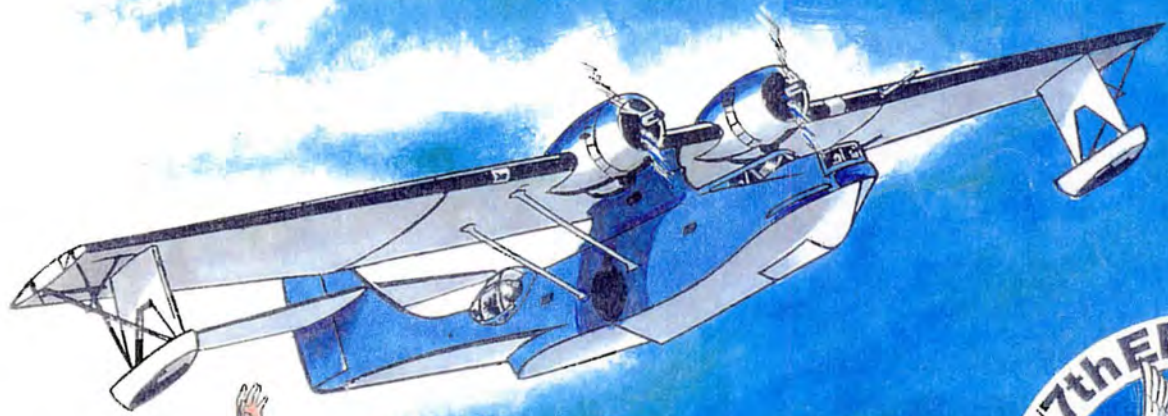


★ WWII ★
EUROPE
CBI



TALES of TERROR

by members of the

First and Seventh

EMERGENCY RESCUE SQUADRONS

chuck Dill 2001

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PREFACE

The stories in this book really began on December 7, 1941. We all remember that morning decades ago when war arrived to change the lives of all Americans.

More than 130 vessels of the U.S. Pacific fleet were anchored at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii: battleships, cruisers, destroyers and other military armaments. Some men were on duty. Some were getting ready for church. Some were having breakfast. Some still slept. It was just before 8 a.m. During the next two hours, death would overtake nearly 2400 of the unsuspecting ranks.

Sweeping in from the North, 183 Japanese fighters, bombers and torpedo planes attacked the land and water installations with well-planned fury. A second wave of 167 aircraft arrived a half-hour later. The battleship Oklahoma, struck by many torpedoes, rolled over trapping more than 400 men. The Nevada tried to bolt the harbor but was swarmed by attackers, set afire and was sinking as she struggled towards shore to avoid blocking the channel. The destroyer Shaw's bow was sheared off in a fiery blast, the torpedoed Utah capsized and the fireswept California and Virginia were sunk.

Bombs rocked the Arizona and a 1,760 lb. armor piercing shell penetrated the hull near the #2 turret, starting a fire that in seconds spread through open hatches. Flames boiled into rooms storing 100 tons of gunpowder. The whole ship erupted like a volcano! The explosion tore apart the ship's bow end. The concussion blew men of nearby ships into the water. Sailors, deafened by the noise of the blast, were unable to hear the screams for help. Tons of debris

rained over the harbor as over two-thirds of the Arizona's crew perished. The ship sank in less than 9 minutes but continued to burn for over two days.

By 10 a.m., the attack was over. It had concentrated mainly on the larger warships moored on Battleship Row beside Ford Island which permitted many smaller ships to avoid destruction. However, twelve vessels were sunk or beached nine were severely damaged and over 200 airplanes destroyed. The dead numbered 2,388, wounded 1,178 while the enemy lost 29 planes, 55 airmen and 9 submariners.

Today, nearly 60 years after its death, the Arizona still bleeds. Drops of oil float upward from the sunken hull every 20 seconds, day and night. The Arizona won't let the world forget the men still entombed in her ravaged hull, evidencing the fatal day the United States was thrust into World War 2.

That fateful day was the "beginning" of our entry into the conflict ...the eventual forming of the Air Corps rescue program and our lives were never quite the same again. In many ways we were fortunate since we were trained to save lives instead of destroying them.

Now, 60 years later, we meet annually to reminisce and enjoy the camaraderie of the good friends we made then...friends who transcend most all other relationships previous to our years in the 1st./7th. ERS.

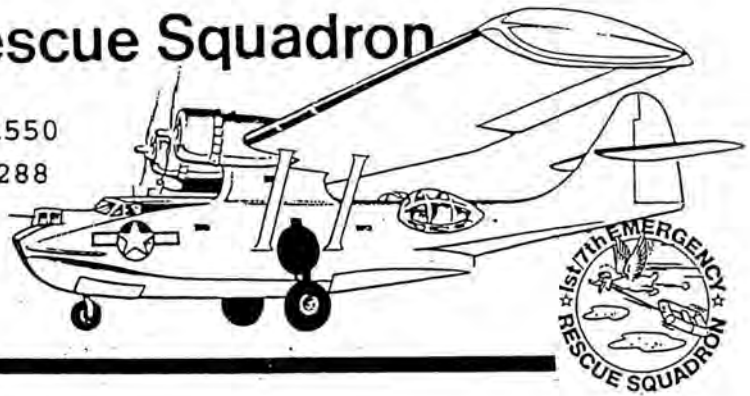


1st & 7th Emergency Rescue Squadron

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CHUCK DILL



★ TO THE 1ST. AND 7TH. EMERGENCY RESCUE
SQUADRONS OF 1943-1945 in the EUROPEAN,
CHINA-BURMA-INDIA THEATERS of WAR

It's been difficult to put this book together...like pulling teeth to get stories out of you...some never contributed but I organized what I did get and I hope you enjoy it! It offers a wide scope of experiences, which tends to make it more interesting.

I know there are even more good tales out there, from our organization at Savannah, Georgia, our training together in Boca Raton, Florida to our departure from Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia, our arrival at Camp Don Passage, Casablanca, Morocco, to Ajaccio, Corsica and Foggia, Italy and to other locations. Then, later, about half of us, joined by many new personnel, were transferred to India, spending time in Cairo, Egypt and Karachi, India (now Pakistan) before arriving at our base in Agaratala, India. (now Bangladesh). All that travel throughout the world should have produced a tremendous wealth of "Tales of Terror!"

To those that helped me put this together, I thank you profusely! Your stories can be read with envy by those who aren't represented here. So settle back and recall those "good ole days" of our wartime "vacation" around the world!

Chuck (the Ed) Dill



HARRY 'HAP' ARNOLD

Tezgon Trial

On May 20th., 1945, while with the 7th. ERS at Agartala, India, I received orders to fly Capt. Muse, our flight surgeon, to Tezgon to pick up medical supplies.

Since my plane was "red-lined", I borrowed an old one and gathered up a crew consisting of Lt. Rogers, co-pilot (normally on a B17), Lt. Stomach, navigator, Capt. Muse, flight surgeon, S/Sgt. Bottazzi, radio and S/Sgts Kidd and Brisque (I don't know which one was the acting flight engineer). I list this information because of this make-up crew, other than Bottazzi, I had never flown with any of them before...and after this mission, none would probably ever want to ride with me again!

Anyway, we piled in and away we went to Tezgon. While Capt. Muse was gathering up his medical supplies, we were in the mess hall eating everything we could while we could (a lot better than "K" rations!). After we had waited there for quite awhile, I got a message from operations for us to report in with my crew. The Operations officer said they had received an emergency message requesting a plane to evacuate an injured man. The notice came from a remote Loran station down in the Sunderbunds on the Bay of Bengal shore. He directed us to fly there and that the Loran people had said we could land on the beach if the tide was out. If it was, they would put out markers so we would know. Then he showed us the location and Somach plotted our course and we took off.

Upon arriving at the Loran site, we spotted their Quonset hut and the beach...no markers and not enough beach! After a good look, I decided to attempt a water landing just outside the breakers, which I did! A little rough but OK. We couldn't anchor there so I decided to try to taxi up onto the beach. No problem...we let the gear down, turned toward the beach, through the breakers, which were not very high, pulled the yoke back and with lots of throttle, up onto the sand we went. We turned around facing down the beach and shut it down.

Some of the Loran personnel came out to meet us and to take Capt. Muse to the injured person. Rogers and I sat in our seats and waited...and waited! Muse and some of the crew were gone a long time. I became concerned about the growing darkness, When they finally returned with the injured man and

loaded him into the plane and onto a bunk, it was pitch black. I went back to the bunks to see how he felt and could immediately see that we had to get him to the Tezgon hospital as quickly as we possibly could.

I dismissed the idea of going back into the water and out through the breakers and doing a black night takeoff in rough water and instead decided we would take off from the beach if the sand was firm enough. Rogers and I walked it to find out if it was solid and also to see if I thought it was long enough because there was a large rock outcropping at the far end. I don't think the beach was more than 1500 feet in length but we did have a very light fuel load, maybe less than 300 gallons, and I was sure we could make it. I asked the Loran people to position a jeep at the far end, facing us with the headlights on and to get out of the way!

We cranked it up, held the brakes, went to full rich and full power with the yoke full back in our laps to keep the nose wheel from digging in, and went roaring down the beach! I held it down as long as possible to get enough flying speed and then jerked it into the air and over the jeep at the last minute and we were flying and on our way back to Tezgon with our patient. Total flying time, 2:25!

JAMES WITT The Floating B-17



On a bright sunny day while we were patrolling the Adriatic, we received word of a downed bomber. We proceeded to the area and behold we promptly located a floating B-17 with the entire crew on the wings. The sea was a mirror like lake. This B-17 pilot ditched his plane and all were safe. He should have received a medal.

I recall we had to call for backup to help load because of the weight. All were saved. I don't know how many people we rescued, but I do know that I participated in a total of 105.

The 1st/7th ERS did an outstanding service for our country and I'm proud to have been a small part of the whole. We played hard, but when the "chips were on the table".....WE DID THE JOB!

My best to everyone -we can be proud.

In the spring of 1945, my AAF 7th. Emergency Rescue Squadron stationed at Agartala, India, near the Burma border, consisted of 6 PB5A amphibian aircraft and 3 B17's with large rescue boats slung beneath the fuselages. Our flight crew was on stand-by, ready for any rescue mission which might be called in. Late that evening, headquarters received a radio message that Burmese natives had brought in a report that they had discovered an Air Transport Command (ATC) C-46 cargo plane down in the jungle near the Burma border. This was a somewhat unusual assignment for us since we generally performed sea rescues. However, we were formed as a rescue unit so we made preparations to do what we were trained to do!

Since the notice came in late evening, we started out the following morning at daybreak. Our flight crew consisted of pilot, co-pilot, navigator, 2 engineers, a radar-gunner, a radio-gunner and a medic. For this mission we were also assigned a chaplain. We flew our CAT to Chittagong airbase, the nearest field to our projected search area. There we were joined by 3 natives who were to be our guides. They were very familiar with the terrain and location of the wreckage but were not sure if there were any survivors. We were provided Jeeps to transport us as far as roads were available! The route we were to travel was primarily through pretty dense jungle and the road was more a forest trail which petered out after several miles. From that point we walked...struggled would be more a better word...a single line of 9 men with 3 leading natives, actually hacking and carving a path with machetes through the thick masses of vines and undergrowth. The trail also lead us up and down steep hills amid 90 heat and we quickly found out how out of shape we were despite intensive army conditioning. When the path led us down a hill to cross a stream, everyone took advantage of the cool water by plunging in, clothes, weapons and all! That respite couldn't last long, so reluctantly we resumed our trek, wet but temporarily relieved. En route, we passed through several Burmese villages where the people lined the path to watch us, including pretty Burmese maidens. Also an abundance of wild orchids were seen growing throughout the trees.

By this time it was mid-morning, close to noon, and we were nearing the crash site...that was easily determined from the putrid stench permeating the hot air. As we later found, this was from the decaying bodies of the crash victims which had lain on the jungle floor for 24-30 hours as well as the fact that the aircraft had been loaded with perishables and tins of food which exploded on impact and fermented with the strong odor of garbage. Our first duty was to determine how many crew members had perished and identify them if possible, which was no easy task! Using our handkerchiefs to try and minimize the terrible smell, we found 2 bodies impaled on bamboo stalks. They had both apparently tried to use their parachutes at the last minute but were too near the ground and their chutes just trailed them down and were hung up half opened in the bamboo thicket. The large lumps of flesh were impossible to recognize as having once been humans...

"hamburger" mixed with bits of clothing and bone. It was with great difficulty that we were able to pry the bodies off the bamboo spears, taking turns of but 5 or 10 minutes each which was all we could endure working with shovels under the torrid conditions. After what seemed hours, we were finally able to free

the bodies who must have been very large guys over 200 pounds in life. We were able to roll their bodies into their parachute canopies after suffering the gruesome task of digging through the remains, searching for their dogtags which were needed by the grave registration team which would follow up ASAP!

In the meantime, those not working to extricate the 2 bodies, had been digging a common grave at the top of the nearest hill...a very steep hill! But we found the bodies too cumbersome and heavy to drag in their chutes up to the holes and ended up digging new graves as far up as we had been able to pull the bodies. We then closed the grave on the blanket wrapped flyers, marked the site and after a brief, solemn service by the chaplain, began our return to civilization.

Now it was early evening and it would be dark long before we reached our Jeeps. Military intelligence had assured us that, though we were near Jap held territory, it was unlikely there were any Jap patrols in the area (very reassuring!) However, the idea had been implanted in our minds and we didn't find it too comforting. We wore sidearms but 8 .45's (excluding the padre), were small assurance in a firefight with seasoned Japanese patrols. Thus we began to retrace our steps, finding a somewhat easier route to follow in the dark by wading the stream we earlier had happily wallowed in.

I don't know exactly how it happened, but somehow I ended up at the tailend of the 12 man column...a position less than desirable to me! Darkness having descended upon us in a strange land, possibly near and unseen enemy and being the last guy in line, my thoughts turned back to high school cowboy and Indian movies where the last man in line was always picked off by the Indians, unmissed by his companions until too late! Now, I was no "chicken" 20 year old, but I was no hero type either. I constantly peered behind me as I waded and finally, unable to stand it any longer, I unholstered my .45, charged it, putting a shell in the chamber and engaged the safety. The other 8 crewmen were just waiting for someone to show signs of being scared, as each man ahead of me, one after another like clockwork, charged his weapon ...all the way up to the leader! Each had been waiting for someone to make the first move...and it was me! Had any one of them been in the last position, I'm certain he too would have made the same move! However, no problems developed and we continued our way back to civilization...and safety!

After what seemed like 3 days but was really but 1, we finally reached the Jeeps and were relieved to continue to the airfield at Chittagong on wheels. We had only to turn in details of our mission to the base graves registration unit for them to recover the bodies and return with them by mule for identification and interment.

This, as it turned out, was probably one of the least dangerous missions we performed in WW2, but the stress and tension we endured in finding and burying the poor C-46 crew members under such deplorable conditions will always haunt me. I don't remember either of their names but I'm sure they're in God's hands. It was rumored a third crewman might have survived the crash with minor injuries and been helped out of the jungle by other natives but that was never substantiated.



The recent remembrance of D-Day, 50 years ago, have caused me to recall and put on paper, my personal recollection of October "44.

As a P-47, Thunderbolt fighter pilot, my final dive toward my target resulted in an oil line hit and a dead stick landing in the Adriatic Sea. The impact threw me forward and despite my safety harness, my head and cheek hit the gunsight rendering me unconscious. When I awoke the canopy had closed over me and the emergency release allowed me to stand just as the plane sank.

Rising to the surface, I inflated the one-man dingy from my seat pack and waved to my flight mates above that I was uninjured. They would then inform the Air-Sea Rescue Service of my location. It was about 4:30 PM with little daylight left. However, the rescue plane, a PBY, arrived before dark. Upon landing and approaching within 100 yards or so, a shore battery put a shell off each wing of the Catalina and away went my rescuers. There I sat, helpless, only about a mile offshore...the enemy shore! In my exuberance of certain rescue, I had discarded my small oars and parachute...a monumental mistake. In the growing darkness I sat and watched a spectacular "fireworks" display from artillery as the sky exploded with shells, machinegun tracers and flares which was a sight to behold, sobered by the thought that many young men could be dying.

During the night, I heard the sound of boat motors and flashing lights were visible. As I sat in a resigned stupor unable to think, the sounds and lights ended. After a night of being tossed out of the raft a couple times by high waves, came the dawn! The first sound I heard was a plane overhead which I recognized as a British Spitfire and several other aircraft in the area, among them a PBY, all heading away...so 3 more chances for rescue missed! Paddling for shore (which by now was very close) with my hands, land felt good as I crawled out of the raft, exhausted. In a short while I got up and began walking along the beach toward some buildings I had seen as I neared shore. I then became aware of my .45 Colt side-arm and to prevent it from becoming an enemy souvenir, I tossed it into a ditch I was walking next to.

Then I became a POW! My captors were a German soldier and an Italian civilian. I was taken to a house where an elderly Italian spoke fair English. He said, "Don't be afraid, you are safe!" I was allowed to wash, was fed and given a place to sleep. After a day and night of sleeping, I found an attitude of hospitality from the family along with another meal, conversation and fresh laundered clothes.

The third night, accompanied by 3 Italians, I was taken on a short trip by rowboat and turned over to the Germans. Then began my travels through Northern Italy by bicycle, streetcar, military and civilian trucks, and a train through the Brenner Pass .

The people, events and sights of the following weeks are subject to a mental, almost visual mind recall. Included are 2 days in a German Hospital where I first tasted ersatz coffee and played chess with the examining physician. The elapsed time from my capture was 10 days, arriving in Frankfort, Germany on November 10, 1944, just in time for the first snow of the year!

As a postscript to my story, where I recalled and wrote about the places I passed through during my wartime incarceration, my son, in 1993, traveled a reverse route from Germany, stopping at the towns I wrote about. They had changed over the years but the pictures he sent me took me back in time to places forever etched in my memory. Many of them were good memories especially since I was able to survive and return to my home and family!

Ironically, I had originally shipped overseas as a 1st. Emergency Rescue Squadron Catalina pilot and requested transfer to a fighter squadron. Therefore, I could never understand why the squadron commander, who was flying the rescue PBV, chose to leave me in my dingy so as not to jeopardize his crew. As rescue units, we were trained to believe the only purpose of our rescue organization was to save lives, even at the risk of our own.

LEN BILSLAND Black Label Bash



Bought a case of Johnny Walker Black Label I picked up in Nassau and divided it with my crew, keeping three bottles to take overseas. Used two of them up over a period of time and saved the third for a "Coming Home" party. To insure it wasn't squandered, I stashed it in my leather, sheep-skinned flying pants, put them away in a barracks bag and forgot about it!

Much later, in India, sorting through my equipment looking for something, having completely forgotten about the liquor cache, I pulled out the pants and out flew the Black Label bottle smashing to smithereens on the brick floor of the basha!

My tears of anguish mingled with the coveted liquor spreading over the floor (too dirty to lick up!) and our contemplated bash went down the drain with the whiskey!!!



WALTER BROWN

Popped Rivets

We were notified of a mission in September of 1944 where a P47 pilot was down. In parachuting from his stricken fighter, he suffered a broken arm when he struck the plane's tail stabilizer. This occurred during my first rescue. Our pilot, Lt. Bilsland, was faced with landing in 10 to 12 foot waves and thus was forced to make a stall landing of such force that rivets in the hull of the aircraft were popped out. The Catalina began taking on water so fast, the bilge pump nearly burned up pumping it from the bottom of the plane. We made the rescue but were then forced to taxi to the lee side of a small island to enable us to take off and head back to our base. Mission completed!

WALTER BROWN Scrub Board Landing

In Sept. 1944, I was put on flying status as radar operator for 3 months replacing the regular radarman who was returned to the states. We were ordered on a mission on the 13th. flying a PBY5A, amphibian, to search for a pilot in the water. Before we were able to return to our Ajaccio, Corsica base, darkness fell and the whole of Corsica was blacked out. Our navigator, Lt. Melvin, asked if I could pick up the mountains surrounding the airfield. I told him I could if the pilot could fly lower since our radar antennas were positioned for straight ahead use only. There was no way we could risk that...we might come right down on one of those mountain peaks! We contacted the field control tower and since they had no field lights, they arranged for a line of trucks to shine their headlights on each side of the dirt runway and our pilot was able to see the runway to land. Actually the field had steel landing mats which sounded like a scrub board when we hit it. It had rained so hard that day, we appeared to have landed in the Mediterranean Sea. Mission completed!





BRUCE CAMPBELL A Record Flight

This story goes back to April 21, 1945 during our service in India, Our crew had a pre-dawn briefing and were to be part of a 3 plane search team headed for the Indian Ocean. Even though we were in the middle of the monsoon season, our weather officer assured us we should have no problems other than the present cloud cover.

As I recall, our crew consisted of Bill Ayers and myself up front. Ted Shapiro was the navigator while Jimmy Stuart was up in the tower. Frank Guerriero was on radio and Del Fisher was watching radar. We probably had an observer and medic back in the blister, but I'm not sure.

We were #2 for take-off which was normal, as was # 1's...that is until our wheels left the runway. That is when we learned that the weather men of that day could do no better than those of today!!! Then the skies opened up and we almost needed the hull and floats to keep us airborne. Naturally winds came with the torrential rain and it got rough as a cob! Number One said enough is enough, did a 360 and went home. We decided we agreed and followed their lead. The runway was cleared by the time we needed it so we poured it in. (no pun intended) The runway lights were old flare pots or construction bombs with open flames. As we rolled out the landing, Del got on the horn from the blister and informed us that as we passed each pot, the rain and monsoon winds extinguished the flames and number 3, having no runway lights to mark the landing strip, was forced to weather the storm until we positioned ourselves at the end of the runway with all external lights on to lead him in and enable us to taxi back to the line.

So, did we set a record? Sure...we logged a total of 0.10 combat flight time!





Our ship was the General Bill Mitchell, our Port of Entry to Africa was Camp Don Passage, Casablanca, Morocco, where we were encamped in tent city quarters. We were warned of the larcenous traits of the local Arab inhabitants and I found how true that was my first week overseas!

I stashed my B4 and parachute bag at the foot of my cot in the pyramidal tent we were assigned to. The third or fourth morning I awoke to find both the back tent wall and my parachute bag slashed open and my parachute missing. Several of us searched the area including a number of other unoccupied tents 100 or so yards away from ours. Strangely enough, half buried in the dirt floor of one of those tents we found my canopy and cut shroud lines. Why? We didn't have a clue! We assumed the thief had been scared off for some reason and had cached the chute and made his get-away, intending to return to retrieve it the following night. No sweat! If that was their intention, we decided to try to trap them !

Leaving the chute, etc. buried where they left it, the next evening we set up concealed points of observation in the other nearby tents, and with 45's and carbines ready, we settled down for the night to catch the culprits when they returned to salvage their plunder. All sleepless night we waited in vain! They never returned...as if they were aware of our ambush (those Arabs were pretty street smart!) Maybe they did know of it! Anyway, they apparently out maneuvered us!!! Finally at dawn, we gave up, dug up the nylon parachute and left.

That beautiful, silky nylon chute found a new lease on life by being transformed into my wife's wedding dress in 1945 and the cord shroudlines were braided into a tiara for her to wear with it.

CHUCK DILL Basha Fire

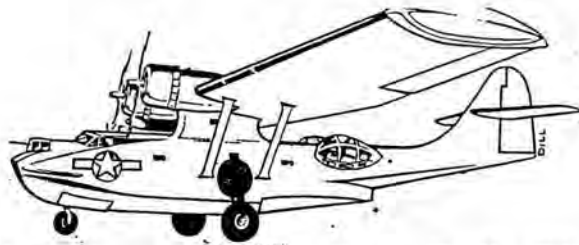
The night before I was to be rotated home from India, John Schott, Bob Narber and I spent the last evening together at an outdoor movie on the air base at Agartala. I don't remember what the movie was... only that midway through it, someone yelled fire and a glow appeared in the sky in the direction of our basha, though it was difficult to tell just where it was. Nevertheless, the movie broke up quickly as we all ran to see what was burning. As it turned out, it was our basha on fire and well past the point of saving anything! The area echoed with sharp staccato explosions as the heat expanded the bamboo sections causing them to explode.

How the fire had started, no-one really knew. There were rumors flying around of espionage and Jap sympathizers but it was probably somebody's careless cigarette. Anyway, after the fire had burned out, I searched the burned ruins for any salvageable valuables and found only half melted coins fused together from the heat. Gone was my B4 bag with \$150 I had planned to use en route home as well as all my flight gear, uniforms, family souvenirs from Europe, my camera and photo negatives (which I had secreted in packs of cigarettes since they wouldn't pass the censors!).

Col. Pardue suggested I could delay leaving for several days to enable me to be issued new uniforms, etc. but I chose to draw one uniform from quartermaster with no insignia, combat ribbons, or rank which is just what I was wearing on arrival in New York 2 weeks later. Fortunately, Dave Smith, who was rotated at the same time, was a good friend and loaned me \$100 to tide me over coming home until I was able to arrange a partial payment from the army finance unit at Ft. Totten, NY. Otherwise, I couldn't even have afforded a beer during my 2-3 day stay in the Big Apple before entraining for Ft. Sheridan, IL



BRUCE CAMPBELL



The following story is as it appeared in "The Daily Okinawan"
March 30, 1946

Flying to save the life of a native pilferer shot by army guards on Ie Shima, one member of the 6th. Air Emergency Rescue Squadron was burned to death and five were seriously injured when their plane crashed into an embankment bordering the Ie Shima airstrip.

On impact, the Catalina burst into flames and an ambulance squad from the guard company was able to save 5 from the wreckage. All incurred broken limbs, internal injuries and serious burns. The normally well lighted landing field was plunged into darkness while the plane was en route from Okinawa. A makeshift effort to light the field was provided by vehicle headlights which proved insufficient to guide the incoming mercy aircraft.

The native the crew was trying to save had been shot while fleeing from guards who had challenged a raiding party of natives after they landed on the beach of forbidden Ie Shima in a small boat. Natives had been coming to Ie Shima by boat for several nights and had been looting the PX and other thievery, 1st. Lt. Sutter, guard company commander, reported. Three nights ago, the guard challenged a party of interlopers near the PX who dropped their loot and fled by boat, but tracks found the next morning indicated one of the group had failed to get aboard their boat.

The next night, when even more natives landed on the beach, the guard challenged them as they unloaded. When they ran down the beach, he opened fire and the culprits took to the water swimming. Later the patrol found one man on the beach with 2 bullets in his back. Lt. Sutter called Okinawa for a doctor to perform an emergency operation to save the natives life. The ill-fated crew from the 6th. ERS answered the call!

The call came in about midnight saying someone had been shot and needed medical attention. Since the call was urgent and we were already awake, we didn't bother to wake the enlisted crew members, so our self assigned crew was: pilot, co-pilot, squadron operations officer, asst. aircraft maintenance officer, navigator/radar officer, flight engineer, aircraft maintenance officer,

medic, flight surgeon and med. tech. Ray Newell, Bob Lovejoy and Bruce Campbell all were captains of their own crews.

Sins of omission: we weren't told the runway lights were out because the generator was being refueled. The vehicle headlights lined up for us were at the far end of the airstrip, but due to a humped runway, they couldn't be seen while sitting on the approach. Bob made one pass over the runway and then a 360 to come in. A combination of lighting or lack of it, and a sudden gust of crosswind and Bob lost the runway! Our main gear hit something (I later was told it was a pillbox), was torn off and a strut penetrated my back and knocked me out of my tower seat. This was the only time I failed to wear a seatbelt which probably saved my life. We went on to ride up what I was told, was a revetment. This flipped us on our back and with enough speed, we continued to be airborne for a short distance. (We are probably the only crew to ever fly a PBV upside down and backwards!) At some point the fuel tanks ruptured and a nice fire started!

To amend the original story, the ambulance may have transported us to the dock but, to the best of my knowledge, did not rescue anyone from the wreck. Nor did, as I heard, a crew member burn to death. Jim Meyers was killed by severe trauma from being tossed around the navigator's compartment. The quasi med. tech., Dave Crockett (yes, a direct descendant) pulled Bob and Ray from the cockpit while suffering burns doing so. He and the doctor (???) were thrown out of the bunk area through a hole in the hull. The doctor 's knee was broken (by his own diagnosis), and he was sitting near the wreckage when I found him. Bob lost part of his arm when the yoke snapped back and hit him and had severe burns requiring skin grafts. Ray also suffered burns. As for me, the strut which penetrated my back broke 3 ribs, each in 2 places. The broken ribs decided to move around resulting in a punctured lung and ruptured kidney. Finding nothing but fire in the navigator area (I had intended to use the hatch above the navigator table to escape), I went aft, which wasn't any better. No sight of the 2 people I knew should be there, so I went on to the the blister (I still didn't realize we were upside down) and made a quick exit through what I thought was an open blister! It wasn't! By diving through the unopened blister I added a concussion to my injuries. I did suffer 3rd. degree burns to my face and hands and nearly lost an ear and eye!

Back to the ambulance crew...finding myself on solid ground, I decided to distance myself from the fire. Nearby, the doctor was sitting looking at the

wreck. He informed me of his broken knee and asked me to help him move farther away from the plane which we figured might explode again. When I tried to pull him away, I found I had a back problem too! Some observers were standing some distance away so I asked them to help the doctor and saw them comply before I passed out!

The next thing I knew we were on a crash boat sent to evacuate us to a hospital on Okinawa. To end the story...Bob got a medical discharge, Ray was eventually returned to active duty and after an 8 month hospital recovery, I returned to duty too. Jimmy is buried on Okinawa. I'm not certain, but I imagine Dave was also back on duty since he was a West Point officer. As for the doctor, not only do I not remember his name, I never heard of or from him again.

While the story is good, to quote Fibber McGee (an old Peoria native), "That ain't the way I heard it, Johnnie!" Of course parts of what I think are the rest of the story are hearsay since I was spending most of that time in the hospital!

WALTER BROWN *On a Wing and a Prayer*

October 27, 1944, while on patrol, Lt. Col. Pardue, flying a PBY5A out of Foggia, Italy, received a call to proceed to a spot near Rimini, Albania on the Adriatic Sea to pickup a downed pilot. The survivor was located, floating in a yellow raft, the Catalina landed and taxied within 50 feet of him when German shore batteries opened fire on them. Immediately upon landing, Sgt. Hendrix had clambered on top of the wing preparatory to throwing a line to the downed flyer. Unaware of the man on the wing and with shells bracketing his plane, the Colonel made a quick decision to forgo the attempted rescue for the moment so he revved the engines and took off, planning to complete the rescue as soon as the dingy drifted out of range of the enemy guns. Meanwhile, Hendrix was finding it difficult to hang onto the wing. Fortunately, there were 2 recessed handles, designed to aid getting onto the wing, which Hendrix was able to grasp and hold on for dear life! After about 20 minutes, his absence was finally noticed as they saw his feet flying in the air at the trailing edge of the wing, over the blister, Col. Pardue was notified and he immediately landed. Shaken but uninjured, the Sergeant climbed down and into the blister. His only complaint was that it had been difficult to breathe due to the slipstream and prop backwash. This incident was undoubtedly one of the most unusual squadron experiences...especially for Sgt. Hendrix.

Ed note: See story by Bob Bell. He was the man in the raft in the above story!

BILL BUTLER



Random observations-

Arrived Casablanca 3-16-44. Riding cattle cars across North Africa to Bizerte...LST to Corsica...(Nice beach and lady bathers there!)...Had monkey there named CheChe...Played cards while awaiting rescue call at Borgo, Corsica...Rescued P47 pilot off Isle of Elba...Laundry women at Grottaglia, Italy...Skippy the dog there too...Rohena, the USO belly dancer...An intoxicated Pearson Wilson smoking on the wing as we refueled...Rescued B-24 navigator (only survivor), Trieste...Isle of Capri for R&R...B-17's, fitted with under fuselage lifeboats...Joe, the French interpreter at Cuers, France...British destroyer picked up Walrus survivors off Revenna, Italy...

Navy blimp at Cuers...also German POW's...Bo Bee, our Cuers dog...the Chic Bar at Cuers...Our B-25, mired in the mud there, had to be scrapped...Stopover at Cairo, the Sphinx, Pyramids and camel rides...On to India and the Taj Mahal at Agra...Indian family riding elephant at Agartala, India...

Making a bamboo home (basha) in India...Our Basha Boy there and Sam, the monkey...WOGS pumping water for showers in India...Dung on Palm trees which was later used for cooking...Double deck charcoal burning busses in Calcutta...R&R at Shillong in the Himalayas...Natives diving for coins in the Philippines...Snowing in July while anchored in the Freemantle, Australia harbor...Okinawa cemetery graves...Return to the USA at Portland, Oregon after completing a Round-the-World trip, 10-11-45!!!

LOUIS CYR



Sailboat Ride

While stationed in Foggia, Italy, one afternoon a bunch of us decided to go for a swim at Manfredonia Beach. On our arrival an Italian guide with a sailboat offered us a ride. About twenty of us climbed on board and as we were returning to the beach, several of the better swimmers decided to jump in and swim ashore. A friend of mine, John Schott, standing beside me said, "Let's go!" but we decided to wait as it was still a long way to the beach. We were both fairly good swimmers but were glad we waited. When we did dive in, we had no trouble making it but we both collapsed when we reached shore.

T-Shirts

Somewhere near Dakar was a military airport across a river from a native village. All the pretty native girls were bare breasted. The chaplain, in order to discourage the G.I's from temptation, offered to donate T-Shirts for all the girls to wear. The chief readily accepted and the next morning the girls sported their new T-Shirts...but they had cut out holes for their breasts! A true story!

Another true story

While stationed in Ancona, Italy, I was asked to ride to Couers, France where one of our flights was stationed. I was probably chosen since I spoke French fluently. Anyway, as soon as Col. Pardue's B25 landed, I was driven to the village. We walked up 2 flights of stairs where an attractive girl was waiting. My friend asked me to explain to her that in the coming days, the food would be getting better, It seems supplies were not coming in regularly and food was scarce...except British Bully Beef. He must have been feeding her...who knows what else!!! I kept his secret!

Capri

Capri was a rest camp for the Air Force. I was there on R& R for 2 weeks and it took me a month to recover from the "rest"!

Bizerte to Ajaccio

We boarded an LST en route to Ajaccio, Corsica. Nearing the island, the ship's captain, over the PA system, asked for volunteers who could speak fluent French to report to the bridge. A friend and I volunteered and were

met on the bridge by a sea captain who was to guide us through the mine field upon entering the bay. I was to act as interpreter and I had no trouble speaking with the pilot. We went 5 degrees left...10 degrees right, etc. until we neared the shore. That's when the trouble began! We were supposed to dock bow first on a cement ramp. There was a strong crosswind blowing. We dropped a rear anchor and as we approached the ramp the wind would move us sideways. All this time the pilot would give orders which I would relay to the captain and he would swear, "Goddam it, we can't make it that way" and the pilot thought I was giving the captain the wrong directions and all hell would break loose! Then the ship would have to be winched backwards and we'd try again! This went on for about 3 hours when finally a small boat was sent ashore with a large cable and it was anchored upwind on shore. We could now proceed to dock safely by winching the front of the ship towards the wind...one job I was sorry I volunteered for!

Cars, trucks and Jeeps

In Foggia a request was received for volunteer drivers to be flown to southern Italy to pick up new vehicles. I and 5-6 others volunteered...I'm sure some of you remember the trip. Anyway, we landed and were taken to a big field crammed with all kinds of army vehicles. Everyone wanted to get a Jeep but unfortunately I ended up with a 6x6 truck. We drove back to Foggia the same day.

Fruit Cocktail

One of my more pleasant experiences...while en route from Casablanca to Bizerte traveling in 40 and 8 open boxcars packed in like sardines, we stopped at a train station somewhere around Algiers. It was a huge depot with many supply trains there waiting to get underway. We stopped in the middle of the yard and on the next track was another open boxcar loaded with boxes of fruit cocktail. Well, none of us had tasted fruit cocktail for months and since the train was being guarded by French soldiers I proceeded to divert the Frenchmen with cigarettes and conversation while some of our guys unloaded dozens of cases of the #10 cocktail cans into our cars. Needless to say, we enjoyed plenty of fruit cocktail, although we all got the shits. The government never discovered those cans were missing!



AL FELIKSA

Overequipped?

After completing radio and radar school training, I was assigned to patrolling the Atlantic off the coast of Florida. Our aircraft was equipped with new, high strength, magnetic impulse radar to locate large metal masses below the waters surface. During one patrol, the equipment located two German subs. The Navy was notified of their location and they did the rest. I felt bad for being part of a team that may have been responsible for the loss of many lives. I was offered a chance to be an instructor at Boca Raton but I wanted overseas duty so I was sent to Italy.

Our flight overseas was interesting and eventful. We stayed at Natal, Brazil a few days, waiting for blinding rains and windstorms to abate. Eventually it began to clear and we were permitted to take off. Also, the field was becoming overcrowded with aircraft heading for the war theaters. An hour or so out to sea, we encountered light rain which increased in intensity as we flew East.

After hours, flying in severe turbulence, unable to even see the ends of the wings, our pilot asked for help; radio first, then radar. The navigator had difficulty determinating our position in the dark morass of the storm and the radio was useless because the static was so severe transmission was impossible. Prior to this, our pilot, a stocky 6 foot Georgian, who was excellent at his job, needed no-one except the tower engineer to help in starting the engines.

Our Catalina was equipped with the new radar of the latest horizontal sweep scanner design and the Ascension Islands were picked up just before the "blip" went off the screen. Very strong Northeast headwinds kept forcing us South. Had the pilot waited a few more minutes to ask for help, this article would probably not be written. Thanks be to GOD!

After a few corrections in our direction, and being low on fuel due to the strong headwinds, our pilot brought the PBY directly over the runway between the high sides of the islands mountains and using the absolute altimeter, to a height of 20 feet over the runway. Never again would he complain of having too much equipment on board.





I hope you can read this, my vision is still good and my hand is steady, but this pen is old! (Jim's words!)

I don't have any wild and wooly tales about my time in the service. I had, and I'm sure all members of non-combat units had, a long "vacation", thanks to Uncle Sam! Clothing of fine quality was furnished us as well as 3 good (?) meals a day (although I do occasionally miss those delicious C-Rations!), and a comfortable bed in pleasant quarters. Short time in 7 states...basic training and schools and then an ocean voyage to popular and well-known Casablanca Morocco. Later we enjoyed a second voyage on an army luxury liner to Italy. We were fortunate enough to get to visit Naples and Rome and then moved on to France.. Paris and the French Riviera no less!

After a brief third sea voyage to India , on to Okinawa... the pearl of the Orient...and finally, back to the United States and a discharge! Those were really the good, old days!



Jack McFarland O.D. Blouse

When I was stationed at Lincoln, Nebr. in 1945, the cadre was always trying to find things for us to do while we were awaiting our assignments to air crews.

One duty, of course, was the ever present policing up the area around the base theater. When we reported to the corporal in charge of the detail, we were asked for our name which he entered on his clipboard.

When he was asked his name, a buddy of mine gave it as O.D. Blouse and as we dispersed to do our policing, he drifted away from the group. When the corporal noticed he was short a man, he immediately called roll and found O.D.Blouse was the missing guy. The corporal went bananas, dismissed us and began a section by section search for Blouse. As he entered each orderly room and told his story he was sent on to the next one and so on down the line. Of course no-one had seen or heard of Blouse so needless to say he never found the culprit. Worse, he never recognized the significance of the name O.D.Blouse!!!



I got this terrorizing story from the third stool on the right (maybe Jim Witt can verify this tale!). India had a sanitation requirement that pit-toilets be at least 25 yards from any existing building. A Bomb Group's Officer's club near Agartala and a nearby Field Hospital had set up a neat basha 2-holer (the type with a thatched screen in front) for the visiting nurses. In order to aid their female guests who needed to use the facility in the jungle darkness, there was a sign posted to follow a wire line to the "Ladies Room". What the neophyte guest nurse didn't know was that there was a microphone attached under one of the seats which, after an appropriate minute or so, bellowed forth, "Jeez lady! Would you take it easy...we're still digging down here!!"... at which point the poor girl would jump from the seat, tripping over her underwear, and invariably end up thrashing around on the flattened privacy screen, much to the merriment of those who were tipped off that they had a new recruit on the line! (What a perverted sense of humor!!!)

Beer Run

Beer Run to the Icecream Front in Calcutta...Wally and I made one of the first trips down that way on "Official Business" from Agartala and as it happens we made it back after dark, which didn't faze Major Walton, the hottest B-25 pilot in the Far East as far as I'm concerned! After some calling around, he got in contact with the RAF controller and requested that the airstrip landing lights be turned on. There was a long pause and we were informed that it would take awhile! Fifteen minutes later we were given permission to land. The landing lights consisted of about 6 flares, one on each corner of the runway and one on each side halfway down! Undaunted, our fearless leader set that B-25 down only to have me scream, "Wally, there's a damn cow on the field!"...at which old Wally calmly goosed it over the cow and we rolled over to the parking area to be greeted with, "We're sure glad you made it...you didn't shake up the beer, did you?"

Those were the days were they not???

GEORGE FOX



One of my "Many Military Experiences" was my first mission!

I was a replacement co-pilot with pilot John Mork flying from Falconera in a PBY5A. It was a slow day and from time to time, Mork **would** take a sip from a flask he carried...probably lemonade!!!

Late in the afternoon, we received a call that a fighter plane had gone down in the Adriatic near the mouth of some river off Yugoslavia. We picked up our escort (a British Beaufighter) and headed out.

We searched the area of the ditching but found nothing...drew a little 20mm stuff...so Mork headed up the river, big mountains on both sides and as they closed in on us, I began to wonder if this was such a good idea!! No problem! Mork sat that old PBY on its port wingtip and made a U-turn! I'm only glad he didn't try an immelmann!!!

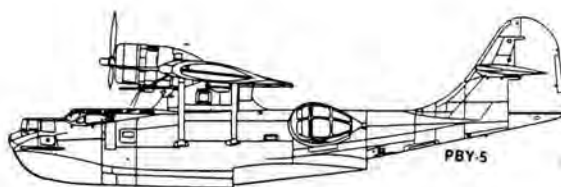
Coming back down the river, the Beaufighter radioed he had located the downed pilot in a lagoon off the river. Mork landed and we made a routine pickup, then we couldn't get the port engine started! As we taxied in a circle on the water, an E-Boat was spotted heading toward us so the Beaufighter pilot tried to delay it until we were finally able to get the balky engine started.

As we climbed off the river, someone lit a smoke and accidentally dropped his Zipper lighter in the bilge and it stayed lit! It was nearly dark and by then so that it made an eerie sight until someone was able to snap it shut with the handle of the emergency hydraulic pump.

We then received word that Falconera was fogged in solid and we were directed to proceed to Jesi, an alternate field. I remember wondering if the IFF gadget was reliable! As we made our final approach it was pitch black...no problem for Mork! He got the runway lights on and greased it in.

That first mission was a great learning experience...mostly that I had better study the charts and find out where Jesi Was!!

JOHN SCHNEIDER



On the Billy Mitchell en route to Casablanca, I pulled night guard duty at the base of a 20 mm gun tub which had connecting water tubes running to the gun. Messing around I opened a petcock and water ran out. Thinking it was rainwater, I drained it dry. Only later did I find out it was for cooling hot 20mm barrels! The next day, the gun was used to shoot down a barrage balloon that had broken loose. Needless to say, the hot barrels, with no water to cool them, turned blue and twisted out of shape. There was a lot of yelling from the regular gun crews but nothing came of it!

With me aboard ship, a friend had a full head of blond hair and decided to let another buddy give him a needed haircut. He got a real chop job...so bad my friend wore his OD helmet liner hat to cover it, day and night, even after reaching Africa. Arab natives slipped into the camp every night and stole everything they could get their hands on...even the helmet liner where it hung on the center tent pole! Brazen Arabs (pronounced "A"-RAB!!

On arriving at Ajaccio, Corsica, we got settled in our tents and then went to town. There were dirty outdoor pissers in the streets that were often plugged up with waste overflow running down the gutters. The local people paraded up and down those filthy streets day and night from one end to the other, walking through the overflow, creating a real mess. Most of the paraders were young, local gals showing off for the G.I.s. On evening, I saw a short, plump lady, all made up, standing on the corner with a furry, white muffler draped across her bare shoulders. Closer inspection revealed it to be her white, fuzzy poodle that was doing the draping...her thing, her gimmick that everyone knew her by!

May 5th., 1944, on an LST from Corsica to Italy (a Greek operated lend-lease LST) carrying a load of Italian POWs back to Italy. The Greeks treated them like dirt, but one of them told me it didn't matter because they were being taken home and he would soon be in his native sunny Italy!!!

When we arrived at the port of Maddalena, Sardinia, the crazy Greeks had trouble trying to tie up at a pier. Due to a heavy crosswind, the LST drifted at an angle toward another pier, missed it but swung toward a third pier and ended up drifting into a French submarine moored there. The French took a dim view of their seamanship and were yelling and cussing, the Greeks were yelling and we were yelling (the Italians didn't care!) but all the screaming

didn't prevent the LST from a collision with the sub, smashing a huge hole in one of the landing craft doors! When it hit, the French crew came charging up out of the sub like ants out of an ant hill! The submarine's propeller guard did the LST damage but also caused a leak in the sub. As the Greek ship pulled back, the sub was rapidly settling lower at the stern so the French crewmen began to pump it out. The rest of the day at anchor, we spent dining on C-rations. The collision apparently caused the LST john to be flooded so we had to use the C-ration crates filled with sand, for a john...like a kitty litter box! The POWs were awarded the latrine (litter box) detail! Night brought on an air raid. A lot of anti-aircraft fire lit up the sky but we could only watch. The next day we were at sea again headed for Naples. Since the front loading door was bashed in, the Greeks lashed it up tight thus the cargo had to be offloaded by crane...a 10 hr. job!

Going to Foggia one night with a full weapons carrier load of guys aboard, the driver hit a donkey cart he failed to see on the road, flipping it into a ditch upside down. Both the driver and the donkey were screaming. The Italian driver screaming we owed him for the damages and the donkey out of pain! We asked where his U.S. military furnished red lantern was! It seems he had removed the red lens and was using the lamp in his home. Therefore we just righted his cart, strapped in the donkey and sent him on his way!

On a supply trip to Algiers, we rented a hotel room, then went out to scout the town. We were having a drink in a local bar when a big Canadian merchant mariner told us we were wasting our money on drinks there and that he had B&B and Canadian Club liquor available free plus the latest phonograph records in his cabin on a freighter. We (all 6 of us) agreed to take him up on it so we went along, drank his hootch and listened to his recordings. After awhile, 3 of us returned to the hotel and went to bed. We were awakened later by a loud commotion but went back to sleep. In the morning we saw that one of the guys we left at the freighter was bloody and scratched up like he'd been in a fight. He told us the big Canadian turned out to be queer and had made a pass at him so he beat him up (he was as big as the Canadian). Most of the scratches and blood were from a big stray cat he'd picked up and tried to give a bath in the bidet...that was the commotion as the cat declined to be bathed!

At the end of the Foggia airfield was an aircraft junkyard of wrecked and burned airplanes. A young squadron member picked out an intact B-17 fuselage, insulated it and made it his own cozy den where he brought females for nightly trysts. When we heard about it about 20 of us decided to put him out of business (eds note: obviously out of jealousy!). One night he had 2 gals there with him, we surrounded the plane and started throwing rocks at it from all angles. It made a lot of noise banging against the aluminum and caused a lot of shrieking as the women ran out of the B-17 and down the road. The fellow finally came out too but decided the odds were too one-sided. He was warned the same thing would happen again with any repeat performance.

Gene Posterli and I were sitting leaning against a P-boat wheel shooting the breeze when I noticed that his PBV across the hardstand had one of its shock struts low causing the plane to lean over a little. He said it could be easily fixed by bleeding a little fluid out of the shock strut on the high side. Some filling plugs have straight threads and some are tapered. Unknown to Gene, his planes struts were tapered, so when he unscrewed it a little to allow some bleed, it was too loose, blew out allowing the hydraulic fluid to shoot out like a huge hypodermic needle. Now the ship tilted way over the other way and Gene was soaked with red fluid! What a mess. I gave him a hand rigging up a lift and replacing the fluid but the cleaning up he had to do by himself! Afterwards, we had a good laugh about how the old CAT looked leaning over like a sick mammoth.

One night while on CQ duty at squadron headquarters, I watched as the window at the end of the hut turned from pink to red. I jumped up and ran outside where I found a tent in flames. After calling the base fire dept. I woke up everyone I could to help save as much as possible. The tents occupant was not too well liked but I woke him anyway. We did what we could and the fire crew finished the job. Any time there is an emergency in any area, the Provost Marshall is notified. He stationed a guard on the burned tent and in the morning inspected the items salvaged from the fire. There had been problems with equipment missing from the PBVs...like morphine syringes from medical kits. Some of these were found in the fire debris along with gallon cans of cheese, fruit cocktail, marmalade, rolls of unexposed aerial mapping film, exposed film of naked women, Xmas messages, etc. The tents occupant was taken away under suspicion and we never heard of him again.

We used to sit by the flight line listening to the control tower radio messages. This day a call came in for an emergency clearance from a B-25 making an approach with only one engine running. The runway ran diagonally across our flight line so we had a ringside seat to watch his descent. As luck would have it, the operating engine cut out just as he straightened up for his final approach, causing the plane to tip down and flutter like a leaf and crash into the dirt beside the runway. We all ran to the wreckage ASAP to help any survivors. One guy crawled out of the waist gunners position and walked toward me and I quickly got him away from the plane and had him sit on the ground. The man, covered completely with dirt and dust, was George Wehrlin, one of our own 1st. ERS members. With everyone gotten out of the wreck, we found a second of our men, Pistolozzi, was also aboard and was safe too. Apparently both guys were in the B-25 waist positions taking turns sitting in the radio operators chair and other crew positions. George was shaken but unhurt but Pisto suffered a bad foot injury necessitating a hospital stay and healing problems caused him to be transferred out of the squadron.

CHUCK DILL



Mingle

Lt. Carl Mingle was something else! He couldn't be in a bar, or anywhere, over 5 minutes without knowing 80% of the people there...especially the women! Girls flocked to him like he was a magnet in a needle box! Once in Monroe, LA on a cross country transition flight, we went bar hopping. I liked to follow Mingle around just to pick up what he didn't want! This night he got acquainted with 2 girls, he got the mature one, I took the other...(they averaged about 23 years old, his was 31 and mine was 15! I think they might have been mother and daughter!). We took them home where I kissed mine goodnight and left...too much risk hustling a 15 year old! Mingle didn't get home until 6 AM. I got lost after I left the girl, wandering around looking for Papa Joes where we were staying, (a navigation school friend of Lt. Wellings) until picked up by MPs who graciously took me there as they were acquainted with Joe! The whole crew, except Welling, left a party held that night, to Wellings disgust, because Jarman thought we were being snubbed by some high brass guests who disapproved of our fraternizing. That happened to us on several occasions. I missed the friendship of Mingle after he was lost in Corsica...his wry humor, which often sobered us up when he caught us in a heated knock-down, drag-out fight, with, "Did you fellas have any words before you fell out???"

KEN RISEDORF



The Great India Tiger Hunt

One morning in Agartala, India, Bob Boswell, Ernie Cavallo, Fred Murphy and I, grabbed our carbines and set out to hunt tigers! Natives had told us stories of tigers coming right into the bamboo bashes and carrying people away. We fancied we were big game hunters and would help rid the area of man eating tigers!

We roamed around about 1/2 mile from the basha area, shooting at about anything we saw. There were several, large turkey buzzards circling overhead so we decided to try to shoot one of them down. We all concentrated on one bird and each time it was hit, feathers would fly. They were hardy targets but one finally fell...down and down he came, hitting the ground with a bang and a cloud of dust. What a mess and stink! It was crazy! We regretted shooting it as buzzards were scavengers in a country where that was necessary!

I moved off to one side while the other 3 moved to my left. I could barely see them although it was fairly flat there. This may have been a planting field during the monsoon season but now it was so dry there was nothing growing.

With the other guys shooting and me popping away at the birds, we saw no tigers...none anywhere! They were probably all in the brush laughing at us!

The low ground started to get higher where there were some brush and trees, when, suddenly, in the distance, I heard screaming and yelling like crazy! It wasn't the other guys although I couldn't see them, I could hear them shooting. They were off to my left and the shrieking was in front of me. Then I saw some natives coming out of the brush toward me...about 12 men. One was carrying a small form and a woman was following him. Every few feet, the woman would drop to the ground and beat it with her fist and scream! Then she would get up, catch up to the men, stop and beat the ground and scream again! I started to go to meet them but then thought better of it and waited. I could see Boswell, Cavallo and Murphy now and I yelled and waved my arms for them to get over to me. Instead, they looked at me and waved back...they're waving and I'm waving! My gun was empty so I put a clip in and fired a few rounds in the air and the guys came running!

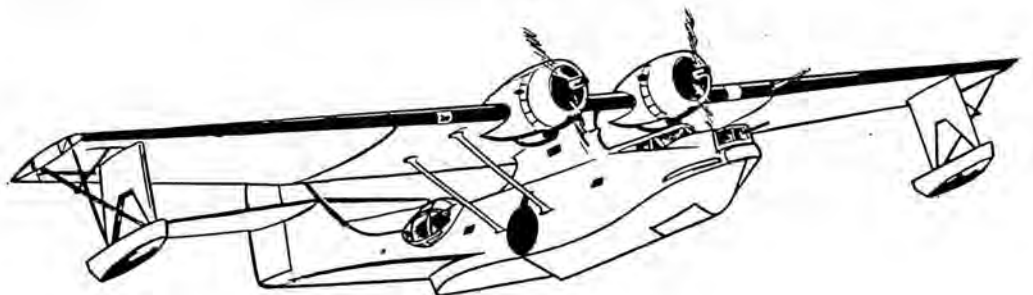
In the meantime, the group approaching reached me. One of them spoke a little English. He said, "You shoot boy!" "I don't understand," I said.

He said, "Look!" The man who was carrying a small child in his arms, pulled the kid's shorts down revealing a little blood coming out of a small hole in the cheek of his rear end. The wound didn't seem very deep and I saw an exit hole near the crack of his buttocks, but no blood. Thank God the bullet must have just grazed him! The woman must have been his mother. The man carrying the child said, "You do something...you fix?" The guys suggested we take him back to the airbase. I told the man to bring the boy with us..."You understand, doctor?" He said, "No!". I said, "Doctor fix boy!" and he indicated that he understood.

It took us about 20 minutes to reach the base. I told the first sergeant about the accident. He called the adjutant, Wilmot Pierce, who called an ambulance and told us to take the whole bunch to the other side of the airfield to the Canadian "Whimpy" base. The sentry there asked what he could do for us and I told him of our accident troubles. He asked if the victim was dead and when I told him he wasn't, just a flesh wound the sentry said to just take him back to the bush and forget about...that there were a million of those people around. "We can't do that, can't your medics help us?" "No! We can't let you on our base!" "Where the heck can we go?" He told us of a civilian hospital 5 miles down the road. There, an Indian nurse, who spoke fluent English, let the boy and his father in. She came back out in about 10 minutes and told us he was going to be OK, he didn't seem to hurt and nothing was broken. "He'll be alright!" She took information from us like our name, rank and outfit and assured us we'd hear from her later or maybe not at all!

Back at camp. Pierce told me to play it cool and not to spread the story around the squadron. No one seemed to know anything had happened and I didn't hear any more about it. A week later we got orders to pull out and had just a week to pack up. Then we hopped in our C-46 and flew to Calcutta en route to Okinawa and the typhoon there that blew everything away but us!

I sometimes think of that little boy and wonder where he is now!





The first lifesaving mission to be made by the 1st, Emergency Rescue Squadron out of Ajaccio, Corsica was on April, 8th, 1944.

We were based at Ajaccio when we were called to fly our first mission. At the briefing, we were advised of at least one survivor down in the Ligurian Sea north of Corsica and south of southern France. I remember the date well since it was my mother's birthday!

Our pilot was Capt. Grey, replacing an ill regular pilot, John Turnbull. We took off and headed north flying at about 500 feet due to a very low ceiling. The rest of our crew consisted of, Lt. Burns, copilot; Lt. Lyle, navigator; M/Sgt. Asbury, engr.; Sgt. Gill, asst. engr.; Sgt. Bolles, radar; Sgt. Sackis, medic and myself as radio oper.

When we reached the designated search area, we began our expanding square search and for several hours but spotted nothing. As we were about to break radio silence to ask permission to return to base, someone shouted, "dingy sighted!". We immediately circled down to 50-100 feet and sure enough, there was a man in a rubber raft, waving furiously. The sea swells were nearly 20 ft. high and it was our rookie mission. Should we leave the man and radio for a rescue launch or land and risk not being able to take off? While we circled the dingy, Grey suggested we take a vote. Every crew member voted to land! Needless to say, we were very apprehensive, but rescues were our job so Capt. Grey said, "Okay, here we go!" picked a wave, throttled back as much as he safely could and rode the trough of the wave down with a beautiful stall landing!

As we taxied toward the survivor, the pilot gave the Cat too much throttle and the nose plunged down into the huge waves, almost like a diving submarine. Thus it was difficult to get close enough to the dingy to get its occupant into the plane. However, when we did get near enough, a rope was tied around me. I got into our dingy and threw a rope to the man. Fortunately, he still had enough strength to hold on while the crew pulled both of us to the PBY's blister. Then we tried to takeoff but every time power was increased, the nose went down and we were unable to attain enough speed to lift off the water. It was then decided that we should taxi as best we could in the direction of Corsica, not really knowing how far from it we were. I again was instructed to break radio silence to send out an SOS repeatedly, hopefully to attract assistance.

Finally, 2 British Spitfire fighters appeared overhead. One climbed to approximately 15,000 ft and circled while the other stayed at about 500 ft. This procedure enabled me to use VHF equipment to talk to one of the pilots. However, since they had been searching for us for quite a while, like us, they were low on fuel, but informed us they had made arrangements for a HSL (high speed launch) to come and get us.

By the time the Spits left, it was dark and with minimal fuel, we had no power for lights, etc. We had some K-rations but no-one was hungry and flashlights, but decided to use them sparingly. Lyle speculated we were near Elba, still occupied by the Germans, and we saw light flashes which Capt. Grey said not to acknowledge. Then we heard a voice out of the darkness with an unmistakable British accent, saying "I say, old boy. We know you're out there, but give us a signal!" With that, our flashlight was waved frantically and a British HSL drew close to rescue the rescuers! We transferred the Aussie pilot first, then the launch crew tried to pull the PBY with ropes, but they broke. Next they offered to take us all on board and blow up our plane! Of course we all strenuously objected to that! A second HSL was radioed for, given our position, and a request for heavy lines to tow us with. The second HSL towed us to Bastia where the Red Cross met us with coffee and donuts, a ground crew checked out our plane, gassed it up and we flew back to Ajaccio.

Two weeks later we were told to assemble for a high ranking English officer. We fell into formation and he asked for the mission's radio operator. He then informed us that atop the Island of Malta was a German gun emplacement and that my continuous SOS signal was intercepted and acknowledged by the garrison there allowing the British to get an accurate fix on their positions and they were thus able to destroy the enemy defenses.

After that first experience, it was business as usual!



DELWIN SHANKS

Chute Theft

From the replacement depot in Calcutta, India, I was assigned in February, 1945, to the 7th. Emergency Rescue Squadron which was located at an airfield northeast of Calcutta (Agartala).

As a fresh 2nd. Lieutenant, I was assigned Personnel Equipment Officer for the flight crew flying gear and airborne lifeboats. I had worked in flight operations as an enlisted man and in supply after my commission.

We had no place to store parachutes, etc. except in one of two bamboo shacks near the flight line, the other was used for operations. Between my men and the native Indians we organized a "make-do" parachute shop. As I recall, we had at least 30 chutes available, but as you know, there was little way those shacks could be locked for safekeeping!

After I had been with the squadron awhile, I was made Officer of the Day...which was mostly at night! Since the flightline was three or four miles from our living quarters, I shuttled back and forth by Jeep. At any rate, this particular night I had made several rounds between the two areas. I am sure late that evening, a group of native Indians were hidden around the two bamboo shacks, watching my movements. After my usual final check, I headed back to the living area, and then the Indians broke into the shack, with little difficulty, and carted away every parachute in the place, as well as anything else they could carry. I was the sole officer on duty and I did carry a sidearm, but I have thought many times since, it would have been easy for them to have ambushed me, taken me along with the chutes, etc., cut my throat, dumped me in the jungle and been well on their way out of there!

Efforts were made to recover the stolen property to no avail. This incident was nothing compared to what some guys went through but it has stuck with me over the years. I was very fortunate in my tour of duty overseas! One of the lucky ones!

DAVID L. SMITH



We were searching off the coast of France and flew one leg too many, ending up in the harbor of Marseilles. The shore batteries let us make our turn back to a harbor island when all hell broke loose. The flak concussions tossed us around and at our slow speed, only the Lord knows why we weren't shot down. We ended up with a few small holes in the wing. I'm not sure if it happened that mission, but one time Pearson Wilson and I tied our parachutes to the blister gun mounts and pulled the ripcords so they would act as brakes landing on the short Ajaccio runway.

On one pickup in the Adriatic Sea, a downed survivor in a raft insisted on gathering up everything he had with him before he'd climb in the blister, creating a hazard for us as plumes of water told us we were being shelled although we heard no sound of gunfire. The shells had the correct distance but were off to the right some but bearing in on us. I pointed that out to the guy in the dingy but he kept picking up his things (what could be so important to a man at a time like that?) Finally I warned him we were leaving...last chance... get in or get left! He got in!

Then there was the poor British chap that the fish got to. He was already dead so I hooked him with a grabble pole and held him up while Melvin removed his dog tags and life vest and let him go. His arms were positioned above his waist out of the water but the rest of him was a skeleton from his waist to the tops of his shoes...all the flesh eaten away!

And then there was the time in Italy when Gannon suddenly started going to town to mass regularly. That didn't sound quite right to us, so a couple guys followed him one day and found "mass" was in fact a girly show! One of the performers was about 8 months pregnant (that wasn't Gannon's fault!!)

After the Southern France invasion, we were stationed at the little French town of Cuers where there was a brothel. One day the madam came to our airfield and asked to see the commander. She insisted to him that she was entitled to be paid for her front door because someone from our squadron had backed an army truck into it. It turned out that a mess sergeant had come to the house for a "visit", but he was refused entry...so he made his own!

Once we flew to Malta for beer, flying with Capt. Grey and Lt. Bilsland as co-pilot. Upon landing, when we reached the end of the runway there was a patch of grass, so the Captain retracted the nose wheel and we slid across the grass to an extra day and night in Malta.

CHUCK DILL- "You'll Never Know!"

While we were stationed in Ajaccio, Corsica, I dated an attractive young (high school) girl, Pauline Guerini, who I met at the local Red Cross there. She spoke fluent English, which "complimented my French!"

To enable her to know when I was in town, I developed a signal...I would whistle the only American tune she knew, "You'll Never Know" as I walked near her apartment and she would meet me at the community water fountain. The hitch was, every dirty little street urchin within a 2 block area, caught on and whenever they'd see me, they would whistle a loud, off key version of that song. Poor Pauline was embarrassed by these unwelcome interlopers of our private signal and would attempt to quiet them by "shussing" them from her balcony, with no noticeable effect. It would do no good to teach her a new song as they would gleefully copy it too!

Those kids really screwed up a good thing resulting in many mix-ups of our meetings at the water spout before we finally had to quit trying to cope with them!

BOB BELL **IKE**

The emotional, heart warming sensation and sense of pride one feels upon viewing the colors during a military ceremony is an individual thing. When it happens, it is an occasion to remember for a lifetime.

Such was the case at Rheims, France, on the 7th. of May, 1945 for me! That day is recorded forever in my mind with personal gratitude, as the day I recieved from General Eisenhower, the warm greeting that only he could convey.

Liberated from a prisoner of war camp on April 30, 1945, the path of return to allied control led me to a small airstrip on the edge of Rheims, France. In the distance, the famous cathedral dominated the war scarred landscape. Around the fields edge lay evidence of the trenches of World War one.

Groups of recent POW's awaited aircraft for transportation to a processing center in Le Havre, France. As a 1st. Lieutenant in charge of a group of 15 men, we lounged around awaiting the next order to move. The variety of clothing worn would scarcely resemble any military organization. There was a mixture of tattered military uniforms of various armies, even German, and including civilian garb which necessity demanded to afford individuals warmth during the past winter months. I wore a Canadian Air Force jacket, English infantry pants and a pair of their hob-nailed boots.

Word had spread that the war had officially ended with our release and as the morning sun rose higher the men became more restless and resentful at the long unexplained delay.

Around 10 AM, there was movement and apparent preparation of some sort among groups further up the road. The motion spread as each group arose and brushed itself off. We were warned by a runner that a unit of high ranking officers was expected along the line of repatriated men. Two groups along the line ahead of mine came to attention and then broke into a milling, cheering cluster. I wondered what was going on. As the officers approached, I called the group to attention and was surprised to salute the man and uniform I had only seen in pictures before...General Eisenhower! He returned my salute, then shook my hand, gave "at ease", and was immediately surrounded by smiling, friendly troops. He shook other hands, patted backs and asked individuals where they were from and how they were feeling! The response was obvious as was appreciation of their commander-in-chief! His entourage then moved on to the next group of excited soldiers. And so it went from group to group on a day to remember in the life of so many who endured so much.





After WW2, I had the opportunity to serve as military aide to Alaska's governor, the honorable Ernest Gruening, during inaugural festivities for President Dwight D. Eisenhower. I was selected by the inaugural committee since I had recently completed a tour with the 10th. Rescue Squadron at Alaska's Elmendorf AFB. One of the highlights of escorting the governor was Sunday evening's Governor's Reception and Ball which was attended by governors of every state, their wives, families and political dignitaries. Being from California, I was pleased and delighted to meet the warm and personable Mrs. Earl Warren and her lovely daughters.

On Monday, as a guest of Governor Gruening, I accompanied him to the Cosmo Club for luncheon which also included a group of close acquaintances.

Because of the political implications, the governor carefully briefed me as to his planned activities. I was asked to see him off at the airport and to take care of the party of Senator Engstrom who were Alaska's republican inaugural representatives.

Our first event was at the Willard Hotel where the Alaskan group held forth with celebrations, serious frivolity and convivial socializing. Senator Engstrom and party were escorted to their place for the ceremony, luncheon and parade.

We gathered at the armory for the inaugural ball...the Alaskan contingent, my wife Elaine, sister Muriel and her husband Foss Kramer were all invited to join the group.

Being a native of the West coast and having served my country over the years, it meant a great deal to me to play even a small part in this impressive national event at the seat of power. I found it extremely exhilarating and rewarding to have had the good fortune to be selected for the assignment.

Having closely followed the recent presidential election campaign and inaugural activities of President Bush with interest and pleasure, my mind reflected on the events of 48 years ago and the worldwide occurrences since.

CHUCK DILL



Nazi Prisoners

We were a USAAF Air-Sea Rescue Squadron (1st. ERS) sweating out the war in Ajaccio, Corsica in 1944. Our missions were radioed to our headquarters from the 12th. Air Force Command in Naples, Italy (or perhaps it was Foggia or Rome)? At any rate, when they received reports of ditched aircraft, we were given latitude and longitude coordinates to aid our navigators in locating the downed plane and crew. Throughout the month of June '44, we had been very active due to the Southern France Invasion which closely followed the Normandy landings in northern France. With all 3 of our "C" squadron PBY's flying several sorties daily, not to mention equal activity by our 6 Catalinas stationed at Foggis (Italy) Main and at Grottaglia, Italy, who were also on continual standby!

On June 14th. at 8 a.m., our crew was notified of a plane in the water and given a fix of 43 N, and 08 E. (as I remember!). We took off immediately and flew to the given position within 1/2 hour. We found the stricken aircraft still floating as we approached at a low altitude and were surprised to identify it as a German JU88 bomber. Of course this excited our whole crew... our first face-to-face contact with the enemy and although we had frequently seen German fighters who were always chased away by our fighter escort, we weren't sure what sort of reception to expect. We could see 3 men in the yellow dingy sporting a small red sail, near the plane wallowing in the water, as we turned into the wind to land. We touched down about 100 yards away and cautiously approached with a Cal. 50 machine aimed at them plus the side arms of each crew member! They didn't appear ferocious as Supermen should...really more like any 3 young guys about to be pulled out of the drink, but they WERE the enemy, and we were taking no chances...even if we might have overreacted with a total of 7 automatic in hand and ready to fire!

None of the 3 appeared to be injured so Jarman, our pilot cut the port engine and taxied close to the dingy so they could clamber aboard through the blister (a domed, plexiglass observation window/entry, which swung inward to allow access to the plane). With all those guns pointed at the German flyers, they definitely understood their position, despite our inability to communicate any other way. We indicated with gestures we wanted each of them to lie down in one of the 4 bunks available in the PBY. At this time they looked chastened and worried, especially one young man who looked about 17 (even younger than most of us), and gave the impression he might burst into tears at any minute. Probably he was just scared of pending imprisonment or perhaps even thought he'd be tortured or killed. I guess I might have been like that had the situation been reversed!

I think JU88's normally carried 4 man crews , so apparently one member had been lost in ditching. The other 2 were obviously older and seemed reasonably comfortable with their situation, accepting it as but a temporary inconvenience. One especially

maintained an air of superiority! We continued our wary vigilance, not getting too near them for fear of possibly being overpowered...afterall, they were capable of taking over our ship and flying it to Germany, then WE'D be the prisoners! After we were airborne, the 2 older flyers made an effort to get out of the bunks, until our brandished weapons convinced them to remain prone. They scanned the Cat's interior with obvious disdain as if they couldn't understand how the thing could get off the water! I admit, the PBY's weren't streamlined beauties but they were notoriously tough, reliable airplanes, one of the most revered of all American warplanes. They flew slow but beautifully off both land and sea!

The older 2 Nazi's grew bolder. They seemed more confident and curious each minute with an air of haughty arrogance! One indicated my gunner wings and pointed to his uniform insignia as if to suggest a trade. I could always get new wings but rarely would I get the opportunity for such a covered souvenir, so I traded with him. Other insignia were swapped between the two crews while we made sure no-one got up or too close!

As we neared our home base of Ajaccio, we broke radio silence to inform headquarters of our successful pick-up of Germans so a Military Police prisoner escort could be arranged. Apparently the word spread like wildfire and the hanger tarmac was packed with French cadre, base gunpit artillerymen, ground and flight crews, office personnel and MP's! When Jarman cut the engines, we could hear the French soldiers screaming for us to send out the dirty Boche. They might not have been understood but their intentions were unmistakable to the Germans! They were very concerned for their lives and thus reluctant to leave the safety of the airplane! We tried to assure them they would be protected,.. (where was the haughtiness now?). Having no alternative, they finally climbed out of the blister onto a ladder attached to the fuselage and thus to the ground amid the fanatical Frenchmen, but MP's cordoned off a line to a waiting truck and hustled the 3 shaken airmen off to interrogation as war prisoners!

We thought we deserved at least DFC's for our "harrying and outstanding heroism", but we didn't get them. Considering the acquisition of our Nazi souvenirs, we weren't upset. And it WAS an unforgettable moment of WW2 for us! We also acquired the captured dingy in which we sailed the Mediterranean the rest of the summer!





Our first mission was to French Guiana to search for Tom Harmon the All-American, Michigan football player who went down in a B25 and was the only survivor, but that's another story. We flew to Cyenne, the capitol, where we were met by officials who spoke only Portuguese and of course we spoke country English, We requested locals who knew the crash area but were swamped by big shots who only wanted a ride. We attempted to set up a square search area but in the meantime, Harmon walked out and we lost our chance at fame and glory!

Then we went to Belem, Brazil. It was Mardi Gras, the base was closed and things sort of got out of control. It was so hot I hit the sack early in GI shorts and under a mosquito net. My crew got into the local suds, caught a foot long frog and thought it would be fun to throw it in my sack, so they did! It landed on my bare chest and I proceeded to tear down the net and everything getting out of there. When I settled down, I kicked some butt!

On to Natal, Brazil , we planned to leave at midnight, checked everything twice and found our sumps had been filled to overflow. We had to pump it out which delayed us another day. The crew was happy about that...they were enjoying the black and brown skinned Brazilian lovelies!

Ascension Island is a story by its self. We were briefed that there is a 500 ft. cliff on the approach which causes a sharp updraft, but as a hot, hot pilot, I made a normal approach and when I was ready to touchdown, I was at 500 feet, took my tail between my legs and went around! So much for hot pilots!

Having a slow aircraft, I requested to leave for Africa at first light. They laughed and said we would leave when the gooney birds leave. In the morning, the runway was solid gooney birds! At night they roost on the runways for warmth and when they all leave at a certain time so do the planes! I was also warned by the tower of the "ice" on the runway...the birds left a nice layer of guano and I could feel the aircraft slip and slide!

This planeload of country kids headed for Accra, Africa. We hit it right on the nose because Glen Tanner was a super navigator which he proved to be on future missions. Walking toward the B.X. in the morning, I noticed a group of concerned GI's. Apparently a loaded GI had sat down against a giant

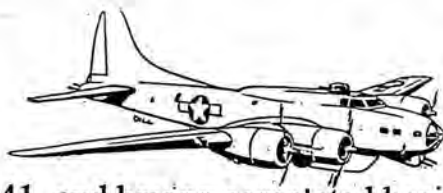
anthill and passed out. All that was left was bones and equipment! I was a long time forgetting that one!

We flew East to Maiduguri located in NE Nigeria. We were somewhat of a curiosity ...a flying boat in the Sahara! Next stop was El Fasher in Eastern Sudan. We got a real test here flying into a "hammertan", a dust storm with no wind! The talcum type dust rose to 7000 feet, alot like our fog! We had to come down through it and made 6 passes at the airstrip. They were shooting flares for us and had vehicles lined up with lights on to try to help us land. They had some instrument landing equipment and we had limited experience. When we landed, the tower called to ask me to talk down a Limey pilot flying a B25. He had made many unsuccessful approaches and was upset and talking too fast. I suggested he start all over and found he was a hockey fan so to calm him down, I talked about Gordie Howe, the only hockey player I knew! That helped him settle some and he brought it in OK. The next day, one of his crew refused to fly but he finally relented.

We went to Kartoum, Sudan, then to the protectorate of Aden. We were surprised how many of the people servicing our Catalina had fingers missing and were told that was the punishment for breaking the law! Then on to Oman where, with Iceland, is one of only 2 places the American flag cannot be flown!

Our next stop was Karachi, India (later Pakistan) where we were delayed a few days. Some of the crew were on sick call as a result of their enjoyable stopover in Brazil and the friends they made too closely!

Next, Agartala, India (now Bangladesh), a British-Australian base, our jungle home for the next few months. We flew a mission to French Indo-China to ferry out some French women and children who had a pile of luggage on a barge bigger than the PBY. I had to limit them to 2 bags but those women outfoxed me. It was really hot, but they put on all the clothes they had...one on top of another...even fur coats! But what my crew enjoyed the most, was when a French officer grabbed me and planted a kiss on each cheek! They got a big kick out of that...said I looked a little shocked and surprised!!!



After enlisting in 1941, and having completed basic training, I was assigned to the Fifth. Bomb Group at Hickam Field, Hawaii, driving a truck in the quartermaster motor pool.

Around November 20, 1941, all personnel at both Hickam and Wheeler Fields were put on emergency alert and all planes and equipment were dispersed. On December 5, the alert was called off, the aircraft were lined up on the field and the navy, which had been sent to sea, returned to Pearl, guns were unloaded, hatches opened and liberty was given to almost everyone!

On Sunday morning, the 7th., I lay in bed late and missed the mess hall breakfast, so I and several other fellows, decided to go and eat at the PX. At the PX, as we looked across the harbor about 7:50, and saw planes flying towards us, strafing and bombing the Navy yard. I saw one plane clearly and knew it wasn't one of ours because it had red balls on its wings! By this time they were coming in bunches, attacking everything in sight! Breakfast was forgotten!!!

I later learned the messhall had been hit and 37 men were killed and several others injured. (I don't know why, but I've often wondered if there was a reason I didn't go to breakfast at the messhall that fateful morning!) I sprinted to my barracks to get my helmet and gas mask as another wave of Japanese planes came roaring over so low I could easily see one of the pilots. He had a big grin on his face and his left eye-tooth was missing! He was so close, I could've hit him with a baseball, if I'd had a baseball! I didn't even have a pocket knife on me!

I was assigned, with a group of 6 or 8 men, to a post by the seawall where Hickem and the channel joined. We were to guard the channel to prevent anyone who might come in that way. I never did get breakfast although about 2300 hours, we did get sandwiches.

A close friend of mine, Alford Hayes and some other guys, ran across the street to the flight line to try and get some of our planes in the air just as a bomb landed a few feet away and Hayes was killed instantly...and he didn't have a scratch on him!!!

I survived one of the most famous battles in American history, as President Roosevelt said, "A Day of Infamy!" The rest of my war was anticlimactic compared to the treachery of Pearl Harbor that December day in 1941!!!

DICK HAIDEN



Egypt was probably the most fascinating place I saw during my tour in the service

We had boarded an English troop ship somewhere in North Africa, probably Tunis. We arrived at Port Said on the Mediteranian side of the Canal. The ship was going down the east side of Africa to pick up some Indian troops going back to India, so our CO arranged to have them pick us up on the other end of the canal . Meanwhile, some trucks were arranged for, to transport us to Cairo for some R and R.

It had been suggested that ,as the pickpockets in Cairo were some of the best in the world, that we put our wallets in the inside pockets of our blouses and keep them buttoned. Three or four of us were walking down the street and one of our guys had a note book that he kept in his hip pocket. Somebody tapped him on the shoulder and handed him his notebook. Just goes to show, there is honor , even among thieves.

The high point was a guided tour, starting with the great pyramid. We got to go up into the inside of it. What an astounding feat of engineering it must have been to build it. Our tour guide told us that there was supposed to be a curse that who ever opened it would die a violent death.

We got to go inside of the sphinx. It is actually a temple. Absolutely amazing. I can see why it is one of the wonders of the world. The inside is of alabaster, a very delicate marble. Just gorgeous.

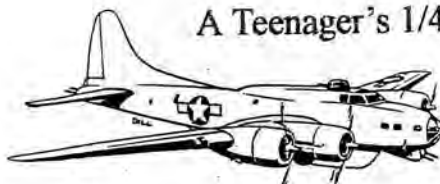
Next we visited the Great Mosque, I think it was supposed to be the biggest one in the Islamic world. We had to put on sheepskin booties over our shoes, This was an exception to the troops as no shoes are allowed inside the mosque

Most amazing and fascinating. I would like to see it again..

Calcutta, India, 1945,probably late June or early July. All our stuff had been packed, ready to leave India for somewhere else. We knew it would be in the Pacific, but that's about all. Some of "A" Flight had been flown down to Calcutta in advance of the rest of the squadron.

We had no duties to perform. Swam some at a local public swimming pool (green with algae) . We could go into town but we were warned not to get off the beaten path because if we did we probably would not be seen again and the MPs would not come looking for us.

A friend and I went to a bazaar,(I suppose what could be described as a sort of open air mall.) Just about anything and every thing available. My friend was looking for some luggage. We didn't find any so we asked a person that we thought was an employee. " You want luggage? Follow, follow, Off we went at following at a half trot. That guy was realy mobiling. We hadn't gone maybe a hundred feet when we realized we were no longer in the bazaar. He wasn't finding luggage. He was luring us out where we could get our throats slit and robbed of anything valuable, including our clothing and dumped somewhere, never to be found again. Needless to say we turned tail and high tailed it back to the bazaar. He never did find any luggage.



JOHN CYPHERS

I'll never forget the day after signing the papers for my new B17, all the equipment on board, cases of C-rations and some other goodies,, a master sergeant, probably in his 40's, said to me, a mere 19 year old, "Son, you take good care of this airplane as it's worth over \$250,000!" I replied that I would!

Our first overseas adventure was at a big bomber field at Foggia, Italy. We lived in tents there and I shared mine with Bob Zollenger, my co-pilot. Bob was 5'6" tall and had dreamed of being a fighter pilot but 5'6" Bob and 6'3" Jack ended up together in a B-17 bomber. All of our B-17 groups shared a field with the British, who flew Wellingtons and Lancasters. They flew at night while we flew during the day!

Flying a B-17 in the 99th. Bomb Group was a super experience for a 19 year old. It was customary for a rookie first pilot to fly his initial 5 missions as a co-pilot with an experienced pilot. My first mission started by arising at 2:00 AM, then breakfast and on to briefing for the days mission. By the time daylight came, we had started our engines and taken off into the wild blue yonder, with each aircraft joining with another and another into a squadron and with other squadrons into groups.

I'll never forget when I wasn't at the controls, and looked out the window at 999 other B-17's climbing into the sky! What a sight! We had a maximum bomb effort of 1000 planes going to Vienna, Austria to bomb the Messerschmitt Aircraft plant. I remember the outside temperature gauge read minus 46 degrees centigrade! I thought, "How can these engines continue churning in this type of weather?"...but they did!

We didn't have much fighter opposition that day but we did start to see black puffs of smoke all over the sky...ack-ack! The harmless looking black puffs increased by the second until suddenly the outer pane of our windshield shattered! Up to this point I said to myself, "When is the action going to begin?" At this point I said, "OK good Lord, I've seen enough!!! I don't know how many planes we lost that day but it was scary seeing them hit and lost at a faster rate throughout the sky as we made our bomb run! After bombs away we headed off to try and make our way home. It is an awesome sight to see aircraft as far as you can see, ploughing through the black puffs and seeing a tragic plane hit and drop out of formation and you think, "That

could have been me!”

Going home is probably worse than the trip to the target as we are now tired and scared from what we have seen. As we approach the coast of Italy, we, who have no wounded, are relieved because our fighter escort continues to shield us from enemy fighters and we have no more fear of the anti-aircraft! As we near the Foggia airfield, the planes with wounded aboard or structural damage, have the green light to land first. After we land, we are met by our happy ground crew to celebrate with the flight crew that we made it back. A shot of liquor a debriefing period and off to the sack for some well earned sleep! When we awake we are painfully aware of all the comrades that we will never see again and of the horrors and realities of war which we will never forget!

That “old” supply sergeant who had me sign for the \$250,000 airplane would be proud of me. I brought it home in one piece (except for a windshield!) The plane’s value increased by at least \$10,000 when they put a 10 ft. Higgins rescue boat under the bomb bay of the B-17 while I was still in Italy. I carried this boat on rescue missions in India and Okinawa.

There were many, many exciting and horrifying moments which are not included in this story. In the world today, it is difficult to imagine a teenager undergoing such responsibility and experiences before the age of twenty. If we are ever able to convey the horrors of war and of the suffering from it throughout the world, perhaps war will only be read about in history books!



Anyone who remembers George Carlonas, knows that he was a very peaceful person who had no use for violence or firearms. After the war, he spent 35 years as a Mary Knoll brother, digging wells, building churches, schools and homes for the natives. He is now retired in the Mary Knoll home.

George Carlonas, P.O. Box 305, Mary Knoll, NY, 10545-0305

KEN RISEDORF First Class on the India Express

In late 1944, C flight and headquarters flight left Corsica for Italy and A flight followed from Southern France. From Italy we went to India. After debarking in Calcutta, volunteers were asked for to go by train with our baggage to our new base at Agartala. I volunteered and George Carlonas agreed to go with me.

That night we stayed at a dorm in a huge warehouse. The next morning in Calcutta, we were to report somewhere on the main drag, to pick up orders to transport our baggage. We hailed a rickshaw and set off. I was really out of uniform in a suntan shirt and blue dungarees Currier had picked up from some SeaBees, and both of us had carbines, Two MP's went by going the other way but quickly turned around and stopped us. We were asked what was going on! "You're out of uniform and what's with the carbines?" We told them we had just gotten off the boat from Corsica and were moving squadron equipment to our new base north of Calcutta. "We have to pick up our orders, and load all the squadron personnel's stuff on the train to our new base." "You guys are a disgrace...outta uniform and carrying weapons, but I think I know where you're supposed to go." He gave us directions but on our arrival an officer couldn't believe what he was seeing...we couldn't be GI's ...not dressed like that! He checked our ID's and papers and told us to be at the Howrah Station at 3 o'clock where we would be told what to do next. We reported to Howrah...it was huge...and were told to be sure to be there at 3PM when the train would be ready. By this time we were very hungry and there was a little lunch wagon there, but we were afraid to eat any of the food! At 3 we reported back and the guy in charge said, "Oh yeah. I got your paper work here, but you missed the train!" "We were told 3 o'clock!" "Well, the train left a little early but it's at the next stop about an hour away." "What do we do now?" He told us to stay with him, put us on the next train (didn't cost us anything) and we caught up with our train at the next station! There, a man behind a desk, gave us a paper with a boxcar number on it. "Is this the car with our baggage?" we asked. He assured us it was and that we had to ride with our baggage. We had no choice and George thought this was a big joke! He's laughing through the whole mixed up thing!

We went into the railyard looking for our car among hundreds of them sitting around. We finally found it but it was padlocked! There was no activity around at all but there was an empty passenger car on a siding and we were



freezing so we got in where it was warmer. We sat all night keeping an eye on “our” car and in the morning, decided to break the lock. We smashed it with a carbine, climbed in and closed the door. (Oh what one does for ones country in times of crisis!)

Shortly after, the train took off...all boxcars, no passengers! We still had had nothing to eat all day so we were starving and thirsty! We moved baggage around to make a comfortable place to rest and heard clinking noises...like cans! Nothing was locked so we went through some promising bags and found cans of beer and some K-rations. They saved our lives! When the train would stop, we’d get off to relieve ourselves. It wasn’t too bad a ride after all as we kept the doors ajar to enjoy the scenery...palm trees, people working the fields and lots of livestock. There were other GI’s about 10 cars ahead and they were shootin at everything...trees, monkeys, even cows.

That night we tried to sleep but the train was being re-madeup with new cars realigned...banged and slammed together so we couldn’t get much sleep. We still had K-rations and beer and the engineer came back and offered us tea but we didn’t have anything to put it in, so we didn’t get any tea.

The next 24 hours were uneventful but by then we were really very tired and still hadn’t had much sleep. I did finally start to drop off but the train stopped suddenly and woke me but George snored on! I heard people talking “Indian” outside and the door started to open. I poked Carlonas awake and asked if he had his carbine handy, “But it’s not loaded,” he said. He hadn’t brought any ammo! “You know how I feel about guns, Ken! I even conveniently got sick to avoid going to the rifle range!” I had 2 clips so I put one of them in his gun and told him to aim at the roof but not to pull the trigger till I said to...and then keep firing through the whole 15 shell clip! I aimed my gun at the top of the door and the intruders had it open about a foot now and I said, “ready!” and we both fired away! George ran out of ammo but he had a good size hole in the roof! The guys took off fast! George sticks his head out and hollers, “Yoohoo, are you there?” The engineer, hearing shots, came back to see what happened. We also told him we were still hungry and he got us lots of bananas and peanuts...we hoped they were germ-free!

When we arrived in Agartala, the motor pool guys asked what took us so long. I told them to “blank” off! They unloaded the baggage and took us to our Basha about 5 miles from the airfield.

We were grateful some guys had beer and K-rations in their duffles , but they’re probably still swearing at the guys who stole their stuff!

WALTER WEBB



On the morning of 25 March 1945, a call came into 7th ERS Headquarters, Agartala, reporting a 7th Bomb Group B-24 crew down in the Ganges Delta region. Some of the airmen were alive at a Bengal Forest Service patrol station. Others from the crew had bailed out, but their condition and whereabouts were unknown.

Flight C's 2nd Lt. Claud C. Shellenbarger and 2nd Lt. Mancefield Barrow were picked to fly the difficult rescue mission. "Shelly's" OA-10A Catalina was #976, **Old Ironsides**; "Mance's," #975, **The Snatch**. Flight C's Operations Officer 1st Lt. Threl C. ("Bunkie") Jarman accompanied Shellenbarger as an Observer.

The two aircraft took off at 0520, about sunrise, and headed 195 miles southwest to the patrol station's coordinates. Upon arrival, the planes spotted the patrol station almost immediately. Shelly's ship landed in the river and taxied over to the station, a wooden shack on stilts. Meanwhile Mance orbited overhead.

The day before an Indian forest officer, Qudrat Ghani, had rescued two of the downed crew members at the ditch site and ferried them and the body of a third man by motor launch some 20 miles to the patrol post. Unfortunately, the B-24's pilot 1st Lt. Nathan Margolies died aboard the sinking bomber. The assistant engineer also expired from his injuries upon reaching the shore of the river. The engineer himself was in severe pain from having an arm mangled by a shark, and a gunner suffered cuts and broken ribs.

The gunner pointed out on a map where he thought the other six men had bailed out. Receiving the estimated fix, Lieutenant Barrow departed for the second location. **Old Ironsides** proceeded to Calcutta, where the survivors were hospitalized.

The Margolies plane had experienced engine trouble en route from Pandaveswar Army Air Base to Thailand on a combat mission on 24 March. Forced to turn back over the treacherous Sundarbans (sun'-der-buns), with its countless interlacing tidal rivers and mangrove islands, Margolies issued the bailout command. Though altitudes were less than 1,000 feet, four of the six parachuted to earth safely. Two chutes, however, failed to open in time. These two men, including my cousin (the navigator), were never found. The four remaining crewmen stayed with the doomed plane until the pilot brought it down in a river some 12 to 14 miles north of the bailout area.

After carrying out a low-altitude, expanding-square search for the parachutists, Mance finally spotted the B-24's isolated bombardier splashing in a stream to attract attention. **The Snatch** landed off the island's southwest coast. A five-man rescue party rafted to shore and decided to split up. While Mance and navigator 1st Lt. Floyd W. Tendick began hacking their way through the dense vegetation, engineer S/Sgt. Claude T. ("Tommie") Whittamore, radarman Cpl. George F. Richardson, and medic Sgt. Bob Narber rafted up a stream.

Meanwhile the other three survivors--the copilot, radio opera-

tor, and another gunner--had together followed other streams, eventually coming upon two Bengalis in their canoe. The trio was being transported down the river when they fortuitously converged upon the bombardier and the rescue party.

The group of rescuers and survivors did not make it back to the anchored ship until after dark and after struggling in the rafts against the outgoing tidal current. After boarding the Catalina, Mance and Floyd removed their torn flight suits only to discover that they were covered with leeches! Obviously, it was something Mance never forgot because he remembered the exact number of leeches on his body--21--as well as on Lieutenant Tendick--26! Sergeant Narber carefully pulled off each of the slimy critters from the bodies of the two officers.

The OA-10A experienced a hairy night takeoff with the heavily loaded plane. Barrow had to make a number of runs across the calm river in order to create enough waves to "walk" the flying boat off the surface. Then the survivors were flown to Tezgaon.

Shelly told me his plane was one of those returning to the area in the days following the initial search to look again for the missing Margolies crewmen. Overall, during a period of four days, a total of 10 ERS aircraft scoured the delta swampland, often all day from sunrise to sundown totaling 72½ hours in the air. However, no trace could be found of the pilot, navigator, tail gunner, or the B-24. To this day, all are still missing.

Information sources for this report include the 7th ERS **Squadron History**, March 1945; Weekly Operations Report; contacts with 10 of the original 16 crew members of both rescue planes; former Squadron Commander Kent Prim; Squadron Operations Officer Wallace Walton; and three living survivors of the accident. Since the position of Mance's rescue isn't precisely known, I am still looking for his full official Mission Report of 25 March.

For the past eight years, I have been researching the Margolies accident and my cousin's AAF career and death in WWII. Using sets of coordinates from official documents, I have reproduced what I believe is the approximate return path followed by the crippled B-24, the location of the parachute drop zone, several possible ditch sites, and the approximate rescue areas for both survivor groups. Space imagery has assisted me. I have even looked into the possibility of recovering the lost bomber with its pilot, although the likelihood of finding the submerged plane is remote. The 7th's rescue mission will be part of a book I intend to write, honoring my cousin and his comrades. I plan to travel to Bangladesh, where the sites are located today, and visit the scene of the accident to memorialize the missing crewmates.

Walter N. Webb
A friend of the 7th ERS

ERNIE CAVALLO Planter's Peanuts to the Rescue

In March, 1944, the 1st. Emergency Rescue Squadron boarded the troopship Gen. Billy Mitchell at Hampton Roads, VA for our trip across the Atlantic. It was a huge ship carrying thousands of soldiers, mostly infantrymen to duty in Europe. The ocean was often rough with high rolling waves causing many soldiers to be unable to be weak for days and unable to hold down food. Fortunately, I was unaffected the entire trip!

I was assigned guard duty 6 or 7 decks below the main deck in a hold housing a contingent of black infantrymen destined for front line battle service in Italy. They were one unhappy group and showed it. Their mostly white officers could barely contain them and were even threatened they might become the first casualties of their outfit!

The only controlling person in their group was a grizzled, old black Master Sergeant but he was so seasick he couldn't get out of his bunk. My duty was to guard stacks of rations to be doled out during the trip. Somehow they were disappearing too fast! I obviously had little control and I was not about to tangle with these guys and they knew it!

One day the old master sergeant asked me if I could get him some peanuts...if only he could have peanuts...(they had to be Planter's peanuts) he was sure he could hold them down on his stomach and start to feel well again.

I pleaded with some of the sailors to let me have a few bags of Planter's peanuts...I'd even pay for them. Sure enough, they got me some! The old sarge almost cried when I gave them to him and in a short time, he was actually out of his sack and feeling his old self again! Barking orders, he had the men under control and especially warned them to treat me good or he'd personally take care of them!!! I sure felt relieved and the rest of the trip went OK! Their officers very rarely ventured down to their hold however!





We anticipated arriving in Europe and seeing the “real war”! Our troopship, the Gen. Bill Mitchell, had zig-zagged its way across the German submarine filled Atlantic to land in Casablanca, Morocco in North Africa. The thousands of G.I.’s aboard were quickly ushered ashore and boarded waiting trucks to head for battle zones all over Europe.

Our squadron was sent to nearby Camp Don Passage to await assignment. As soon as we finished our first overseas chow, a grizzled first sergeant bellowed...”YOU...YOU...and YOU are volunteering for immediate guard duty!” We were issued a WW1 Enfield rifle, a clip of bullets and given a stern lecture about a group of previous “volunteers” who were lying in a deep well with their throats slit because they didn’t follow orders! We were herded into the back of a battered army 6x6 truck and were off down a dusty road. It was dusk in an unfamiliar foreign countryside of hills, trees, dense brush, sand and tall waving grass which all looked menacing! What could be lurking there??? I heard a creaking, rusty gate swaying in the wind...just my luck to be assigned that post! The truck stopped...”You soldier! Get out here and walk 300 paces west, then back 300 paces...and remember...shoot anything that moves!!!” Then off he went with the remaining “guards” to the next drop-off!

The cold fear I felt throughout that first night is still a vivid memory! I worked out little signals with the next sentry so we wouldn’t shoot each other (and I kept saying a prayer that I was luckily in the Air Corps!) I heard a lot of shooting that night but at dawn the only enemy shot was a donkey and a cow! One of our guys must have been as scared as I was!

During the next few weeks we hung our metal mess kits across the entrance to our tents. They would clang noisily and awaken us if any intruder tried to enter. Few of us would venture out to the latrine during the night preferring to suffer. Many slept with a knife or 45 under his pillow! We even put up a metal mesh screen around the perimeter of our tent! Despite all that, would you believe that an Arab slit the tent and stole Chuck Dill’s parachute!!! And we were still a thousand miles from the real war! What lay ahead for the rookies of the 1st. ERS???



Rescue missions while stationed in Ajaccio, Corsica were going well. We had plenty of time off from our duties to go into town for fun and hopefully to stay out of trouble! However, apparently some squadron member was involved in some shady deal!

One day, First Sergeant Loeffler called an immediate muster of all C-flight and headquarters enlisted personnel on the tarmac in front of the big hanger. Muster this time of day was especially unusual! Everyone turned out and lined up shoulder to shoulder as roster was called...all present and accounted for! We were then called to attention as 2 army jeeps pulled up along side the hanger.

Several unknown officers escorted a young, attractive French girl to the line up. She moved slowly down the line stopping occasionally and peering into each face before moving on. It was apparent she was trying to identify someone who was in deep trouble!

Beads of sweat broke out on every face...later we all admitted that, although innocent, we felt we might mistakenly be fingered as the guilty one! Finally, Sgt. Loeffler dismissed us randomly and we were ordered out of the area ...except for the guilty person who remained behind!

Several days later, a rumor circulated that the boyfriend of the girl had been supplying her with quartermaster army blankets to be re-dyed and sold on the local blackmarket. As I remember, one of our supply sergeants disappeared sometime after the incident! I recall another lineup happening one other time!





ERNIE CAVALLO A Ride to Remember

While at Ajaccio, Corsica, it was standard practice to be awarded time for rest and relaxation (R&R). Fortunately, because of a great group of 1st. ERS officers, they agreed to fly us for such rests to Italy...Rome or Naples!

A buddy and I wanted to visit Rome but the only flight Capt. Walton had available in his trusty B25 at that time was a flight to Naples. We agreed. My buddy had a friend in the Naples motor pool and we were sure he could get us transportation to Rome.

After landing in Naples, we were offered a ride to Rome in a 6x6 truck driven by a big, burly Texas private...a real cowboy, with trucks...not horses! The road was a narrow, precipitous, roller coaster of a ride. We sat in front with our cowboy...who put the pedal to the metal up and down those hills. He had absolutely no fear! The only fear was with his passengers! Suddenly, the cowboy's eyes opened wide as he pumped the brakes wildly. He said he must've lost a fan belt on the power booster for the brakes and only had partial brakes!!! We were in big trouble with all those mountain roads that lay ahead!

As we rounded the next big curve, an old man leading a donkey pulling a wagon piled high with long fire wood sticks, was coming up the other side of the narrow road. The 6x6 sideswiped the long protruding sticks and from the corner of my eye I saw the cart start to wobble and then spill down the side of the mountain! Our driver kept right on going keeping control as best he could. Finally the road flattened out somewhat and with only partial brakes the rest of the journey, we somehow made it to Rome.

It took a couple days of R&R to recover from that ride on the road to Rome! Flying is much safer! After our vacation was over we had to hitch a ride back to Naples to meet Capt, Walton and return to Ajaccio...but that's another story!



I served in CBI in the Indian city of Agartala which is located several hundred miles northeast of Calcutta near the Himalayan Mountains of Tibet. We lived in bamboo huts with thatched roofs of grass or straw, dirt floors, open doorways and wide open, unscreened windows protected from the weather by wide overhangs. Mosquitos, crawling snakes, rats and lizards had free run. It was not uncommon for someone to shoot at rats running along the bamboo ceiling rafters under the thatching. Once, one of the fellows, Frank T. , came face to face with a large lizard. They both jumped a mile and went in opposite directions! Each hut (Basha), housed several men and their cots which were covered with mosquito netting.

It was a common practice for each of us to hire a young Indian boy as one's "Basha" boy...a kind of butler. Early in the morning he would go down to the well, fill a large container with water that would remain very cold and refreshing due to evaporation when poured into a porous container. He would also find and pick bananas for me, sweep around my cot area, straighten the mosquito netting and clothing, shine my boots after shaking them to make sure they were free of scorpions or spiders. Then he would carry my dirty laundry down to the wash ladies who would mark my name on each item using a dark, ink-like beetle juice, then wash them by pounding them on rocks at the waters edge. They would be returned the following day clean and beautifully ironed. He was a real man-Friday and asked only to be paid \$.38 a week. The money went to his mother who was saving it for his wedding. Indian parents chose mates and arranged wedding plans when the bride and groom were only children!

One night after midnight, we heard loud screeching coming from the woods behind our basha. Not wanting a wild animal in our hut we went outside to check it out. Someone shined a flashlight into the eyes of a large animal. I shot and killed it. In the morning we found it was a large bobcat. My basha boy took it and buried it. Before I left, I gave my "boy" several dollars for his wedding which thrilled him and he thanked me profusely.

We left for the Pacific and Okinawa!



As most of you know, in the Foggia Area allies had over 100 air fields with at least 1000 aircraft--B24's and B17s. British Aircraft of all kinds were stationed, as were others. In Foggia my crew was Chuck Eisman, Chief Pilot, Dave Millard, co-pilot and I was navigator. Millard later became chief operations officer of Pan Am. His father had been among one of its first pilots.

The Adriatic Sea is not a large body of water so it was very hard to get lost unless due to inclement weather, etc. We would patrol the north portion from a fixed position, up to the isle of VIZ.

There was a radar station at Ancona, which would track the returning aircraft from the Polesti Oil Fields that were in trouble. When one went down they would call a Mayday and give the pertinent detail -ie altitude, direction, etc. We would receive the co-ordinates of their last known position. We would then proceed to the area and institute a search pattern, usually at 300 to 500 feet altitude. When found we would land and rescue. All our enlisted men were extremely efficient and brave, --very brave. In all rescue attempts I've seen more than one man jump into the rough water to get a downed comrade but was never given a medal for his heroic deed. It was an injustice that can never be remedied.

On one mission we had a call for a downed pilot. I proceeded to give Eisman the known coordinates (longitude and altitude) and we promptly found and picked up a downed Spitfire pilot. He was what you would expect of a Spitfire pilot--British, of course, about 5'2" to 5'5" and 140 pounds.

On a subsequent mission we picked up the same Spitfire pilot from the string of inlets north of VIZ, sitting on one of the many islands. Within the next month we picked him up out of the Adriatic again. The 3rd time.

After the 3 times I asked him when he was going home. His reply was "When I put in 5 years". Our British allies were a neat, gutsy group of people.



ERNIE CAVALLO A Train Trip to Remember

Orders came on March 23, 1944 to ship out of Camp Don Passage. Having had the opportunity to visit Morocco's deserts, seeing the desert nomads, the Badouin tribesmen, camel caravans and being chased out of the "off limits" sections of Casablanca's Casbah, had been a throwback in time and culture!

We were headed for Italy. The flight personnel would fly but most of us would go by ground transportation along with our crated supplies and equipment. We were trucked to a rail yard near Casablanca and boarded a narrow gauge, dilapidated, rusty steam train. There, a long string of strange looking boxcars, left over from WW1, the infamous 40 & 8...40 men and 8 horses! This couldn't be for real...after all, it was 1944! The small cars were packed to the ceiling with aircraft equipment and supplies and case after case of C-Rations with little room left over for us who were to guard the cargo to its ultimate destination!

It was a long, hot trip. We ate C-rations until they came out our ears! We were desperate for a change of menu. We got word that several cars back some Navy Seabees were sitting on cases of fruit cocktail and K-rations! Soon there was a steady line of bodies, like ants, walking across the top of the cars of the moving, wobbly, shaking pile of metal called a train as we traded cases daily! C-rations were a novelty to the Navy guys. (I'm sure inventory never tallied at its destination!!!)

As we rumbled through North Africa, we could see the remains of shattered trucks, tanks, artillery, houses and whole villages, the result of the torrid battles that had raged between Rommel and Montgomery during the desert war. We realized how fortunate we were to have missed being here during those fierce battles! A few of the "cowboys" among the train's troops, sat on top of the boxcars shooting up things with their carbines and 45's...sort of a no brainer...doing a lot of unnecessary damage and even killing animals at times.

We eventually arrived Bizerte, Tunisia on March 30th. After a brief stay, we were flown to Foggia, Italy. It was extremely cold there but GI ingenuity solved that by connecting a copper tube to a 55 gallon drum of high octane aircraft fuel and lighting the mashed tube end on a brick in the center of the tent. Occasionally the end would break, the flame would get out of control

and puff... a tent would go up in smoke!

I was extremely impressed seeing huge flights of B-17's...wave after wave, on their way to bomb the Ploesti oil fields. Then watching a crippled B-17 as it returned from a mission...badly shot up and attempting to land with only one engine, is not easily forgotten. We were told that once the remains of the tail and the ball turret gunners had to be washed out with high pressure water hoses!

We, the 1st. ERS, were here to rescue the crews who couldn't make it back and were forced to ditch in the sea! It was to be a noble task!



ERNIE CAVALLO . A Swim for Health

One night in Agartala, a 7th. ERS crew member visited one of the local villages to seek a change in his social life! He became acquainted with one of the local girls but apparently the family of his newfound girlfriend didn't appreciate his amorous intentions. Thus, for whatever reason, they chased him out of the village with the intent of inflicting bodily harm!

He ran for his life with several family members in close pursuit and was finally cornered! His only chance to escape was to dive into one of the deep irrigation ponds. He did, and swam back and forth from shore to shore trying to escape , but finally, exhausted, he had to crawl out and into their grasp.

When I saw him the next day he was pretty bruised and one arm was wrapped in a large bandage. I guess he was really lucky to get away in one piece. No-one ever really discussed the incident further (he was sort of a quiet person anyway) but, I might add, a good swimmer!



ERNIE CAVALLO Thank God for MP's

Upon leaving Agartala, we arrived in Barrack-pore Calcutta and boarded the USS Gen. Freeman scheduled to leave port the following morning. Thus we were give a final night on the town to party, eat or drink!

Several of us went to Firpo's, an upscale, posh restaurant located on the second floor of an ornate building. It featured thick, red carpeting up the wide stairs and throughout the place. There were white table cloths and napkins and waiters dressed in sharp red uniforms with white turbans. The place was mobbed, primarily with sailors and marines. Before we could be seated, a small fight broke out between a gob and a jarhead which soon led to an all out brawl between the two groups. My friend and I, along with many others, vacated the place pronto!

At the entrance, we met 2 ladies in a white, horse-drawn carriage who offered to take us to a quieter, less rowdy place. After a long, drawn out ride, we found ourselves in a seedy, unfamiliar part of town. The girls stopped the driver, got out and asked us to wait for them. They entered a building with a long, dark hallway, a light went on upstairs and we heard men's voices in a loud argument! We looked at each other and as one, jumped out of the carriage and ran down the street as fast as our legs would go. We didn't know where we were going but we felt there was real trouble behind us and we should get out of there fast!!!

Luck was with us...we ran right into 2 MP's in a Jeep! They yelled, "What the hell are you two doing in this "off limits" dangerous area? You looking to be arrested?" We pleaded our case saying that our ship was sailing in a few hours on the way to the war in the Pacific. I guess they felt sorry for us as they gave us a ride to the pier and we were allowed to board the Gen. Freeman while the two MP's watched to be sure we weren't lying!

We were very grateful to leave India alive!



ERNIE CAVALLO The Mattress Cover

The 1st. and 7th. ERS members enjoyed many adventures while traveling through Europe and Asia. We were privileged to visit many exotic lands and cities like Casablanca, Morocco, Rome and Naples, Italy, Cairo, Egypt and Calcutta, India to name a few. The ubiquitous street venders hounded us to buy their trinkets of jewelry, knives, perfume and incense, most of which was junk and a rip off! One major concern were the pick-pockets...we met a lot of unscrupulous people!

Our travel by train took us through many small villages and at each stop the local venders would crowd outside along the length of the train to try to sell their rip-off junk to us! One of our guys, after being taken too many times...struck back!

He took his army mattress cover (a desirable item to the natives) and tied one end to the metal leg of the train seat. He then held the mattress cover out of his window and offered it for sale to the highest bidder. He would wait for the train whistle to sound, indicating we were about to leave, ONLY then would he take any money, Francs, Lira or Rupees from the high bidder. After paying, they would try to pull their purchase from the window, but it held fast, tied to the seat! As the train slowly pulled away they would desperately run along, yanking on that old mattress cover. Finally tiring and being outrun by the train, they would give up in disgust...swearing at us all the way! I don't remember how many times that cover was sold, quite a few, but finally one guy pulled out a knife and cut off a portion of his prize to take home!

At least there was one ERS'er smiling. He got payback for all the times he'd been ripped off!

I wonder if he was ever able to convince the supply sergeant to issue him a new mattress cover???





LIFE IN POSTWAR AMERICA

We Are Survivors!!!

Consider the changes we have witnessed:

We were born before television, before penicillin, before polio shots, frozen foods, Xerox, plastic, contact lenses, frisbees and the pill.

We were before radar, credit cards, split atoms, laser beams and ball-point pens; before pantyhose, dishwashers, clothes dryers, electric blankets, air conditioners, drip-dry clothes and before man walked on the moon.

We got married first and then lived together. How quaint can you be? In our time, closets were for clothes, not for "coming out of". Bunnies were small rabbits and rabbits were not Volkswagens. Designer jeans were scheming girls named Jean or Jeanne; and having a meaningful relationship meant getting along well with our cousins. We thought fast food was what you ate during Lent and Outer Space was the back of the Riviera Theatre.

We were before house-husbands, computer dating, dual careers and commuter marriages. We were before day-care centers, group therapy and nursing homes. We never heard of FM radio, tape decks, electric typewriters, artificial hearts, word processors, yogurt and guys wearing earrings. For us, time-sharing meant togetherness ... not computers or condominiums; a "chip" meant a piece of wood, hardware meant hardware and software wasn't even a word!

In 1940, "made in Japan" meant JUNK and the term "making out" referred to how you did on your exam. Pizza, McDonald's and instant coffee were unheard of.

We hit the scene when there were 5 and 10 cent stores, where you bought things for five and ten cents. Sanders or Wilson sold ice cream cones for a nickel or a dime. For one nickel you could ride a street car, make a phone call, buy a Pepsi or enough stamps to mail one letter and two postcards. You could buy a new Chevy Coupe for \$600.00, but who could afford one; a pity too, because gas was only 11 cents a gallon.

In our day, cigarette smoking was fashionable, GRASS was mowed, COKE was a cold drink and POT was something you cooked in. ROCK MUSIC was a grandmother's lullaby and AIDS were helpers in the Principal's office.

We were certainly not before the difference between sexes was discovered but we were surely before the sex change; we made do with what we had. And we were the last generation that was so dumb as to think you needed a husband to have a baby!

No wonder we are so confused and there is such a generation gap today!

BUT WE SURVIVED!!! What better reason to celebrate!





JUST A COMMON SOLDIER

*He was getting old and paunchy and his hair was falling fast;
And he sat around the Legion telling stories of the past.
Of a war that he had fought in and the deeds that he had done,
In his exploits with his buddies, they were heroes, everyone.*

*And tho' sometimes to his neighbors, his tales became a joke,
All his Legion buddies listened, for they knew whereof he spoke.
But we'll hear his tales no longer, for old Bill has passed away:
And the world's a little poorer for a Soldier died today.*

*He'll not be mourned by many, just his children and his wife,
For he lived an ordinary and quite uneventful life.
Held a job and raised a family, quietly going on his way,
And the world won't note his passing, though a Soldier died today.*

*When politicians leave this earth, their bodies lie in state,
And thousands note their passing and proclaim that they were great.
Newspapers tell their life stories, from the time that they were young
But the passing of a Soldier goes unnoticed and unsung.*

*Is the greatest contribution to the welfare of our land,
A person who breaks promises and cons his fellow man;
Or the ordinary fellow, who in times of war and strife,
Goes off to serve his country and offers up his life?*

*It's so easy to forget them, for it was long ago,
That the "Old Bills" of our country went to battle, but we know,
It was not the politicians, with their compromises and ploys,
Who won for us our freedom that our country now enjoys.*

*He was just a common Soldier and his ranks are growing thin,
But his presence should remind us we may need his like again.
For when countries are in conflict, then we find the Soldier's part
Is to clean up all the troubles that others often start.*

*If we cannot give him honor, while he's here to hear the praise,
Then at least let's give him homage, at the ending of his days.
Perhaps a simple notice in the paper that would say,
"Our country is in mourning, 'cause a Soldier died today.*