, told them where we were and

what we had done. They said we used our heads for once and to find some place to get out of the weather and they'd pick us up in the morning.

While Rocky was doing the phoning, I got into a conversation with four or five characters sitting around drinking "water". They asked questions like, "where are you from?" and so forth. This character looked at me and said, "Son, you're soaking wet. You're apt to get the miseries." I agreed. He offered me a drink and hands me a glass of their "water" which I took and drank. I didn't notice any immediate effect, except, when he said, "Would you like another?" I discovered that I couldn't talk. Rocky asked, "What is that?" The fellow says, "Corn likker."

After a while the fellow with the truck makes an offer. "I'll take them home and feed them and put some dry clothes on them." Of course, by this time, we're all on the same side, if you get the drift. He drove us to his farm and loaned us dry clothes. While we waited for his wife to prepare some food, we had two more glasses of the corn likker. We had a delicious meal (I guess) and the man took us up the road to a house where they gave us cots and blankets and two last glasses of corn liquor. To say there is no memory of the details is ridiculous. All I remember is a nice old lady who gave us breakfast. A ship flew out from Moody and two rated pilots took the plane and one of

us back to Moody while the other went back in the other plane. The only remarkable thing in my memory is we both drank six ordinary water glasses of corn liquor within an eight hour period and except for my total loss of speech after the first drink, neither of us was drunk, sick, unsteady, hungover or anything. I've often thought we should be doing some research eleven miles west of Americus, Ga. on some divine "cloud juice!"

Finally came the great day, July 3, 1942. Class 42-F graduated and 2nd Lt. of Infantry became 2nd Lt. USAAF-Res. As they said at the time, now we were licensed military pilots and would have a legal right to learn to fly.

Now, I'll back up a couple of weeks. We lived off base in a group of houses that contained our instructors. It was perhaps inevitable that Mary Evelyn came to know Captain Jack Eaton's wife and he was aware of me. A couple of weeks before graduation, he called me into his office and asked me if I would like to be an Instructor Pilot. I told him that I had just been married and would appreciate any extra stateside service/ but I was willing to do whatever was asked of me.

About eighteen of us were posted to Moody Field upon our graduation and everybody got a short leave. A week, I think. At the end of my leave I was ordered to the Flying Instructors School at Maxwell Field. There I learned to fly from a very superior pilot and a real saint, Lt. Guy M.

Jones. For example, before graduation I was taught to land the AT-9 at 125 mph, 500 ft. per min. descent, power on until the landing gear touched the runway, push the wheel forward and check the throttles. If we lost an engine, we were instructed to bail out. One month later I could and did land the plane at 45 mph, 500 ft. per minute, until it was on the ground, then close the throttles and mixtures. I was flying on either engine alone and landing on either engine alone. This was a shocking change in just 30 days/ but it opened the eyes of us fortunate ones and I never soloed a student again who had not made at least one single engine approach and landing. I'll admit though that my heart was in my mouth sometimes.

At the end of this school, I returned to Moody for duty as a flying instructor, teaching British Cadets. There were four students to each instructor for each class. I made great friends with a John Sandifer and from him I accidently learned a trick that helped me in politics some fifteen odd years later. Sandy played with a pipe. I don't remember ever seeing it lit, but he'd kind of mumble around the thing and never really say anything much, but was such good company. I used the trick to deflect political traps that I either could not or would rather not take a stand on. Worked great!

Anyway, between the Instructor's School and the Cadets, by the end of the year I was learning to survive. Thanks to

that lesson over Lake Okeechobee a year earlier, I had taken all the Link Trainer Instrument training I could get. If anyone didn't want his training time, I took it. I accumulated a lot of this training, much of it not recorded in my records.

In October 1942, somebody confused my time in service with my rated pilot time, and I was posted to Maxwell to be an instructor in the Instructor School, which was ridiculous. I only had about 400 flying hours and had just graduated from the school. The school people were horrified until I explained being a 2nd lieutenant Infantry and they quieted down and in fact shipped me to George Field, Illinois to gain some time and experience.

In October 1942, I went to George Field, Ill., a new twin engine training base. We lived in Vincennes, Indiana. The field was in Lawrenceville, Illinois across the Wabash River. I instructed from October to the end of December. Three of us instructors, going out to the field about three or four in the morning, singing Roy Acuff songs at the top of our lungs to keep awake and to build up our spirits. I wound up as instructor of the squadron "hard luck cases." If If a cadet had trouble with some particular phase, instrument landings, whatever, they turned him over to me so as not to slow down his regular instructor. I didn't get to know many cadets, but they sure kept me on my toes. We were flying a

few AT-9's and more and more AT-10's, twin engine trainers.

Here are a few odd memories of George Field. We were just married when we went to Moody and just about the first thing we acquired was a Golden Cocker Spaniel, just a puppy and not housebroken. When we went to George, we stayed in a hotel for a week or so while we found a place to live. Each night we covered the bathroom floor with a lot of newspaper and we used the bathroom as a kennel for Flip who used the papers as if he had no thought of the morrow. So, when I got up, my first chore was to bundle up the (ugh) papers and lacking any other place, dropping them down an air shaft. I dare say we did not enhance the hotel's opinion of those "Army people", but it worked.

The first place we found to live was a small two story cottage at 1827 North Second St., Vincennes. The lady who rented it to us was a bit timorous, but we finally gained her confidence and made a deal on the rent. The house had very gloomy drapes over the windows and a perfectly horrible ceramic bust of Fatima on the newel post of the stairs. The moment the old lady accepted my deal, Mary Evelyn and I started jumping up on the sofa and chairs, taking down those gloomy drapes and I strained and toted Fatima to the rear porch. It wasn't a bad place to live except that it had one of those furnaces in the basement like an octopus with ducts to each room of the house. Mary Evelyn had never seen or

heard of a coal fired furnace and did not know how to lay and start a fire. I knew how, but try as I might, I could not bank the fire for the night. We had to buy apple and orange crates for kindling and every morning of the thirty we stayed there I had to go to the cellar and build a new fire. The last night there I found the problem. The base of the furnace was cracked, so there was no way you could shut off the draft, so you couldn't bank the fire.

In December, I was home with a terrific cold, when my instructor from Moody, Lt. Alan Blair showed up. He was in command of an Engineering Squadron at George and wanted me to be his engineering officer. When I returned to duty, he walked with me to the center of the perimeter road which ran around and just behind the engineering shacks. He stopped and said, "There are 25 to 30 AT-9's that you are responsible for. You have approximately 180 men and I don't want to ever cross this road again. You're in charge." He turned and walked away and I never saw him again. I walked over into the tar paper shanty that was to be my "home away from home" for the next year or more. I called for the Line Chief, who turned out to be the real old Regular Army type, Master Sergeant Edward Jusko. I didn't know it then, but he was an old friend of Col. Bobizen, the Base C.O. Jusko as a corporal had crew chiefed a plane for Bobizen when he was a 2nd Lt. Guess who followed my activities pretty closely.

This was my first conversation with Jusko. "Sergeant, I've just been assigned as Engineering Officer of this squadron. You are going to have to run the squadron and at the same time, teach me. I want to give just two orders. There will be no gambling on the line at any time. I want that door taken off my office. I don't want any man to feel that he can't talk to me at any time. I want every broken part and the new replacement to be shown to me, on my desk, with everyone's best guess as to why it failed." Well, you talk about results. All day long, day after day, the mechanics came by showing me the broken parts and replacements. My desk top was ruined, but a new sheet of tempered board took care of that. The mechanics were happy to be smarter than I and proud to share their knowledge and skills. I got to know them on a very good basis, and, boy, did I learn about aircraft and engines. After some months, the stream slowed, but the rapport between me and the men never diminished.

After a while the men, though very respectful were talking to me and reacting the way men should. Then in the Spring, the Wabash flooded and we were on flood duty, besides protecting and maintaining the planes. There still were no hangars and we were so short of tools that we had to have the flight going off duty line up and turn their tools over to the men coming on duty. I started having squadron get togethers for ten or fifteen minutes when flights were changing

every week or so. Anybody could speak up, gripe, make a suggestion. We got some pretty good ideas this way. Primarily, it kept the men informed, not beset with rumors and made to feel important (which they certainly were.) I never noticed any over familiarity or unsoldierly conduct as a result.

After the flood, we had all but my squadron's AT-9's taken away and the entire field was outfitted with AT-10's, about 200. The new ships <u>all</u> developed cracks in the landing gear and struts and had to be grounded. This meant that the entire load of use of planes for instruction fell on the 25 or so AT-9's of the 709th Eng. Sqdn. It was a real crisis. I held a squadron get together, explained the situation and asked for ideas. Strangely the same idea came out of a meeting of instructors. I didn't even know about the meeting. The instructor returning to the field after a training session would radio to the tower any discrepancies or needed repairs. The tower would inform us and we would go to the Supply Depot, pick up the parts and rush to the lineman waiting on the ramps. We would replace the part, then return the faulty part to the Supply Depot for credit. The only trouble was, this was not the approved way. AF regulations concerning accountability require the accountable officer to get the old part before he relinquishes the new one. Otherwise its out of his pocket if he turns up short. So, every-

body but one is totally imbued with doing their utmost to keep this handful of ships going. The one clod is Captain Harris, the Supply Officer and he would not budge and we were Stateside, so .45's had not been issued. I told him in plain American, "You dumb SOB, I'm going to tell you something. If you treat us as thieves, we'll really give you a lesson. What in the h--- do you think we can do with old engine parts." He wouldn't budge and the law was on his side.

I had two Tech Supply Sergeants who were very interesting people. I knocked myself out trying to rotate the men so that nobody drew more than his share of night duty. But, these two preferred night duty permanently. Blink was the more colorful of the two.They both came to me and said they thought they could maybe help a little if they could get a little physical help from time to time. I said sure.

At this time, each technical squadron was expected to maintain a guard during the night on the planes. We had quite a few young boys just away from home and quite naive. This particular night was a warm but not hot evening with the stars out and all. About 10 P.M. a boy named Petrillo was walking guard duty with a .12 gauge shotgun on his shoulder. Here comes S/Sgt. Blink and therefore a power to the boy. Blink comes up to Petrillo and they walk up and down for awhile just shooting the breeze. Finally Blink asks, "Is that gun loaded?" "Sure is, Sergeant." "Let me look at it

a minute." Petrillo hands over the shotgun. Blink slips off the safety and pulls the trigger. BLAM BLAM BLAM. Blink hands the empty shotgun back and runs like h---. Everybody at home in Lawrenceville and Vincennes tears out to the field. We've got Condition Purple, the entire MP company is out and the base is locked up. Boy that was an interesting evening. Poor Petrillo. The only thing that saved his life was that he was a private.

Finally, there came a day when they closed down the 709th Tech Supply Sqdn. I had a Maintenance Receipt file as thick as a fair sized telephone book and everything listed had to be turned in or accounted for. I put Blink and French to work turning in the stuff that I was charged with. After a couple of days, lo and behold, my memorandum receipt is totally cleared. This is really unheard of, all these small different items, hundreds of pliers, etc. etc. I checked with Captain Harris of prior fame and he admits that I am clear and that he has never heard of this before. I went back to the squadron and there was Blink and French. "You're all clear, aren't you?" "Yes, I am and it seems to surprise Captain Harris." A few minutes later Blink says, "What do you want us to do with the rest of it?" "What are you talking about? The shelves look bare to me." "Everything down here is cleared out, but we have a few things left in the attic." It took four men a day to fill a 6x6/½ ton

truck with the stuff from the attic. I'll never know why the building was standing. I got into a 6x6 and drove it up to the curb just outside of Captain Harris's office. I walked in without knocking and said, "Do you still say that my memorandum Receipt is clear and that I'm free of it." He looked up a bit irritated because I hadn't knocked and said, "Yes, your record is clear in this office and I have signed your Post clearance." I then said, "Allright, you stupid SOB, I told you months ago that if you considered us thieves we would really show you how. Now that 6x6 is full of stuff you are accountable for. You have no papers on it. If I was a mean man, I would unload it around the garrison flag pole. But, you poor b-----, you can have it. Just don't doubt me again.

In December of 1942, I flew the base Adjutant, Captain John Banks to Maxwell and back on some business. While there I promoted some sheepskin lined flying gloves which were a real blessing as we had very little winter equipment. The men and I worked out in the open in really bad conditions. No hangar was available to us. When we started back, I made one more really stupid mistake that should have cost us our lives. I had told the Alert Crew Chief to fill the gas tanks to the top--but I neglected to take the caps off and check. He had not topped the tanks off. It was late afternoon, pretty cold and both Banks and I were eager to get home.

After an hour or two, I noticed the gas gauges were much too low. I figured and refigured the gas and it simply wasn't enough. I had the engines running so lean on gas they would pop a bit now and then. Then about an hour out from George the electricity packed up. No lights, no radio, no nothing--except one d--- scared pilot and a (fortunately) ignorant passenger. We got to the vicinity of the field, by the luck of the Irish, and they had a bunch of cadets shooting night landings. No way to radio, no lights to warn anybody, so I night lighted one plane, slid into close formation with him and flew to a landing with an unknown ship that didn't know I was around at all. The moment the gear touched the runway, I began to brake and slow down as much as I dared, turned off the Main Runway. We were safe temporarily. I taxied about half way to the parking ramp and both engines quit cold. Totally out of gas. That was another lesson that never needed to be repeated.

1. Check everything.
2. Habits good and bad keep you alive or kill you.
3. Nothing is more worthless than altitude over you or runway behind you.

On or about 21 October 1943, I went from George Field to Macon, Ga. and back with a few others for the High Altitude Indoctrination course, or something like that. We sat on wooden benches along the walls of this steel cylinder as

they pumped out the air to simulate the air density at differing altitudes. The crux was to sit there with our oxygen masks on at 35,000 feet (I think) and see if we would develop nitrogen bubbles in our joints, which would disqualify us from high altitude flying. The third toe on my right foot suddenly developed a red hot needle sticking into it. My God, it hurt. But before I had to yell "uncle", they began to lower us and I had passed another hurdle.

On the 4th of July 1943, I was ordered to the Pratt and Whitney Engineering School at Hartford. Captain Thom and I took off from George Field after I had made a check on the weather. There was a strong cold front moving across our flight path from southwest to northeast and I stupidly check the weather at George and Hartford and didn't worry about the middle of the course. We were so used to flying in and out of instrument weather at George that we didn't give it a thought. Over Lakeland, B-17's werelshooting landings, so we just climbed up a few thousand feet andldrove for awhile. We started to let down to regain visual contact. What do you know, after a while our altimeter says we are below the land surface. We crawl up a bit and start to "ride the radio" beam into Pittsburg. The static on the earphones was terrific and I missed the "cone of silence" over Pittsburg Field. We wandered back and forth trying to ride the beams into Pittsburg, but it's no use. Finally the

gas gauge lights come on, about twenty minutes fuel left. We are in a truly dense cloud. We've been on instruments for about four hours and my nerves were shot. Just then we passed over a hole in the murk like a funnel and we looked down and there's a football field. We're both at the end of our endurance and decide to land. I remember looking at that football field and thinking, "A football field--1000 yards, three thousand feet. I can set it down and walk away."

I made the first pass and I'm probably twenty feet off the ground and flying way too fast. A steep pull up and 180 degree turn back, then try again. Still too fast and too high. Again a steep turn back to the other end of the field and it's this or nothing. The red fuel lights have been on over ten minutes and it's this pass or "Katy Bar the Door." I remember bringing the left wing down to try to slow us or to wipe out the landing gear. The left strut hit the ground and in that instant I realized that a football field is only 300 feet long. We sheared off a small tree about 4 or 5 inches in diameter, which slowed the ship greatly and turned us about 90 degrees left. We came off the football field which was sort of built up above the rest of the area. We dropped down, shedding wings, engines and tail and wound up with only the cockpit around us. I asked Thom if he was all right and he didn't have a scratch on him. The tree had taken a bit of skin off my left forearm. Kids started coming

up with little bits of the AT-10 and asking "Autograph this for me, Mister?" So Thom and I sat in the rain and autographed bits and pieces for quite a while. I guess they held an inquiry back at George, but I never heard any detail or outcome. I sure learned to check the weather.

After returning to George, I went back to Engineering Test Flying. Whenever a flight surface, wing stabilizer, aeleron elevator or trim tab was replaced or repaired, the plane had to be flown by me before it could be used by a Cadet or instructor. Normally I would do the flight alone on the theory of no sense endangering two when one would do. One fine day I had a ship that had had an elevator control tab worked on. Just by chance, I asked T/Sgt. Sammy Lopez from New Mexico if he'd like to go up for a short hop. Every man seemed to be eager to do this. Sammy was a very fine Flight Chief, not very tall but powerfully and compactly built. I checked the trim tab control through its full range several times for freedom of movement, called the tower and requested the full runway (as usual on tests), checked the engines and we rolled out. Everything was going great. It was a beautiful day. The engines were talking nicely. I stood on the brakes, applied power and we started rolling. We lifted off just great and held the ship down to pick up speed, reached over and tripped the switch to raise the landing gear, and what do you know--the plane's nose starts

to rise and rise, well above the horizon and still rising. I roll full down on the elevator control and its still rising and I do not have the strength to push the nose down. In a second we'll stall and crash. I called Sammy for help and with the help of his strength we slow, but do not get the nose down where it has to be. It has bought time for me to analyze the sequence of events. I reached over and threw the landing gear down and with that drag, I got the nose down. I called Mayday, turned around and got the plane back on the ground. Examination turned up the killer. When you rolled the elevator trim there was a thing called an elevator trim actuating arm inside which two screw affairs were needed to change the trim tab. There was a key-way that made it possible to work up and down. That little semi-circle of steel was not in the key way. Every time you moved the elevator trim tab control, you were putting in the up-elevator force and didn't know it. That was a real killer, especially for an inexperienced pilot. Only Sammy and his strength gave me the time to think of the sequences and save us.

In the fall of 1943, Sgt. Jusko came to me with a report of a request from the men for a squadron party. After all of these years, it is difficult to believe this incident, but it really happened. I told Jusko OK on the squadron party provided there was no liquor. The party was being put on by some group of citizens in Vincennes. Mary Evelyn and I dropped

in on the party quite early and it was pure decorum--or in better words--like a wake. I innocently went home. The next morning when I got to the base, Lt. McGinn, the Provost Officer was in my office. It seems that someone provided some liquor and a good party ensued. One of my flight chiefs, T/Sgt. Howard, an excellent flight chief was one of those rare people who not only cannot "handle" liquor, but who, for all intents and purposes, go utterly insane when exposed to it. He was the only one that I encountered, but I talked with a few other officers who had experienced the same phenomenom. McGinn, who was from my home town, handed me the damnedest charge sheet you ever saw. Two or three city police required medical treatment and three or four MP's were in the hospital. This was really serious in many ways. We were shorthanded, especially for leadership. Relations with the city were vital. I read the charge sheet through and asked McGinn if this had really happened. "Of course. Do you think I'd dream up something like that. It will hurt the squadron and the man who up to now has been an exemplary soldier. Give me a little time to think. How bad are the city police really hurt? "Oh, not too bad," said Mac. "You wait in your office for at least a half hour and I'll be by to see you," I said.

The Colonel would be right onto this. I asked,"How many copies are there of this charge sheet?" Mac explained that

there was the one in my hand, the original on the Colonel's desk and the file copy. I drove to base headquarters and soft talked my way past the colonel's secretary and there, right on the top of the Colonel's desk (like a neon sign) was the charge sheet. I picked it up, folded it and put it inside my blouse. Then I went to the Provost Marshall's office and McGinn and asked to see the file copy of the charge sheet. I asked, "Are these two copies and the one on the Colonel's desk the only copies?" Mac says, "That's right." Whereupon I pull out the copy from the Colonel's office and the two copies in my left hand. I open the stove and thrust all three into the fire. Poor McGinn. He looked like he'd just been a witness to rape or murder and for seriousness he probably was right. Boy, did it take some talking to calm Mac down and a few bottles to the city police and M.Ps. But nothing ever came of it.

I then returned to the Engineer Shack and ordered out every person except Jusko and Howard. I sat Sgt. Howard in a chair where I could talk down to him. And I laid him out. "Army regulations will only permit me to restrict you to the post for a month, but I am restricting you for six months. Furthermore, you will take the tech orders with the lay-outs of the electrical and hydraulic systems of the AT-10 (which were 8½x11") and you will enlarge them to fill a four by eight foot piece of plywood. Any spare time you

may find, you will spend with the chaplain doing anything he needs. Do you want to put up any argument?" Dead Silence. Offly, the blow-ups of the electrical and hydraulic systems were such an aid and convenience that Howard was praised for his work (no one knew it was a penalty). Everybody won.

Just before Christmas, 1943, we were given the percentages of men we could give Christmas leaves. This was terribly important to the men and I wanted to treat each man fairly. Long conferences between the First Sergeant, Line Chief, Flight Chiefs, the Squadron Commander (who was now a wonderful man, Major Ramey Howard). All of us did the best we could. We got the lists of names together as far ahead as possible. Wouldn't you know it? Somehowlwe lost this corporal from Tennessee. Here we were with lists all made, every man we could spare was listed. Then up pops this kid and he is more entitled to a pass than several others that we'd OK'd. Here he stands before my desk asking why he doesn't have a Christmas pass and listing several very good points about his entitlement. I sat there squirming because I knew he was entitled by the rules and I knew we had goofed. I learned that he had to take a train to Nashville for most of a day and all of a night, then a bus for the next day and finally, mules for half a day back in to his home. I just writhed inside. We were numerically at the absolute minimum headquarters would permit. Finally the kid slices it. "Be you gonna

give me a pass or ain't cha?" I decided to h--- with the quota. He had the guts to ask for what was due to him. I wouldn't withhold what was due nor would I resent him for asking. But I still remember that blunt, honest question and feel that he outperformed me on that one.

Now I can only hit places and duties. They crowded together very fast.

Sometime in the early spring of 1944, Mary Evelyn and I had dinner with Lt. Dick Grace and his wife. She was secretary to some wheel in the Technical Service Command. She said they were forming a new Sea-Air Rescue Squadron and needed a pilot with engineering experience, administrative experience, in the grade of captain, and I was tailor made for the job. The next day I went in to Operations, told them what I'd heard. As I'd been brought up on small boats, I'd like the job. I'd always thought flying over an endless runway had some advantage and I'd rather be saving people than killing them. Whoever I talked to said to put the request in writing and they would try to get it for me. The normal work load permitted no time for letters and a few days later, I had orders. I would be going to Berry Field, Smyrna, Tenn. for B-24 Transition Training.

When I was relieved as Test Pilot for the field (a job I'd held for several months), they replaced me with three WAAF's and four second lieutenant pilots!

I drew Stevens, an old classmate from Moody as my instructor. After the usual delighted reunion, he read my orders and said, "You are going to get your tail worked off in emergency procedures here by me or I wouldn't be your friend." I said, "Of course, that's what I need and want." Then, off into the blue in those old B-24-D's. Talk about emergency drill. I can still see that d--- water tower just off the runway to the left. On take off, Steve feathers #1 engine, no real problem, then he feathers #2, full power and both feet on one rudder bar, feather #3 and we just graze that tower. Another time in the landing pattern, Steve feathers #1, "what are you going to do now?" "Land this thing, what else?" He feathers #2 and the landing pattern forces me to turn left into the dead engine. "What are you going to do now?" "Land the b-----, what else?" On the base leg, Steve punches out #4. I just set my jaw, watched the air speed and picked up over the tallest trees. We made it but when we got on the ramp, Steve said, "You crazy Irish-man, you could have gotten us both killed." "I thought that was why we drew flight pay." I owe Steve a lot. He really made me learn and perform.

Mary Evelyn came to Smyrna and joined me for two or three weeks and we rented and lived in a travel trailer. I think Ned stayed in Shreveport with Grandma Bell.

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where I picked up my crew. In May, we proceeded to Charleston for RTU Training and poor quarters and lousy weather and very hard work. Only one incident is worth relating. I was asked to fly a ship to Langley for Sub-Depot overhaul. We were flying planes with standard propellers and some had so called paddle blades. The paddle blades were shorter than the regular propeller blades and almost twice as wide. Either one worked all right except the paddle blades turned 400 or 500 rpm slower than the standard blades. If you were flying a plane with standard props, you would read a certain range if the engines were turning up full power. We were flying ships with either prop and were supposed to look and see which prop your ship had. I did not check the props, but loaded my crew and a whole bunch of guys who were mooching a ride to Langley, cranked up and taxied out. The engines did not feel right, but as the engine warmed up, they checked out OK on the instruments. I just knew something was wrong. When we cleared for takeoff, I was still very uneasy, but as we say, "This is what they pay us to do." I was concerned enough to come off the taxiway onto the runway at about 50 mph and threw full power on. We rolled down that runway without picking up proper speed, reached the point of aborting the takeoff, d--- near to the end of the runway and still only marginal flying speed. I pulled the wheel into my lap, yelled at Jr. "Gear up." and we floated just off the

ground until the gear retracted which gave us an additional ten or fifteen mph air speed. We finally gained a hundred feet of altitude. Talk about sweating. There was a woman tower operator who started calling, "1823, are you experiencing difficulties?" over and over. We were about ten or fifteen miles out, the operator still bleating, "1823, are you experiencing difficulties?" and me so busy and scared, I didn't dare change my grip on the wheel to make a radio call. Finally, with the help of God, I got the plane 500 feet off the ground. Over a cleared area in the woods, I dropped 100 feet to pick up enough speed to turn back to the field. I mashed the radio button and yelled, "May day, may day, 1823 coming in on a straight-in approach." I got that thing down on a taxiway and shut it down. I was shaking too hard to light a cigarette and for the first time (but not the last) Bill Leach lit a cigarette for me. Some idiot major (combat returnee--and therefore knew it all) came roaring up and ordered me to immediately take another ship up citing the good old stuff about eliminating fear by immediately getting into the air again, but I was no rookie. I told him to go to h---, that I was going home and would be available tomorrow. He made a lot of remarks about incompetence, fear, etc. but I left. Next morning he was going to push my face in it, so he climbed in, fired up and tried his hand. He was very lucky. Takeoff was down the

river and he was able (somehow) to get off and fly down the river, under the Cooper River bridge and some time out over the Gulf was able to turn it around and get back. He was greenish colored and had no comments on my efforts. As it turned out, the ship had paddle blades and fourteen bad spark plugs. I've often wondered who the major was and how he made out.

We had to make a few night flights and the whole coast was blacked out. We learned to find the field by opening the window and when you smelled the paper mill, you were home. Another thing we learned was to take off most of our clothes when we boarded a ship on the line as they would be like ovens from the heat. We'd take off, climb to 3000 ft., dry off with towels and dress.

It was also at Charleston that the whole crew took a day off at Folley Beach and I was inspired to suggest we try out our Mae West life preservers, which had been issued with no information on the use thereof. Mighty good thing that we did, for we put them on loosely, pulled the release tabs and immediately were held head down. Quite a sensation, until we figured out how they had to be used.

For some screwy reason, every one of us wore our Mae Wests on every flight even though we knew you couldn't ditch a B-24 and if you happened to get into the North Sea, your life expectancy was on the order of ten minutes or less,

but <u>now</u> we knew how they worked!

We were quite a collection at Charleston; a lot of experience, skill and rank was represented in the group. It seems some general or other decided they should go thru the training commands and take out 1500 pilots with 1000 hours or more than one year's experience and use them to form a new B-29 squadron or two in a real hurry to use on Japan. I presume this was before anyone knew about the "A" bomb. This is what I had blundered into when I'd requested the Air-Sea Rescue (somebody said McGuire asked for something, maybe this will suit him.) We had 500 at Charleston, 500 at Hunter and 500 somewhere else. Some typist had typed the orders "assigned to First Air Force for training" instead of "attached to First Air Force." Being the bureaucracy it was, the First Air Force wouldn't release those 1500 picked characters. In a group with that much time, rank, etc., it did not take long to find the screw up, but it proved impossible to correct. It did change some 500 guys' attitudes, however. I remember doing calisthentics under the orders of a 2nd Lieutenant (pretty new). It was hot and a fellow not far from me said, "H---, I'm sick of this. What are they going to do to us? Send us home and we miss the war?" All 500 officers crossed their arms and lay there. The poor innocent lieutenant nearly went out of his gourd. PT was changed to athletic games the next day.

We had to learn to send and receive messages. I think eight words a minute were required. I had really wanted to learn Morse Code all my life and never succeeded beyond SOS. I did learn semaphore, but Morse Code was hopeless. We had an hour of code instruction a day for quite a time and the general consensus was we would leave it to the radio man. We learned that the code instructor was sending the same sentence over and over, so we all passed with no further problems. I still can't understand Morse Code.

The Infantry had taught, our primary job is to deny the enemy the will to resist. There were quite a lot of German troops held on base as POW's. These troops had not lost their will to win. They marched very smartly with their rakes or hoes on their shoulders in quick step. They were very good looking troops in my opinion. We, on the other hand, while marching to classes were nothing but a rabble headed in the same direction. One day a column of Krauts passed us going the other way, looking as proud as you can imagine. I felt a twinge of shame for myself and these other bums I was ambling along with. The Krauts sang a snappy verse of some song, obiously derisive and laughed. The officer in charge of our column ordered the Germans to halt. One of our fellows who could speak German bellowed, "Enjoy yourself, you stupid b----s. Just wait until you get home. We will have been there earlier!" The whole column of Krauts seemed to shrink

a little and never gave another sign of derision.

In August, 1944, we were ordered to Langley Field, Va. and assigned B-24 1823-J, a real Monday morning creation if ever there was one. There was a fire in the radio the first time I approached the ship. We eventually replaced every engine instrument three times, every flight instrument twice. I had to fly it manually from Langley to Valley, Wales. In fact, I never had a moment's relaxation during the entire period and when I turned it over to the Engineering Officer at Valley, Wales, I wrote three pages of discrepancies and I heard later it never flew again, but was cannabilized for parts. I felt in my heart that some poor soul owes me his life for my action on this jewel, 1823-J.

Our job at Langley was to drive the Mickey Operators around. The Mickey Operator was really a radar operator, more navigator than anything else. The airborne radar was real new, called H2X, and permitted bombing through the clouds with considerable accuracy. On these training missions, I would take off, get us up to assigned altitude, set the ship on auto-pilot and turn it over to the Mickey Operator who worked at a radar scope behind me on the flight deck. He couldn't see out, but he had a knob on his navigator's table and he could turn the ship right or left using that knob through the auto-pilot. It was the most boring flying ever invented. When we turned the ship over, Jr. and I would

slide our seats back, disconnect our safety belts and head sets and read magazines. Nobody looked out except occassionly. We'd wait for the end of the three legged cross country flights. Some flights were at night with the entire country in black out--no lights anywhere. I remember a flight up to Detroit, back to somewhere else, then back to Langley. Near Detroit, with everyone relaxed and half asleep, suddenly, right in front of us was a terrible bolt of lightning. We nearly went out through the roof. It turned out that the radar image of a city could hardly be distinguished from that of a thunderstorm. Nobody told us, but we sure knew from then on.

Another time we were supposed to turn over Richmond, Virginia. The Mickey Operator called me and said, "Richmond coming up, sir." So I slid my seat forward, hooked up the radio, fastened my safety belt. I looked out and thought vaguely that Richmond sure was lit up. I rolled the ship so that I could get a good look and there was the Washington Monument directly below us. In the whole world, there was no air space any more restricted than Washington D.C. I had a vague idea that it was "shoot on sight" over Washington. I applied full emergency power and got the h--- out of there. It sure ruined the relaxed routine of those flights.

The airborne radar permitted us to bomb Germany through the winter of 1944-45, but it also required us to fly in

weather that is difficult to make an outsider understand. This filthy flying weather cost a lot of men and really sapped the survivors. Flying was never again a big drive even to the types who had previously "just lived to fly." It was a grim fearsome business and four of these take offs were equal to any four of the toughest missions.

The section on Drinking, Living and such takes up from here until we join the 93rd Bomb Group.

36 COMBAT MISSIONS

"Base to target is Uncle Sam's time, target to base,
you're on your own!"

COL. THERMAN BROWN, 93rd C.O.

When we left Langley Field and throughout the combat tour, my crew consisted of:

Pilot: Capt. Edward L. McGuire, Jr. 0392667
Co-Pilot: 2nd Lt. Victor H. Hanf, Jr. 08266262
Navigator: 2nd Lt. Charles D. Sill 0-723449
Bombardier: 2nd Lt. Joseph A. Dondero 0-722777
Nose Gunner: S/Sgt. Theodore F. Szajna 36164043
Tail Gunner: S/Sgt. Barney C. Eller 34828795
Waist Gunner: S/Sgt. William H. Gardner 33710942
Flight Engineer: S/Sgt. Cornelius J. Leach 42056289
Waist Gunner: S/Sgt. Edward S. Powell 33805719
Radio Operator: S/Sgt. Donald M. South 31305999

In October Sill and Dondero were transferred from the flight crew and appointed lead crew navigator and bombardier respectively. At the same time I was offered lead pilot but refused it. The rest of the crew remained as wing crew by choice. The flight engineer Cornelius (Bill) Leach joined the crew at Charleston as a replacement for another engineer who preferred to be reassigned to a different unit and had earlier told me of his preference. Leach had been on the maintenance line at Charleston for a year and a half and knew every nut, bolt and rivet in the ship. He ultimately saved the crew on the night of February 22, 1945, and, in my opinion, demonstrated extraordinary bravery and skill on the mission of February 21st. He also demonstrated unusual bravery on the mission of October 12, 1944.

On the bomb run, the engineer (Leach) moved down into the hatchway leading to the bombay, held the bomb doors open manually, checked that all the bombs had gone out, or, if they had hung up, attempted to get them out. The radio operator (Don South) manned the top turret on the bomb run (and if we were under enemy attack during the mission). Since the upper turret was located just above the heads of the pilot and co-pilot, the unbelievable vibration created by the firing of the twin fifty caliber machine guns was enough to make you feel you would "pop out" of your skin. The vibration pounded your head with the force of some fierce giant beating a battery of intensely loud drums.

On September 3, 1944, we departed Langley Field. Our flight schedule took us via Dow Field, Maine, then to Goose Bay, Labrador, BW1 (bluie west) Greenland, Iceland, and then finally landing at Valley, Wales on September 19. The craft was then transferred to the care of Air Transport Command. We then boarded a train at Valley and rode as far as Stone, England, changed trains for our final destination, Hardwick, England (the code name for Hardwick was Milfoil). On 23 September 1944 we officially joined the 93rd Bomb Group (H), 20th Combat Wing, 2d Air Division, 8th Air Force. We were assigned to the 409th squadron which carried the code name "thrufare" on 25 September 1944. Quite frankly I remember little of what happened from September 25th though the 5th

of October except for a considerable amount of confusion and waiting around; there were, of course, the usual check-outs and so forth which are shown by the attached copies of official documents. The confusion, however, soon passed and the system began to make some degree of sense until it became our whole world to the almost complete exclusion of all of those normally important matters such as home and family. Strange, perhaps, but that was the way it was for me. The thing that is crystal clear in my mind is that 1st Lt. George A. Dobbs and I arrived on the same day and under the same orders. One of the first things that happened was a briefing of the two of us by Lt. Col. Therman D. Brown, Commanding Officer of the 409th squadron. Col. Brown spoke to Dobbs along the lines that Dobbs might hope for promotion to Captain and to become lead crew, and discussed the specific duties which these changes would involve. To me he said: "No one can be a combat pilot only and hope to advance beyond the rank of captain. Therefore unless you acquire other duties, you cannot expect a promotion until your tour of duty is completed. The best you can expect is to be assigned as lead crew pilot." He followed these words with what was sobering and just a bit scary instructions, he continued: "In view of your flying experience, I will assign the 'war weary planes to you in order to be able to permit the younger and less experienced pilots to have the better and more reliable

planes.' I remember this verbatim for two reasons: first I immediately replied to the Colonel: That is all right with me, sir, and I agree with your thinking.' And I really meant those words. Secondly, what neither of thought about was the increased probability of aborting with these weary ships. Long afterwards Lt. Col. Fant landed on me for excessive aborting, and I presume this was the basis for no recommendation for the D.F.C., which I honestly thought I'd earned three times: (1) for continuing combat over age, (2) getting 814 G back safely 21 February 1945, and (3) flying the extra mission to finish up Lt. Smith's crew and my waist gunner.

Perhaps at this point I should explain what the Col. was referring to with the reference to "your experience". At the time I joined the Group, my Form 5 shows a total pilot time of 993:55 hours, but more important was the types of flying. I had graduated from the Instructor Pilot's School, Pratt & Whitney Engineer Officer's School, served as an Instructor Pilot, Engineering Officer for a year and as Test Pilot for George Field, Illinois in the Spring of 1944. A lot of high performance flying with some additional hazards over regular duty. I had survived several experiences and felt very competent to handle any emergency involving the airplane under MY control. I had not had ANY CROSS-COUNTRY or FORMATION flying to amount to anything, almost

since I had rated Pilot in July 1942!

And that brings me, with a mixture of eager anticipation and some fear or dread (believe it or not), to: Mission #1: 5 October 1944; We called it PADERBORN Air Base, but the record says LIPPSTADT. It is not unusual for this difference in names, but I never found out who made the changes or why.

The 93rd had a policy that the new pilot and his new crew were taken on their first mission by an old pilot, while the old co-pilot checked out as airplane commander by taking the old crew and the new co-pilot on his first mission. It was an excellent system, since the old pilot could communicate better with the new pilot and the new pilot had a chance to get help in whipping his new crew together, while the new co-pilot saw a seasoned crew work and got better instruction in his phase of the team effort.

So Captain Kenneth Gilbert rode in the co-pilot's seat with me and my crew. Gilbert was on his 71st mission (I believe) and was very good. As an aside, it was not unusual in the 93rd for a pilot to fly more than the required number of missions. The take-off, forming up and climb out are gone from my memory, which means there was nothing unusual, although everything was totally confusing, for several missions, until you got the hang of it. We were flying in 168 "Y", a B-24J of the 409th Squadron.

We were loaded with incendiary bombs and flying on the leader's left(#3 position). All went fine to the I.P. (initial point), where we turned onto the bomb run. No flak, no fighters=a MILK RUN! About 30 seconds from "bombs away", I got caught in tremendous prop wash and we were immediately thrown upside down to the right. The B-24 was a very heavy ship on the controls when loaded, as we were, and it took a few seconds for me to comprehend what had happened. I knew B-24's were restricted from inverted flight, we had been told the wings came off, and these thoughts raced through my mind. The nose was unbelievably heavy. In fact, using ALL my strength I could not hold the nose up and the air speed was rising fast while the altimeter began to unwind. Time is amazing. In the space of time it has taken to write this, all those thoughts had gone through my mind. I reached up and rolled the elevator trim control forward desperately, and, Thank God, the back pressure on the wheel reduced and I could hold the nose above the horizon. Gilbert, who had been apparently frozen by the sudden disaster, came on the controls with me and together we rolled the ship to the left and back into normal upright condition. Gilbert shouted: "Salvo the bombs--quick!" There was a little red "T" shaped handle on the pedestal labeled something like "bomb salvo" and it was secured with safety wire. No one had ever said anything about how it worked, but I found out now. I reached over with one

hand and pulled up on the handle. It was like trying to pull over the world with one hand, nothing gave in any way. Gilbert was still shouting, "Salvo the bombs. Quick!" I undid my seat belt, stood up and straddled the pedestal, put both hands on the "T" handle and pulled with all my strength, and suddenly it gave, and the bombs went out. We then closed the bomb bay doors and retrimmed the ship and began to regain the 3000 feet we'd lost, while slowly turning to the left and hoping to rejoin some formation. As we climbed in a slow turn to our left, with Gilbert flying the ship, I looked back and down. There, down below us and slightly astern now, miles away from the target, was a little bitty cross roads with a few buildings around the cross roads, and the damnedest fire you ever saw--right in the center of that cross roads. The only time I knew where my bombs had hit!

When we got home, we found we were posted MIA (missing in action). The group had written us off when they saw us flip over and start down, and of course, that was the last they had seen of us. It took a good hour to go around to various huts and recover our belongings, amid heart warming remarks like; "Hell, I needed a new jacket (or pants or whatever)" or "How come you Jokers had to come back?"

Mission #2 6 October 1944 Hamburg:

The next day, the weather still perfect, why not go again? Really no choice. This time it's me and my gang on our

own. We've been once and we're supposed to be ready--right? Wrong! We've never been over the target and/or dropped on the target and that comes later. I was as nervous as a cat about prop wash, really terrified of it and very bad on formation flying anyway. We got off all right, but when it came to forming up it was another story. Let me stop a moment and explain how we formed up. We had a "buncher" (that's British for a non-directional radio beacon) near the coast. If we were forming at say 6,000 feet, we would take off, turn to a heading Easterly (I forget the degree heading) climb out over the North Sea to one-half the forming altitude (in this case 3,000 feet), make a climbing one needle 180 degree turn to the reciprocal of the outbound heading and climb back; theoretically arriving over the buncher at forming altitude, and that part was pretty easy.

Meanwhile, an old B-24 named "Ball of Fire", with wild paint and lots of lights, was flying a race track course around the Buncher. Now came the real fun. The object of the game was to intercept the loosely organized formation on one of the turns, so you could "cut the corner" and catch up. Easier said than done for the first few times! Anyway, this day, every time I tried to get into formation with old weary "R" Roger, I would hit a little prop wash and get NERVOUS and fall out of position, and this went on all the way to the IP! Somebody had said, "If you can't get into your own

formation, get into any B 24 formation. They're all going to the same place." So, being utterly desperate by this time (a ship out of formation is a sitting duck for Kraut fighters was an article of faith by one and all), I decided to "cut the corner of the IP, which I did (the Hell with trying to get with the 93rd) and got into formation--somehow--with the 446th Gp, which was just ahead of the 93rd in the Wing formation. Halleljah! Safe at last! Open the bomb bay doors! Over the target we go. MY GOD! THE FLAK!! (they had briefed us for 500 guns, and sure enough, they were <u>all</u> there. BOMBS AWAY! And everybody continues to fly straight and level. I didn't think of strike photos--only what the h-- are we doing hanging around in this stuff? Well, it isn't my outfit so out of formation, skip the Group rally, hit the Wing rally and slide into formation with the 448th and off for home. Whew!

The only thing was, my outfit hadn't seen me all day, so when we get home (ahead of the Group, I must add), we're MIA again--and again it takes an hour or so to retrieve our gear!

The record shows we next flew on October 11th for 2:50 hours, pilot dual, so it was probably formation practise, but I don't remember.

Mission #3: 12 October 1944 Osnabruck Marshalling Yards

This was more like "real war". We were carrying 100

lb. GPs in clusters. The flak was not so heavy, but much more accurate. On the bomb run, the ship flying on my right wing, took a hit at the left wing root. The left wing just slowly folded straight up, the ship dropped to it's left toward me and I had to pull up to clear it. Lower down, in a few seconds, the ship blew up, in just a big black cloud. We continued on the bomb run, of course, and about this time I became aware of a ruckus on the flight deck. Leach was yelling something and when I asked what was the matter, he answered 'South is on his knees praying and won't man the top turret." I said, "Leave him alone. We need all the help we can get. You man the top turret.' that took care of that, and maybe it did some good. Immediately after "Bombs Away", #3 engine packed up, and we're out of formation. No matter how many times you practise, the first time you REALLY lose an engine it's different, believe me! We feathered #3 and trimmed the ship and headed home alone, and boy, do you ever feel alone. As we crossed the North Sea, I thought about my coming problem. It really wasn't a bad problem. I merely had to land on three engines that were running perfectly all right, that was old stuff and not particularly worrisome to me. We had, however, lost quite a few ships that tried to "pull up and go around". That is, where the pilot had misjudged his approach and decided to pull up and go around and try again. I decided that I would land on the first approach regard-

less, my theory being, better to run off the end of the runway a bit than chance stalling out on a go-round. So I called the crew and told them my decision. Leach said, "No problem, Chief. I'll put the gear down on the auxilliary source". Now we had three ways to put down the landing gear. First, normal operation. #3 engine had a hydraulic pump that provided power for the gear and flaps and brakes, but #3 was out. Second, for emergencies, in the bomb bay was an auxiliary motor and pump which activated the same system. Third last resort, there was a hand crank in the forward bomb bay, by which, the main gear could be lowered or cranked down manually. It took quite a bit of time and the crankers had to stand on the eight inch wide main girder in the bomb bay (without parachutes--no room) with only those lousy weak bomb bay doors between them and eternity if they slipped or anything. Also, on this system, after the main gear was down, the nose wheel had to be pushed out manually. Meaning somebody had to get down in the nose and exert super human strength to push the nose wheel out.

We landed from a circular pattern, not the square approach used in the States. As I approached the field from the east, I ordered the gear down, then called for landing clearance. The little Gremlins were very busy that day. The auxilliary source wouldn't function and we're almost to the field. I yelled at Leach, "Get cranking--I'm landing whether

the gear is down or sidewise". So Leach, South and I think Szajna, get down in the bomb bay and start cranking like mad. Just as the main gear locked down, we touched down, on the main gear only, there's no time left to push out the nose wheel. We roll down the runway with the nose in the air and the tail dragging (later I found out the tail skid was ground off), and when the nose starts getting pretty heavy, I kicked a rudder and we veer off the runway onto the grass and the nose drops with a slight thump- and IT GETS REAL QUIET. For the third and last time, we're posted MIA. This time our gear is easier to recover. We had attained the rank of "bad pennies" and would always come back. And, as a matter of fact, no one on the crew ever was injured and we always came back. We were well known anyway. They patched old weary "L" Love up, but I don't remember flying her again.

As a result of the landing of October 12th, they had an accident inquiry board on me. I have copies of the statements submitted by me and Engineer Leach with the date of October 14, 1944, but the board couldn't have been the 14th, as I was on another mission. I remember a couple of things about that board. I told them I had considered pulling up and going around, but, as aircraft commander, I thought it was an unnecessary risk and it was my decision to complete the landing once I had committed the ship and myself to it. They assessed me some forgotten amount of Pilot Error, ended

the investigation, and then, each member of the board complimented me on the execution of the landing even though they disagreed with my decision not to go around. About a week later, 8th Air Force issued a directive to the effect that, due to the losses from attempts to pull up and go around, the completion of the landing was recommended as less likely to result in casualties! Too late to help my record, though! Either the day of or the day after the board, I was offered the opportunity to become a Lead Crew pilot. I turned this opportunity down because Lead Crews did not get as many missions and I wanted to finish the required tour as quickly as possible. After that, I might be interested, but the opportunity never came up. We ran out of War! Lts. Sill and Dondero were separated from my crew and made Lead Navigator and Bombardier respectively. Also, about this time, an order came out that lead crews would be awarded the DFC automatically, as would wing crews who had completed some forgotten number of missions by some date in September, which we did not qualify under. All others had to be specifically recommended, which had disastrous results for me, but that's in the future at this time.

Mission #4: 14 October 1944 Kaiserslauten

No record of any incidents nor any memory of the mission. This is very good flying weather and we are getting better all the time. Still flying clunkers, though.

At the end of this dissertation on missions, I will give some memories that I cannot ascribe to a specific mission, but are very clear in my memory. This was the last mission with all of my crew as Dondero and Sill were ordered to Lead Crew after this mission and transferred from the 409th Squadron. After this mission we carried different navigators or bombardiers (one or the other, but not both). We were Wing Crew all through the Combat Tour and dropped our bombs when the lead dropped and we did not carry a bomb sight.

Places like Kaiserslauten, Neunkirchen and Euskirchen had only a few anti-aircraft guns, but they were 88's and extremely accurate. There would be a four gun battery or two of them. Each battery would fire in sequence, it seemed, as the burst would come up like four dots in a line and in sequence (one after the other) in a row and each burst a little higher. Very often they hit a ship on the first burst. Very often they burst so close you could see the red fire in the center and they were ALWAYS very, very black and CLOSE! One of the most difficult things about aerial warfare was that, after surviving take off and getting up to altitude, you would be flying along in the sunshine under an intensely blue sky. Everything so beautiful and peaceful, and without any warning, WHOOMPF! Right beside you or just off your wing, or a ship would just disappear in a big black cloud--and things would fall out of the cloud. There

never was any way to get used to that, and it went on to and including the last day.

Mission #5: 17 October 1944 Cologne

My formation sheet indicates we were posted for ship 362 'J" Jigg, but we flew old "G" George. If I could remember what an amplidyn was, maybe I could remember what happened better. Anyway, we burned out three of them! We carried a navigator/bombardier whose name I remember, but will not give. To set the stage we were loaded with twelve 500 lb. bombs, and it was COLD! The weather was getting worse each mission. What few who were not there either knew or remember, is that the Winter of 1944-45 was the only winter of the war when we bombed practically regardless of the weather. With H2X (airbourne radar) we could bomb even when we could not see the targets, or anything else for that matter. Several times we took off carrying our shaving kits and a blanket; to be informed after the target as to whether we would land in Scotland, France, Italy (once), Russia (once), or where ever! Also nervousness (or fear) affects some men differently. Many are afflicted with a tremendous output of urine. I was a urinator first class! After briefing, ALWAYS a bowel movement in the latrine near the briefing room, where there was always a long line. No constipation among combat crews. Then the drying room where we dressed out for the mission. Then trucks took us out to the hardstand.

First urinate, then check the ship, then urinate, then wait, then urinate, then start engines. On the climb to forming altitude, two or three trips to the bomb bay were normal, sometimes more (as today). We were dressed so clumsily that the only place the flight deck personnel could urinate was on the bomb bay doors. On this particular trip, it was very cold and I was extremely active until we were well out over the North Sea en route to Cologne. Finally I ran dry. We turned the IP and the Lead opened its doors which was our signal to do the same. This day, however, our doors wouldn't open--frozen shut! The navigator started arguing that we would have to carry the bombs home because he couldn't get the doors open; I turned the ship over to Jr. (the co-pilot) drew my .45 pistol and cocked it and aimed it down towards the navigator and, over the intercom said, "You s-- of a b----, I'll give you a slow count of three to drop those bombs through the doors or I'll shoot you and throw you out with them!" Pause--utter quiet on the intercom--ONE! pause--TWO! pause--BARROOM! and the bombs went out right through the doors and, of course, tore the doors loose in the process. I put the safety back on my pistol and re-holstered it and took over the ship again. A little while later, the lead called us and asked, "G" George, what happened to your bomb bay doors?" Before I could think of a suitable reply, my co-pilot mashed the button and blurted out, "The skipper pissed

on the bomb bay doors and froze them shut!" Needless to say, when we got back there was h-- to pay. I was called up before the Squadron CO and the Engineering Office and really blistered. I said, "I'm sorry I've caused (the Engineer office) additional work. My crew and I will work with you and your men all night if necessary, to make repairs, but I am not going to get over the target--after all the efforts and sacrifices of all those people that made it possible--just to haul the bombs back, because it might cause a little more work!" That was the end of that- except I went to Sqdn. Ops and said, "Don't you EVER post that man to fly with me again!" and they never did.

Now, long years later, I think back to this and realize the extreme danger in which I placed my crew, ship and myself, but that was long ago and I was tough enough to do my duty as I saw it; and I did not tolerate reluctance on the part of my crew. When I said- GO--they better be moving. I am certainly thankful the navigator carried out his orders. He would have been dead and I Court Martialed in less than three seconds more!

My Form 5 shows 3 and 4 hour flights on the 25th, 28th, and 29th. Probably recalls or aborts. At least one of these was scrubbed--the target--Frankfurt, and my comment on the mission hand-out sheet is "should have been #6, scrubbed, Thank God" which conveys the general feeling.

With worsening weather and flying the war wearies (remember the Colonel's remark), I had to abort quite a few times. Sometimes the mission would be "scrubbed" and this invariably happened just after the wheels were tucked away after take-off. This meant flying around for an hour or so, burning up gasoline to lighten the ship enough to land. Very aggravating. So Leach, Jr. and I put our heads together and evolved a plan. These ships had a gasoline transfer pump on the main beam in the forward bomb bay and this pump was used to transfer gasoline from bomb bay tanks (only installed for extreme duration, non-combat flights) to the main tanks. We had no bomb bay tanks, of course, but we did have the transfer pump and between us we figured out how to reverse the connections to pump gas from the main tanks--overboard!--through a 3 or 4 inch flexible hose. Just crack the bomb bay doors, stick the hose out a little ways, turn on the pump, and boy, did we ever get rid of gasoline! Also, at this time, I began thinking about the drag created by windmilling proppellers. To make a long story short, on some recall or abort, late that month or early next, we experimented with the pump first. It worked, and after maybe half an hour, we approached the field to land. Of course the Tower said, "remain airbourne until you have used more gas." I just turned the radio off and landed. Again, h--- broke loose! I said to the Ops Officer, "Before you say too much, let's get the

bowser and see what she takes." Sure enough, I had less gas than I would have had after flying 2 hours. After we had done this a few times, they would mutter, but that was all. I don't remember anyone being impressed by what we had learned. Everybody else went on churning around for a couple of hours.

Then I drilled Jr. and Leach on my slowing down idea. Came a day--and with a bit of trepidation--as soon as the main gear were firmly on the runway, I yelled, "All engines, idle cut-off." The results were amazing. That ship slowed down like it had an anchor behind it. By cutting off the gasoline to the engines we had all propellers windmilling and had a drag area equal to the area of all four propellors. The real trick turned out to be putting all four engines back into full rich before they slowed turning too much, because we had to apply power to clear the runway at the mid-point! All the rest of the group continued to roll the whole length of the runway and had to stand on the brakes even then, in order to slow down to a controllable speed. It helped that, from Engineering and test flying, I firmly believed in touching down within 100 feet of the beginning of the runway and very often with the tail turret still over the grass- so that I didn't waste any runway. "Nothing is more worthless than altitude over you or runway behind you!" Going back to Col. Brown's remark about having me fly the wearies. This

caused me to have to abort quite a bit more than would be normally expected. Col. Brown moved up to Group C.O. and Lt. Col. Fant became Squadron C.O. He had not made the remark and probably didn't know about it, but naturally, the system went on and he got irked about my aborting. So one day he called me in and told me that the next time I aborted he would court martial me. I replied in a very poor way and left.

As luck would have it, the very next day we took off and started to climb up through the murk. Before we were up to forming altitude, the waist called, "#3 is covered with foaming oil all over it." Sure enough, the engine was about twice it's normal size. We immediately feathered #3, turned on the transfer pump, returned to Milfoil and landed shortly after the last ship had taken off. We taxied to the hardstand, shut off the engines and sat in the "horror hole" (cockpit) and waited. Pretty soon here came the jeeps, one after the other, Group Ops., Sqdn. Ops. and Sqdn. Eng., and each one drove up, took one look and left. It turned out #3 propellor shaft was cracked two-thirds through, just a few seconds more might have taken the prop off and the engine, too, if we weren't on our toes. No more remarks about aborting--ever.

Mission #6: 30 October 1944 Hamburg

This was the first of three missions to Hamburg. Each time we were briefed for 500 guns and I will certify they

were all there. We turned the IP and started the bomb run and I looked ahead to the target area, mashed the button and said to Jr., "We weren't briefed for thunderstorms today!" "Hell, Skip, that's no thunderstorm. That's flak!" The flak was coming up so heavy it had formed a great big black cloud over the target! The bomb run had been briefed for ten minutes, as I remember. I looked at that black cloud and all I could think was, "My God! In ten minutes I will be dead." I really believed that. For about ten minutes, I flew the plane, holding formation, stealing a look ahead and then at my wrist watch, and thought; "In eight minutes I'll be dead- in six minutes, it will all be over, -in four minutes, we'll all be gone- in two minutes, it will all be gone and forgotten." Suddenly it seemed, we peeled off in a turn into the Group Rally, then into the Wing Rally and away, and we were still alive and didn't have a hole in the ship! What an extraordinary feeling of awe and humble gratitude. I've faced what I thought were pretty good chances of dying, both before and since, but that was quite a feeling--never to be forgotten.

Form 5 shows November 2; 1:30 hours flight, probably an abort with the new technique.

Mission #7: 4 November 1944 Merseburg (according to the Mission Credit)

My mission hand-out sheet shows #7, bombed oil refinery

at Hannover, never saw so many ships. Flak was very heavy and very accurate! This was another of those days when I saw the red in the center of the bursts! I have a feeling that this was the last mission I had trouble flying formation. I think it was on this trip that I overran the formation on the turn into the target. God! What a sensation! I had to dog leg out and back in to let the Squadron get up to and ahead of me. Sitting out there all alone. That was the last time (if it was this trip) that I ever again had trouble flying formation. In fact, later I got too good, but that's another incident or two.

November 5, 1944, another abort or recall, 1:25 hours.

Mission #8: 9 November 1944 Fort L'Asine 6:00 hrs. +:30 min.

This was the worst mission out of 36! Flying 362 "J" Jigg again (a B-24H) in the Hi-Right Squadron. My hand-out says, "#8, hit Fort L'Asine 4 miles in front of Patton's 3rd Army. Tachometer on #2 engine began to fail over target. I thought I was losing the engine. We broke formation during return. Hit heavy ice, rain and snow squall. Finally landed at Framingham B-17 base, came home later, no flak. What happened was: when we turned the IP and the Lead opened his bomb bay doors, he had a faulty release. That means something electrical failed and his bombs went out before they should have. We thought it was an early release. You never know, we could have turned onto the bomb run late or some-

from Alabama and always talked in a soft easy manner when reporting information to me. Barney called me in a few minutes, "Flak at 6 o'clock, sir," in a real steady matter of fact voice. "Never mind the sir. Where is the flak? A good ways back and low. OK, keep me posted." Then, "Flak at 6 o'clock, sir", voice rising and more rapid speech. "Never mind the sir. Where the h--- is the flak?" "Still behind and below, but closer. I think they're tracking us." "OK, keep me posted." Then a shrill, excited, "Flak-at 6 o'clock-sir!" Where, Barney?" "Directly back and below." I called out to Jr., "Half flaps," and shoved the throttles and applied a touch of right rudder. We went up like an elevator 500 feet, as quick as it takes to read this. PHOOMP! PHOOMP! PHOOMP! PHOOMP! right through our formation position. I gave her a touch of left rudder and eased back on the throttles as Jr. pulled up the flaps. Down like a rock, right back into our position and the last four bursts went off up over our heads PHOOMP! PHOOMP! PHOOMP! PHOOMP! The only time I really felt I did something that really saved us from flak. I felt I earned my pay that day--and so did my whole crew. During the withdrawal, we watched a B-24 that may have been a cripple. He was out of formation and all alone and got too close to Heligoland, and they really shot at him. Nothing we could do to help, just sit there and keep flying and sweat the poor b----- out.

Mission #10: 25 November 1944 Bingerbruck

Bingerbruck on the Mission Credit but Bingen to us, and a marshalling yard. A real Milk Run, and we missed the target, but Division hit. We flew high right on the 448th lead, in other words we were reinforcing the 448th. Our ship was 334 "K" better known as Old Patches, from all the patches over flak damage. It took several inches more manifold pressure to keep up because of the additional drag from all those patches. I let Jr. fly most of this one, in fact, it was the only time I let him fly the bomb run, as I remember. I also remember that I drove him crazy because I kept trying to remember that poem about "Bingen, Fair Bingen on the Rhine".

Mission #11 26 November 1944 Bielefeld

A viaduct, widely and well known as a milk run. This may have been the mission on which I neglected to plug my electric pants into my electric jacket! It was COLD! I turned my thermostat up to the limit, and from the waist up I roasted while from the waist down I got practically frozen solid. I think my voice was two octaves higher for an hour or two after we landed. Checking plugging my electric suit was NEVER done carelessly again, I assure you.

Another memory brought back. Flying a B-24 was very hard manual work at altitude and loaded, so you kept pretty warm all the way to the target (between work and fear, you usually were sweating with the electric suit turned way down

or off). You learned, however, to turn the thermostat way up during the Wing Rally, or you might get the shakes. If that happened, you would shiver and shake uncontrollably, probably partly with reaction.

Mission #12: 30 November 1944 Neunkirchen

My hand out sheet says Saarbrucken marshalling yards, "Milk run, saw ship explode, d-- long flight." The form 5 says 5:45 1st pilot day 1:00 P-AI. So the reference d-- long flight does not refer to clock hours, but the strain. The ship exploding probably was when the bombs dropped, sometimes they would slap together just as they fell free and, if they were armed, they would explode. Of course, they all exploded in this type action and the ship and all would just disappear in a big black cloud. The bombs had a nose fuse and a tail fuse. There were little propellors on the fuses, which were restrained from turning by arming wires which were fastened at one end to the bomb rack and went through a hole in the fuse shaft at the other end. Sometimes, for God knows what reason, these arming wires would slide out of the hole through the fuse shaft. When this happened, any wind current could spin the propellors and after so many turns the props would fall off. Then the bombs were armed and any sharp blow would explode them. This loose propellor was not common, but real bad when it happened. I remember one day when it happened to us and Leach, South, Powell and

Gardner were all down in the bomb bay at the same time, trying to hold the propellors on while somebody put the arming wires back in and gave the wire a little bend to hold them. A real nasty few minutes. I saw at least two ships blow up during my tour and I was quite sure this was the cause.

December 4, 1944, should have been #13-aborted-forgot target.

#1 turbo surging (running away)

#3 losing oil badly

#3 gas tank sprung leak

Ship 814 "G" George 1:40 hrs. Notes on hand out. Gives you some idea of the ship's condition, and I flew "G" many times until 21 February 1945.

Mission #13: 28 December 1944 Kaiserslautern 6:40 hours

Hand out sheet says, "Flak heavy and accurate, holed for first time. Lost #1 at target, 13 holes in ship". Another trip home on three engines! In all, I landed in England nine times on less than four engines. The return of 21 February 1945 was the worst of these. Targets like today's were the most dangerous because the flak was predicted fire, i.e., they aimed at YOU. These 88s were extremely accurate and very often hit the lead or deputy lead with their first bursts. We used to kid that they practised on our tanks all day and when we came along they had gotten the hang of it.

Mission #14: 31 December 1944 Euskirchen 5:45 hours

Hand out sheet shows I flew "G" as Hi ship of the Hi Right. This was my favorite position, although many did not like it. You were the most exposed ship to fighter attack from the right side of the formation, but we had to contend with flak more than fighters. In this position I could slide out a bit and increase the space for flak to miss through. We flew almost line abreast, so you could slide in and out without falling behind. Mission sheet also says, "lost #2 on way home, very little flak, dog fight under us." Since we were the end of the Division Column, those Kraut anti-aircraft batteries were probably having other troubles by the time we got there.

My form 5 shows three flights in December, other than these two missions, December 2, 4, and 6. Probably recalls, but I have no notes on them. This was very bad weather and we were grounded by weather all through the Battle of the Bulge. As I remember, we were on stand-by every day through this period, hoping for some chance to get up and over to help our buddies in the Bulge.

Mission #15: 3 January 1945 Hamburg

This was the last of three trips to Hamburg and they still had 500 guns there but this time I didn't see the stuff. This time there was a front lying to the west of and over the target area, including to the east of Hamburg--and COLD!

D --, it was cold! We were flying in the soup plus heavy contrails. I couldn't see more than four or five planes most of the time, and over the target, I could only see the ship I was flying on and the one on my right wing, flying on me. We were pulling full power with 10 degrees of flaps down, at 30,000 feet altitude and just barely above a stall. NO flak up where we were at all. In openings I saw some way down below us and how my wingman stayed there I do not know. My remarks on the mission hand out are "#6 went to Hamburg, up to 30,000 feet, -42 degrees C, salvoed bombs 5 mins. approx. W. of Hamburg. Rough weather- heavy persistent contrails."

I believe I was in error about W of Hamburg, more likely north, often we were not sure of where we were and the route may have been changed from that which was briefed. I do remember asking the bombàgator several times, "Where the h- is Hamburg? When do we get rid of the bombs?" When everybody finally agreed we had left Hamburg, I ordered the bombs dropped. It was very important to lighten the ship and everything under us was enemy. We had been pulling excessive power for a long time and might run low on gas and only God knew what weather we might face over England to land in. I always felt that three trips to Hamburg should have counted as one tour by themselves.

Mission #16: 5 January 1945 Neunkirchen

Hand-out sheet says "bombed Neunkirchen with the 44th

Group. Only eleven ships. We were twelfth. Saw FW109 just after target. It started a pass at us but didn't press home." The formation sheet also shows I flew a 330th Squadron ship as a spare to the 93rd Lead Squadron. I have a vague recollection that nobody aborted so we weren't used as a replacement, which is what the Spare ship was there for. Normally, the Spare returns to Base if not needed. I think we (the whole crew) agreed we would just join some outfit and help "crush the Hun", which is the only way I can account for being with the 44th unless maybe there was a recall and I turned off the radio and went on. This I did two times I am positive about and maybe a third, I've forgotten. Anyway, I do remember we found this eleven ship (one squadron) outfit all by itself and I flew #2 position in the left flight. Right after the bomb drop, we saw this FW109 way out ahead of us, and crossing our path from the right. I tightened up on the leader of the left flight so much that his right waist gunner was cringing away from the window! The pilot also gave away to his left which separated the flight from the rest of the squadron, but made our three ship element awfully close to each other. All turrets were trained on the Kraut, of course, and I guess he got the idea, because I saw his left wing drop as he started a pass, but immediately he broke away to his right and disappeared. MUCH relief in twelve ships, I assure you!

On January 10th, the Form 5 shows a 55 minute flight and 20 minutes instrument.

January 10, 1945: Mission hand out shows: "aborted-lost all instruments at 21,000 feet, finally got down, instruments thawed, went back to 22,000 feet, landed in a snowstorm, 4 hours instrument, 4:40 total flight." This hand out also indicates forming up over Beachey Head, which was in the South of England and we sometimes formed up there if the weather was too bad over East Anglia. The Form 5 shows 4:20 for time, but my notes were probably more accurate.

The weather was really filthy by now and we made over a dozen instrument take-offs during this period, say from late December through early February. I have taken off several times when I could not see my outboard engines, nor over 30 feet ahead. We taxied VERY slowly and carefully, one ship after the other, from our hardstands out onto the taxiway and lined up one after the other on the taxiway. A ship would move out onto the runway, and disappear completely from view. He would line up, hopefully, on the center line of the runway and on the compass heading of the runway. On ALL combat takeoffs we were under strict radio silence, and, unless some supreme emergency happened, we were under radio silence for the entire mission. We would hear the increase in his engines as power was applied and he began to roll. The next pilot would note the minute of that ship's take-

off roll as he moved out to line up. At about 30 seconds, you pushed your throttles forward to half power, then at about 45 or 50 seconds you pushed your throttles to full power and when the second hand hit 60 seconds--off the brakes and rolling (and sweating). We used a directional gyro turn indicator for direction, and if you deviated over ONE degree left or right, you would go off the runway and die! In my ship, I watched the directional gyro, flight instruments and air speed, Jr. had his window open and looked down (hoping he'd see the edge of the runway in time if I veered his way) and Leach tightened the throttle brake and watched the engine instruments until I lifted us off the runway, when Jr. took over the engine instruments. It was quite a ballet, but there was no room for error!

One day near the end of our tour, Leach confided to me that he watched my jaws on instrument take-offs. He said I chewed gum (which I did when instrument flying) and my chewing went faster and faster as we went down the runway until I lifted the ship off. He said I immediately started chewing very slowly at that point and he would pull up the landing gear the second my chewing slowed, and didn't wait for the order, "Gear up!" Needless to say, we had quite a discussion about using my jaws instead of orders. The odd thing was, I was completely unaware of my speeded up chewing maybe I was concentrating. Getting back to the 10th of January, I be-

lieve it was this flight when we missed the church steeple. I can't remember losing the instruments, but the notes written the day it happened and I'm sure that if it was humanly possible, I would keep trying to fly the mission. I do remember the Church steeple! We were trying to get home, right down on the deck of course, heading for home on the "Gee Box", and flying through snow squalls. Sgt. Szajna (pronounced Cheena) was in the nose turret as usual. We called him Snafoo. Anyway, Snafoo was a regular army man and as cool and steady as any man I ever knew. I couldn't see a d--- thing except once in a while out sideways or toward the rear, but nothing forward and were"hauling the mail" just over the trees, we hope.

Suddenly Sgt. Szajna let out a strangled squawk, just as I got an impression that we passed close by something, just a quick impression. I called Snaf on the intercom and it took a while before he answered in a rather shaky voice, "I'm all right, but did you see them?" "See what?" "The steeple. We passed right through the steeple!"

After we landed, I was able to get the whole story. It seems we passed over one of those square bell towers with little spires on the four corners. And further, it seems, we passed between two of those corner spires and barely over the steeple, and only Szajna saw it, right up close!!

The Form 5 shows flights on the 20th, 21st and 25th,

two or three hours each, probably aborts maybe due to weather.

Mission #17: 31 January 1945 Brunswick

Mission sheet says "Berlin-Dresden-recalled". My guess is that there was a weather problem and two alternate missions were set up and for some long forgotten reason we hit Brunswick finally. I have no notes and remember nothing about this one. This was very grim flying weather. In fact, it really was not flying weather at all, we just flew in it.

I remember on one instrument take-off, when I finally broke out of the murk at three or seven thousand feet, I saw three pillars of black smoke rising from three different fields at the same time, where ships had crashed on take-off, and of course, all hands lost with each ship.

It was in this period also, that another incident happened that I "got away" with, but might not have, I had become convinced in my mind, that a B-24 (properly handled) could outfly a P-51! Now, that's a wild thought, I admit, and probably I was wrong, but <u>properly handled</u>, now that's something else. Remember, I had more engineering and testing than piloting. The B-24 had a "Davis" wing and Fowler flaps (hydraulically operated), quite a lot of power and very fast responses in certain ways, particularly in the action of the flaps. When you put the flap control lever in the up or down position, those flaps moved very quickly and the reaction was almost instantaneous. So, one "fine" day we got up-

stairs through the murk all loaded up with twelve 500 pounders and no place to go (mission recalled) and what do you know? There's one of our little friends! So I waggled (or tried to) my wings and turned toward him. In a few minutes we're really going at it. He, being extremely maneuverable, would start a "pursuit curve" toward me. When he got just about that distance where I figured his firing would begin, it was "Down half flaps". I'd close throttles a bit and we'd jump five hundred feet up faster than I can write this and practically stop in the air. He'd be under us and gone before he could correct. Then "Up flaps", power on and we'd lose five hundred feet while picking up speed. Next time I'd ease the flaps down while he was gaining position, then when he turned it was "Up flaps", we'd drop like a rock five hundred feet and he'd miss going over. We were having a great time although I remember the ship felt a little "heavy" on the controls. If he had been a Kraut, the outcome might not have been too good ultimately, but we had two factors on our side that this test did not check. Each time he missed he was d--- close and two of my turrets were prepared and really ready and they were manned by experienced gunners. How long this game might have gone on, I can't say, but it ended when Leach said, "Skip, those d- - bomb shackles are bending!" In the joy of the game, I'd totally forgotten the bomb load. That was the end of that,

but I never again feared to be the "lone ship".

February 3 and 14, Magdeburg, both times. Flight time six hours, 40 minutes. I don't have the mission sheets for the first trip. All I remember is that the "old hands" in the Group would not say aloud the word "Magdeburg." It seems the Group went there some time before and had a very rough and costly mission. We all sweated blood worrying. There was bitter flak and no fighters.

On the 14th mission (7:10 Day :30 P-AI) apparently I was considered seasoned enough to take a new pilot (Blanchard) on his first mission. No real problems, but the notes say, "lost #1 on way out from target, intercooler baffle collapsed into induction passage." Ho Hum! Another three engine return and landing. I think we even stayed in formation (probably to impress the new boy) and I got h--- from Lt. Col. Fant for turning into the dead engine. I thought that idea had been buried two years before, and told the C.O. so in plain American. Nothing like winning friends!

16th February, 1945, #20 Osnabruck, 5:30 Day :30 P-AI All my notes say is "not bad," flying old "Queen", another weary.

17th February, 1945, Log shows 3:25 Day, 1:25 P-AI It wasn't a mission and I can't remember what it was.

19th February, 1945, #21 Siegen marshalling yards, 5:50 Day :15 P-AI. My notes only say "Prop wash was terrific,

no flak. This was probably a trip where I had to cut engines on one side or the other to keep us from flipping. Also, both Jr. and I would push with both feet on either the right or left rudder bar to maintain level flight! And this would go on for an awful long time. Talk about physical labor!

The mission record says 21 February 1945, Nuremberg, 8: hours. I remember it as the last mission in 814 "G" George and I will remember it forever. I do not have the mission handouts, they were lost as you can imagine when you finish the story of these two days. We started out all right. I seem to remember we formed over Beachey Head or else we went down there for the penetration. Instead of Jr., I had a young co-pilot who had flown only one mission, on which he and his crew were shot down by the British. They had received battle damage, were returning alone, and tried to enter over the British flak belt. I've forgotten his name, but it would be in the Squadron or Group records. Anyway, I was tired, seven missions in eleven days, so I let him fly formation for a while. Crossing the Channel, my wingman called up and said, "Your #4 is losing oil." I already knew it and acknowledged the call the co-pilot would not keep up in the nearly line abreast formation we used, in spite of repeated correcting, admonishing and showing. Finally, it happened. Over a small hole in the clouds, three 88s went off right under us and I mean close! The shrapnel cut the hydraulic lines, but not

the control cables. Leach checked carefully and reported our condition. I determined to complete the mission. Finally, over the target, Bombs Away, immediately #4 packed up and almost immediately #2 started running so rough I thought the left wing would come off. Now in the Group Rally, #2 and #4 feathered, no flaps=We've got a problem!!

No B-24 will maintain altitude with only two engines, and no flaps and we start down like a well rounded boulder. The Group, et al, disappear and we are a lone cripple. All this started at about 20 to 21,000 feet, our normal bombing altitude. We head for the American lines 150 to 200 miles away, but we're still flying, ship trimmed, losing altitude more slowly perhaps, but still losing it. There were ground vector stations called Haystack or Sweepstakes, behind our lines that controlled and directed the fighter sweeps and we had "call signs for the day" etc. We had a VHF push button radio that had four buttons and I would push one button and make the call, no answer, then the next button, no answer. Finally, after quite a bit of this (and to this day I don't know what channel I was on) I decided "the h--- with the code words and just yelled, "If some SOB doesn't give us a hand pretty g--d--- quick, we're d--- well going to buy the farm." Immediately a GI voice came back and said, "What's the matter, Mac?" So I told this forever unknown blessed voice what our situation was, altitude and heading. He said "Maintain your

heading." A bit later he said, "Correct five degrees right to (?) degrees." We had recently been warned that in situations like this the Krauts would get on the frequency and gradually change the unwary pilot's heading until he was headed back into Germany and this popped into my mind. I said "the h-- with that junk, we're getting behind the lines right now." The voice immediately said, "OK, OK, maintain your present heading." We were now down to 5000 feet and in pure desperation, I decided to try #2 again; and what do you know?! #2 fired and ran as nice as you please. We immediately stopped losing altitude (though we couldn't gain any) and things became much more civilized. We passed from one vector station to the next until we were almost to the Channel. Big decision. Do we try to cross the water or not? If #2 packed up again or anything, we might not make it. We've got a perfectly legitimate excuse to land on the Continent. Finally I asked everybody how much money have you got? Would you believe, the nine characters all together only had four pounds and a little. No sense hitting the Continent broke, so we opt for England. After an eternity, we're over England and over Manston, which was a special field for battle damaged air craft and had (as I remember) an extra wide 10,000 feet runway. During all this long trip, Leach had gotten down in the bomb bay, with no parachute, and plugged hydraulic lines with 50 cal. bullets held with tape and he tells

me he thinks I can get some flaps. We crank down the landing gear while circling the end of the runway and I start down. At 500 feet or so above the runway and two thirds of a turn from lining up, #1 starts acting up. #4 still feathered, #2 lost and regained so far! So I closed all throttles, put her on her ear in a turn and dove for the end of the runway, rolled out just off the runway, called for flaps, got a little and plugs blew out of the lines.

We're just off the ground, going pretty d---- fast, I'm kicking rudder left and right to slow down or spill lift and finally we touch down. When that nose wheel touched I locked the brakes and cut the switches and we slipped down the runway and finally stopped, about 10 or so feet short of the end of that nice long runway, with old George at a slight angle to the left and it got real QUIET!

Everybody bailed out onto the runway. Some kissed the ground. I was shaking so much I couldn't light a cigarette. Leach lit one and gave it to me. Some characters came up in jeeps, looked the ship over and asked, "What the h-- did you bring that back for? We can't fix it."

We stayed at Manston overnight. Next day Captain Dobbs came down from Hardwick in old war weary "O" Oboe". Over my protests, he ferried me and my crew to Bury St. Edmonds, where he picked up a brand new ship and I was ordered to fly "Oboe" back to Hardwick. We made an instrument takeoff very late in

the afternoon in a pouring rain and headed for home. I had flown one flight of 1:25 hours night in England, but this time I flew 30 min. day, 45 min. night and 30 min. P-AI! I remembered the light system for night landings, which consisted of a circle of hooded lights around the field. If you got at the right height and distance you could see the lights and sort of fly formation on them. They would lead you around to a final approach and then you picked up three vertical lights like a traffic light--Amber, you're too high; Green, you're OK; Red, you're too low.

I was terribly tired, completely drained and I knew it, so I called Leach and the co-pilot and said, "I'm too tired for good judgement. I intend to fly the orange path, I can always lose altitude and speed, but I don't want to take unnecessary chances. What color is that light?" They both replied, "Orange," so I settled down to land. The landing lights wouldn't come on, we flew through what I thought was some bushes or brush off the end of the runway. I applied power to carry us over and onto the field, then reduced power again and we settled, hit with a bump which shook the landing lights on. The first thing I saw was a great big ditch right in front of us. My impression was 15 or 20 feet across and 10 feet deep. Instantly I applied full power, Leach turned up full turbo and we lifted or bounced over not just one, but a total of four of those d- ditches. I had

touched down a good half mile short of the field. Naturally, we didn't wind up on the runway but off to one side and hit a big pile of short logs with the left strut and #2 engine. That prop was throwing logs all over the place. Suddenly we stopped, all switches cut, old Oboe listing to port and everybody getting the h- out through any hole available and it got real quiet. I walked back to my quarters, dug out the bottle and had a couple of 180 proof drinks. For all this, I was grounded for 30 days! Old "G" George and "O" Oboe were finished, and I nearly was, too.

21 March 1945 Hespe A/D

Yesterday I flew 2 hours, probably a check flight to terminate the 30 day grounding. Starting today, I flew 600 "W" Willie, a brand new ship that never gave a moment's trouble. In spite of some moments of fear/stress, this was the best flying time I had. Wee Willie had boosters on the rudders, no more both feet on one rudder bar. It was un-painted which meant more speed with less power. From here on to the end, there were no aborts, no battle damage, no mech-anical troubles, just good flying. I went through 4 co-pilots during this period also. The missions were generally longer and I was "too old for combat". In fact, I just ate, slept, ', flew, in bed quite early each night, as I remember, before 9:30 p.m. I would take off, form up, fly the bomb run through the rally and land. The rest of the time the co-pilot worked.

I flew missions on March 21, 22, 23, 24. March 30, 31. April 4,5. April 14, 15, 16, 17. April 20, 21.

The mission sheets tell little and I only have a few for this period. I remember certain missions pretty clearly.

#27, Wilhelmshaven, 30 March--a very long bomb run and we went in over a canal apparently filled with barges loaded with 88's. The flak was very noticeable. My Form 5 shows 2:55 co-pilot time, which is an error, I believe.

#28, Brunswick, 31 March shows 3:00 co-pilot (error again?) Maybe I let the co-pilot make some 1st pilot time. No memory of it however.

April 1945

2 1:00 copilot 1:15 pilot

3 1:00 copilot 1:00 pilot

4 3:35 copilot 4:00 pilot

5 2:10 copilot 4:10 pilot

20 4:10 copilot 4:10 pilot

21 2:20 copilot 5:20 pilot

Odd: 6 missions in a row showing me with co-pilot time. These and #10 on 3:50, November 25 are the only co-pilot time in the ETO except the SCS 51 flight February 2, 1945 which shows :10 CP.

#30 Bayreuth 5 April 1945 2:10 CP 4:10 P 2:00 P AI

We formed over Charleroi in really stinking weather. Could hardly see anything. A B-24 spun in. July 10, 1977, I

received a letter from Paul Steichem who flew on this mission with me, and a copy is attached. ALL I really remember is coming down the Rhine River, right on the deck. As the land rose on each bank, the wing ships were forced to fall back and reform until we were in Javelin formation. Then just before Bonn or Cologne, we left the river and re-formed almost line abreast, going full throttle, right on the deck in that terrible murk. Suddenly, just ahead was a big gray shape in the murk. Barrage balloons! I threw the ship into a vertical bank to the right, then when I tried to bring her back, I over-controlled into a vertical bank to the left. Then I brought the whip back level. When I looked at Jr., he had a funny look on his face. I asked, "What the h- bothers you?" He said, "Did you see the second balloon?" I hadn't. I had dodged one by quick reflexes, but the other was just Irish luck. I heard we lost one or two ships in this incident, but I never really checked. Too tired probably.

April 1945

#31 Lacoubre 14 April 8:35 Day P 1:35 P AZ

#32 Royan 15 April 8:15 Day P :15 P AI

These two go together. Some German troops had been by-passed and were on an island in the Gironde Estuary. The first day we went in with five 1,000 pound bombs each ship. This was the only trip carrying this size. Just a very long hard trip, 10 hours!

The second day we carried (8) eight napalm bombs, the only time for this type, thank God! The weather wasn't particularly bad. In fact, the second day was real nice, but--

A B-24 normally carried a whiff of eau de petrol about it all the time. Leaking gasoline, was to a degree at least normal.

We briefed to bomb from 15,000 feet, but when we got to about 10,000 feet, that jellied gasoline began to expand and ooze from those drop tank containers! Talk about a riot. We all went on straight oxygen, cracked the bomb bay doors and the smart leader decided to bomb from either 8 or 10,000, I forget which, but that was okay with us. What become pure h--- was trying to stay in formation in the most wicked prop-wash I ever experienced and I may say, I experienced a bit more than average. How we stayed right side up and didn't collide with one another I'll never know. After the drop, the trip home was great. We drove over St. Michel, London and just had a real touristy trip in the sunshine! London from chimney top height was great.

April 1945

April 16 Landshut 8:35

April 17 Krocehlauy 7:50

April 20 Muhldorf 4:10 Co-pilot 4:10 Pilot

Three real long missions for the last three required for

my tour. I really remember nothing about them except when we got back from #35 technically I was through with combat operations and my crew was also. Sgt. Gardner, originally our ball turret gunner and, on this tour, the second waist gunner had somehow fallen one mission behind the rest of the crew. Probably grounded with a cold some time or other. Anyway, everybody is very joyful except Shorty. When I learned the situation I said, "Shorty, remember I said I'd get you here and I'd get you back. You and I will make one more, if we have to go alone." He really perked up, and I went into operations and said, "Post me for the mission tomorrow," which they did. Now it seems another pilot and co-pilot had finished one mission ahead of their crew and said flatly, the h--- with it. We've done all we're required to do." So the next day, April 21, 1945, me, a co-pilot, Lt. Smith's crew and Shorty Gardner took off in Wee Willie for one last time. For the life of me, I can't remember the beginning. I do remember being over France, there was a recall, I turned the radio off and headed into Germany alone. After a while, way off there were some specks. Them or ours?! Thank God, a B-24 Group going in all alone. I moved in to about 500 yards out and made the full formal radio call. We had been alerted some time before that the Krauts were salvaging parts from wrecks, building up ships which would join a formation and all of a sudden shoot down a few and leave,

so I was careful of my entry. After a bit, the lead said, "Throughfare, Wee Willie. We're glad to have you with us." I replied, "I'm d-- glad to be with you all." Just a few minutes more and we passed over a hole in the clouds under us and the first 88 burst blew the lead ship up. The high right squadron promptly made a 360 to the right, losing altitude and joined the low left squadron, just as it passed over the hole in the clouds and again, the first burst blew up the lead ship.

As best I remember, we went on a short while and finally turned back. I don't remember what we did with the bombs, dropped them in the sea, I think because it was difficult to know where our own troops were at any moment by this time. I finally landed at Milfoil.

And so, on April 21, 1945 it was over. Both Shorty Gardner and I were thrown into the water tank by the rest of the crew, which was the normal celebration for the completion of a tour. Then I went into Sqdn. Ops. soaking, dripping wet. First I got h- - -for joyriding, then for not returning on the recall and only got mission credit after the Squadron Operations officer, Major Gray, telephoned the other group and they verified that I had been with them, we had been under enemy fire and had sustained losses. So much for rewarding the eager!

It was a curious feeling, being finished. No more mis

sions no more duties a let down, lost and relieved mixture. I passed up taking part in the "trolley missions" (low level aerial guided tours for the ground personnel to see what their efforts had contributed to). Instead I got seven days sick leave starting the 25th and wandered off all alone down to Plymouth where I was the only guest in a Red Cross Club on the Hoe and the ladies, having only me in the club, harrassed me with attention. Next morning I left and returned to London and back to the Base.

All was utter confusion. I requested a rail ticket to Leeds for the next day, but when I went into Sqdn. Hdqs. the next morning for the ticket, the First Sgt. said, "I'm sorry, Captain, but everybody is restricted to the base." "The h- - -you say! What for?" "It's VE Day!" "Well, Sgt., I'm going to London and if I'm needed, I'll be at the Rein deer Club" and I walked out, passed off the Base between MP posts, walked through the fields down to a railroad station and joined a couple of hundred GI's doing the same thing. I would guess we wound up with 400 GI's all going AWOL for at least a day.

The compartment I entered held about six sergeants, and one corporal. Everybody acted real nervous about me until I said, "Relax, men. I'm doing the same thing you are." Great relief all around and we enjoyed our ride to London, but before we got there it dawned on somebody that they

probably would have MP's there to turn us right around. I said, "Let's try something. When we get into the station, the corporal can try getting up the stairs and into the station. If they don't bother him, we're in. If they stop him, all of you unload on the platform, I'll form you into columns and march you in as reinforcements, in case of trouble." Everybody is holding his breath (including me) as we roll in. The train stops, one compartment door opens, and a solitary Corporal gets out, walks the length of the boarding platform, up those long stairs and the two MP's, who were always at the head of the stairs, kept on chatting with each other and paid no attention to him whatsoever. In about, say five minutes, over 400 AWOL GI's and me are out of the train and up the stairs into London.

I went to the Reindeer Club and signed in immediately. There was a Lt. Kelly from our group just about to return to Base and I talked him into staying over, AWOL or not. I knew no one at the Base would be sober enough to know if we were there or not, even if they felt in our beds. Besides, the lady in charge of the Reindeer Club and her nice assistant invited Kelly and me to her apartment in Maid a Vail for supper. Real home cooked food, wow! I had acquired a pinch bottle of Haig & Haig and the lady in charge had a magnum of champagne. Kelly and I finally found the place and the ladies served up a delightful meal, after which we went up on the

roof (it was a flat roofed apartment building with a parapet wall all around) and we all sat down in the utter darkness of the black-out and proceeded to tap on the bottles. After a while, one of the anti-aircraft search lights which completely ringed London came on shining straight up. Then one after another the rest came on and formed a solid picket fence-like of search lights pointing straight up. After so long in utter darkness, it had become sort of normal, but to see those lights shining for the whole world to see was a terrific emotional experience. I doubt there was a dry eye in London, there certainly wasn't on that roof; not too much talking, just looking at this miracle of light and thinking of many things and many buddies we hoped had lived to see it, too.

Before midnight, Kelly and I left. I lost Kelly immediately and all I can remember is wandering out into the middle of a road. One of those taxis came along with at least a dozen AF types, Navy men, RAF, you name it, all pleasantly drunk and headed for town. The cab would drop one or two, go a ways, and do it again. Until only the cabbie and I are left. We're on Bond Street. I check my money and what do you know, I've got a handful of coins including ha'pennies. They total two bob or twenty pence, that's all. At probably two o'clock in the morning, I'm in the only cab we've seen in a couple of hours, so I say, "How much do you want, Cabbie?" (the

meter never ran in these situations.) The cabbie, figuring I'm a bit sloshed, and in fact I was feeling no pain, but I'm alert to what's going on, says, "Two bob will do it, Captain." I say, "Here's where I get off." He stops and I put a real handful of every coin in the realm in his hand, get out of the cab and start legging it. The cabbie finally counts all the coins and realizes he's got two bob and no tip, and you could hear him a long ways as he cursed the Yanks!

Next day Kelly and I went back to the Base and, just as I expected, no one had been aware we weren't there all the time. All that has happened at the base was Kelly and I missed buying liquor at six pence a fifth and I never saw my crew or "W" Willie again. I was sent on May 13, 1945 to Casual Pool Station, which I think was halfway between Chorley and Preston. There a dismal wait. Then to Station 592 (Warton) where we drew our plane for the flight home, B-24M #4451107. This was about the last model B-24 and this one was brand new!

"W" Willie had boosters on the rudder controls which had been a terrific help but this one had boosters on the rudders, elevators and aelerons. Boosters were a system whereby when you moved the flight control a small area or tab of the flight surface moved in the opposite direction and the air force moved the big surface instead of your

muscles doing it. Only thing, nobody told me of the change and I remember actually lifting off in front of the control tower and d--- near slow rolled on takeoff, but aside from the shock, nobody complained. We were on our way!

We went by way of Warton, Valley, Meeks, to BWI Greenland, then to Dow nonstop from Greenland; from Dow to Windsor Locks, Bradley, Conn. Our old friend the iceberg was right at the end of the runway at BW-1 where we had first dodged him going over in September 1944. That sure was a long night from BW-1 to Dow, manual all the way, and "Gus Hodges, my co-pilot again, did a yoeman job keeping me company and awake by talking almost continuously of his mother's cook and what he would get to eat when he got home. We crossed the Maine border at a very welcome sunrise.

Dow was a short stop, food and a little rest, and on to Windsor Locks. On the way, I "buzzed" my home, first and only time I ever saw it from the air. Dropped a message streamer to the folks, which they got and I still have. Then on to land at Windsor Locks, last landing with a B-24: through a lot of confusing customs shake downs or something. Immediately on a train to Camp Miles Standish (which I had never heard of but which turned out to be in my home town of Taunton and out near Lake Sebatia where I'd taught small boat handling in another life.) They told us we were restricted to the base! I went to the Provost Officer or

somebody and said something like, "This is my home town. I know every blueberry bush around here. I'd like a short pass to visit my folks a few hours, but if you can't give me one, you'd better get a lot of help to hold me in." Whoever it was turned out to be reasonable and I got a pass, phoned my Dad and had a few hours with my folks.

Next day, on to a troop train for Camp Shelby, Miss. All I remember of this trip was in Richmond, Va. (I think). Some trainman let me get a helmet of hot water to shave. It was pretty hot in June in OD woolens and it took three or four days sitting up on those old bench seats (it pushed into a siding for every load of fruit headed north.) Dirty, stinking and unconfortable and nobody griped.

We got into Camp Shelby about 3 or 5 o'clock in the morning and sat on the steps and platform of a warehouse until it was broad daylight. In the processing, a Sgt. and I were taken aside and told we could separate right then. We both had way over enough points. The Sgt. and I looked at each other totally shocked. I woke up first and said, "I joined for the duration and the war is not over yet." The Sgt. said, "Those are my sentiments exactly."

I was processed for 30 days RRR leave at Miami Beach starting July 13.

Mary Evelyn was waiting at the Monte Leone Hotel in New Orleans and I got there by Army bus. Wouldn't you know,

when I got to the room, she was out shopping or something, so I stripped to my filthy shorts, lathered up to shave, and there she was. A real romantic get together, like you dream of, standing there in my dirty shorts, unshaven for two or three days and my face all covered up with lather! I was cancelled out of Miami by returning POW's so I never did get any lush return, except all that counted, Mary Evelyn and Ned.

It was like being born again, or permitted to visit heaven, to be with Mary Evelyn and Ned again, no other way to put it. When this brief interlude ended, I had to report to Greensboro, N.C. for reassignment. Then we were off to Hill Field, Utah.

Mary Evelyn, Ned and I signed into Hill Field on VJ Day, I believe. I have no copies of orders or anything from here on, so I'm writing from memory.

I was assigned to Personnel and Base Services Division under Col. Mac Taggert (I believe). He died within the month. I remember having one talk with him in which I told him my greatest desire was to be an officer again and not just the chauffeur of some prefabricated metal flying through the sky. I remember he seemed quite surprised and I remember he seemed kindly toward me.

He assigned me as Chief of Control Section under him. I don't remember actually doing anything in this job, but

a few weeks later I was sent to the Personnel School at Orlando, Florida to take the Personnel Course. Orlando was a beautiful spot and the course extremely interesting. When it was over, I went back to Hill (by train) and was requested twice by telegram to return to the school as an instructor, but two things had happened that were unforeseen.

The move to Hill originally, and being separated almost immediately to go to the school, followed by the possibility of another move so soon had an adverse effect on Mary Evelyn and ended her desire for Army life. She became intensely aware of the endless prospect of moving around and the limited time I would have for family life.

The second thing was, Col. Mac Taggert had died and I was made Acting Chief of Base Services Division, which was a pretty heavy job. I was working at a desk about as big as a double bed, with two female secretaries and one civilian and one military assistant in my office and a whole gaggle of typists and such in the next office. Back of me were big plate glass windows looking out towards the Wasatch Mountains, where my heart was. I was in charge of six or seven airfields and several thousand civilian workers and several thousand military. I believe the fields were: Wendover, Pocatello, Stapleton, LaJunta, and Cheyenne. Directives and cable/telegrams came direct from Material Command and Washington on some matters. I had no idea from whom I could get

advice or guidance no idea of the bounds of my authority or responsibility. No superior officer ever spoke to me concerning my duties and I felt all alone, lonesome and ignorant. This period from about early October 1945 to my separation at Fort Douglas on February 20, 1946, was surely the most awful period of my life until then.

I had on my desk cablegrams or directives from Materiel Technical Command or Washington, I believe Washington, to hold these bases on thirty day stand by basis. Soon after receiving these orders, I got a telephone call from the Surgeon in San Francisco requesting the use of a hangar at Pocatello to process surgical equipment for storage. The field was inactive for our uses, so I gave permission for the use of the hangar as long as there was no expense to my command and as long as they agreed to vacate within a thirty day period. "Fine," says the voice, "We'll confirm by telegram." and he did. Shortly afterwards, the Provost Marshall in San Francisco requested the use of a hangar at Pocatello for preparing German POW's for return to Germany. Same reply, conditions and confirmations. Then the use of a hangar to spray potatoes (some government program controlling the potato crop prices) same agreements. There was also something else, but I can't remember.

Then the roof fell in. The phone rang and some Major or assistant or something to General Harris: "McGuire, what

do you know about German POW's at Pocatello?" "I know everything about it." "Who authorized it?" "I did." Click, the phone is dead. But in about ten minutes, I'm at attention before somebody with a star, whom I know nothing of, named General Harris and he is giving me h-- !

When he finally stopped to draw breath, I said, "General, I was trained to handle all I could and only bother my superiors with things I couldn't handle. I have directives and wires from Material Command and Washington too, covering these fields and they are real simple. They say that the following fields will be kept on 30 day stand by basis until further notice. Now if you want to know everything going on at Pocatello, I'll be glad to inform you." and I rattled off the other four activities. I thought the General was going to have an apoplectic attack right there and then. I don't remember how I got out of his office.

Things were quiet for a while and then I was ordered by General Harris to take a civillian "contract officer" and a military contract officer and go to Cheyenne and Stapleton to see if the contracts covering the servicing of airplanes at those two fields should be renewed or cancelled. It turned out that this was, I believe, Thursday and unless something was done, the contracts automatically renewed on Monday. As I was about to board the old DC-3, the General asked the usual, "Any questions?" and I replied, "Yes. What

basis am I supposed to use to renew or terminate these contracts." 'Economics! Economics!" the General snapped. I saluted and boarded the plane and we took off.

Airborne I learned that the two contracts were the same. The government furnished the equipment, including desks, chairs, the oil and gas and operating personnel. A very small military detachment was also furnished by the government under the command of a Captain. The civillians who had the contract were paid $10,000 per month per base for operating the installations.

Finally we got to Cheyenne and I went into the operations office and confronted the Captain in charge. I asked, "How many landings and take-offs did you have last month?" "One hundred or one hundred fifty (by my memory)." "Prepare to shut down." So my two contract officers go to the hotel and they prepare papers for the shutdown.

Next morning to Stapleton and the exact same thing happens again, with one exception. About the time I ordered, "Prepare to shut down.", here comes a file of eight or ten bird colonels and one lt. colonel whom I'd known in the 93rd. We greeted each other and I asked what all the rank was about. Turned out they were a special mission to check and expedite the AAA priority of the return of Pacific casualties. I nearly dropped on the floor. Imagine if a Red Cross plane needed an emergency landing at Cheyenne or Stapleton and I

had closed the field. I explained my situation and my buddy said the investigating detail was going to have lunch with the C.O. at Lowry and that he would have an answer for me before 2:00 P.M. About 2:00 P.M. I got the call. The C.O. at Lowry would be glad to assume the work load of Cheyenne a and Stapleton (they helped to justify his budget, etc.), neither field was required by the movement of wounded. I breathe a sigh of relief. However, everything must be in order for Monday morning and this is Friday night. We fly a beautiful moonlit flight over the Medicine Bow Mountains and into Hill Field.

Next morning, Saturday, I'm at my desk real early, and what do you know, I'm about the only officer on Hill Field. Everybody else had gone pheasant hunting in the Dakotas. I sit and stare awhile thinking of Monday and finally I call the Chief of Base Services Division at Wright Patterson (Col. somebody) identify myself, explain the situation and what I have done. The unknown Colonel, who just happened to be in his office, said, "Young man, you've done fine, just what we wanted. I will be in touch with Washington in a few minutes. We will have cablegrams on your desk Monday morning early or you call me back. We approve of your decision." Well, I did feel better and went home Saturday around noon and proceeded to catch "the bug" and didn't get back to any desk until Wednesday morning, when I found all h-- had broken loose. Then the last two touches were added. In mid-

December a Lt. Col (base executive officer, I believe) personally drew up the Roster of Officer of the Day (non-flying officers) and Airdrome Officer (flying officers) for duty Christmas Day. Both were twenty-four hour duty tours and you had to be on the base. We had around 60 officers on the OD roster and a little over 30 on the AO roster. I pulled AO about a week before and normally would be on again about the second week in January, and so I got pretty hot when I saw my name on the list for Christmas Day. I went down to Base Headquarters where a poor Captain Miller (quailing under my wrath) tried to explain he had nothing to do with it. There was also a 1st Lt. (non flying) there who couldn't expose his wrath, but had pulled AO a couple of weeks before and wasn't due on the normal roster for another month and a half. We were both "combat returnees" and in the middle of this ruckus with Captain Miller, a Colonel Brophy (Inspector General's Office) happened by and asked me what was the problem. I gave it to him straight. Both the Lt. and I were combat returnees and this was our first Christmas home with our families. Col. Brophy listened. I told him I didn't mind doing my share and I certainly had done my duty, but I resented being mistreated and this Lt. has even less chance to defend himself than I did.

Col. Brophy said, "You two just wait here a few minutes and I'll get this straightened out." He went upstairs to the

Executive Officer's Office and you could hear the profanity and chewing out real easy. In just a few minutes Col. Brophy came down and said to us, "You two young fellows go home and forget this. There's enough of us old b-- ---s living on this base and we can give a couple of hours each and never notice it." I never saw or spoke to him again, but I still remember him as an outstanding example of what an officer should be. Incidently, I learned that a great many of the ranking officers at Hill at that time were Mormons given direct commissions at the outbreak of the war, and had been there all their time and did not have friendly thoughts or attitudes toward us outsiders. But I didn't know all that then.

All these actions: fifteen or twenty years with no DFC, no guidance for the job entrusted to me, Mary Evelyn's unhappiness, the Pocatello-General Harris encounter, the General Harris-Cheyenne-Stapleton affair and now, only the chance encounter with Colonel Brophy saving me from 24 hour duty on Christmas Day, all these were really working on me.

Then just before Christmas, Captain Miller called me to come to Base Headquarters again. When I got there, he acted real happy and pleased. He had a telegram from Washington offering me a Regular Army commission in the grade of Captain. Just what I'd been dreaming of for eighteen years. All the hopes, dreams, set backs and trying again were over.

I stood there and read that telegram and Captain Miller was almost beside himself he was so eager to administer the oath, and then a funny thing happened. It was like I'd awakened and could see what was important for the first time. I said to Captain Miller, "Shove it up your - !" Poor Miller. H'd walked into a rock wall.

Immediately after Christmas, I decided to separate from the service and on 20 February 1946, five years to the day, I was separated. I was so bitter by then that I had a choice of so many dollars if I separated in Grade or I could accept a promotion with the higher pay. Up until now I never could have told you what my pay was, it just wasn't high on my priorities, but now I went to the finance office and said to figure out which comes out better in dollars and cents. Turned out taking the rank of Major resulted in more net to me so I became a Major as I went out the door, which, for some unknown reason, left me with a feeling of resentment about that, too!

Back we went to Shreveport and then to Massachusetts until the end of the year. David, our second son was born in October 1946. Mary Evelyn flew to Shreveport and I drove over the road all alone with everything we had in the world and all the tools I could imagine ever needing, just space enough for me, my mussette bag of personal articles and my faithful Colt 38. A real long drive.

I started a business of my own as a roofing contractor from just as near zero as you can get. I had an M Day assignment as MI for 301st Wing and tried to do some active duty time on weekends, but it was impossible. The whole system was set up for fellows working for big companies or the government. I couldn't spare the time, really. Sitting around, reading newspapers on Saturdays was such a galling waste of precious time. Those on active service had no time for us and showed their contempt in subtle ways. Then they alerted me for Korea. I had 3 MOS's (four-engine pilot, Administrative Officer and Engineering Officer). I shut down my business to get ready and when it was totally dead again, they said, "If you have four or more dependents, you don't have to go." Great! Now to try to find work and my men and get started again!

Then, with exquisite timing, "tough boy LeMay" came out with requirements on flying hours that were ridiculous, but had to be met or they would either take your wings or you could resign as a pilot and retain the right to wear the wings. I chose to resign as a pilot so I could keep my wings. Then you had to do so many days or hours per month (I've forgotten which) but it didn't matter. It was impossible to find more than 24 hours in the days I drew. Then they would put you into the inactive reserves where the time did you no good, but you had your name in the pot. When the permanent

commission came out, I decided to "sit on my hands" and on April 7, 1953 my commission terminated and I was totally a civillian at last!

Looking back now, I guess God was trying to tell me something all the time, and I wasn't listening. Military service did an awful lot <u>to</u> me and <u>for</u> me. On the balance, I think there was a whole lot "better" than "bad".

Today is January 28, 1983 and I'm about finished with this story. Just in the past month have the following thoughts occured to me.

1. When I joined the group in October 1944, the required tours were:

   25 missions for lead personnel

   35 missions for wing personnel

   30 years of age was rated too old for combat

2. On the 27th of October 1944, I was 30 years old. At this time I was too old! But I had five completed missions.

3. They changed the DFC from "automatic" to "had to be earned".

Question: Had I completed a tour by virtue of age?

Answer: It never crossed my mind until now. Anyway, I volunteered to go on as a Wing Crew, I presumed for thirty more missions.

At the time of the Flying Evaluation Board of May 8, 1945, I had completed 22 missions. I was offered instructor

duty at Marseilles on the constellations for A.T.C. pilots and refused, desiring to finish my full tour (which in my mind was 35 missions). But there was sure no requirement for 36 missions. I now believe I did, not one extra mission, but more like fourteen. How about that! And Fant denied me the D.F.C. because of a personality clash between us.

THE END

DRINKING, LIVING AND SUCH

When we finished out time at Langley Field and were alerted for "overseas movement" we couldn't find out where we were going. Everything very secret. So Jr. (my co-pilot) got friendly with some girl in the processing section and (when her back was turned) read the shipping orders and told us we were going to England--which was a great comfort, for now we could start planning. We learned that liquor, ladies' stockings and soap were very desirable items, so the crew pooled resources and prepared. Jr. got a lot of stockings--which he later used at the rate of one stocking per night or week-end, just depending. The rest of us laid in liquor. I forget exactly, but it seems to me we got about ten gallons of bourbon (in fifths, of course) and some rum (say a gallon or so). When we started out from Langley (that was a take off to remember--as was the first landing at Dow, Maine). The bomb bays were loaded with cases of K-rations and a few cases of tools. We were loaded to the absolute limits and that did not allow for the weight of liquor, etc. carefully stashed all over the ship. Fortunately we took off on a runway that aimed out over the bay. I had stood up on the brakes to half power and then gave it everything. We lumbered down that runway, it seemed forever, until I pulled the wheel into my lap, yelled "Gear up"" and we sank

down toward the water about even with the slope of the shore and barely picked up enough speed to remain airborne. After the gear retracted it got very slightly better, but it took miles and miles to get up to cruising altitude. When we got to Dow, I called in, and was cleared to land. As we came in on the final approach--I can still see that warehouse or hangar to my right, that started to rise like an elevator as I closed the throttles! A tremendous burst of power did not quite cushion our descent and I thought the main gear would be driven through the wing. After we had reached the ramp, parked and shut her down, some people from the sub-depot came out and checked the ship for damage. The tower had considered it a "hard landing" and they didn't know the half of it. When we left Dow, we stopped on the taxiway for final engine run-up and take off clearance. At my prearranged signal, after receiving clearance to take off, the bomb-bay doors were opened, a dozen crates of K-rations heaved out, the doors closed and away we went--only slightly overloaded!

We got sandwiched between two fronts and it took several days to get to Valley, Wales. I never had a moments' relaxation in that ship, from the first moment I drew it at Langley until I left it at Valley, Wales. There was a fire in the radio the first time I approached the ship. Every

engine instrument had to be replaced at least twice, and the flight instruments three times. Taking off from Iceland in a cold drizzly rain, I feared icing and sure enough there was. I put the pitot heater on while taxiing. We took off, entered the murk at less than 1,000 feet and proceeded to climb on instruments. The crew were all jabbering on the intercom and suddenly my air speed needle wavered and then dropped to zero! I called Sill, the navigator, and asked, "'What does your air speed read?" It reads . . . it reads zero! You could, figuratively only, have heard a pin drop. All the crew flight instruments depended on the air flow from the pitot tube to turn the gyros and they would only be dependable as long as the gyros kept spinning fast enough. And here, habits came into play. I always kept the ship trimmed for hands off flight. I was constantly rechecking trim. So, guiding the ship with finger tip pressures only, we slowly climbed higher. Good old Jr. to the rescue. He had a watch on a chain and proceeded to hang it from a feathering button--so I could use it as a plumb bob! I guess he'd never swung a bucket of water around by the handle, but it served to calm him and the crew, while I sweated pure blood--until finally we beoke out into the sunshine and a little while later the air apeed began to thaw out and read again.

When we got to Wales, we were informed of two things, by grapevine I believe. One, we would go by train to Stone and two, there they would confiscate our liquor. You know what they say War is, but American ingenuity is our greatest asset--isn't it? Anyway, we took a case of K-rations, removed the K-rations, got a tremendous bunch of tech orders and repacked the case with plenty of tech orders surrounding our precious load. Then, lots of lashings of clothesline sized rope and lots of knots and some kind of stencil on the outside. Sure enough, at Stone they lined us up and began shaking everybody, crew by crew. Jr. and I stood there with the case of "tech orders" between us and the crew behind us. Nearer and nearer came the enemy. Finally, it's our turn. As the inspectors came up to us, I believe it was a Captain first, "What have you got in that case?" I opened my mouth to answer, but a joyous: "Captain McGuire, where did you come from?" It's my old base Adjutant buddy from George Field. He's a Major and we fell on each other. After some chat I say we've got a box of tech orders for some changes, he looks at me and says "Fine" and we're saved.

It took almost to Thanksgiving to put that liquor beyond all danger, but the last bottle taught again that crime does not pay.

Our wash house was a good 100 yards from our hut, had

no window glass anywhere, no heat whatsoever, and the cold water (only kind there was) just dribbled--so you wouldn't waste water of course, and it worked. We did not waste water on the base. Once a week we'd go to Norwich to the Red Cross Club and clean up. Along in November, a cold raw night, Jr. and I were on our way to the Red Cross Club and really stepping along. Clean clothes, etc. in our musette bags and Jr.'s carrying the last bottle of rum. He had carelessly put it into his musette bag horizontally, instead of vertically, and as we rounded a corner, the bottle flew out of the bag and crashed in the gutter. We were utterly shocked! Black disaster! The ultimate! We sat down on the curb and eyed the mess. In a few minutes, a Limey came by, stopped and looked at us and said something like, "Do you need any help?" We told him what had happened and he looked properly shocked. "Oh, I say, that's a rum go!" and he sat down with us. In no time at all we had half a dozen sitting there with us, looking at the wreckage and all anybody could say was "Aow! that's a rum go!" and it sure was rum gone.

Our quarters and living conditions may be of some interest, especially in view of the length of time on combat status and the weather of the winter of 1944-45. Jr. and I were quartered in a Nissen Hut along with Capt. George Schlueter's crew. They were a lead crew consisting of

Sheridan R. Smith (co-pilot) Lautch, Martin McMahon (little Mac-to distinguish from me), W.D. Willie Landon, Henry Salva, Russell Bonnfanti. Eleven of us in a hut built for four to six. George was shot down, 28 January 1945, I believe, along with Henry Salva and maybe little Mac. I visited with Bonfanti and Smitty after the war on my way to Shreveport. They were a fine bunch to live and serve with and easy to live with under bad conditions.

Sometime in late October, Jr. (as usual) brought our attention to the coming winter and probable problems. All hands immediately tackled the problem of surviving the winter in Jolly Old England. Now the heat situation was this. Each building had a stove, which can be imagined as two large wash basins. The bottom half with a fire door and the top half another large basin inverted over the lower and with a place to attach a stove pipe and a removable lid for stoking the fire. It was made with sheet iron and did not retain any heat. For fuel, each building had a coal ration which apparently was the same whether it was one room for one man or a hut for eleven.

The ground echelon officers(we called them ground pounders) had pretty decent quarters, which had the same coal ration for one room that our whole Nissen Hut had. Their office had a ration for all day, their mess had a ration

and so did their club. So they could have a little fire in their rooms for the short period they were there each day. It made us pretty bitter, but we figured a way to even up a little. The coal dump was guarded by M.P.s. Every once in a while, groups would organize raids on the coal pile. A few would start a ruckus on one side while the rest went through the fence and borrowed a little coal. When we were posted for mission, we were confined to the Base and if the mission was scrubbed, at say 6 AM just before take off, it meant we got up about 3 AM, had breakfast, to Ops for briefing, to the drying room with the usual stop, to the ship, then back to the drying room and back to quarters at say 7 AM with nothing to do and nowhere to go until bedtime. It was a lousy day any way you looked at it. I used to go down to the Link trainer quite often, just to use up time that others passed up. Got quite proficient on ILS on the Link, and when we were checked out actually flying ILS, I messed up the first approach, but shot half a dozen touch and goes right onto the center line of the runway, to the considerable respect of the check pilot.

Other than this coal ration, which was d--- small, we could burn wood or bomb rings. Since it was a court martial offense to cut the "King's Trees", the only real sources of wood were two. We could use the boxes the bombs came in or

we could salvage wood from trees. Once we got a couple of 6 x 6 truck loads from a tree a B-24 cut down in a crash landing. But we got lots of bomb crates, took them apart and laid boards on top of boards under every cot until the springs couldn't give. We also made book shelves, hung on wires from the curving walls of the hut, benches and a table. As it got colder and colder, first we burned the boards, then the table and last the benches. The bomb rings were like big life savers made of some kind of impregnated paper and used to cushion the bombs inside the crates. They did not really burn so much as explode in flames. Put a bomb ring in the stove, voom, the stove got anywhere from dull red to a pretty bright red. You couldn't get near the thing for a few minutes and ten minutes later you could make ice on top of the stove. A lot of huts (but never ours) got old oxygen tanks and copper tubing and rigged up the tank at the ceiling, filled it with engine oil and/or 100 octane gasoline mixture, led down the copper tubing through a needle valve and into the stove. These were strictly forbidden and dangerous and the brass regularly inspected for and confiscated them. Every once in a while one would explode and really mess up the hut involved.

Somewhere around or just before Christmas, Capt. Roark and I got permission from Mr. Crawford who lived just off our base in the "Long Wood House-Topcraft" to cut down an

enormous dead oak tree on his property right next to the road. Roark was Group Operations and came from Michigan or someplace up North where he swore he'd learned to drop trees! I had learned a bit too, so after a snowfall, Roark and I got a two man saw and a couple of axes and tackled this tree that was easily three feet in diameter and extremely hard wood. Roark drew a line in the snow where he said the tree would fall and we labored for two or three days. Finally, it gave up, and as it started to topple we both suddenly realized that it was very close to the road and all the wires connecting the 93rd, 446th, 448th, 20 Combat Wing and 2nd Div. were along that road. We were not very chilly for a few minutes until the tree, which did fall on the line in the snow, missed all those very important wires! Whew!!!

Getting back to living in the hut. In early November it began to get pretty cold. I went into Norwich and bought an eider down comforter and an alcohol radiant heater (which I still have). Some Captain being returned to the ZOI gave me an officer's eider down sleeping bag. I turned it inside out and used it for a mattress, put the comforter under a GI blanket over me and, each night, lit the alcohol heater and aimed it under my cot. The heat went up the wall and down onto me because it was stopped by the rear door entry. I lived in the pocket formed by the wall of the hut, the end

wall of the hut and the wall of the entry. With this combination I was warm and comfy. The alcohol heater would run out of juice about 2:30 AM and I would be awakened about 3:00 AM. I remember during the worst of it, Jr. had 8 blankets and a piece of carpeting over him trying to keep warm enough to sleep. Some of the others wore their alpaca lined jackets and pants or slept fully clothed.

It was curious how conditioned you got to being awakened for a mission. Jr. and I were awakened many many times more than Schlueter's crew, but not one of them ever complained. You would be sound asleep, yet you'd hear the jeep come down the road and turn into our area, the motor stop, then the boots on the walk, the door to the next hut opened. In a few minutes, the door again, the boots on the walk, our door open and closed and a low voice and a shake, "Wake up. Briefing in one hour. Your're on the Mission. Are you awake?" "I'm awake. OK." Your day had started.

Jr. had gotten a gramaphone right off. It was a small box with a crank to wind it up. Each night, the last thing Jr. did was to wind the gramaphone, put on "The South Rampart Street Parade", and poise the needle head over it. The last thing I did was to sing out--"Good night, Captain Schlueter." Back came "Good night, Captain McGuire." Then each Lt. would say good night to each other.

Jr. was in the first cot to the right inside the door, so he was always first to be awakened. Immediately he would release the gramaphone brake and lower the needle--and we all went to war again to "The South Rampart Street Parade!" Schlueter's gang would send Jr. and me off with encouraging remarks. I still miss George Schlueter, Henry Salva, Little Mac, Willie and Bonny.

Going back in thought to that miserable wash house reminds me of shaving. While you could shower once a week, you had to shave daily and that led to an invention. I somehow got a bomb crate about a foot square and 3½ feet long that had a round hole in each end. It turned out that my steel helmet just fitted that hole. So I stood the crate on end, put the helmet in the hole and there was a dandy sink for shaving--complete with water previously heated in the same sink which happened to also fit the loading hole in the top of the stove. No stooping and no clogged drains. Just take the sink to the door and fling the contents! Whee!

In 1963, when I renovated our house at 840 Kings Highway in Shreveport, I remembered the convenience of that bomb crate and helmet. I insisted the plumber set the wash basin in my bathroom at a height that I could put my hands flat on the bottom of the inside of the basin without any bending. Over his strenuous arguments I insisted. A few years later

that plumber came back to measure the height for his own house. Seems he's hurt his back, didn't remember the formula but did realize the benefit!

And speaking of bad backs. On some mission up in the late fall, I drew a ship with what we called a "coffin seat". These seats were of armor plate and shaped like the top part of an Egyptian mummy case. We utterly detested them and in fact, they were dangerous. If for any reason the ship stopped suddenly, the heavy seat would mash you into the wheel and instrument panel. At all times, it interferred with visibility and accessibility in the cockpit. Anyway, I drew one and I also drew a back pack parachute. The chute had something like metal hooks and eyes where it closed in the center of the back. So there was a metal to metal contact and with the efforts involved in flying the B-24, an additional hazard developed. Everytime you tried to exert pedal pressure, your back slid one way or the other with a pretty good wrenching movement. When we returned from the flight, I could not stand up straight. I remember walking, bent over at a right angle for an awful long time and in considerable pain and discomfort to the Station Hospital. There somebody helped me lay down on a bed for a while, maybe they applied heat to my back, I don't remember. Undoubtedly the usual aspirin, and later, a very long uncomfortable walk back to

the hut. When Dr. Overdyke cut that steel brace on me long afterward, I wondered if the seeds of trouble started with that d--- coffin seat.

Speaking of equipment, our air crews had helmets that looked to me like big buckets with metal ear flaps. They had to be big to fit over headphones and flying helmets, but I really didn't like them. We also had flak vests which probably did some good, but they were pretty heavy. The second mission we made, when we came under anti-aircraft (flak) fire, Jr., Leach and South tried to "protect" me by piling a couple of flak vests on and around me and the weight was too much. I shoved the vests away and really chewed them out. Never again was I bothered by flak vests. Right after this mission, Capt. Gilbert gave me a leather covered tank commander's helmet and this was all the protection I ever used. About this same time I got a pair of English electric flying gloves which were much superior to our issue electric gloves. I still have them along with memories of the steam rising from my gloves when it was real cold up there.

No account of military service would be complete without a bit on food. In this case it is confined to the period of combat status, but will cover more than just the combat officers' mess. However, I'll start with the combat officers' mess. It can be fairly accurately summarized in one word--

bad. I only remember two kinds of breakfasts; powdered scrambled eggs (which I thought very good by comparison) and at intervals, two sunny side up cold storage fried eggs. They were intended to be special and were served only when we had a hard mission to face. They had two overwhelming drawbacks. Picture us coming into the Mess Hall very early in the morning, say 4:00 AM in the pitch black unless it's an unbelievably dense fog. Our souls and bodies have not really joined up for the day. One after another we walk in and there are those two yellowish red eyes looking up at us and screaming into our sleep-befuddled brains; "This may be your last meal--enjoy it--that's an order". The after effect was equally enjoyable. Hours later at altitude you quietly burped formaldehyde fumes into your oxygen mask for a long long time. And breakfast was the best meal we got. For lunch, as long as we could get them, we ate K rations in preference. Later in my tour when the missions got longer and harder some genius ended the issuance of K rations to take on missions and substituted hard candy. That'll help you with eight hours of the hardest physical and mental effort.

What saved our lives was the heavy dark English bread and marmalade. Along towards 8:00 in the evening, on their own, some K.P. personnel would come around the huts with

good big sandwiches of bread and marmalade or peanut butter or sliced spam at six pence each, and big cans of hot chocolate, six pence a canteen cup full. Once we got some ten in one rations and feasted for a couple of days. Thanksgiving we had a good meal.

In the late Fall I went over to the 446th Gp. to visit Lt. Pat Knopf who'd been at George Field with me. Pat invited me to stay for supper and I nearly dropped my stitches. We sat at tables and had real steak and a well cooked meal and (for the only time in the ETO) I had ice cream for dessert. Pat assured me that they regularly had these things. It was like peeking into another world--I was incredulous. After this extraordinary delicious meal, Pat asked if I had ever seen the operational order come in. I had not, so we went down to operations and I saw the "order for the day" for the next day's mission. Cologne! 500 guns! Pat accepted my word of secrecy and later had a staff car return me to my quarters at the 93rd. Everybody in the hut was speculating about tomorrow's mission (as usual) and there I was, loaded with the information, but unable to say a word. To lessen temptation, I hit the sack slightly earlier than usual and couldn't go to sleep. Just lay there and sweated. In the morning the mission had been scrubbed and I had just lost one night's sleep.

Later we had a squadron get-together in which Lt. Col. Fant asked for suggestions to improve things. I was doing good keeping my mouth shut until he asked me directly for any suggestions. I let him and the squadron know about the meal at 446th and wanted to know why we couldn't have the same. The meeting terminated immediately.

It wasn't all bad, of course. We had a traveling entertainment group that put on a play one night that was well attended and well appreciated. We had a couple of squadron parties that were quite drunken but "good for the boys". After one such party, I remember a few of us getting behind the bomb bunker with a Very pistol and a bunch of flares and laying "mortar fire" on the MP post just a little way from our area on the road to Topcroft. As the only one with infantry training, I was in command. We kept those two MP's in their little sentry box for quite a while--until we ran out of flares. Somebody came home from the party later and walked along the path that ran beside the huts firing his .45 automatic into the hut at about chest level every 5th or 6th step. Sill told us afterwards that he had been lying in his bunk reading a newspaper and the slug went right through the paper he was holding up to read.

Another time, long after the party was over, somebody tried to park the CO's jeep on top of the same bomb shelter.

They had stolen the jeep. Were too drunk to get it into 4-wheel drive and for over an hour (until they ran out of gas) we listened to Varoom! then it would roll back down, then Varoom! up again, and so on. We had thermite grenades on board the ships to be used to destroy the aircraft if we crash landed in enemy territory. Nobody knew how they worked, so one day, I took one, read and followed directions and proceeded to melt or burn a hole a foot or so in diameter right through the macadam walkway. Then we knew how they worked, although I don't believe I ever heard of anybody using them for the purpose intended.

A story went around that, in the middle of winter, Col. Fant was to go to a party, in Norwich and needed to get his "pinks" cleaned. So somebody got a bucket of 100 octane gasoline soused the pinks and hung them up to dry and air out, but it was mighty cold and damp and the gasoline didn't do right. So, when the Col. got to the dance, he and the room warmed, and the fumes and irritation put a quick end to the party.

It took only a few missions to become quite well acquainted with flak. If the stuff wasn't too far away when it burst, which meant very often, you would hear a sort of muffled "Whoomp" sound and it was unmistakable. One evening about the end of October a whole bunch of us went on our

bicycles to the pub in Topcroft. We got glasses of half and half and sat there relaxing or trying to. But every few minutes someone would open the door and come in. The door was a very heavy wooden door and as it closed it went "Whoomp" and each time it did, everybody jumped or flinched. In short order we set down our glasses and left. Flak was not good for relaxing. A few months later, on foggy, murky evenings with low ceilings especially, the V-1's would come right over our area. We would all climb on top of the bomb shelter and watch for them. You could hear and see them quite easily. We'd time them from overhead or near us until we heard the explosion. The navigators would then computed how far away they had hit and the bets on how near they would hit were paid off. One night one dropped quite near. Near enough to sway the hut, throw the books on the shelves across the hut, and knock down the stove pipe.

Right after the Battle of the Bulge, they took up everybody's .45 except mine (as far as I knew). I flatly refused to give mine up. I took care of mine, kept it clean, loaded and ready and it seemed immoral to me to have to give up my sidearm while in combat and to have to draw an unknown gun in unknown condition to carry on a mission. For whatever reason, the matter was not pressed and I kept mine. Not long afterward, on a particularly nasty night, the Tannoy (public address

system in every building) came on and a voice reported enemy planes dropping paratroopers in the vicinity. We had heard odd sounding engines and were wondering. Now we knew! Everybody remained indoors. In our hut, everybody was in bed, and since I was the only one armed, I lay there, tense and scared with that .45 in my hand and waited with feelings of fear and dread. Nothing happened and after what seemed like three nights, but probably was three hours, we got the all clear. "Capt. Mac., what would you have done?" "Rolled onto the floor and done my damndest--what else?"

On a pass to London in late January, Jr. and I decided we would go see Limehouse. All we knew was that we'd seen in the movies. We got on the top deck of a bus and started out. The V-2's were coming over pretty regularly. Every few blocks one would hit and the bus would rock like it was going over. I don't remember if we ever got to Limehouse or not. I observed a very interesting thing about the reactions of the British and Americans to the two different bombs. The British definitely did not like the V-1's, but were very calm about the V-2's. The British said about the V-2's: "Oh, when you hear them you're allright." We seemed to prefer to hear the V-1's coming and preferred the warning. "If you hear one coming and the noise stops, hit the deck!"

Jr. and I had become acquainted with some people in

London named Jackways and we spent a few three day passes in their home. They were just ordinary folks, but they were very kind and good to us. They had a daughter, Pamela, about twenty I would guess, and Pam was a switchboard operator somewhere. I think it was in late March that Jr. and I spent a pass with the Jackways. One morning, shortly after Pam had left for work, Jr. and I were sitting at the kitchen table having some oatmeal for breakfast. Without any warning, the door was blown right off its hinges into the kitchen. Bits of plaster flew all over. A V-2 had hit about a quarter mile away right on the center building of a row of five two-story brick apartment houses. We later looked at them and the center two or three were heaps of rubble like heaps of sand. The biggest remains of the others were some half bricks. The train station was on top of an embankment between these buildings that were hit and the Jackway's home. In a little while Pam returned to the house, crying, knees scraped and bleeding. She had been in the station and was blown out of the waiting room and across the loading platform, but had apparently suffered no really serious damage. Jr. and I packed out gear, went to Rainbow Corner and left a note for the crew. We returned to Hardwick that day (just skipped the last day of leave) and I went to Col. Brown and requested that from then on we be loaded with RDX bombs only, and that we

get every chance at every mission. RDX bombs were considerably more powerful than G-P (general purpose) bombs, but they were a bit more dangerous to carry--at least we all thought so. From that day we really hated the Krauts.

Not long after this, Leach (the engineer) came to me and said "Skip, could you get me a new set of tools?" "Sure, Leach, but where's the ones you had?" "Well, Skip. You know when we drop the bombs, I go down and stand in the hatchway and hold the bomb bay doors open manually and make sure all the bombs go out." "I know that, but what's that got to do with your tools?" "Well, Skip, just before I close the bomb-bay doors, I reach around and throw something for good luck and I don't have a d--- tool left." I got him a new set of tools.

Which brings back a mission back in the dead of winter. There was about 4-6 inches of snow on the ground and the day before we had carried anti-personnel bombs. I was delayed in getting out to the ship and when I got there I couldn't find Jr., Leach or Ed Powell (one of the waist gunners). In a little while here they came dressed in bulky flying clothes and stumbling through the snow. Each one had an anti-personnel bomb under each arm. "Hey, Skip. These were left-over from yesterday and we thought we ought to do something with them." So we stashed them aboard and took off. In the

waist there was a small hatch in the floor where cameras were sometimes mounted. After we bombed the target, one after another of the crew went back to the waist and dropped "HIS" bomb on the third Reich as we flew over little towns on the withdrawal. It must have been the day before this incident that I flew so tight. To set the stage, I was flying in the bucket position, that is directly behind and below the lead. We were carrying anti-personnel bombs which were 6 twenty pound bombs mounted three in front and three behind, around a pipe that had spacers and metal straps to hold the whole thing into something resembling a real bomb. When these bombs went out of the bomb bay, the straps undid somehow and the bombs became a swarm of little bombs falling out of a swarm of straps, pipes and spacers. So this day I am a "hot pilot" and I'm going to show one and all that I can fly formation with the best of them. On the bomb run, I tuck up under the leader until I can see the tail gunner's face--and he is motioning me back and away; but I'm having a ball, really tucked in there, couldn't have been fifty feet between his tail turret and my nose turret. Jr. yelled, "Skip, the bombs!" In a flash I realized what was about to happen. I closed the throttles tight and we seemed to stop in the air and the space opened, just as the bombs dropped. Pieces of pipe, spacers and straps bounced off us, but no serious damage. That was too

close though and that cooled me for quite a while.

Later, in March, flying on somebody's wing, we got a call ""Bogies in the area. Tuck it in." I slid in until my left wing was between the other ship's wing and tail, the wing tip poking in the other waist gunner's window and my #1 engine in line and above his #4. The poor waist gunner was horrified but Col. Brown complimented me on my formation flying just outside the debriefing room after the mission.

Another incident that I can't tie to a particular mission, but must have been along about now, involved my Mae West. The Mae West was a life preserver that was flat until you needed it, It was inflated by pulling either or both of two cords that had knobs on the ends that hung down from the bottom of the vest. When you pulled either or both of these tabs, a lever with a point punctured a CO^2 cyclinder and the gas instantly inflated the vest. Once in a blue moon, you might pull one of those tabs accidentally and this day I did. One cord got caught under the seat belt and when I moved to look at something--baloom--right now. We're at 20 to 21000 feet so the pressure is multiplied and the d--- thing had me totally immobilized. I carried a trench knife on the inside of the calf of my right leg because I feared getting hung up in a tree or something if I had to parachute. I had experimented and learned that I could more

likely reach the knife there than anywhere else. Anyway I drew the trench knife and stabbed the Mae West until it finally deflated which made a mess of the Mae West. As we entered the debriefing room, Col. Brown was standing there greeting us and when he saw the Mae West, he was very concerned. "What happened?" Jr. piped up, "Oh, the flak ripped his Mae West." "My God. Were you hit? We'll get you a Purple Heart!" I had to explain what really happened and I'm afraid the Col. gave me a disgusted look. Jr. wasn't a big help sometimes.

Every month every crew got a three day pass and we were given railway tickets from base to anywhere you wanted to go and back, but just one destination, you couldn't take a tour or if you could I never knew it. The majority went to London and practically all the officers stayed at the Reindeer Club which was a Red Cross Club just off Bond Street and not very far from Picadilly Circus. In case you don't know, Picadilly Circus is what we'd call a rotary traffic intersection. Several streets came in like spokes of a wheel and in the center, completely covered with sand bags, was a statue of Eros--the Greek god of love. The area was quite large and at night there was no traffic and, of course, no lights. No lights anywhere for that matter. The entire area, every night I saw it, was like the biggest Christmas Eve buying

rush you can imagine. GI's and commandos packed solid, wall to wall. The commandos were women of every description, all with only one thought--to get money for sexual intercourse. The pubs had to close during certain hours but the answer was "bottle clubs". There were lots of them all over the place and a "membership" ranged from free to one pound. Jr. and I went to the Blue Goose several times and one time there were six of us at a table with three or four commandos, drinking and dancing or watching the others. There was Jr., myself, a B-17 pilot, co-pilot, and navigator and a British Ensign Disch. Poor Disch was broke, being shipped out to somewhere in the pacific, and desirous of one of the commandos. Disch and a commando went out on the floor to dance. In the middle of the dance the commando left him and came storming back to the table and sat down next to me and just glowered into her drink. I was pleasantly amiable at that point and gently asked her what was the matter. "Eee arsked me if oy would, and ow much, and oy told 'm one pound, and eee troyed to beat me down! One pound is moi price and oy sticks to it." "That's good business," I said, "Have another drink." A little time passes while she knocks off the drink: then "Sometimes wi me friends I only charge ten shillings." "Well, that's nice," I said. "You ought to give your friends a break. Have another drink." More time passes while she knocks off the

drink. Then leaning confidentially over close to me, she whispers: "Oy loike yew. I won't charge yew nuffink." During all this, Disch has borrowed ten shillings from Jr. and when I turned down this friendly and generous offer, next thing I knew Disch and the commando are out on the floor dancing, and in the middle of the dance, they leave! One of the remaining commandos says to the other, "Well, she won't get much out of im. Eee's only got ten shillings." Where upon the other says "Ten shillings! She's got her nerve. She ain't worth two bob!"

Three other incidents occured in Picadilly that I remember. One night Jr., having swiped a pepper shaker at where-ever we ate supper, said to me, "watch this." There was one corner where there was a sheltered entrance to a building and people used to pack into that sheltered spot. Jr. went over and wormed his way into the middle of the group, poured half the pepper into the palm of his hand and blew it up into the air in one direction, then poured the rest and blew again in the opposite direction. The group was convulsed in sneezing while Jr. (who'd held his breath) got out quick.

On another night, there was a big altercation between two GI MPs armed with night sticks and .45's and about thirty or forty commandos. I never knew what it was all about but the women had surrounded the MP's and the situation was

getting serious when along came one solitary unarmed Bobby. "All right now. Break it up. Move along now." And in ten seconds there was not one commando in sight. Just two mighty relieved MP's and one solitary calm Bobby who had not even raised his voice, just spoke in a steady clear voice. It was extremely impressive.

Once more and I'll finish with Picadilly. I was standing just off the Circus with my back against a bank building, just standing and watching the show, and along came two commandos strolling towards Picadilly. When they were a few feet to my right, one said "Oy Yank. Gotney Chynge?" "Not a sou, sister." "Oh, you poor barsted." Never a change in pace, facial expression or anything from a few paces to my right to a few paces to my left.

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FLYING INCIDENTS:

From time to time, to keep us out of mischief or to put in some flying time, we had to "calibrate the airspeed." There was (and is I suppose) a canal that runs more or less north and south lying south of the Wash and northwest of Norwich. One fine day we were sent to calibrate the airspeed on some war weary ship and off we went. Now the procedure was to fly up and down this straight canal at maybe 500 feet off the deck while the navigator figured out the relationship between the air speed indicator and the time it took to go this measured distance. On this day, when we finished the calibrating, which we did while flying on the auto pilot, we headed for home. A beautiful day, no troubles, ship flying smoothly on auto pilot and all of us relaxed. With no warning whatever the ship abruptly went into a vertical climb. Both Jr. and I were caught completely unawares. I tried desperately to reach the auto pilot release button on the wheel and after several wild swings finally hit it. Jr. and I both pushed our wheels forward with all our strength and, on the verge of a hammerhead stall, succeeded in getting the nose down and regained flying speed. Talk about scared. This was one of the worst experiences in my entire tour and and a memorable one in my entire flying career. In only

a few seconds more it would have been too bad! I never really trusted an auto-pilot again.

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At Christmas, Jr. got two boxes of goodies from his father. One was a box of nips, which we polished off for Christmas and refilled with 180 proof medicinal alcohol. Each member of the crew carried two nip bottles of 180 proof and the theory (Jr.'s) was that in the event of being shot down we would; first, hide our chutes, second, drink a nip, and third, on the quick energy, outrun the Wehrmacht. Thank goodness we never researched this one.

The other box contained packets of chocolate mix (most welcome) and some ice cream mix in powdered form. Jr. and Ed Powell went to work. Jr. promoted all sorts of things from the mess hall, including sugar and other ingredients, an enormous tub like mixing bowl and a wire whisk type mixer. Came the next mission and Jr. and Ed smuggled the works aboard in the waist. As we made the penetration into Germany, from time to time Jr. would call Ed "How's it coming, Ed?" "Just fine, Jr., just fine." This went on all through the flak and everything. We made the bomb drop and started the withdrawal. As we neared the German coast and got down to about 10,000 feet, Ed came up on the flight deck with this enormous tub of ice cream.

I slid out of formation a couple of hundred yards, set up the auto pilot and called all hands onto the flight deck. Boy, was that ice cream good. The lead called and asked "G" George, "what the h--- are you doing out of formation?" Jr., with great glee replied, "We're eating ice cream. Don't you wish you flew with Capt. Mac?"

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In some of the worst weather of the year, we drew a ship that had a plexiglass replacement in the portion of the pilot's side window that normally could be slid back for taxiing. This window had been cleared of ice with some sort of scraper by someone, and it was impossible to see through it well enough to maintain position in the close formation of the mission. 2nd A Division had recently issued a directive that any air crew man who suffered frostbite would be court martialed. So, here I am with a ship on which I must keep the window open to fly in formation, and if I get frostbitten doing it I get court martialed. I flew with the window open, and it was cold. When we made the withdrawal and when we had let down to 10,000 feet or so, I tried to get my oxygen mask off to have a cigarette. To my surprise, the mask wouldn't come off, it was frozen to my face. After a while it came free as we got down where it was warmer and after I closed the window.

After landing, I informed Sqdn. Ops of what had happened and said, "If that window is not fixed I will not fly that ship on a mission." The very next day we drew the same ship for another mission. The first thing I did when we got out to the ship was to climb aboard and examine the window. Same window in the same condition. I ordered the crew to return to quarters and me, Jr. and the Bombigator went back to quarters. I expected to get all h---, but nobody ever said a word to me.

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On a mission (I don't remember which one) a couple of the crew had a touch or more of dysentry. Leach had it particularly bad. I tried to get him to stay in quarters but I really did not order him to do it. The truth was, he was an extremely valuable member of the crew and none of the crew wanted to be left behind at any time anyway. So, off we go. Along the way, Leach had problems and a B-24 is not fitted with very many amenities. Some of this I learned later--really from here on. It seems they used a Flak helmet for a latrine and, of course, there were no facilities for cleaning it on the ship. When we got back, either because they didn't give a d--- or more likely, felt too bad to care, the dirty helmet went into the pile as was. The uproar was considerable, but the culprit never was found.

One interesting thing I often observed. The waist gunners were supposed to drop chaff (little flexible strips of aluminum-like Christmas tree icicles) that was designed to confuse the Kraut radar and it did. They were supposed to drop it at the same rate, but every time the flak came up it was amazing how much chaff started to fall from the ships ahead. Of course, I suppose mine were doing the same thing. There is nothing like a little flak to get your attention.

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We started on a mission one day in the winter and, after penetrating Germany, received a recall. Heavy weather was moving into England. So we turned around and headed home. We headed for some field north of the Wash and came over the coast fairly high, say two or three thousand feet, in column of Groups. The first pass, we peeled off in Squadrons. Back out over the North Sea and back toward the field. I had noted the heading from our entry, over a little village on the coast and to the field west of the village and also an impression of the distance. The weather was deteriorating rapidly. You could see the murk move over the field and towards the village. When we peeled off from Squadron column it was every man for himself. I headed out over the sea, turned a 180 degrees and headed back on the heading I had noted, right down on the water. The waist gunner swore after-

wards that our props were turning up spray! When we hit shore, the warmth of the land raised the murk a little and we cleared the houses and trees, but not by much. Suddenly ahead was a rosy glow and a tremendous fireworks display. We were landing over FIDO for my first and only time. I brought down the ship in the teeth (and in defiance) of the red flares. We hit the runway dead center, missed two wrecks, one to the left and one to the right, by a few feet on each side and slid down the runway which had about six inches of slush on it. Finally got onto the ramp and parked. A real close one. We lost quite a few ships that day and guys were walking in for hours carrying 50 calibre barrels, etc. It was a British field and not very big. Quarters were strained to say the least. Jr. and I and the crew, in full combat gear got a ride into the village and looked for some place to sleep. The town was buttoned up tight and we were a bad looking lot. I believe we would have walked all night if a friendly Bobby hadn't stopped us--regarding us with considerable suspicion, I might add. When I explained the situation, he took us to a house, had us stand back while he talked with the lady and, on his say-so, she finally let us in out of the wet and cold. Everybody but me sacked out immediately. I sat and talked with her for quite a while, 45 under my arm and trench knife on my leg! She was very nice, though, and later

I wished I had gotten her name. One of the very many British who helped when we really needed help.

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There was a Lieutenant named Gilmer D. Summey from Durham, N.C. When I met him, he was on permanent Drying Room Detail and had been grounded. It seems one awful day, Summey had a cold and couldn't fly. He went down to the line to see his crew off, but they crashed and blew up on take off. It temporarily destroyed the kid's nerve and in Summey's case, that stupid old idea that forcing men into flight immediately as the only way to overcome fear was the wrong approach. It simply didn't work.

The Drying Room Detail was normally pulled the day after you returned from a three day pass (it gave time to "dry out") and the job required driving the crews going on the missions to their ships, along with flak vests and whatever was needed. Then the worst cases would climb into any ship sitting around, put on their oxygen masks, turn on straight oxygen and, presto, end of hangover. But poor Summey was in a h where no one could help him. His whole life revolved around getting his tour finished and getting home to his wife, Mabel.

Jr. and I got talking to him over a period of time, and finally he approached me very timidly and asked if I would take him along on a flight over England, airspeed calibration,

I think, and I said, "Sure, get a jump sack and come on."

A couple of those flights and Summey asks if I would take him along if I draw a "milk run". Sure, why not. Real soon we drew Bielefeld, I think, Summey goes along and, what do you know, he's doing fine. I kick Jr. out of his seat and let Summey land (along with some suggestions for doing it easier and safer). Lo and behold, we've got Summey back on active combat status and he goes on and finishes his tour with no problems.

In late 1946, on my way to Shreveport, I came through Durham and phoned him. He begged me to come out for supper at his house. When I got there, there were over a dozen cars in the yard. I was a hero to everybody there! Just before I left, the Sheriff (who was Summey's father-in law) took me to one side and said, "Young man, we like your looks and we appreciate what you did for Gil and Mabel. If you'd consider staying and making your home here, we'd be delighted. I'll tell you right now, you won't have to worry about the law around here, up to and including murder." I thanked him very sincerely, for I know he meant what he said, but I had a date with destiny in Shreveport, Louisiana that I had to keep.

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