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(These memoirs were transcribed in the year 2000, by Justine Beane Bradford from reel-to-reel tapes, dictated by her father Lt. Colonel James B. Beane, in 1970.)

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Every step in combat is built on one step before; I can only go back to the beginning and relate my experiences as they happened during the war years. In the school year 1939-1940, I was attending the University of California, Berkeley. At that time, the civilian pilot training program was initiated, and I applied for this and was accepted. My training school was the Oakland Flying Service, and my instructor was one Swede Lemontine. Swede was quite a character whose nickname indicated what he looked like: he was a man in his fifties and, according to what I learned in my period of training, had been a world-class commercial pilot, and subsequently an Alaskan bush pilot. Swede had absolutely nothing to say on the ground, except for one outburst that I will record later. The main thing that I remember him saying was, "Let's get a scuttle of coals" (cup of coffee). In the air, it was quite different. He was extremely voluble in his training methods.

At this point I might interject that, as I learned then, and was subsequently confirmed in many hours of instruction, flying is an art; its application is a science. It cannot be taught from books -- in fact I have never seen, though there may be and I am sure that there are at this time books on how to fly -- at the time that I am talking about they did not exist or if they did, we never saw one. It was purely a matter of demonstration by the instructor and repeated practice on the part of the student. You might almost say that it was typical of the ancient method whereby the warriors of the tribe, even as some of the aborigine tribes do today, instruct the young members of the tribe by demonstrating and telling.

As I say, Swede was an expert pilot, in fact he was so expert that it was often difficult to follow him in a maneuvers because his movement of the controls was so soft and gentle that, unless you were very much on your toes, you were unable to discern the pressure that he put on the rudder of the stick. The one outburst that I recall his ever making was due to a girlfriend from UCLA, visiting me at UCB. Having a flying lesson that day, I had her go with me out to the flying field and, though at that time I had been flying solo for quite some period, on this particular day, to my surprise, Swede climbed into the cockpit with me. He didn't say anything and we went about our regular business during our entire flight. We landed, the flight was over, and nothing was said. The following day, however, when she again came to the airport, Swede hit the roof, and I can remember his angry outburst to the effect that if I ever expected to fly under him again I was to send that woman away because he was not about to have any student go berserk showing off in front of a girlfriend and thereby killing himself. So I had to inform my young lady to go somewhere else during my hours of instruction.

In the spring of 1940, after completing some 40 hours of flying time in a small Fleet aircraft with a 125hp motor--47 hours and 50 minutes my logbook says--I got my civilian pilot license. As soon as I had obtained this, I began to get inquiries from both the Army and the Navy as to whether I wished to join their air corps. I was in a great quandary about this because I only lacked one semester of completing my college career, or getting my degree, and they wanted me immediately. In this circumstance of quandary, I turned to an individual for whom I had a great deal of respect, one Franklin Dewey Richards, a very elderly man with whom I had been living as a companion during the year.

Mr. Richards was a former multi-millionaire New York corporation lawyer, and very intelligent, and I had a great deal of respect for his opinion. I asked him what I should do. His reply was, "Son, I have seen it all before." He said, "before very long, we're going to be in this war, and at just about that time, you will have graduated, gotten married, gotten a job and just started on a career. Then they will reach out, grab you, hand you a rifle and you'll do your fighting and dying in a muddy ditch. You're a good pilot, according to what I hear--why don't you just go ahead and join, and at least fight and die like a gentleman?" I accepted his advice and let the Army know that I would be interested in joining the Army-Air corps.

In those days, to be a flyer, it was not as simple as it would be much later. They wanted only the best that they could get their hands on, and the physical examination was very, very rugged. They had something called the Snyder test, which I was never able to figure out, but it had an index and if you passed with a seven (7) you were accepted, and if you had anything lower than a seven you were rejected. Not only that but they wanted at least two years of college, and they demanded letters of recommendation from people who had known you for a considerable period of time. I passed the physical, and was told to stand by because the first class that I could enter would be opening in September. So, bidding adieu to Mr. Richards, I went down to Los Angeles and worked in the Volte aircraft factory waiting for my class to begin.

On September the ninth, 1940, I was sworn in at Fort Mac Arthur and was immediately sent to Glendale Primary flying school. The Glendale Primary flying school was a rather queer operation--you might almost call it a makeshift affair -- because the airport was right in the center of the city and, therefore unsuitable for student instruction around it, and the quarters that they had for us were an old--what had been an old--country club, gambling joint, etc., with swimming pool and everything. One amusing part about it was that our dormitory was what had been the gambling room, and the ceiling was painted with many nude women. Therefore, the upper-classmen took the top bunk of the double bunks in which we slept so that they could gaze at the ceiling, and the lower-class men were relegated to the lower bunk. It was also an unwritten law that the lower classman did not stick his head out to look at the ceiling, because if he did, he was sure to get a big foot stuck right in his face and the order, "...get back in there, mister!"

As I say, the area surrounding the airport was not suitable for student instruction and so, therefore, we had to fly the planes each morning out to the Newhall Auxiliary airport. While some of us flew the planes, the rest of us were bussed out to Newhall. I can recall that we took great delight in singing, at the top of our voices, songs that can only be called obscene. I recall three of them, but I am not about to record them for posterity because I am sure future generations will come up with their own bawdy or obscene songs. The titles of these three were "the Bastard King of England," and then in the Scottish dialect, "I Do You Larsenick (sic)," and then another one, "O'Riley's Store". There were many startled expressions at street corners or stoplights when the passersby heard these songs coming from the bus that amused us no end.

Newhall Auxiliary airport was certainly not what one would call an ideal flying situation. In my scrapbook I have a notation that it was "an abandoned alfalfa patch that would have broken a mountain goat's legs to traverse, where the winds were like Macbeth's witches' cauldron and the language sulfurous." We washed out many a Stearman, and by washed out I mean ruined the wing or undercarriage and so forth, flying off this field. The fact that I had a private pilot's license, and already had some forty-seven hours in the air was a deep, dark secret that I kept from the instructors. I considered this money in the bank to keep me from being washed out. Flying instruction in those days was extremely rugged, and of my primary class 60% were washed out--that is, discharged without being sent on to more advanced training. The men that were trying to become flyers at that time took it very seriously, and I have seen grown men, ages 20 to 25, crying like small children when they were washed out.

I never revealed my civilian pilot training program until one day, with one instructor, I could resist no longer. This particular instructor delighted in giving me forced landings, that is, cutting back the engines and telling me to pick out a landing in the most impossible situations. I had made up my mind that if he ever did this again I was going to surprise him because Swede Lemontine had taught me some very effective methods of putting a plane down in impossible terrain where you knew you were going to crash but with the least damage to yourself.

On this particular day the instructor picked out a postage stamp size field down in a ravine over which we were flying at some 1000 feet and in the middle of this field was a tree. The instant he chopped his gun, that is throttle back, and said "emergency landing" I threw the plane up into a vertical sideslip and immediately dropped some 800 feet vertically. Then I leveled the plane out and started fishtailing, that is hitting the rudders from side to side so that the plane was thrown broadside to the line of flight and immediately slowed up. Before the instructor knew what was happening. I almost had him sitting in the middle of that tree. He grabbed the stick and the gun, pulled up and headed for the auxiliary base.

When we landed he looked at me and said, “you know you’re not supposed to do that”. I said, “Yes, sir.” We had never been taught this in the primary flying school because it was too dangerous a maneuver. He said, “Where did you learn to do that?” And I told him. “Well if you hadn’t done it so perfectly I’d give you a washout slip, but since you did it perfectly I’m going to overlook it. But don’t ever do it again while you’re here.” My only answer was, “yes sir” but I went away with a certain glee in my heart.

We had a ritual that after you soloed, that is were permitted to fly the plane by yourself, your classmates threw you into the swimming pool at the Glendale dormitory with great glee, and you accepted it in like spirit because it meant that you had arrived.

Passing on, leaving behind 60% of our class that were discharged, the remainder of us went to basic training at Moffett field. There we went into a different type of aircraft, the BT14, a fixed landing gear North American aviation plane that was quite good. At Moffett we were not able to complete our training because we got rained out, so the powers that be picked us up and in convoy caravan style we were moved to Bakersfield, California and lived in tents out at the Kern Airport, now known as Meadows Field.

According to our instructors, we were the first cadet class to take to the field. There, while at Bakersfield, I had some very uncomplimentary things to say about it: one comment in my log is, “God, what a country! Three inches of mud under your cot, two inches of sand in it, and a forty mile wind blowing overhead.” However, we were able to complete our basic training here, losing only one student who power-dived into the ground.

From there we moved to Stockton and completed advanced training. Advanced training at that time and for many years thereafter was in the North American AT6, a retractable landing gear aircraft with very good performance particularly for student instruction. As we progressed in our training, the language of our instructors became more acute, more cutting and to the point. It was nothing to hear come over the radio (when some individual had forgotten to transfer his radio from broadcast to intercom) some instructor tell a student, “Don’t sit there like a cold jug of piss, Mister! DO SOMETHING!!!” Or the famous phrase in the Air Corps flying schools, “Get Your Head Out, Mister!” This had an obscene connotation but it literally meant what it said: get your head out, look where you’re going, see what you are doing and do something.

In advanced training we lost another student who crashed, and it was at that time that I learned a very valuable lesson. One of my cohorts in the class in aerobatics had been shown a vertical snap roll by his instructor--that is, after diving down and getting up excessive speed you pull straight up and while going straight up, execute a snap roll. That night in the barracks he was telling us all about it, and since I was scheduled to fly solo the next day, I resolved to attempt the maneuver myself without ever having had it demonstrated to me.

I dove down, got my speed and was going straight up, but the one essential point the student had forgotten to say was that you did not do it at normal air speed--you executed it at excessive air speed so that after the maneuver was over the plane would still be flying upright. A snap roll is a violent whirl of the plane on its longitudinal axis. I sat there waiting for the speed to fall to the normal speed, at which we did a snap roll and when it hit that speed I executed the maneuver. I have no knowledge of what happened after that. The plane and the world were just one whirling mass. I went every direction imaginable and when things stopped whirling, the aircraft was hanging nose down with zero air speed and absolutely no pressure on the controls. I couldn't believe it! I whirled the stick around in the cockpit to see if I could feel any pressure of air on the controls and there was none--I was at an absolute dead standstill in mid-air at some 10,000 feet!

As I say, it was a valuable experience because from that I learned never to try something that had not been demonstrated to me by someone familiar with the maneuver. Some students never learned this and the results were sometimes disastrous. One thing Swede Lemontine had told me when I was in the civilian training program was that the best way he knew to bust your ass was that every time you saw a strange aircraft land at your field you rushed out and attempted to have the pilot let you take a test hop in it. Swede's instructions were, "If you're flying a particular type aircraft, get checked out in it and fly that aircraft exclusively, because every airplane differs in its performance characteristics. The instruments are different and the various controls, switches, etc., are different." I always stuck to this advice and stayed with the particular aircraft that I was assigned to fly.

One amusing incident that occurred in Bakersfield while we were in basic was our purchase of automobiles. After one had passed the forty hours check in basic, there was a very high probability that you would be able to get through the remainder of the training without being washed out. At Bakersfield there were some ninety of us in the class, and after we passed our forty-hour check we were anxious to buy automobiles. Every one of us had a different idea and was discussing the different types, models, makes of what we were going to buy. One individual in the class who, if he survived, I'm sure is a millionaire today brought us somewhat to our senses. He said, "There are some ninety of us in this class who want to buy automobiles. Let's get together and by common vote decide which make automobile we want and see if we can get a fleet price on them from some dealer."

The men thought that over and decided that this was a very good idea, so on one Saturday some forty of us, whom you might call the advanced echelon, descended on Bakersfield to buy automobiles. That year, Ford had a very flashy model, so the first choice of the men had been Ford. We went to Haberfeld Ford and made our proposition to the owner. He was extremely insulting, and I recall him making the statement that he did not have to do cut-rate business, that he had all the business he needed. So we bid him a polite good-bye, went outside and conferred on the sidewalk.

The next choice was Plymouth, so we went to the Plymouth agency and got approximately the same reply. Again we conferred on the sidewalk and this time we decided on Chevrolet. So we went to the Chevrolet agency, and a Mr. Lake who was the owner listened to us until we had completed our spiel and then he said, "Now wait a minute, let me get this straight. How many of you want to buy automobiles?" We said, "There are ninety of us in the class, and all of us want to buy automobiles." He said, "No, I mean here today. How many of you are there here today that want to buy an automobile right now?" We said, "There are forty of us." He said, "Just a minute!" And he started doing some quick calculations. Then he turned to us and said, "Gentlemen, I'll make you a proposition. No down payment, \$25 a month until you get your commissions, and the remainder spread over a two-year contract. One-third off of carrying charges and insurance, one half off of all accessories and \$100 off the list price of the automobile." We said, "We'll take it!" And he said, "Go get 'em!"

The Chevrolet agency was a madhouse of flying students; each running around, grabbing a particular automobile and telling everyone else to get their hands off, this one was his. I had a car for a trade-in so I remained in his office for a few moments. He had immediately gotten on the phone and I heard him call one Chevrolet agency and then another, telling them to send him every single Chevrolet sport model they had in stock. He looked at me and he said, "What can I do for you, son?" I said, "Well, I have a car to trade in." He said, "What is it?" I said, "It's a 1935 Ford V-8." He said, "What kind of condition is it in?" I said, "Oh, pretty good." He said, "I'll give you \$300 for it." So without him even looking at the automobile, I traded it in, went back and picked out my sport model, and of course, the cadets were having every imaginable accessory put on them.

When we had gotten all forty of these automobiles fixed the way we wanted them, we lined them up outside the Chevrolet agency, then we drove by the Plymouth agency. All of us leaned on our horns, leaned out the window and thumbed our noses at the Plymouth manager. We did the same to Haberfeld Ford.

Of course upon our return to base with our new cars, we immediately informed the remainder of the class who had not yet purchased, that if they wanted a deal on their automobile to go to the Chevrolet agency. Strangely enough, it wasn't very long before Mr. Haberfeld of Haberfeld Ford was out at the flying base crying the blues and trying to get the students to buy a Ford. Of the entire class of ninety, one bought a Ford, one bought a Chrysler and the remainder all bought Chevrolets.

After the war, I had an opportunity to talk to Mr. Lake and he took great delight in having one of the original group come in and talk to him. He informed me that from that time on, his agency got the lion's share of the business from the flying cadets because the word was passed down from class to class, "...if you want a deal, see Three-Way Chevrolet. Don't bother with the other jerks!"

On April 23rd, 1941, I got my pilot's wings and a commission as second lieutenant at Stockton Air Force Base. We were given five days leave and I recall that I had borrowed some money from the bank as had a friend of mine, and that the two of us had started out in San Francisco at the St. Francis Hotel, eating lobster, then closed up the Top of the Mart at some odd hour of the morning with the waiters trying to get us to go home and us demanding more champagne. Five days later, I wound up at the Pirate's Den in Hollywood, California minus the majority of my \$500 but the interval in between San Francisco and Los Angeles is in general a blank. I do recall going to UCLA and parading onto the campus in my full military uniform to see my girlfriend. Somehow or other I got back to base, how I don't recall because it was a very peculiar thing with pilots that no matter how much they drank they seemed to be able to navigate and get where they were supposed to go, and be there when they were supposed to be there -- apparently by just instinctive reflex action.

My orders came through and I was assigned as an instructor to Mather Air Force Base in Sacramento. Mather was an old WWI flying field that had been abandoned until the outbreak of WWII, and was merely a grassy, rolling field. There were no runways, there was no permanent housing and we lived in tents. The terrain was such that every time it rained we had rivulets of water running across the field in the valleys. It used to be a favorite expression of ours that "he made a good landing on the third splash," because each time a plane would land you would see him disappear over a rise, a big splash of water come up, then he would appear over the next rise with another splash of water, and then a third.

This went on for some time, and then they started to modernize the field. Since it was rolling terrain, they took bulldozers and leveled the field so it was all cut and filled. Over this they laid a sheet of oil, and apparently thought this would be adequate for the AT6s. It wasn't because in the dry weather the planes landing on this oil surface would break the crust, and then when the rains came the water would seep through the cracks and every place you had a fill in the field became a morass of mud in which the AT6s would get bogged down.

I was assigned to a flight commander by the name of Peschka. Peschka and I, for some reason, had a mutual dislike of each other and it rapidly came to a head. Peschka was a second lieutenant, the same as I was--the only thing was that he ranked me by two or three classes. Any of Peschka's friends amongst the instructors could come into the flight office a half an hour or 45 minutes late in the morning--we began flying at 7:00 a.m.--and Peschka never said a word. But just let me arrive one minute after seven, and I immediately got chewed out. As I say, it came to a head with me telling him off on no uncertain terms on one particular day. His reply was ... "I'll fix you. I'll give you an additional duty of aerodrome maintenance." The truth of the matter was that this was an additional duty that had been assigned to Peschka and he was in hot water because the engineers had dug a hole and one of the aircraft had gone in and wrecked its undercarriage.

Everyone expected me to “goof off” on this job because there was nothing that a flier in those days hated worse than a ground job in addition to his regular flying duties. But my thought was the exact opposite; that the best way that I could knife Peschka was to do the best possible job that I could on that aerodrome maintenance. The office for aerodrome maintenance was a tarpaper hut with half-inch cracks in the wall through which the wind and the dust and the rain whistled, an old WWI sergeant, and a few men. The furniture in the office consisted of one desk, one chair and a few other chairs for the maintenance crew--and I can recall the dismay of this sergeant when I moved in on him. In a somewhat bitter tone he informed me that he had scrounged that desk and that chair, and was I taking over from him? My reply was quite definite in that, in so far as that job was concerned, I was not only taking over the desk and the chair, but him and every man in that maintenance crew. And I wanted to hear nothing about it in the future.

I don't know how many tons of gravel I poured into bog holes on that field. But I do recall being called in by the operations officer one day when it was driving rain and we could not fly, and I had scrounged some two hundred enlisted men and had them pouring gravel in these holes and packing it down. He told me to get those men off the field and out of that weather condition immediately before the colonel really blew his stack about it. This went on for quite some time--flying when the weather was so that we could fly--and when the weather was unsuitable for flying, I was working on the field. I used my new Chevrolet as a test vehicle to test these bog holes in which we had poured the gravel.

The first indication that I had that some notice was being taken of my efforts was that I was suddenly without any warning transferred to the navigation school that was also there at Mather. This was a step up because the navigation school flew the beach craft AT7, which held a pilot, copilot and six passengers. Nothing still was said, and I started flying for the navigation school--and I must say that it was some of the best training that I have ever had as a pilot. The problem was that you had to keep a three-dimensional navigational layout in your mind. We were required to follow the instructions of the student navigators, and these were many times wrong. Therefore we had to keep in mind where we were supposed to be, where we were, and how long we could let it go on before we had to make to the nearest airbase. As I say, it was a three-dimensional navigation problem that required extreme care.

That school was a peculiarity in the air corps; it seemed that the pilots ran it. I know the only one of the senior ones that I came in contact with was a first lieutenant pilot who still flew the navigation aircraft and they were a wild and woolly bunch. I think at this point it is apropos to cite a line of Kipling's that “Single men in barracks aren't any plaster saints.” This was certainly true of the instructor personnel at Mather. Each Friday on the bulletin board would be posted a sheet of paper, and the pilots were asked where they wanted to go for the weekend. This was purely a pilot decision, the navigators were not permitted to have any say whatsoever; and, by common vote, whichever the majority wanted to go to, we would take off for Salt Lake City, Seattle Washington, Los Angeles or wherever. After spending a night of much drinking, carousing and women we would

take off the following Sunday and fly back to Mather with a magnificent hangover. This was also true on practically a day-by-day basis.

The Walnut Room of the Senator Hotel in Sacramento was our favorite gathering place, and every night it was filled with instructor personnel drinking as though liquor was going out of style, and picking up any unattached woman who was willing to be picked up. The situation was, or rather I should say the general feeling was, that you didn't know whether this drink that you were drinking, or this woman that you were holding, was going to be your last so you might as well make the most of it.

I recall one humorous incident that happened on the flight line one morning. A little cadet student finally couldn't stand it any longer and he said to me, "Do you know what you look like when you come to the flight line in the morning, sir?" With a hangover growl, I said, "No, Mister, what do I look like?" He said, "You look just like death warmed over!" I said, "Well, that's just the way I feel--get your ass in that airplane and get going!" This was general throughout the instructor staff. It caused a lot of animosity in the towns near where we were located because all the available women seemed to flock toward the flying personnel.

My big break came at this time without my knowing what was going on. One day, flying an AT7, when I was still outside the aircraft radio contact with the base I could hear the control tower broadcasting blind, "Lieutenant Beane, report to Colonel T.B. Anderson immediately upon landing." It was some time before I got within range of the tower and, of course, my thoughts were at this time, "My God, what have I done that I should report to 'Old Rough and Ready' Tough T.B. Anderson!?" When I queried the tower I was told that these were the only instructions they had, and I was to report immediately to Colonel Anderson. I made off running from the flight line to Colonel Anderson's office, knocked, went in, and saluted. He looked up at me and he said, "Beane, how would you like to go to the four engine B-17 school at Hendricks Field, Florida?" I could only say, "SIR?" He said, "You're on your way," and that was the full extent of our conversation.

I might at this time explain that, up to that point, the B17 was considered so valuable and so complicated that only bird colonels with 3000 flying hours had been permitted to fly them. We were the first class of students to not have those qualifications, and, as I subsequently learned, they had given orders to each base to pick out one man to go to Seabring Hendricks Field, Florida. Of course, I thought that I was on my way to combat. I might incidentally say that when Pearl Harbor happened I was flying a student in the air and it was broadcast over the air; I immediately landed and put in my name for a combat unit, but was rejected at that time.

To get back to my story, one of our favorite bars in Sacramento was the Golden Cup, and I heard an amusing bit of by-play that occurred between Peschka and Colonel Anderson one night before I shipped out to Hendricks Field, Florida. It seems that Peschka was pretty well intoxicated beyond the point of caution, and that Colonel Anderson was there. Peschka bounced Colonel Anderson about why I had received that assignment when there were so many officers on the base who ranked me and who wanted it. My informant told me that Colonel Anderson turned around and looked at Peschka and said. "Peschka, do you remember a little job by the name of airdrome maintenance?" He said. "You did the piss-poorest job that I have ever seen, and Beane did the best! That's the reason that he got the assignment. Any more questions, Sir?" They said you could see Peschka literally shrink, and slink out of the bar. Many times thereafter when I ran into somebody from Sacramento, I sent back a nasty message to Peschka that I was going to come back and dust him off with my four engines.

One incident did occur before I left Mather. One of my friends had a hot date in town, and didn't want, at this time, to go to Hendricks Field--and asked if I would check this student out on the AT6 that night. I, of course, replied that I would. At that time we did our night flying off McClellan Air Depot Base because they were the only ones that had a runway with lights, which Mather didn't have. I got into the aircraft with this unknown student and told him to take me around the field, stay in the pattern and make a landing. He made a very sloppy take-off, a very sloppy pattern and, on the base leg, he throttled the engine back at 1000 feet and then started gliding downward. First he would go right, then he would go left and did he would go forward and so forth--and I was sitting in the cockpit wondering what in the hell is he doing?!

Finally we got down to some 200 feet with this still going on, and I let out a blast on the radio and asked him what was the deal?! His reply was that he was looking for the runway--such stupidity was unbelievable, and I pointed out to him in very violent language that there were high-power transmission lines at 150 feet near the field, that we were going into them rapidly, and that the runway he was looking for was off to the right there. This student came in and made a terrible landing. I told him to immediately take off and he did so; however, at this point I must explain that the aircraft had certain adjustable tabs whereby you moved the rudder or the aileron to a pre-adjusted position--this is because as you decreased power the aircraft became nose-heavy and moved downward. When you increased power the nose had a tendency to come up into the air--this you compensated for by what we called stabilizer controls. These were normally rolled back almost to the full position as you came into a landing as the weight of the engine pulled the aircraft down and you had to put increasing pressure on your controls to hold her up.

This student, after I told him to take off again, forgot to roll his adjustable tabs back into the normal take-off position. In consequence, and also doing a very sloppy take-off, when he ran the power to the engine the nose came up and we ran off the runway at an angle and he proceeded to do what we call a stabilizer stall headed right into the metal doors of the biggest hangar on the depot base! The aircraft was barely airborne, and I think if I hadn't been so busy trying to get that airplane flying again that I would have died of fright right on the moment. Suffice it to say, I did get it flying, got it back on a normal pattern, turned it over to the student and then proceeded to chew him out.

I was on the intercom for two solid hours. I traced his ancestry from Adam down with all of the illegitimacy therewith--plus telling him what a terrible flier he was in every aspect. As I say, the only time I got off the intercom was just to draw a breath and start all over because he had literally scared me pea-green. At the end of two hours of making him go around the pattern time after time to land, I let him go and turned in a pink slip that was our nomenclature for absolute failure--this had a sequel many years later, and that's why I related it at this time.

So, at this point I was transferred to Hendricks Field, Florida. However, upon arriving there much to my dismay I found that, instead of being trained to be a combat crewman to go into combat, the school was training us to be instructors on the B17. There wasn't much we could do about it, so we went ahead and took our transitional training in the B17 and became proficient as instructors.

I had a roommate at that time by the name of Katz; so one day Katz and I decided to go to the colonel of the base and request transfer to a combat unit. We did so; the colonel pulled a telegram out of his desk from the War Department that read like this: "The value of a four-engine instructor at this time is inestimable. They will not, repeat, will not be sent to combat under any circumstances." If the colonel had left it at that I think matters might have taken another course, but he added, "So if you are any good as an instructor, you are not going to go to combat!"

This gave Katz ideas. So one day while out instructing a student crew he was standing in between the seats while they were flying on automatic pilot. The automatic pilot would over-control any pressure put upon the stick, either by hand or by the trim tabs of the aircraft. So, while Katz was instructing, he was telling the students that this was something you never, ever wanted to do under any circumstance. And, all the time he is talking he's rolling the trim tabs of the stabilizer to the full down position. He said, "Because, if you do, when you turn off the automatic pilot this is what happens." Thereupon, he turned off the automatic pilot! They were flying at about 10,000 feet and the result was almost disastrous. The plane, responding to the nose down stabilizer, went into a violent dive--so violent that 50 pound toolboxes in the back were flying all over the place, one crewman in the back got a broken leg, and Katz himself was plastered up against the ceiling of the B17 To pull it out was beyond the strength of the pilot and the copilot. Katz reached down, grabbed hold of the yoke throttles, pulled himself down to the stabilizer control and trimmed it nose up, full up. The plane pulled out at some 1600

feet but with the wings sprung--it was absolutely washed out as a flyable aircraft thereafter.

He, of course, was immediately called in on the carpet by the colonel, but Katz contended that he was so engrossed by his instructing and demonstrating to the students that he just did not think of the consequences. However, I think it was deliberate because he came into the room that night with a big grin on his face and said, "I'm going to combat, what about you?!" I said "You S.O.B., after that trick that you just pulled I couldn't even spit in the cockpit without getting court-martialed!" Anyway, Katz went off to combat and I remained behind still instructing.

However, my chance came. One of the older instructors one day gave me a piece of advice. He said, "If the colonel ever comes down here to check-ride you, be sure that whatever you do is decisive. Whether it's right or wrong, be decisive about it. There's nothing that drives the old man crazier than someone who doesn't know exactly what they should be doing." And I thought to myself, this is a beautiful chance.

My day came. The colonel came down to check-ride me and I gave him one of the most horrible rides that anyone ever took in a B17. For example, coming in to landing, I didn't know whether I was going too fast or too slow--one minute I had the power on and the flaps down, then next minute I had the power off and the flaps up--it was a mess. The colonel exploded. He said. "You can't instruct in these things! I don't even think you can fly 'em!" So that night I was informed that I was being transferred, much to my delight.

It was about this time that we saw the first B24. It was a god-awful looking aircraft on the ground. One of my friends once described it as a pregnant salmon with wheels on its belly and a wing with engines attached to its top dorsal fin. They were the most clumsy-looking aircraft I think I have ever seen when they were on the ground. I was transferred to Salt Lake City, 2nd Air Force, but, lo and behold to my dismay, when I got there I found that I had been transferred as an instructor in B24s! At that time we considered it a fate worse than death to have to fly the B24 because we knew nothing about the aircraft, only about what it looked like and some of the stories that we had heard about what was happening to them. However, on my first ride in the B24 I was sold, primarily because it was so different in flight characteristics to the B17. The B17 was an extremely stable aircraft--in other words, when it was trimmed correctly in level flight you could take your hands off the controls, put your feet up on the instrument panel and it would just continue to wallow through the sky in a predetermined rut. However, if you tried to get it out of that rut, you had to exert considerable physical force in the controls both in the rudder and the aileron. In fact, we used to say that it took two men and three small boys to move the controls.

In my first flight in the B24, I found that this was an entirely different aircraft. There was no force required either in the rudder or the aileron to execute whatever maneuver you desired to execute. Since I was never blessed with great physical strength, this was a great blessing to me.

So there I began what we called the 2nd Air Force merry-go-round. That is, we instructors would be assigned to a group in training and would take it through all three phases of training in the primary, basic and advanced in the B24--then they would go off to combat and we would go back and pick up another group and repeat the performance again. The major difficulty was that at that time the B24 had not been perfected. There were two things primarily wrong with it. Number one, the exhaust collector ring, which was steel and had two halves, which were bolted together, had bolts, which were of an inferior metal. And these bolts would burn in two thereby letting the two halves of the exhaust collector ring gape open, and you had a flame playing back into your engine's innards which very soon burned through the gasoline lines and oil lines, and you had a first class fire in the wings which you could not put out. The other defect it had was that the gas tanks were an integral part of the bombay section of the wing and these leaked. You would get into one of the aircraft to go flying in it and there would be a very reeking odor of gas in the bombay that only needed a spark to ignite it and the plane blew up. These flaws persisted for quite some time and were a continual source of worry to those aircraft pilots who flew them before they ever got these problems corrected.

The students who were assigned to us had heard all of these gory stories about the B24s blowing up and therefore they were as reluctant to fly them as we had been initially. In consequence, many a morning I had a crew who would come back into the flight line after taxiing an aircraft out to the runway to check it and tell me that the aircraft wasn't fit to fly. So it was my responsibility to see that they did fly, but it's not as simple as ordering a man to do something that you're scared to do yourself. The only thing that I could do was to get the crew in the airplane, and go myself, take it out and check to see that it was safe to fly. Many a morning I flew them like this with goose bumps on me as big as grapefruit. I couldn't afford to let the crew how I felt about the matter, because then we would have had a great deal more trouble getting them to fly the airplane.

I recall one very humorous incident, with a rather gruesome aspect to it that happened at Alamogordo. During this early period of time, we had a troop train bring in our new recruits to train and it seems that we had just gotten our shipment of caskets for those who had been killed in training. These caskets were very openly stacked up on the railway platform and the pilots and crews that had been assigned took one look out of the passenger coach windows, saw all of these caskets that had been stacked on the platform, and flatly refused to get out of the train. In fact, we had to use MPs in main force to get them out and get them onto the base. It was about this time that we had a general from the 2nd Air Force come down and tell us that any instructor who volunteered to go to combat was a coward. He based this on the fact that we were killing 5.2% of our crews in training whereas in combat, they were only losing 3.1% I can recall once losing three crews out of one flight of ten at Alamogordo.

Alamogordo was also unique in that it was nothing but a bunch of tarpaper shacks with almost an 1849 wild-west atmosphere. We had an officers' club that was decorated with old wild-west motif, and the pilots certainly lived up to it. We didn't have the spit and polish rules where you did not enter the officers' club unless you were in dress uniform. We were in our flying togs all of the time, the bar was open twenty-four hours at a time, and the craps and blackjack tables went twenty-four hours a day for anyone who was not on duty. The latrines and washrooms were separate buildings from the tarpaper shacks. There were no living quarters for married couples on the base at all.

There I saw one of the queerest sights I have ever seen in my life. If you wanted one of your girlfriends or your wife to visit you, you merely kicked your roommate out of your room, told him to go somewhere else and sleep, hung a blanket over the open doorways--there were no doors--and had your wife or girlfriend move in with you. There were two washrooms and latrines, one of which had ice-cold water and one that had scalding hot water; there was no intermediate. There were always women in the barracks, so we used to take a vote from the women as to which they preferred, the ice cold water or the scalding hot water, and whichever they chose that was the particular latrine that they used. In the mornings, it was a very queer sight to see the women coming out of what was supposedly the bachelor officers' quarters in their dressing gowns and heading for the washing rooms and latrine some fifty yards distant from the barracks.

I covered the 2nd Air Force--Clovis and Alamogordo New Mexico, Davis-Monthans, Tucson Arizona, Briggs Field, El Paso, Texas and just about any other base that you could name. In the meantime I had married and with one group was based at Pueblo, Colorado. At this particular base, for some reason I was assigned to night flight duty for one solid month between midnight and dawn. Flying operations went on twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week on all Air Corps bases at that time. We had heated flying suits, however if you wore these you also had to wear the shoes that were socketted into the main suit, and if you developed trouble and had to bail out of the aircraft these shoes came off very easily. You can imagine bailing out of an airplane and coming down barefoot into the cactus and lava rock that covered most of the area where the 2nd Air Force had its effort.

In consequence, I never wore the heated suit, but wore the sheepskin lined suit; however flying at from ten to fifteen thousand feet altitude at night at Pueblo, Colorado or, in fact, any place where your temperature decreases rapidly with the increase in altitude one literally nearly froze to death. You were so sleepy that you could hardly keep your eyes open on this midnight to dawn shift, yet you were scared to close your eyes because you knew if you did the students would run you into one of those mountains and you would be dead. You were so cold that it was unbelievable, and all you could do was to stamp your feet and curse. Many a night I swore that, if I could ever get out of that airplane, they would never get me into another one except at the point of a gun! Of course, this had a side effect in that when I got off flight duty at dawn I made a mad rush for home started peeling off clothing as I entered the front door, and by the time I hit the bedroom I'd

gotten it all off and slid under my wife as an absolute chunk of ice. She would go about six feet into the air, but I held onto her to try to warm me up.

The 2nd Air Force was really quite something in training. After we had trained these crews, particularly because they were not part of an organized group but were merely replacement crews, we had to take them through the three phases of training and then escort them to the port of embarkation. A troop movement under those circumstances is rather rugged, and we heard all kinds of wild stories before we started doing it about what went on in the trains. In fact, one story I heard was about them tearing out all the seats, breaking all the windows and even running part of the crewmen off the train with their guns.

I took my first troop movement of four hundred men back East, and I was bound and determined that this was not going to happen to me. Before we started I told the men that I had no objection to their drinking and I had no objection to their gambling, but that any man who got out of line was going to catch it. In consequence thereof, the train was a traveling gambling casino and bar--we were the only ones on the train--and I must have at least a hundred trips up and down the aisles of that train watching to see that the men were still in order. Any man that I saw that had had too much to drink, I would order the senior officer in the car if it was an officer's car, or senior non-commissioned officer in that car if it was an enlisted men's car, to put him to bed and keep him there until he sobered up enough and wanted to drink some more and then let him drink if he wanted to. In the method in which I handled that train there was no damage and no disorder, and I arrived at the port of embarkation with a clean bill of health from the railway authorities.

Stationed at Wendover at one period of this time, I had a rather terrifying experience with a B24 and student crews. I had taken off with an absolutely green crew from Wendover, which is on the western side of the salt lake, for a night cross-country to Salt Lake City and then down south towards Provo, Utah and other points. As we left Salt Lake City, I began to think about the mountain peaks that were around me which were sticking up some thirteen thousand feet and since I was flying at twelve thousand I thought just for safety's sake I would get a little higher altitude. Instead of putting it into regular climb I just gradually let the plane ease up to thirteen thousand, fourteen thousand feet. However the plane sounded peculiar and I jerked off my headphones and listened, and told the student pilot who was flying in the copilot's seat to throw the intercooler heats to it--that is, to give some heat to the air going into the carburetor because I thought we might possibly be picking up carburetor ice. When he did so, the airplane sounded worse so I told him to get it off immediately.

About this time, the engines started to cough and then all four engines quit momentarily. This sounds impossible unless you push the crash bar, which cuts off all ignitions, but it actually happened. They then came back on, sputtering from one side to the other, pop, pop, bang, bang, bang, pop, pop from side to side and about that time I noticed that my instruments were going crazy and also that the tachometer on number two engine was rapidly falling back. When I glanced out I could see that the exhaust collector ring under the cowling was white hot so my first thought was that number two was freezing up on me and so I feathered it.

In the meantime I had rung the alarm bell for the crew to stand by to bail out, and I had to practically fly the plane with one hand and hold onto the crew with the other hand to keep them from bailing out immediately. I had made up my mind that if I wasn't at least eight thousand feet by the time I had Salt Lake City in sight we were bailing out. I called in for an emergency landing, was cleared, and landed the aircraft and immediately called my colonel at Wendover, long distance. The colonel refused to believe me, and made some very nasty remarks about my flying skill and to the effect that it just so happened he had a Consolidated Aircraft man at the base which built the B24 and he was sending him over in the morning--and if there wasn't something found wrong with that airplane it was going to be my ass.

You can imagine how little sleep I got that night because the whole thing sounded implausible. The next morning I was at the flight deck at the crack of dawn, and the Consolidated man flew in. He took one look at the aircraft and started to curse, stating, "I grounded that thing a week ago. It's not supposed to be flying!"

With that a great relief came over me because I figured if he had grounded it, there must be something radically wrong. They worked on that airplane for a solid week and we found what had been wrong. There were four inferior fuel pumps on the engines, and therefore I was getting an over lean mixture of gasoline which was causing detonation in the engines. Also, the maintenance on the aircraft had been so poor that the air ducts that were supposed to conduct the air into the carburetor were just hanging loose down in the cowlings instead of being fastened where they were supposed to be up at the vents. Also, both Autoson invertors, which furnished the power for the instruments and also the lights in the cockpit, had been burned out. So, as I say, they worked on it a week and the crew and I flew it back to Wendover.

Nothing was said when I arrived there because the Consolidated man had already apparently given the colonel the information. However, in flying back from Salt Lake I had noticed several minor things that should be corrected by the mechanics before it was flown again and I noted these. Two days later, as I was sitting in the operations office, the flight chief came in and asked me to test hop 1-3-6, the aircraft of which I had been speaking. One of my friends asked me, "What the hell are you going to do, Judge?" And I replied that I was going to take it up and wring it out and find out what the hell was wrong with it. We had a very snotty operations officer who was junior to me, and he never could keep his mouth shut and he popped off to the effect that, "...you be sure you bring that airplane back in good condition!" My reply was that when Judge Beane took one out he brought it back at least in pieces so they could see what the hell was wrong with the planes they were asking us to fly.

This time I had a very good copilot with me. In addition, I had ordered the flight chief and the crew chief that had worked on the airplane to fly. They were not normally flying personnel, and they said, "You mean you want us to go up with you?" And I said, "Yes, you said that aircraft was all right to fly, and then it scared the bejesus out of me the other night. You go up with me this time, and we'll see if it's fit to fly."

He was agreeable so they got into the aircraft, we went out to the end of the runway, ran her up, she checked out all right on the ground--which was a peculiarity with aircraft that many times on the ground they would check out perfectly, and then when you got them into the air it was an entirely different story. We started down the runway, got about two-thirds of the way down the runway and were just about airborne when all four propellers ran away. We got number one, two and three back with emergency procedures--running away means exceeding the tolerable limits of the rpm of the engine--but number four would not come back no matter what we did.

By that time we were about twenty feet off the ground and I made a mad dash for the feathering button to feather number four. At that instant I felt the airplane give a decided lurch to the right and try to roll on me. Shebo, about that time, let out a yell, "Too Late!" standing on the controls to keep forward directional control and balancing the power of the other three engines, I glanced out at number four and it was just like a horse's ass, there wasn't anything in front of the cowling, the propeller and the whole front end of the engine had just flown out of the airplane.

About this time the tower started yelling. "1-3-6, 1-3-6 your number four engine is smoking badly!" Shebo picked up the microphone and said, "Tower from 1-3-6, we ain't got no number four, get the meat-wagon, we're coming in on a crash landing!" So, I pulled her up and tried to make a tight turn to go onto another cross runway, however it was too tight a turn and I could not make it in time to get the plane leveled out and down in time to keep from running off the end of the runway. The whole thing must have looked very spectacular from the ground because there was a long plume of smoke coming from number four and even Shebo thought I was going to land it out in the salt flats there. I remember his yelling, "Ride it in like a boat, Judge!" I told him, "Hell No, give her 'emergency rich'! So he gave her 'emergency rich' and I began to very gingerly open the throttles again to pull up, and we were about ten feet off the ground, milk the landing gear up and come back in on the other runway.

We landed, taxied up to the flight line, and I think that the majority of the personnel that were not flying were lined up on the flight line. The colonel was over on the left side of the aircraft as I parked, and he angrily yelled at me as I opened the window, "What the god damn hell! Can't you fly these airplanes, Judge?" And I said, "Colonel, would you mind going around the nose and taking a look at number four?" He walked around the nose of the airplane, and I heard him say quietly, "Jesus H. Christ!" I never heard another word about this particular incident.

Also at Wendover we had an airplane, a B24 that had been sent back from combat as no longer fit to be flown for combat any longer. Each instructor pilot that took that airplane up came back scared to death, and no one was able to say exactly what was wrong with it except that they were just scared to death of it. I took a flight in it, and it had the most peculiar reactions that I had ever run into in an airplane. In fact, it gave one the feeling that the airplane had a mind of its own and intended to do what it wanted to do instead of what you tried to make it do. For example, you would be coming in lined up with the runway at a glide, no apparent trouble, and all of a sudden with no movement of the controls, no shift in power or anything, the airplane would just suddenly slide over some twenty to thirty feet off of the runway. Or, under like circumstances, you would be coming in and all of a sudden the plane would start flying almost sideways coming down the runway. So we refused to fly it.

Group headquarters, when they heard about it, sent one of the senior officers down there to fly the airplane and he came back and told us we were all a bunch of junior birdmen and we didn't know what we were talking about, that there was nothing wrong with the aircraft. So we thought maybe he was right, maybe it was just us, so we tried it again. And each pilot when he came down said never again would he get in that airplane. This time Group conceded to the majority opinion and said we'd fly it until it had its six hundred hour check, for which it was almost due, and then we'd junk it. Our response was that if anyone put the remainder of that six hundred hours on it, it would have to be someone else, not us.

I very vividly recall one day that Captain Dobrusky called up from Group and said he wanted an airplane to fly and he wanted a student to fly with him. And we said yes we've got an airplane, and he said, "I know, it's that war-weary one." There was one student in the operations office, and I can still recall that student saying he didn't want to go up in that airplane. We told him there was nothing we could do about it, Captain Dobrusky was a big wheel and that was the only airplane we had and he was the only student around. Captain Dobrusky made three take-offs. On the third take-off the airplane turned upside down, and crashed on the end of the runway killing all ten men aboard. I can say that from then on when the pilots said there was something wrong with an airplane around that particular group they were listened to.

Flying was a very peculiar business in that you developed a sixth sense--I am not a believer in ESP or anything of that nature, but I do know that we developed a sense of knowing when something was wrong. We could tell it with an aircraft and we could tell it with a student, even though it was not obvious by sound or actions, and immediately we started to find out what was wrong before we ended up in one of those Air Force sealed caskets.

I can recall one night on the bombing range at Pueblo, Colorado I had a student who was very stupid and was unable to make the proper bomb runs. It was pitch black dark, and like a fool I got my head down in the cockpit trying to show him on the instruments where he was fouling up the bomb run for the bombardier. All of a sudden, something inside me said something was wrong and I immediately sat up, looked out and looked right into the wing of a B24 at our exact altitude, coming right at us at an unbelievably short distance. I hit all engines full-power, super charges full power, pulled back on the wheel and stood the B24 on its tail. The other aircraft passed under us with a loud "whap!" as it hit our backwash--the turbulence from our airplane. I don't think he missed us by ten feet! We would have a student who seemed normal but something nagged at us that he wasn't right, and so our method of discovering whether a student was weak was to start giving him emergency procedures; that is, giving him stress conditions. Sometimes these stress conditions that we put him under became disaster conditions with us because you let him proceed to the point where it became very obvious he had made an error.

I recall one night with a student of this type, taking off from Davis-Monthan Field, Tucson Arizona. As we made our first turn in traffic at some seven hundred feet I reached up and pulled off his number one and two engines on the left hand side on the inner part of where he was making the turn--that is, inside the turn. The student almost went out through the roof in terror, and before I realized what he was doing--I have to say that in those conditions the aircraft has a tendency to roll upside down--the student, instead of balancing his rudder and ailerons to compensate for the loss of the two engines on the inside of the turn, reached up and cut off the other two engines in order to regain directional control. At that point, I almost went out through the roof of the aircraft because there we were at seven hundred feet, sitting right on top of the Santa Rita Hotel, and without power! The B24 had the gliding angle of a crowbar under those conditions, and I had one hell of a time getting it to fly before we crashed into the Santa Rita Hotel. I think I took some of the TV antennas out of the building as I came up!

I do not wish it to sound as if every flight was a near catastrophe because my log book is filled with literally scores of flights with merely a laconic notation of transitions, landings, etc.; however, when making a documentary of this type the flights where nothing happened do not come to mind and are of little interest. It's only those that are near disasters that are interesting. One of the banes of our existence were the senior officers who came down to get in their four hours of flying time for the month because they insisted upon flying the aircraft and they did not have enough constant practice to be reliable. We were junior officers to them and had to let them proceed even though we thought that they were doing things wrong.

I very vividly recall one flight out of Colorado with a Major Knorre who taxied out onto the runway, and when he stopped his nosepiece was at an angle instead of being directly

in line with the runway. I thought he realized this so I didn't say anything, thinking that he would straighten it up by balancing his startup power when he started his takeoff roll, but instead he poured on full power and took off across the runway diagonally. We were headed directly into a hill that was on the side of the runway with insufficient flying speed to clear it, at which point as a second lieutenant I took over. I literally wrested the controls from him, giving it full right rudder, full right aileron, full supercharger, full power on everything and we barely cleared the top of the hill. Needless to say, my crew was scared to death and there was not much that could be said. I recall the major saying, as we pulled up to correct altitude, "Were you on the controls?" I not only was on the controls, I had taken them away from him, which was not exactly healthy for a junior officer to do.

Another thing about instructing was that you seldom, if ever, heard any feedback on just how effective your instruction had been. The only time that I ever heard how effective my instruction had been was one night while sitting in a bar in Santa Monica, California a captain came up to me and he said, "Aren't you Captain Judge Beane?" By that time, a considerable amount of time had elapsed and I told him I was Judge Beane, but that I was a Major, and he said, "No, you're Captain Judge Beane to us. Do you remember how you used to play with those feathering buttons on take-off?" And I started to grin, and he said, "You know, you literally used to scare us pea-green doing that--and then one day out of Greenland we were on submarine patrol loaded to the gills with bombs and just after we got off of the runway our number four engine quit cold. The pilot let out a yell, 'Shades of Alamogordo and Judge Beane!' and with that proceeded to go through the regular routine to get the ship under control. When he was on the ground the pilot remarked, 'the guy used to scare me to death doing that, but thank God he showed me how because I never would have gotten this airplane on the ground if he hadn't. We would have been dead on the end of that runway.'" That was the only time I have ever heard any feedback on how effective my instruction had been with the students.

One rather amusing incident happened with a friend of mine at Davis-Monthan. He was addicted to low-level flying because of the sensation of speed that it gave, and when he was instructing his crews he would tell them that they were going to have to do it in the South Pacific and so, therefore, they might as well learn to do it right. At that time we were flying the B24-D with low altitude propellers, a considerably lighter aircraft than it later became in the E, F, G models. So, many a day, he and I would go out across the flats of Arizona there buzzing the farmhouses, blowing tiles off, turning over outhouses with a blast of our propellers much to our great delight.

Then, we got in some B24-Es with high altitude props, a much heavier aircraft but with the same amount of power that the others had had previously. On this particular day my friend was by himself and was doing his usual hedgehopping routine when all of a

sudden there loomed up in front of him a windmill. He poured the coal to it and pulled back on the stick, expecting the normal response of the B24-D of immediately shooting up in the air two hundred feet, but nothing happened except that the airplane stood on its tail and went straightforward. In consequence of which he picked up a ten-foot windmill blade in his bomb bay; and, of course, came flying back to the base with this ten-foot blade sticking out of his bomb bay, and no way of explaining it to the senior officers of the base. He was subsequently court-martialed and fined ten thousand dollars. I'll never forget the expression on his face in the officers club that night when I yelled out across the tables to him, "Hey, Windmill!" and from then on he was known as Windmill.

Things happened to men in training and in combat, and in their private lives, that made a great deal of difference in the way they lived. I saw my friend about a year later in the combat zone in Italy and he was a completely changed man. In the meantime, he had married a very wealthy young lady and she had been involved in an automobile accident and become paralyzed, and my friend was just not the same. All the fire had been taken out of him.

My crew was as weary as I of this constant instructing. One night my crew engineer made the wry comment to me, "Sir, these students are going to kill us on the base leg some night and we ain't never gonna see combat!" Another one of my crew was asked if he wasn't scared to death working with these students all the time and he replied, "Not as long as he could hear Judge Beane up on the flight deck instructing the student", but that if he ever stopped hearing me he was bailing out immediately. This was probably based on the fact that having a very heavy voice they really said that they could hear me plumb back in the waist of the ship whenever a student pulled something stupid.

At this point I would like to talk about aircraft crashes in general, a pet peeve of mine, that is aircraft crashes within the continental limits of the United States. Contrary to the orderly process of the chaplain and the colonel going to inform the widow that her husband had been killed, no such system was in operation. In fact, the instant that we had a crash the telephone lines were immediately hot with the students calling their wives to tell them not to worry about the airplane crash because they were not involved, but that 'Joe Dokes' was. This resulted in some very unnecessary and unbelievable situations.

I had one woman who was told of her husband's death right out in the midst of traffic in the middle of an intersection, and she fainted and was almost run over by the automobiles. In an attempt to stop this, I put an immediate freeze on any outgoing calls that were not of an official nature at Alamogordo after airplane crashes. The colonel, however, did not want to be involved so he rescinded my order and things went on their merry way.

The thing that was particularly gruesome about an airplane crash was the fact that it is not a very neat and orderly type death. The bodies are not laid out peacefully and serene with the hands lying out across their chests nor anything of this nature. I will describe one that occurred at Albuquerque and from this you will understand what I am trying to get

at. On one particular night a Navy transport with some twenty-seven people aboard, including an Admiral and two Waves and other various ranks of the Navy reported themselves as being at fifteen thousand feet altitude just south of the field. The tower attempted to call them back and confirm their position report; whereupon there was an immediate flash of light, which was a very evident explosion in the direction that the pilot had indicated. At that time, I was an officer on duty and we immediately sought out searching for the aircraft and found it about daybreak. Of the twenty-seven persons aboard, there was no piece of any one of them that was bigger than a ten pound roast, and the only things that were identifiable were the left arm of the admiral due to the stripes he had on and the scalp of one Wave due to her long hair.

Now, under these circumstances, the doctors who are charged with the responsibility of identifying the bodies and shipping them off to the surviving relatives merely lay out rubber sheets and, going on the premise that the human body weighs approximately one hundred and fifty pounds, just deal out these chunks of flesh until they have approximately one hundred and fifty pounds per casket. I have always felt, and so did many of my fellow fliers, that under these circumstances the orderly way of doing it would have been to merely take a bulldozer, cut a trench in the ground, scrape all parts of the aircraft and the bodies into the ground, put a concrete slab over it and a marker that here in the service of their country died so-and-so on such-and-such a date.

There was also another very disturbing factor about aircraft crashes in the United States, and that is that they always attracted a large crowd of civilians who pawed through the wreckage, found a fingertip or something of this nature, and then put in a horrified call to the base that there were dead bodies lying all over the field which we hadn't picked up. This occurred three times on the Albuquerque crash until at the end of my patience I did just what I had spoken of previously. I moved all of the people away, had a bulldozer come in, cut a trench, and scrape all parts of the crash and bodies that might still be mingled therein, and then covered it with six feet of dirt. I was not very polite to the civilians when I told them, "Now, you damn ghouls, see what you can find." This was a very particular peeve of mine.

It was also very difficult when the bodies had to be shipped home, because an officer had to accompany the body. This sometimes was very difficult because, particularly with people of foreign extraction or first generation immigrants, they refused to believe that the sealed casket contained the remains of their loved one. I recall one friend of mine who took a polish boy home, and the father of the family took crowbars and so forth and was going to open the sealed steel casket. This friend of mine knew that if he got it open all he would find would be a uniform and a pair of scorched wings. He was horrified but was unable to stop them until he dashed down to the local parish priest, explained the situation to him and had the priest come back and prevail upon the people not to open the casket.

By 1943, I had been promoted to the rank of captain and was a senior flight commander with the 2nd Air Force, with other flight commanders serving under me. In June of 1943, I, along with three of my flight commanders, received orders to report to Dyersburg, Tennessee for the formation of a cadre to formulate the 451st bomb group. Three of us

were assigned as squadron commanders, and the other one as group operation officer. Being the senior ranking officer, I was assigned the first squadron of the group, i.e., the 724th bomb squadron, 451st bomb group. We only stayed at Dyersburg for a short period of time to let the remaining men ordered there arrive and I found, much to my delight, one of my former pupils, a man by the name of Vail, had been assigned to the Group as what they called in those days, Model crew. That is, these were crews upon whom you could depend to help train the remainder of your squadron as you went along. From Dyersburg we went to Orlando, Florida for tactical training at the Air Force School of Applied Tactics and stayed there until about July 18th. During this period of time we were indoctrinated with all of the scientific techniques of combat flying in a bomber under war conditions.

At Wendover, the remainder of the Group began arriving, both ground crew and flying personnel. Unfortunately, the colonel who had been assigned to us, Colonel R.E.L. Eaton, had sat behind a weather desk in Washington for twelve years and the largest thing that he had ever flown was a little O47 single-engine observation aircraft; and he knew absolutely nothing about heavy bombardment aircraft, nor the crews that flew them. It wasn't very long before the Colonel and I began to lock horns because he would get wild ideas about how to do something in the way of flying and I, being in the fortunate or unfortunate position of being the senior one of his staff assigned, was left in the position of having to correct the Colonel.

The Colonel was not amenable to any explanations of why a particular operation would not work. His usual reply was, "It damn well will work, and we will do it." I would try to tell him that I had seen it tried at Clovis, at Wendover, Alamogordo, El Paso, at Biggsfield but he would pay no attention whatever. Then we would do it the way he said, and it would turn out to be a mess. In addition to telling him what wouldn't work, I tried to tell him what I had seen that would work. When his original idea turned out to be a mess, then he was angry with us because we hadn't done it the way I had explained to him in the first place. He was also a rather peculiar man in that he had no interest in women, he had no interest in alcohol; the only thing he was interested in was sitting in his room or his tent talking about how good his Group was, and how piss-poor somebody else's Group was.

He took violent objection to my manner of handling my men because my attitude was that I didn't care if they slept with every woman within forty miles, or drank all the whiskey obtainable in that direction, as long as they were on the flight line when they were supposed to be there and in a condition to do the job that they were supposed to do; and, also, so long as they did not get their name in print, that is official reprimands which I would have to take disciplinary action on because under those circumstances I told them I would take very severe disciplinary action.

My men seemed to like it, though the Colonel hated it, and I recall a meeting that I had with my Squadron in its early formative stage when I informed them of the situation that existed between the Colonel and myself. I pointed out to them that if they wanted me to remain as their Squadron commander, they would have to do the best damn job that had ever been done in the Air Corps otherwise the Colonel was going to nail me to the cross.

Apparently my words had an effect because the men really pitched in to do their best to make it an operational squadron.

Our crews started arriving in Wendover, and we found that the supply system was not operating at all in the way it was supposed to. In other words, we at the first stage of training as we were at Wendover were supposed to get crews that had already completed the first stage of training and so therefore would not require a catch up type training on the part of the Group. This was a problem that existed during the entire time of our training because as we went into second and third phase we were supposed to get crews who had completed that phase of training. Unfortunately, as I say, this was not true. We got crews who had had little or no training in the B24. I was fortunate enough to have Vail, my Model crew, and another officer by the name of Stone and his crew that I was able to use as trainers for the Squadron. The problem that I was facing was not only that of being an instructor, but also of trying to run a Squadron at the same time--a Squadron consisting of several hundred men.

To show you how poor some of the people were who were sent to us, I recall vividly the worst example of a man who had gotten out of flying school, gone to the B25 school, that is, the twin-engine bomber, and had been given about twenty-five hours of instruction there and then let go on the basis that he could not handle the B25. From there, he was sent to a B17 school, given about eight hours and then shipped out on the basis that he did not have the qualities that would make a B17 pilot. From there, he was shipped to a B24 training school and at this school they gave him a crew, put him in an airplane, rolled him around the field twice in a B24 and handed him to me as a man who had completed B24 subsequent training. This, of course, caused an immense strain on the capabilities of the Squadron to train them.

I recall in one particular month I flew Vail and Lieutenant Stone, with their crews, one hundred and eighty hours within the month instructing the other crews. This may not sound like much to a civilian, but it is an extreme load in flying. I believe that the modern airline pilot is absolutely prohibited to fly over ninety hours a month.

This business of the unqualified crew being assigned was also true about other personnel who had been through various training schools. For example, we would get gunners, or ground armament men, who supposedly were capable of all repair and maintenance of the 50-caliber machine guns and the turrets that we had on the aircraft. When we got them, in many instances, we found that their entire time in the armament school had been spent on k.p. or kitchen duty. About the only thing they knew about a 50-caliber machine gun was that it had one end that the bullet came out of and another end that the bullet went in to. Under those circumstances you make the best usage you can of the personnel that you receive--you either train them yourself, or you put them into something that approximates their civilian occupation.

The Colonel was continually on my neck, and our relationship continually deteriorated. I recall his abrupt order one day when we had finished flying the crews that he thought that the commanding officers of the squadrons should go up and do some instrument flying to keep in practice. Of course, we had only been doing this for some two solid years and the order infuriated me, as tired as I was from instructing the crews. So I took a B24 with a

crew, took off with the hood up, that is on instruments, climbed up to ten thousand feet and started doing mile aerobatics on instruments--that is, lazy eights, shondelles, vertical turns and things of this nature which are quite difficult when you are flying on instruments. Apparently, the colonel was quickly acquainted with what I was doing for I only stayed up for about a half an hour, came in on instruments, landed the aircraft, cut the engines, walked out and went to my barracks. There was nothing else mentioned from then on about the squadron commanders getting flying time on their own to increase their efficiency.

From Wendover we were transferred to Geneva, Nebraska in August of 1943. The pilots of the squadron at that time were Lieutenants Vail, Wiersema, Stone, Kester, Graber, Tepfer, Ed Johnson, Coyle, Carlson, Moran, O'Conner, Williams, Kearney, Nagle, V.G. Johnson, Brown, Bolin and McCollester. We were overstaffed on crews in the group for the purpose of training them and taking them overseas to act as replacements for combat losses in other groups. We were also overstaffed with aircraft for the purpose of training the crews.

Things were somehow not going right and I kept a very close tab as to why not. Though my wife was there I very rarely went home more than two or three nights a week. Most of my time was spent in the operations office watching the training going on and lending my support and efforts to that. In fact, I became so sensitive as to what was normal operating tone in the operations office, and we were flying twenty-four hours a day, that when I was asleep on the cot if the operations office became too quiet or too noisy I would wake up and come out to see what was the matter. I could not use my operations officer to relieve me of part of this duty because he was an Army officer who had gone through flying school in-grade as a first lieutenant, was then assigned to me as an operations officer and I wouldn't even trust him in the air alone with a B24.

Also, at this time, the Air Force realized that young squadron commanders, though they might be proficient in flying and so forth, were not proficient in the paperwork mill that went on in your Squadron Headquarters so they assigned to us officers of World War I to be our executive officers. Now it must be clear that the flying captain was in absolute command of the squadron, however the exec officer, if you were wise and used him correctly, was a great deal of assistance in holding down your squadron headquarters and doing all the personnel and paperwork and so forth that went with it. I was fortunate in the one that I got who was a Major, and I put myself on a firm footing with him right from the very beginning. I told him that, as he knew, I was in command of the squadron and I intended to keep it that way; however, I respected his rank and whatever good he could do me in my headquarters. Therefore, the men would not be in the position of playing off me against the major or the Major against me. I said, "If there's any difficulty, you and I will work it out."

I am looking at my logbook now, and I see the notation across one page, in September of 1943, "Squadron training pressure really heavy." And it was very, very heavy. Also, there is a notation here that "...Crew #12, Williams and Crew #16, Brown had a midair collision while flying formation with both crews wiped out." Also, a notation that

“...Crew #6 Kepfer had a nervous breakdown, going is too tough for the weaklings, awaiting replacement of entire crew.”

Things continued in this manner, and in November we were transferred to Fairmont, Nebraska, which was supposed to be our final phase of training before going overseas. At Fairmont, the Colonel and I had just about had it with each other. He could not understand the way I was running my squadron, and I could not understand him at all. One day one of my Operations clerks, who happened to be down at Group Operations, was down in behind a bunch of files when the Colonel came in and started looking at the progress charts of the various squadrons. He looked at mine and then exploded with the following comment, “They’ve got the same number of crews, the same number of airplanes, the same number of hours in the day, and yet they consistently fly more hours, drop more bombs and fire more ammunition--how do they do it!?” I was rather delighted to hear this.

At this time, I finally got track of what was going wrong in my squadron other than the straight flying end of it. We were awaiting the preparation for overseas movement inspection from the Inspector General’s office, and if there was anything that the Inspector General was death on, it was working men outside of their occupational specialty. As I had remarked earlier, some of these people had not been trained properly so we were using them in other aspects of the squadron. I recall that about four armament men were at that time working in our squadron headquarters as typists and clerks, getting our records together for us to go overseas. However, having an Inspector General’s team coming in I could not afford to have this, and so I called a meeting of my squadron and readily admitted that these men were not worth anything in their occupational specialty and that we needed them where we were currently were using them, but that for the purposes of inspection these men had to be returned to what was supposed to be their specialty until the Inspector General’s office had left.

Some two days later, going by the armaments office, I noticed they seemed to be shorthanded. I asked the lieutenant in charge where the men were I had ordered to be returned to their particular section, and he replied that he hadn’t seen them. I immediately went back to my office and called my Squadron Headquarters and got hold of the first sergeant, and I asked him where the men were that I had ordered back to the armament section. The sergeant stammered and stuttered and finally came out with the comment that the first lieutenant adjutant that I had had said that these men were not any good as armament men and that they needed them to complete the records, and so he had countermanded my order to send them down to armament.

I was livid with anger. I immediately ordered the sergeant to report to my office with his stripes in hand, and I meant just that. When he arrived I sat him down and took his stripes in my hand and told him that unfortunately he had been caught between two conflicting orders. However, I said that I considered him a good first sergeant and he would be left in

as a buck private, and if he showed me that he could do it he would get his stripes back one by one. At the same time I handed him a squadron order to be cut transferring the lieutenant adjutant to supply, and transferring the supply officer who was a second lieutenant to the adjutant's position. I also, at the same time, gave him a reply-by-endorsement letter to the adjutant. In this letter I enumerated the various times he had been given instructions and had either ignored them or made a mess of them.

I subsequently learned that upon getting this letter he was running all around the office trying to get people who would refute my statements in the letter. The Major, who was my exec officer, later told me that he told him the best advice he could give him was to shut up and to get down to supply, and try to do the best job on supply that I had ever seen because I was so angry that I was going to hang him to the flagpole if he didn't do so. Some short while later, I had the necessity to call my headquarters and the lieutenant answered the phone. When I had given my orders the lieutenant stammered and said he hadn't had time to reply to that letter. I said, "It does not take any time to state the letter was received and contents noted, and sign your name." He said, "Is that all you want on it, sir?" I said, "That is all that is necessary on that letter."

Also, at this time I had been having a great deal of difficulty in my engineering section in that they never supplied me with enough aircraft to keep my crews flying as much as I wanted. The particular master sergeant in charge of the flight line maintenance had been bounced about this matter several times, and I had asked him whether he needed more men or if he needed any particular supplies or any particular equipment or anything of that nature to give me the airplanes that I needed. The reply was always no, but this time I decided to make a clean sweep so I busted the master sergeant line chief and transferred him out of my squadron. Then I went back to the maintenance section, and to the assembled sergeants that were there I asked, "Is there any man here who can give me nine airplanes a day in good flying condition?" One buck-sergeant stepped forward and he said, "I can, sir." I said, "Is there anything that you need?" He said, "Yes, sir" and he started enumerating the supplies that they needed from the depots and other articles.

That night I bought a case of whiskey, ordered an aircraft to be ready the following morning and, getting the sergeant who had volunteered in the plane, flew to one of the big depots. At the depot the copilot and myself disappeared in the general direction of the officers' club and left the sergeant with the case of whiskey to negotiate supplies. This was, of course, strictly against all normal supply channels but I needed the material to get my airplanes in shape. When we came back the B24 was loaded with every possible supply that we needed to keep those airplanes flying. I never had any trouble from maintenance thereafter. This was subsequently known in the squadron as the Week of the Ax, and I must say that from then on things went like soap in the squadron.

Now I will relate a particular incident that happened of which I am not particularly proud, but which illustrates what can happen when an ill-conceived order is given. A blizzard started there in Fairmont, and the Group engineering officer called and made the following statement: "In accordance with the Colonel's orders, the engines in the B-24s will be run up and diluted every four hours as long as the blizzard lasts." This, of course,

was sheer nonsense but I was so stunned by it that I just dropped the phone and held my head in my hands.

The reason it is sheer nonsense is that, in the first place, to dilute an engine means to pour raw gasoline into it by means of a switch in the cockpit into the oil reservoir and therefore make it a thinner consistency. Any idiot can figure out that this is only necessary to do one time; you do not have to keep repeating the process! The other reason it was sheer idiocy was the fact that the Pratt engine with which the B24 is equipped, though it was the finest engine the Air Corps had, would not take idling for any prolonged periods of time because under those circumstances, and, particularly with diluted oil, the oil would coat the sparkplugs and then you were unable to get power.

As I was sitting there with my head in my hands, Doc Davis--one of the other squadron commanders--called me and he said, "Judge, did you get that damned fool order from Group?" I said that yes I got it, and he said, "What're you gonna do about it?" I said, "Well, Doc, I am so tired of being chewed out by the Colonel every time I try to correct him that I'm gonna let it go through." He said, "My God, man, you know what will happen!" I said, "Yes, I know what will happen but, as I say, I am just sick and tired of being chewed out every time I try to correct the Colonel."

So the blizzard lasted three days, and the mechanics, in accordance with the orders, poured raw gasoline every four hours into the oil. On the third day, there came bright bluebird weather. Also, to my horror, the Inspector General's office appeared that same morning to see us run a mission to judge whether we were combat ready or not. What followed I can only describe as the most horrible mess I have ever seen occur in any type mission. Of the seventy-two airplanes that we had, at least half you could not get one or more engines to start. We had one-way taxi strips out to the end of the runway, and you ran your engines up to see if you were developing sufficient power at the end of the runway. Of those that were able to get to the end of the runway, the majority of them were trying to taxi back because they could not get enough power on the engines to take off. Of those that did take off of which I was one because I was bound and determined that I was going to get off if I had one cylinder working because I was sure that the Colonel was going to blame me for the whole mess.

Of those that got off the ground, practically every aircraft was immediately calling in for an emergency landing. When I got off, I wished to God that I hadn't because I went off across those Nebraska farmyards with one hundred feet altitude and one hundred-ten miles per hour air speed which is just above the stall point of the B24, and I could not get another mile of air speed nor another inch of altitude to save my life. We, of course, had to call in for an emergency landing and, of the total of seventy-two aircraft, there were only eight that went on the mission. Those eight, I presume, the mechanics had considered the order so stupid that they just said the hell with it and didn't do it.

I kind of felt sorry for the Colonel because he realized what had happened. He called us all in and he was almost crying. He said, "Why do you let me f___ up like this? You know I don't know anything about these airplanes, or anything about these crews, that's why they gave me you men. Why do you let me f___ up?" Of course there was no answer to this, he knew the answer well enough himself. So we went out and changed thirty-six

sparkplugs on each engine, four engines per aircraft, seventy-two airplanes and the next day flew a beautiful, model mission for the Inspector General's office.

But it almost broke the Colonel, and it also taught me a lesson. Never, under any circumstances, would I let anything like that ever happen again. If I got a damned-fool order, no matter from what source, I would protest it regardless of how I was chewed out because, as those aircraft were taking off that morning with those fouled-up engines, it suddenly occurred to me that if any of them got killed it was actually my moral responsibility. I had known what was going to happen. I have lived by that code ever since, even though sometimes it has gotten me into a very difficult position.

Having finished our combat inspection satisfactorily, and with new aircraft and new equipment of all types, we were ready to go overseas and were scheduled to go on a particular Monday. In the meantime, my squadron had decided to have a squadron party on a Saturday night so we sent Lieutenant Schneck, a navigator on Vail's crew, to Omaha where his uncle ran the Chez Paris to buy liquor, for the officer personnel, and beer and food for the enlisted personnel because we were prohibited buying liquor for enlisted personnel. I think we collected about five hundred dollars from the officers in the squadron, and with that money Lieutenant Schneck took off for Omaha.

On Friday night in the Club I mentioned something to the Colonel about having a party. His first reaction was, "No!" Then, when he saw I was quite persistent about it, he said we could have a little party tomorrow night with a couple bottles of beer and some 5-minute pep talks, and everyone could go to bed early and get a good night's sleep. I told him that wasn't the kind of party I was talking about and he said, "Yes I know the kind of party you're talking about--a goddamned drunken brawl!" I said, "Well, don't you think the men are entitled to a celebration in as much as they have finished their training satisfactorily and are shipping out to combat on Monday?" He said we could have a Group party but no squadron party, whereupon I asked if any of the other squadron commanders had planned anything, yet. He said, "You mean to say that you already have?" I informed him that Lieutenant Schneck was on his way to Omaha for the necessities for our party.

The Colonel was quite wroth and stated that there would be a staff meeting in his office the next morning. The next morning when we got in there I could see that the Colonel was attempting to hold his temper but was having a very difficult time doing so. He started off the meeting by stating that I, in my usual inimitable fashion, had gone ahead and made arrangements to have a party. He said he had decided that we would have a Group party and he proceeded to outline what he had said to me the night before. But, he

ended up his little dissertation with the fact that everybody could have a little drink of my liquor and that would be it. I immediately spoke up and said that I could not do that; that liquor belonged to the men in the squadron. They donated the money for it and I could not take their liquor and disperse it to the entire Group. His first comment was, "We'll pay you for the god damn liquor." I said that wasn't the point, but rather that liquor was just too hard to get at this point and time. He said, "Well then how the hell are you getting it?" So I informed him that Schneck's uncle ran the Chez Paris and was giving it to us wholesale. He thereupon exploded and said, "Well I don't know what the rest of the Group thinks, but as far as I'm concerned you can take your goddamned liquor and stuff it up your ass! But there will be a Group party tonight, and everyone will be there!"

Well, we hadn't realized how much liquor five hundred dollars could buy at wholesale prices. Lieutenant Schneck returned that afternoon with case after case of liquor, beer, and food of all descriptions, the trunk, front and back seats of his car loaded to capacity. He said, "What shall I do with it?" By this time I was so disgusted with the way the whole thing had gone that I told him to just put a 724th Squadron label on it and stack it back of the bar in the Officers Club. In the meantime word had gotten out over the base as to what had gone on--that was always one of the great mysteries that you could have a closed session of senior officers and yet what went on was immediately all over the base. So that night I told the men that it was their liquor, and if they wanted to invite a friend from another Squadron to share a bottle or case it was their business, but I was not going to give their liquor away wholesale just because the Colonel desired it.

The consequence of the whole thing was that the entire Group got drunk on the 724th's liquor that night because the boys kept inviting friends from other squadrons to have drinks with them and the Colonel's party was a dismal flop; in fact, he had been unable to get anybody in there either from my or any other squadron. In the midst of the festivities I took some of the key staff personnel and our wives down to the enlisted men's mess hall to see how they were faring with their party. It was a scene of great joviality and squadron spirit on the part of the men. During the course of the evening in the short time that we were there, two men came up to me and said, "Sir, we hope you don't mind us being here, we're not from your squadron. Our squadron commander didn't even think enough of us to tell us we did a good job, good-bye until Monday or anything." So I asked these two men if there were any more men in their barracks down there, and they said there were lots of them. I asked my first sergeant how much beer we had left and he said we had all we could drink and all they could drink, too. I told them to go down to the barracks and get all the enlisted men they could find and invite them to the 724th's party. This they did, so as a result the entire Group was a recipient of the hospitality of the 724th bomb squadron and they never forgot it.

On Thanksgiving, November 25, 1943 we took off from Lincoln, Nebraska to Morrison Field, Florida. Two days later we left Morrison and flew to Borinquen, Puerto Rico and two days after that we flew to Atkinson, British Guinea. Now, I do not recall the flight at all from Puerto Rico to British Guinea. I was running a temperature of 102 degrees and all I recall is one flash of a white beach and calling in for landing instructions at Atkinson. As soon as I got out of the aircraft I reported to the surgeon's office at the base.

He took my temperature and so forth and immediately ordered me to bed; in fact he wanted me to go into the hospital there for several days. This I flatly refused to do on the basis that I was leading a squadron of bombers overseas and I was going with them unless I was so flat on my back and didn't know what I was doing that they had to keep me there. He gave me a handful of pills and told me to drink a lot of orange juice, and so forth, and go to sleep. It was boiling hot at Atkinson but I was shivering with chills so I crawled into bed, after taking this handful of pills and drinking almost a gallon of juice, under several army blankets. I slept all day and night with the sweat literally dripping off my head and onto the floor, and by next morning my head was clear and I was ready to go on.

From Atkinson we flew to Belim, Brazil and the following day from Belim to Netal, Brazil. Then, on December the third, we started the long hop across the Atlantic from Netal, Brazil to Dakar on the Gold Coast of Africa. I had not joined the Navy because I did not particularly relish the idea of flying over water, but on that flight from Dakar to Nepal which took us ten hours and twenty minutes I saw more water than I ever want to see again in the rest of my life.

At Dakar we were backed up because of some difficulties up the line at the various airbases because of the number of aircraft that were trying to move in to the theater of operations. However, on December the eighth Lieutenant Vail, with whom I was flying, and I were gotten out of bed at two o'clock in the morning with instructions that we had to fly a special messenger to Marrakech, Morocco. We were briefed that at about dawn we would come to the Atlas Mountains, and that there was a doglegged pass through these mountains, which the aircraft normally took. But they warned us that under no circumstances were we to go into this pass if there was cloud cover because we would crash in the pass. At dawn we got to Tindouf, West Africa after flying across the Sahara which was really an eerie flight because it was the first time I had ever seen red lightning--and that red lightning after glistening off the sand of the Sahara was something else.

When we got to Tindouf, we found that the pass was not only socked in solid with fog, but also had a cloud cover of what looked to be twenty-five or thirty thousand feet over the mountains. Since we could not go through the pass, nor could we go over, I stayed right at Tindouf. In the meantime, this special messenger (who was apparently carrying dispatches of high priority) was having a fit because we didn't go on to Marrakech. So, in about two hours, an air transport command aircraft landed at Tindouf from Marrakech,

and I asked the pilot if he had negotiated the pass or had gone over and he told me, "Hell no. It's impossible in both situations." So I asked him how he got there, and he informed me that what he had done was to fly out to sea in the clouds until he had found a break and then go down and get right on top of the water, go around the mountains and then climb up through another hole and find Tindouf. My reaction was that if he found do it, we could too.

So we took off and flew out to sea in the cloud cover. First off, the ship began to ice up with chunks of ice flying off the propeller and the wings getting heavier and heavier, so I called the sergeant to find out how this messenger was taking it in the back and he said, "Sir, this damned fool is sound asleep!" I said, "Well kick him in the ass and show him out the window what he's gotten us into!" The sergeant later told me he did just what I said. The lieutenant was quite indignant to begin with, but when he looked out at the wings and saw all that ice he turned as white as the ice itself.

We did find a hole finally and got down under the cloud cover, however we found that we were flying about ten feet above the water in an absolute blinding rainstorm. The rain was so thick that it was as though we were in a submarine; of course, I was flying zero-zero instruments. I called Schneck, the navigator, and asked him how in the hell we were going to find Marrakech in a mess like we were in at that particular time. He replied that there was a small river that ran by the airport at Marrakech, which was some twenty miles inland that came out to sea --if we could find the mouth of that river we could fly up it until we came to Marrakech. It sounded like the best idea of getting there, so we started looking for a river mouth. Schneck, by this time, was not doing ordinary navigation, but was sitting up in the forward gun turret in the nose trying to see visually while I flew instruments under those zero-zero conditions.

All of a sudden he let out a yell to turn ninety degrees, that he had found the mouth of the river. The only things that we had not taken into consideration were that this river wound in and out of hills, and the cloud cover was down, so that we had to stay practically on top of the water. We turned into the river, and had the most harrowing twenty-mile flight from there in that I have ever experienced. The only way I could tell how to follow the tortuous path of that river was by how frantic Schneck was in the nose as he directed me visually. It sounded something like this, "Right, right, right Goddamn it R-I-G-H-T. Left, left, level out, level out, all right now left!" This went on for twenty miles, and by the time we got to Marrakech we were ringing wet with cold sweat.

When we got there, Marrakech did not want us to land. In fact, they forbade it to begin with until I informed them that I had a messenger with high priority messages. It seemed as though there was a meeting of some Allied Commanders going on at that particular time and that these dispatches were for them. The instructions from the tower then were to land, roll to the end of the runway, let our passenger out and immediately take off and go to Casablanca. This was just about too much, and I can still remember Vail reaching

up and pulling the bar that was covering the feathering buttons so that if we ran out of gasoline they would be immediately available to feather some of the engines.

We made an instrument flight to Casablanca, and when Schneck told us that we were there, we were unable to see the field at all. I called the tower and was informed by the tower that we were flying right down the main runway and to make an instrument letdown and come on in. We made a box pattern, got lined up with where we thought the runway should be and started descending from our thousand-foot altitude. We kept getting lower and lower and lower and lower, and we still couldn't see a thing. Finally we were down to a height of one hundred-fifty to two hundred feet and I was just about to give it the guns and climb up, feeling it was hopeless when Vail, looking out the right window, let out a yell, "There it is, there it is, four hundred yards!" We skidded the B-24 over one hundred yards and plopped her down in Casablanca.

Later on in the day, the main part of our Group, which had been sitting around in Dakar, was cleared to go to Casablanca and was able to do so because the pass had cleared at that time. However, when they got to Casablanca it was still socked in--the way it had been when we came in--and Colonel Eaton made thirteen passes at that field before he was ever able to get that B-24 down. We thought we were going to have to get anti-aircraft guns and shoot him down to get him on the ground.

At Casablanca we learned how fortunate we had been in getting through with all of our aircraft and crews intact, because the Group immediately preceding us in their flight from the United States via the route that we took to Casablanca had lost five aircraft and five crews in the flight alone. We stayed in Casablanca eight days and, during that time of course, since it was the first of the foreign civilized ports that we had hit--or bases, or towns, whatever you want to call them--we took in the sites of Casablanca and the night-life.

One particular night spot was known as the Select Bar and was quite well known for its decorative pattern which consisted of the insignia, mottoes, slogans so forth of the various German, Italian, French, American and other units that had passed through Casablanca going in one direction or the other. Also, there, I saw some of the most proficient prostitutes that I have ever seen in my life. There were two that used the Select Bar as their hangout, and you could almost set your watch by the time that elapsed between their picking up military personnel and their return to the bar to pick up another set--in fact, we timed it and it was forty-five minutes and this went on from the time it opened in the early day to the time it closed late at night. We weren't particularly impressed by the activity of these two individuals because too vivid in our memory was the venereal disease video that we had been shown before we left the states. That film, without doubt, can kill the libido of just about anyone that sees it.

After eight days in Casablanca, we flew to Telergma, Algeria and a more God-forsaken spot I have never seen. We were in tents, there was at least a foot of mud on the ground, and as one fellow said, "My God, what a country! Why fight over it? Rain, snow, ice, mud too thick to drink and too thin to plow." It was bitter cold and, as I say, we were in tents made out of make-shift contraptions that were made out of oil drums, burning hundred octane gasoline from the aircraft supplies from a complicated system of valves that we had formulated ourselves.

We stayed at Telergma until January the 20th. All the time we were there, our nearest center of civilization was Constantine, Algiers, which was some fifty-eight miles away from us over a narrow, winding mountain road; however, at every opportunity we went there for recreation. The only difficulty was that if any of our personnel got into trouble with the MPs, the Colonel took great delight in routing the squadron commanders out of bed at 3:00 a.m. on a freezing night, telling us to go get them. You can imagine the condition of mind you were in after you had driven fifty-eight miles in freezing weather to pick up a couple men who had gotten too drunk and into trouble with the MPs. I had to do it one night, and thereafter I held the record for the time elapsed between Constantine and Telergma, fifty-eight minutes for fifty-eight miles on that road as I have described it-- when they got back to base, the men said it was worse than being busted.

Also, at this time, I should mention the fact that the Arabs are the greatest thieves in the world, and will go to any lengths to accomplish their purpose; for example, we killed two within sight of our camp for trying to steal parachutes from our aircraft. This was in broad daylight with the squadron not a hundred yards from the planes were parked, but fortunately we had guards on the airplanes and the first we heard was the gunfire as two Arabs were cut down trying to steal the parachutes.

They also had another little trick which they used to try to steal things from the camp, and that was to let their sheep drift in to the camp and those Arabs with those long gowns that they wore would get down on all fours among the sheep and be unrecognizable. We suffered with the indignation for a day or so, until a French officer told us how to stop it. As they came in with their sheep, they would take a knife and slit a tent, then take sheets or guns, things of this nature. The French officer told us the next time we saw a flock of sheep in our camp to take a Tommy gun and kill a couple of sheep and have them for dinner. He said we wouldn't be bothered with it thereafter because they value their sheep more than that. So the next time that this happened, we had the cook armed with a Tommy gun and he stepped out and proceeded to lay low two of the fattest that he could spot. Two Arabs bounced up from the midst of the sheep and took off over the hills with the sheep following them very rapidly. We were not bothered again in that way.

On the twentieth of January, we flew from Telergma, Algiers to Gioia del Colle, Italy. This was our theater of operation base, which we had at last reached. From then on, beside the usual transition to acquaint the crews with the appearance of the neighboring and surrounding country so that they can find the base, my logbook shows combat missions. The first one was Pojan, Albania and on that one we missed the target, a small radar station that we just completely missed. The next one was Durazzo, Albania and we obliterated that one. On February the 2nd, 1944 we hit Arrezo, Italy and then on the 15th when the weather had cleared we hit Campoleone, which was at the Angio beachhead.

The logbook is to the effect that the flack was tremendous over the Angio beachhead and we had three aircraft shot up and another one shot up so bad that it crashed on landing, however no one was hurt.

On February 16th, we hit Sienna, Italy where another airplane cracked up on landing and on February 22nd we hit Regensburg, Germany, which was a real target for the first time. Regensburg was rugged. On this particular day, I was flying with Stone and we had bad luck. I was supposed to lead the formation and, just as we reached the initial point that is the point from which you make your 32nd bomb run, the top turret was being filled with oxygen and we were hit by the fighters. The top turret gunner got excited and, without thinking, whirled his turret around to follow the fighters while he was still connected to the main oxygen system of the ship. The result was that he jerked the oxygen line out of the side of the ship, broke it, and we lost all of our oxygen immediately at 22,000 feet. At that point I had to make a lightening decision. I knew that I could tolerate a lack of oxygen at that altitude but I had no knowledge of how my bombardier in the plane could tolerate the lack of oxygen--and, in as much as we were the lead ship, we could very well mess up the entire bomb run for the whole group of thirty-six ships. My decision was to get out immediately and let the alternate group leader take over so therefore I fishtailed my tail of the B-24 which meant "move out", turned the airplane upside down in formation, and dove straight down from 22,000 feet with the fighters right after us.

At some 8,000 feet there was cloud cover for which we were headed, and we pulled out with the wingtips practically shaking hands because a bomber is not constructed to take that type of maneuver. The two fighters were right on our tail, and the only thing that we could do was to duck into this undercast at 8,000 feet. This would have been all right, except that we were in mountainous terrain and you could see the tips of peaks sticking out of this 8,000 ft cover, so we had to play a game of cat and mouse for considerable distance with these two fighters. We would duck down into the overcast, stay there for 10-15 seconds just praying to God we did not run into one of those peaks, then we would pop up like a cottontail rabbit out of the brush and the fighters would make another run at us and we would drop down into the undercast again. This went on until we were practically all the way back to Yugoslavia, at which time the two fighters were apparently nearly out of gas and gave up and we were able to make it on home after a very harrowing fight.

In between combat flights, and on days when we did not fly due to weather, we were trying to get acquainted with the town of Gioia del Colle. We very soon discovered that a small provincial Italian town had no nightlife whatsoever: no liquor, no food, and the women were always accompanied by with big brother or papa so the chances of recreation were nil. I found that the only drink available was wine, and of that they seemed to have plenty all the time.

In my particular squadron, my squadron staff bombardier was a boy by the name of Lieutenant Astenado who was of Italian parentage and spoke Italian perfectly. Through him, we became acquainted with the mayor of the town of Gioia del Colle and thereafter

made it our off-duty headquarters. They very soon learned that I was very cold-blooded and freezing all of the time--and those Italian houses had no central heating whatsoever. The entire heat, except for the kitchen where they had an open fireplace, was heating merely by charcoal braziers so they very soon got in the habit, when I came with Astenado to call, that they would put the charcoal brazier right under my chair even though I was clothed in long-handled underwear and a full wool uniform and sometimes with the overcoat included. And they would immediately set a bottle of wine to hand.

One night Astenado made a casual comment to the effect that he would certainly like some pizza. I noticed that the mayor and his wife looked somewhat embarrassed so I told Astenado to ask them what was the difficulty, and they replied that they would be very happy to make pizza for us but they did not have the ingredients. I asked Astenado what pizza ingredients they did not have, and I found out that it was such basic items as cheese and flour, tomatoes and things of this nature. I said, "Hell! That's no problem, tell them we'll get it for them". The following day we were on stand-down because of the weather, so I went into the mess hall and told the sergeant to give me about one-quarter of a cheese that he had there, a couple gallon cans of tomatoes, a sack of flour and various other things that they had mentioned and we took this back to the mayor's house. They were absolutely delighted because anyone who has read accounts such as Bill Mauldin's Up Front knows what dire straits the Italians were in after the war in so far as food was concerned. Of course, not knowing the amounts, I just picked out what would furnish them with food for about two weeks.

So that night we had pizza made in a style that I have never seen in the United States. They would take a little dough, roll it out into about a pie-sized piece of crust, put two or three tablespoons of grated cheese, tomatoes and other ingredients in the middle of this, double it over and seal it up, then deep-fry it in hot fat--immediately when it hit the hot fat of course it would puff out. The mayor had a pig that he killed and that night we ate the pizza plus a special delicacy, which was pig's liver cut in slivers about 3/4 inch thick and 3-4 inches long with some Italian seasoning sprinkled on it and then the whole encased in the membrane that is found in the intestines of the hog so it was sealed up like in cellophane. This was broiled over an open charcoal fire, and was absolutely delicious.

I might mention here our preoccupation of food was due to the fact that the change of climate had made us so hungry that we were eating about twice the normal ration of sea-rations and, God knows, they were nothing to be bragged about--and we were hungry for the taste of anything that did not taste like sea-rations! This the Italians did not understand, given the amount of food that we had, but of course the military service has never been renowned for its chefs.

Our acquaintanceship with the mayor rapidly ripened and, as an expression of his gratitude for the food that we brought over, he had made a seven gallon keg and filled it with wine, and presented it to me. This I hung at the head of my cot at the base, and on off-duty hours I could just lie there in bed and stick my tin cup under the spigot and fill it

up with wine, lie there, sip wine and think about home. This was much to the colonel's disgust and I recall his walking in one night and seeing me lying there doing this and he said, "My God, Judge, can't you even get out of bed to drink, nowadays?" I informed him I was more comfortably in the position I was in drinking out of the tin cup than I would be getting up.

It was about this time that there was considerable dissension between the various branches of the service as to who was doing the most important job and had the best living conditions, and so forth and so on. In an attempt to alleviate this, the powers that be decreed that air force officers would be assigned to infantry outfits for a period of one week and that infantry officers would be assigned to the air corps for a period of one week to observe the combat conditions under which we lived and fought. A colonel from the infantry was assigned to my particular squadron, and he was a very obnoxious individual. His entire commentary was to the effect that every time he saw the beds, he said, "Damn nice beds. It's too bad the infantry doesn't have them." Every time he ate a meal, it was the same comment, "Damn fine meal. It's too bad the infantry doesn't have it." This kept up until he had gotten on our nerves considerably, and he insisted that he go on a combat mission. My men kept holding him off, and he thought we didn't want him to know how we fought. All they were doing was laying a trap for him and waiting for one of the real targets to come up. Finally, it arrived--Stier, Austria, one that we really hated because it was 6-7 hours flight time over enemy territory with flack and fighters all the way--and they immediately informed the colonel that they had the mission for him.

He got in the aircraft, and pretty soon we were in enemy territory with the flack guns popping all around us and the colonel began to become concerned. He turned to the pilot and said, "Why, that's enemy territory down there!" And the pilot said, "Why, of course, where do you think we do our fighting? In the backyards of our own base?" So, the mission got very, very rough. The left waist gunner had his hand shot off at the wrist while we were under heavy attack by fighters and, in the midst of the action, with one gun not being fired by the man who had been injured the pilot forgot all about rank and said, "Get off your ass, colonel, and get back there on that gun and start firing!" The colonel did, and when he came back to the base he was an entirely changed man.

In my barracks he said, "Do you men know what you do? Every time you go out on a combat mission, you're pulling an interior invasion and if you're shot down, there's nobody to help you! You're finished!" We said, "That's exactly right, colonel." He said, "Well boys, you can have it. I want no part of it. I'd rather be in the infantry where if I get hit or something there's a buddy nearby who can take care of me and get me back to my own medical aid station and so forth." I think we made a believer out of the colonel on that date. At least it paid off.

At this point, I think some general observations in regard to combat are in order before I go on with the missions that we flew. One rather amusing thing was that I had two pairs of shoes, which I wore in combat. One pair was an old pair, which I normally wore when the mission was not considered to be rugged; however, if it was going to be a very rough

mission, I had a brand new pair of GI shoes saddle-soaped to the tenth-degree, which I wore. The leaders of the Group were told the night before as to the mission we were going on the next morning; however, the combat crews themselves did not know. So very soon the men learned to look at my feet as soon as we got up in the morning and if I had on my brand new shoes there would be a general groan, knowing that we had a rugged day ahead of us.

The day began with a 3:00 a.m. breakfast which wasn't particularly appetizing because it usually consisted of pancakes, which tasted as if they had been cut from old tire inner tubes, and hydrogenated butter which did not melt on the pancakes but instead stuck to the roof of your mouth--along with scrambled powdered eggs, which I believed that there was nothing on God's green earth that tasted like them! I swore after the war that if my wife ever served them to me that I would divorce her instantaneously on the spot.

The food, as I say, was not appetizing and particularly not at three o'clock in the morning. Then briefing occurred wherein the crews were given the full instructions about the mission we were to fly, and then we made a dawn take-off. I might say a word here about enemy fighter attacks. In those days we were flying without cover from our own tactical fighter aircraft because the missions that we ran were beyond their range of flight. Therefore, the enemy fighters had a field day whenever we came off of the target. They usually waited for us to go through the flack and for the flack to cripple up or knock down planes, and then they would select the stragglers from the formations and proceed to pounce on them and finish off the job that the flack had begun.

They usually made beam attacks, that is, flying in towards the side of the aircraft or tail attacks. The terminology has become quite common, although I don't believe people really understand it when we talk about twelve o'clock high or six o'clock low. The aircraft was divided up in accordance with our clock--that is, the nose was twelve o'clock and the tail was six o'clock, so therefore you were able to alert the gunners of the enemy's position by merely saying "one o'clock low" which meant that meant he was coming in approximately one o'clock from the nose and that he was coming up firing from underneath or "six o'clock high", etc.

The most terrifying enemy fighter tactic, and one that we regularly encountered, was the Focke Wulf 190. The Focke Wulf 190 was built like a bank safe, and apparently the pilots relied on this armor. Their tactic was to fly head-on into the formation, just coming in straight at you firing as they came, and then suddenly pull back on the stick to just clear your aircraft and go on through the remainder of the formation firing at the other ships as they could. The thought that was always in the back of your mind was that if we were lucky enough to kill the pilot, firing at him from our forward turrets, the plane that he is firing is going to be uncontrolled and is sure to smash into the formation and taking at least one if not more of the bombers with him. This, as I say, was their most terrifying tactic.

I would like to bring up at this time that the morale of the squadron depended to a very large degree on the morale of the commander; the confidence, or the morale, of the

commander was magnified by his subordinates manifold, and therefore the commanding officer had to be very careful as to what he said or how he acted about combat losses. Losses were always a blow to us, but you could not let your men know that it affected you. For example, on one particular raid I lost two aircraft and Doc Davis lost three. That night my senior officers gathered in my room discussing the mission of the day and there was much talk about the two crews that we had lost, and my reply was that "they were good men, I hate to have lost them, but there's not a damn thing we can do about it. So drink up your drink and let's hit the sack because we've got another mission coming in tomorrow." In contrast, Doc Davis' men got in his room and all of them started crying about their losses of the day and it went on until the wee hours of the morning with each one of them feeling sorrier and sorrier for himself and for the squadron. As a consequence, the morale of his squadron took a decided drop, which lasted for several weeks, and the colonel was very unhappy about this and read us the riot act on this particular point.

Air warfare was also very uncertain from the standpoint that we were briefed that our formation would form over the field, that is the thirty-six ships of the 451st bomb group, and then that we would fly to a rendezvous point where we would tack onto the leader for the mission, who had been designated by the 15th Air Force. Unfortunately, sometimes the man who got to the rendezvous point first was not the designated leader and you coming up on him had no idea whether he was or not, and so therefore you tacked on and you never knew who was leading the mission. We could not query because radio silence was strictly imposed until we had gotten to the target area.

Coming back from the target area we used to listen in on the radio to the bomber-to-bomber comments and, as a friend of mine who was in the 8th Air Force in England told me, they used to listen in on the fighter-to-fighter comments. Sometimes these were rather gruesome, but with a wry humor to them. I recall one particular day as the formation as it headed back toward base still over enemy territory seemed to be going in several different directions by the leader, first he would go one direction and then another as so forth, until finally some soul in the back of the formation could stand it no longer and a very gruff male voice pounded out over the radio, "Who in the God Damn Hell is the junior birdman leading this formation!?" There was an instantaneous reply in a semi-hysterical almost falsetto voice--you could tell that the person was quite young--and it went something like this: "I am a copilot, this is my first mission, my pilot is dead, my engine instruments and my flight instruments are all shot out! If you think you can fly this formation any better than I can, get up here you Son of a Bitch and do it!!"

Immediately, the gruff voice came back, "That's all right junior, take it easy, you're doing fine. Just head straight for those two mountain peaks in front, we'll go through them and you'll be right on track for home."

My friend from the 8th Air Force where they had fighter cover for part of their mission told me that he heard two interchanges, fighter to fighter, that I have never forgotten. In one, a fighter pilot let out a frantic yell for help, saying there were three Messerschmidt on his trail. Instantaneously, a voice came back from another fighter, "Tell your troubles to Jesus, brother, I've got troubles of my own!" and in the background you could hear the guns going brrrrrrrup, brrrrrrrup. Another day, came a somewhat similar comment from an individual crying out for help, and a voice came back saying, "Dial Mercy 000, and ask for Jesus Christ." This was not quite as callused as it may sound, because the person replying might be anywhere from five to fifty miles away from the person in trouble with no possibility of getting to his rescue.

I am always slightly perturbed by war films, and particularly one called Twelve O'clock High. They have never gotten the sound effect of anti-aircraft fire, or flack as we call it, correct. The anti-aircraft fire when it was some distance from you merely appeared at some distance in the sky, as a black puff some twenty feet in diameter, which had no sound to it. If the flack was quite close to you, you would hear it as it exploded and you would hear "wu-wu-wu-wu-wu-wu-wu"; however, if the flack was right on you there was an entirely different sound to it. In this instance, you did not hear the explosion as much as you heard the breaking of the steel shell itself, and this was a high-pitched "skeerank, skeerank!", quickly followed by a dull "kechoonk, kechoonk!" as pieces of the flack went through your aircraft. And, of course your immediate reaction as you heard that was "My God, what have they hit now?!" You could look out at your wings and see holes opening up in them from the flack, and these we called flack blossoms for the reason that as the piece of the shell came out of the wing, the aluminum plate covering of the wing would curl back just like the petals of a flower.

I have spoken of the fact that the enemy aircraft hung out on the edges of the target zone waiting for us to come out of the flack to attack the cripples. One of the things that used to perturb me very much was to see a formation in front which would, immediately upon clearing the target zone, pour on the coals as fast as they could go and leave their cripples behind. I always made a point after leaving the target area of flying at the minimum speed the formation could fly without stalling out your wingmen so that the cripples if possible, could keep up. However, it was a direct command to my personnel that no ship that was undamaged or slightly damaged should ever drop out of formation to try to cover a cripple, because under these circumstances you were sure to lose both ships to the fighters.

Another point is that, though I am not particularly superstitious, some aircraft seem to have a jinx on them. I recall that we had one aircraft in the squadron that on every mission, regardless of what position it flew or how rough or how tame the particular mission was, there would always be one big chunk of flack come flying through the

cockpit. Sometimes it came up through the floor, sometimes from the side, and sometimes directly through the windshield, but every mission that aircraft went on, that piece of flack came flying through the cockpit. It never hit anyone, but it kept the pilots on edge whenever they were flying that particular aircraft.

I also seemed to have a double jinx in the squadron between two crews and their aircraft. One was Lieutenant Carlson, who was from Chicago, and the other one was Lieutenant Johnson. They seemed to always be tangling about their aircraft. Carlson took great pride in his aircraft, and he named them consecutively Windy City I, Windy City II and Windy City III. The only difficulty was that Ed Johnson's ship was a hangar queen--by that, I mean it always was in maintenance status rather than flyable status when we were going on a combat mission. That particular aircraft seemed to have a mind of its own and if we were not going into combat nothing was wrong with it, but just let it be scheduled for a mission and you could not get it off the ground. Under these circumstances it always seemed as if Carlson was not flying on that particular day and the only ship available for Johnson was that particular ship. And every time Johnson took out Carlson's ship, he got it literally shot to pieces. He consecutively crash landed--Johnson did--Windy City I, Windy City II and Windy City III. Carlson was about to go out of his mind over this because he took great pride in his ships, and always fixed them up as if they were traveling boudoirs.

I have spoken of the fact that we were stationed at Gioia del Colle, Italy but I did not mention that this was a steel mat runway. It was not concrete but was planks of steel with holes in them, and when the rains came this steel mat began to sink deeper and deeper into the mud until we were flying off of it with some foot and a half of mud on top of the steel mat. This, of course, was exceedingly dangerous as the planes skidded around on it both on landing and on take-off; therefore, we moved to San Pancrazio. This move to San Pancrazio of about forty miles distance was executed in about twenty-four hours and you can imagine moving all of the aircraft, supplies and personnel into a new base when you were supposed to be operational and ready to fly within twenty-four hours.

This was a time that I had another run-in with the Colonel because he had gone down to San Pancrazio and he had picked out a location for his Group Headquarters. The only difficulty was that if I had put my squadron where he had wanted me to put it, my men would have been knee-deep in mud. Therefore, when we moved down there, instead of putting my tents up where he had wanted them, I moved across the base to a rocky hillside where the drainage off to the lower levels left us comparatively dry. The Colonel was irate because he was based on me for mess supplies and facilities and so on; so he had a choice of either trudging through this knee-deep mud back and forth to get to meals, or he could move his Group Headquarters over onto the rocky hillside where I was. He chose to move over to where I was, or rather that we move him to us.

The afternoon that we had moved into there it was spitting rain, and the Colonel came around and in his usual nagging fashion started off something like this:

--"Well, I suppose we're going to sleep in the rain tonight."

--"No sir," I said, "the tents are up and every man is under cover."

--"Well, I reckon we're going to have cold chow tonight."

--“Sir,” I said, “We will have a hot meal within forty-five minutes.”

--“Well, you got any airplanes to put up tomorrow, or are you gonna stand down?”

--I said “I will have my normal nine aircraft ready tomorrow morning, Colonel.”

So he looked around trying to think of something to find fault with and he found it.

--“Where is your latrine?”

--I said, “Colonel, for God’s sake, let the men use a bush tonight! We haven’t had time to build a latrine.”

And he started off on a tirade to the extent that the very first thing you did when you moved in the field was to build a latrine. About that time, a brilliant idea struck me and I told him, “Colonel, you will have your latrine.”

--“See that I do.”

It seemed that some time back I had made acquaintanceship with a man in the British engineers and promoted from him a box of nitroglycerin jelly along with primacord and firing caps. I told the 1st sergeant to give me six men with strong backs and six crowbars. I went outside and laid out the outlines of a trench away from the tents, and then I told the men to drive their crowbars as deep as they could into that rocky soil. They started at one end, and right behind them I was jamming this nitroglycerin jelly which came in sticks down into the bottoms of these holes by the time they got done wrapping the primacord around each individual stick of nitroglycerin jelly. By the time they got to the other end of the trench I had used the entire box of nitroglycerin and thereupon, not saying anything to anybody except the men, I told the men to get out of there and I lit the fuse to the primacord which would detonate all of the nitroglycerin at the same time.

There was a tremendous explosion, which sounded like the Germans had dropped a bomb in the middle of the camp. There was dirt, rocks, and boulders of all sizes that came raining down. The Colonel came tearing out of his tent and was almost clobbered by a rock about 10 inches in diameter. He came running over to where I was standing, and before he could say anything, I pointed at the trench and said, “There is your latrine, Colonel.” All he could say was, “God Damn You, Beane! You and your direct methods.” That was the last time it was ever mentioned.

In the TV series, Twelve O’Clock High, it bothers me where the gallant general leads his men into combat because of the fact that generals don’t fly (to the best of my knowledge). In World War II I think they quit flying after General Forrest, who was a direct lineal descendant of General Nathan Bedford Forrest the famous Confederate Cavalry leader, was shot down over Germany and killed and I think they stopped flying after that. The formations were led by captains, majors and occasionally by colonels of the Groups that were flying.

Another point that I would like to bring up here was the tremendous exhilaration that followed a combat mission. It was an exhilaration, which I don’t believe any drug could simulate, and it was based primarily on the fact that you were on the ground, alive, and not dead in enemy territory. The mere fact of being alive gave a tremendous exhilaration. The only difficulty was that from that height there was a sudden relapse, and I have actually seen men who were one moment cheering the squadron, having another drink just suddenly collapse in their tracks and have to be taken off and be put to bed.

Speaking of putting people to bed, this item would be somewhat controversial, I'm sure, but I can only report what I saw in my Group and what I heard from squadron commanders in other Groups. It seemed as though the Catholic Church picked out the best men that they could find for this type of duty. The Catholic priest was always around; he seemed to be an integral part of the squadron. He was there when we were drinking, and if a man folded up whether he was Protestant, Jewish or Catholic many a time I heard him say, "I'll put him to bed." On the other hand, the Protestant chaplains seemed to be the individuals that the Protestant Church didn't know what to do with. You never saw them during the week, they were never a part of the squadron and they never really entered into the combat life of the airmen. As I say, this is controversial, some may contradict this, but this is what happened in my squadron. And may I say I am not Catholic--I am not anything. As one author of a war book stated, "There are no atheists in foxholes" and I might say the same thing: "There are no atheists in the cockpit of an aircraft in combat."

To take up with my logbook again, I notice that the next entry is that B.G. Johnson and Wiersimer were missing from the second Regensburg raid that we made. Regensburg, Germany was a very important target, I believe, because of the aircraft factories that were there. It was therefore very heavily defended and our losses were always quite heavy when we went into Regensburg.

On March 11, we hit Toulon, France. We hit the docking facilities in the town and it was there that I lost Vail. He was flying on my right wing when he got a direct hit in the bomb bay with an 88 mm shell, the plane was a solid mass of flames coming out of the bomb bay. It turned upside down in formation, dropped about two hundred feet and blew up. Nobody got out.

The next entry is the 17th of March when we hit Vienna, Austria and nothing particular of interest was written on that raid. On the 19th, we hit Klagenfurt, Austria--I mean my particular Group hit it. This was one of those fouled up missions when apparently somebody who was not qualified got into the lead at the rendezvous point and we wandered all over half of Europe for God knows how long--I notice in my flight book here that the entire mission consumed eight hours. Eventually, after wandering around over the southern half of Europe there, the formation of the whole 15th Air Force was headed back in the general direction of home when suddenly we came upon a little town which we finally figured out was Klagenfurt where a tremendous amount of flack came up at us. The front ships of the other Groups pulled out and drew their formations off with them and went around the flack as much as they could and, from where I was in the last third of the formation, I could see the lead formation still headed towards home.

At that time we had orders not to bring our bombs home, but not to drop them on Yugoslavia. So, being very irate at this point about how the mission had been run and seeing all this flack coming up from this town, I figured that it must be important to the

Germans for some reason or other. I was flying with Lieutenant Stone that day and my comment on it was, "Piss on it, turn around." He turned to me and he said, "Turn around?!" I said, "Yes, turn around! We're going to bomb here!!" So I pulled my 36 ships out into a large, sweeping 360 degree circle and we came back in on Klagenfurt--of course by this time the other formations had gone forward, but they could see us coming back to make the run on Klagenfurt. Of course the entire anti-aircraft fire of the town was concentrated on my formation of 36 ships, and they weren't fooled a bit by my attempt to throw them off by dropping 1000 feet in altitude because the first four shells that exploded were approximately 100 yards in front of my nose and exactly on our altitude, the next burst was right under my nose and the third was right under my tail. The formation literally was shot to pieces; I shouldn't say the entire formation, my ship was and so was my right wingman. We dropped our bombs and the notation in my logbook says, "Flack heavy, made two runs over target. Everyone got through by the grace of God; left the town and the marshaling yard on fire."

I think this is the one time that I ever got a direct compliment from the Colonel. When we landed he rushed up to my ship and as I got out he said, "Say Judge, I hear you made two runs over Klagenfurt!" I told him, "Yes Sir. They messed up that mission so terrible that I decided to do something with my bombs." He said, "Well I want to tell you that no niggers and damn few white men would do that!" As I say, that was the only time he ever made a direct compliment to me, other than saying one time that he couldn't ask for a better combat man but that he would court-martial me in two weeks in a peacetime army. I told him at that point that he didn't have to worry about that because he was not going to find me in a peacetime army.

On the 30th of March we hit Sofia, Bulgaria. I'll go in some detail about this mission because it was another one that was fouled up, but from a different standpoint. There was a very heavy undercast on that particular day, which was just solid, so we were being led in by a radar ship. The radar ship, rather than staying to the left of the flight line which would take us to the town where our IP was located, got off track and led us in to the right. This was the whole wing of the 15th Air Force.

We still had the solid undercast under us until we got to Sofia. Sofia, on the southeastern side, has a range of mountains and then the city is over in the valley on the other side. The undercast went right up to the mountain and then stopped; Sofia was clear as a bell. Unfortunately, as I say, the lead had gotten us off track and we were right over the center of the city immediately before we could get to the IP and turn, and get on a normal bomb run. In consequence of which the lead ship turned to the right a little bit and dropped its bombs, while I was right over the center of the city with insufficient time to make a bomb run on the marshaling yards which was our target for the day. So we went straight through the flack even though the bombardier was yelling, "Let's drop 'em, let's drop 'em and get out of here!" I might say that was not one of my men, but one of Colonel Eaton's staff who was doing the yelling, my men knew better.

We went through and turned around and came back for our run through the marshaling yards; however in flying over the city in the first run, I had a ringside seat looking down to see the bombs of the entire 15th Air Force going right into the city. Even from the

twenty thousand feet at which we were flying you could see apartment houses, houses, churches and everything of this nature just crumpling and being blown to bits.

Later on we heard from intelligence sources that we killed some 12 thousand people that day, and I am of the opinion that they were primarily civilians and not military personnel. Nothing was ever said about it, and this makes me sometimes wonder about the “yelp” in the newspaper articles on the Vietnam War and the Vietnam terrorist village that was wiped out by some of our military personnel. I think they are over-exaggerating it because from the air warfare a bomb does not differentiate between civilian and man in uniform; and, as I say, there were many things that occurred in World War II that I consider far worse than what is known as the Mei Lei Valley massacre by American troops that is currently in the newspapers.

This was quite common. The British, for example, used what they called Blockbuster bombs--that is, bombs weighing two thousand pounds, one bomb to an airplane--and would go over a German city and drop it right in the center of the city and they literally followed their name that they would wreck anything within a block radius of where they hit. The Germans did the same thing in the battle of Britain on London and also on certain of the European targets; therefore, I think there is entirely too much publicity and too much censorship on the fatalities occurring in the Vietnam civilian population at the present time.

On the 3rd of April 1944, our target was Budapest, Hungary. This day, I had misfortunes. As we gained altitude to get into formation over the field, my # three engine broke an oil line and oil was pouring out all over the ship. It was therefore patent that we could not go on the mission in that aircraft, with only three engines right at the very beginning. In running up the other engines to higher power, to compensate for the loss of the one engine with a full load of gasoline and a full load of bombs, my # two engine propeller ran away. We were unable to get it back, it would not come under control, and so therefore we had to feather the number two. However, there was no particular sweat because we were at some twelve thousand feet right over our own base and all we had to do was to circle down, losing altitude and land. This we did--that is, dropping the altitude--and as we got near the base and were lined up for a landing I had the engineer fire a red flare to the tower to let them know that we had to land immediately on an emergency.

For some unknown reason, the tower ignored us and continued to signal other aircraft to take off, and by this time I was down too low to drop my bombs because I was right over

the base and the packed aircraft. And when we made a turn to make another circle to come in we were too low to drop them out in the olive groves because by that time we were using RDX instead of TNT and RDX was very unpredictable. It would go off when shocked without a detonator, and I had had a crew blown up because they had dropped their bombs on takeoff and it had blown them right out of the sky. I told the engineer to fire a flare and to keep firing them, I didn't care what color they were, and this he did one right after the other. The other Group personnel later told me our ship looked like Mount Vesuvius with all those different colored flares coming out, and this time they made no bones about getting out of our way and giving us room to land, which we were barely able to do.

On that day, I was supposed to be deputy Group lead, and immediately upon landing I started looking for another aircraft to fly and to catch up with the formation. There was only one lone aircraft sitting on the field, and I asked the sergeant if that plane had bombs and gasoline and ammunition on board. His reply was, yes sir, but that it didn't belong to our Group--that was Colonel K.K. Compton's personal ship. I told him I didn't care whose ship it was we were taking it, so therefore we all piled into this other aircraft, took off, caught the formation and flew to Budapest as we were supposed to.

I almost got court-martialed for this, because Colonel Compton was the commanding officer of the Radar Squadron and this was highly secret at that time. Of course, when we got into the aircraft we saw all this paraphernalia but we didn't know what it was at that time and so we just ignored it and used the standard equipment of the aircraft. When I landed I found that my colonel and Colonel Compton were going around and around, Colonel Compton swearing he was going to court-martial me because I took his ship and a radar ship at that on an ordinary bombing raid, and my colonel (strangely enough) taking up for me and saying, "You can't court-martial a man for doing his duty. He was supposed to be deputy Group command that day, and, by God, that was what he was going to do. Whether he took your ship or some General's ship, you can't court-martial him!" I'll have to give the colonel one for that.

The next is my last mission--April 5, 1944. Ploesti, Romania. That morning I had on my brand-new shoes because I knew that was going to be a real rugged mission. The colonel had informed me of the target the night before, and that I was to lead the Group. We flew towards Romania and began to get anti-aircraft fire as soon as we got anywhere near the target, and by near I mean some thirty miles out. Some ten miles from the main target area upon which we had been briefed and the target area was the oil refinery which was being exploited by the Germans to keep their armored vehicles and trucks rolling. I got a direct hit with an 88 mm shell; it must have been a contact fuse shell rather than an altitude fuse shell because it exploded right in between my number one and number two engines with a sound that was like 'Kingdom Come' and 'Gabriel's Horn' all rolled into one.

The ship went out of control, Lieutenant Stone hit the alarm button for the crew to bail out and I hit the intercom and told them to get the hell out of there because it looked like we were going in. The ship fell about five hundred feet and then Stone and I got some semblance of control, and then the thought struck me that if I can't do any more I'll see if I can't hit some of those anti-aircraft gunners, and I reached down and released all of the bombs. The thing that I had momentarily forgotten was that I was the Group leader, and the other ships had been briefed to drop their bombs when I dropped mine. Therefore, the whole Group let go of their bombs when they saw mine come out of the bomb bay. I observed this out of the corner of my eye, and I was immediately dismayed thinking that, not only was my ship crippled up so that I did not expect to be able to make it home, but also that I had messed up the bomb run and the entire effort of the Group had been wasted.

My # 2 engine was absolutely dead, and # 4 was completely out of control and therefore giving us no power so we had to feather it. Only one in three engines were running, also the shell when it exploded (and why the wing never came off, I'll never know, because I could have dove out the window of the cockpit and gone right through the hole of the wing and not even touched the sides of the hole) had jammed the left aileron in the full up position and cut certain other of our cables to our control surfaces. When we got her under control, and I deliberately pulled her out of formation so that the men would know we were finished, we had the wheel upside down full right, the right rudder right into the floorboards as hard as we could push it, we had right rudder trim tab full over, right aileron trim tab full over, we were indicating about 135 miles an hour and we were dropping 500 feet a minute.

Immediately when we pulled out of formation, the fighters jumped us. There were five ME109s and, instead of making a head-on attack with which they could have gotten us easily because everyone was out of the ship except Stone and I, they kept making beam attacks that is coming in on the wings. So we would stagger the aircraft into which side the enemy aircraft was coming from. I can still remember Stone yelling, "Here comes one from this side!" and I'd turn the controls over to him and he would stagger the ship to the left or I would let out a yell, "Here comes one from this side!" and I would stagger the ship to the right. I was flying in the copilot's seat because that was the position that the command of the Group always rode. They were firing 20 mm shells into us, and we could hear the continuous "chunk!" as the shell entered the aircraft, and then the explosion with a big "blamm!" and the rattle of the pieces of the 20mm shell as they flew forward towards the cockpit.

This kept up for some twenty minutes, and then they finally set us on fire. I looked out the left and the left wing was one mass of flames all the way from the wingtip plumb to the fuselage and the sheet of flame extended all the way back to the tail surfaces. I punched Stoney on the shoulder and just pointed out the window. He turned around to me and I swear his eyes were as big as teacups and there was just one big question mark in them, "Who in the hell is going to get out of here first?!" because we were holding the controls by main force. That was one time that I wished I was the lowest buck private in the Air Corps because the code was that the senior officer aboard was the last man out. So I told him to get his ass out of there, but fast, and he did!

In the meantime I got up on the arm of the seat, held the rudder with my right leg, held the wheel with my right arm, stuck my left leg as far back on the flight deck as I could, grabbed hold of part of the radio equipment cables with my left hand and watched Stoney's feet in the bomb bay. The instant Stoney's feet left the bomb bay I released, and threw myself backward with all the force I could toward the bomb bay door. The ship did what I expected it to do; it went into an immediate snap roll and, as I was flying back toward the tail of the ship with my head towards the tail, the flight deck came up and hit me between the shoulders. It hit me hard enough so that it bounced me in a complete somersault and I went sailing back through the bomb bay doors, touched the catwalk with my toes and was out of the aircraft. It happened so fast that when I got outside of the aircraft I caught a glimpse of the horizon, and my feet and my trunk were at the exact position which we were briefed to pull the chest parachutes so that the rises would not come up and lacerate our face.

I pulled the chute and it went right up past the tail of the aircraft. The plane turned around me and then went into a very violent vertical spin and crashed by the time I had made three oscillations in my parachute. Looking out, I could see the enemy fighters but my first impression was, "My God, how quiet it is!" because the moment before here had been all the roar of the engines, the explosion of the enemy shells and so forth--and all of a sudden I was hanging in the air in dead silence. There is no sensation of falling when you are in a parachute; it is as though you are merely suspended in the air.

As I say, I could see the enemy aircraft out and I saw one turn towards me at a distance of some 1000 yards and I thought, "My God, is he going to shoot me in the parachute?" So I was climbing the rises of that parachute like a toy monkey on a string; however he merely came by, saluted, and went on his way. As I came down I could see soldiers running from all directions, and saw I was coming down in a little pig-track of a village I later learned was Glodeni, Rumania. The ground comes up very fast in the last few hundred feet of your fall, and the actual fall itself is like jumping off of a twenty foot wall; however, I did not hit the ground but was hung up in a tree near the edge of a pond with my toes barely touching the ground. I could not shift my weight to get the weight off my parachute so I could get out of it, and I hung there helplessly waiting for the soldiers to arrive. In the meantime a Rumanian peasant who looked like he was about seven feet tall was standing some 10 feet away, waving a double-bitted ax and yelling 'Ruski!'.

One thing I forgot to mention was that very odd thoughts would come into your mind even under conditions of stress. For example, in the last hundred feet of my descent when I could see this duck pond underneath me the uppermost thought in my mind was that after being shot down and made a prisoner of war, if I fall in that duck pond and get all wet that will be the last straw. But to get back to the live action, as I said the soldiers were running from all directions toward where I was falling and very shortly they came up. One of them struck me across the face; then they very rapidly had me out of the parachute and were marching me towards town.

I might also say as a matter of general warfare that civilians with captured personnel are really more dangerous than the military personnel. The military personnel have at least some semblance of order and discipline, but you never know what to expect out of the civilian population, especially if they have been bombed. They took me into the main village, and there Stone was waiting for me. He had fallen approximately 100 feet from where I fell and landed on top of a steep gabled slate roof of one of the houses, and of course started sliding off. As he told me, as he started sliding off the roof he saw this Rumanian soldier standing below him with his bayonet fixed and the butt of the rifle resting on the ground and the foremost thought in Stone's mind was, "My God, is he going to hold that thing under me so that he rams that bayonet up my ass?"

After things had calmed down a little bit, and they had brought in a woman who spoke English, it turned out that one of the things that had them the most puzzled was why there were only two men who had come out of a four-engine bomber. It seems as though my aircraft, having come in at terrific speed, had almost buried itself in the ground and there was no trace of any passengers. And having a Captain and a Major, which I found out later were considered very high ranks in the Rumanian army, come out of a four-engine bomber alone was quite puzzling to them. This English-speaking woman of course did not attempt to interrogate me but merely made some casual comments or inquiries about why we were allied with the Russians and my reply was, "Well, you're allied with the Germans." She replied, "Yes, we don't like the Germans but at least they're civilized whereas the Russians are just beasts and savages." Seeing that this conversation was fruitless I let the matter drop.

That was a peculiar thing in Europe that no nation liked any another nation, but there was one common feeling and that was a contempt which all of the personnel that I ever ran in to in Europe had of the Poles. Why I don't know. No one was ever able to explain it to me but I heard Frenchmen, Rumanians, Yugoslavians, Czechoslovakians and others all express this contempt of the Poles. That night, as I lay on the bed waiting for the morrow, some half-remembered lines from John Milton's Paradise Lost ran through my mind and served to toughen my soul for the trying days ahead. After the war I looked these lines up again to refresh my memory, and here they are: "What though the field be lost, all is not lost. The unconquerable will and study of revenge, immortal hate and courage never to submit or yield." That's from Book One, line 105. I kept those half-remembered lines in my mind all through my prison stay.

In the morning a major had arrived and he took us in a horse and buggy to another little town named Tergoviste which seems to have been a central collecting point for prisoners of our shot-down aircraft that particular day. At Tergivoste we ran into a very particular situation: the Romanians accused us of carrying poisoned candy in our aircraft so that if any children found them they would be sickened and perhaps die. This puzzled us to no end until we found that what they were talking about were our medical kits which contained sulfa tablets and things of this nature--apparently some children had found them and eaten some of these sulfa tablets and had become ill. That night also we were permitted to write a line or two to our families. I still have mine; in fact I have all the correspondence I wrote my wife while in prison (even though it never did her any good because she never received any of it until I got back in the states). I carried it off rather jovially to the effect that: no ill effects, no injuries, but poppa has the jailhouse blues--I think that's about the context of the short note that I wrote her.

On the morrow, they took us by truck to Ploesti and the target, which we had been bombing two days before. Here I underwent my first interrogation. We were locked up in a garrison wooden structure, and the colonel in command attempted to interrogate me through an English-speaking teacher (man) from Ploesti. The interrogation was of course not professional and was in direct violation really to most of the regulations of all armed services that interrogation of prisoners will only be done by intelligence officers because unskilled personnel can dry up a source very rapidly. The first thing that they said to me was that we had missed the target entirely when we had bombed. My reply was, "Well, if they missed it then they will be back tomorrow or the next day", and this visibly shook the colonel and the schoolteacher. The next thing that they brought up was that it was a custom of Rumania--I don't know whether it was or not, but they said so--for a murderer to be required to be at the funeral of his victim if the murderer was known, and that we had killed a number of women and children. So therefore they said, "Will you select the men who will attend the funeral or shall we?" And my comment was, "It's your funeral, you invite the guests." I was calling their bluff, really, and that was exactly what it was.

They kept on nagging at me: they thought the fountain pen in my pocket was a bomb, and it caused a great deal of consternation when I inadvertently pulled it out during the interrogation, until I showed them it was nothing but a fountain pen. Then, I finally got angry and I let out a burst that I had given them my name, rank and serial number according to the Geneva Convention and that was all that they were going to get out of me and that I had only one more comment to make and that was if they didn't want to be bombed to get the Goddamn hell out of the war. This last comment of mine really caused a commotion! Before the professor translated it to the colonel, he said something to him and the colonel immediately had all the subordinate staff, sentries and all, removed from the room and then they started eagerly querying me: "How, how do we get out of the war?!" My reply was, "You have ambassadors in Turkey and so do we; you do it there." I saw that I had struck a nerve and therefore at that point I clammed up and would say nothing further. I believe the knowledge of my having been just one of two crewmen in a four-engine bomber that had gone before me puzzled the Rumanians, and also by my comment about get the hell out of the war--in other words, perhaps I was a secret agent.

That night we were locked up in the garrison and a thought occurred to me which common sense then told me was very stupid. We had a kerosene lamp in our room which was burning and there was a hole in the wall of this wooden structure and I could very easily have taken the burning kerosene lamp, taken the top off of it, poured the kerosene down in between the walls, and then dropped the wick in after it and burned the garrison to the ground. But my common sense told me that this was a very stupid thing to do with I don't know how many prisoners locked up in the various rooms of this garrison. So I had to let that beautiful opportunity go by.

On the following day they took us in to Bucharest, the capital city, and there we were herded into the Mihaivestcue garrison. This was our first actual prison. As I was standing there with my men, a captain came over and started questioning a lieutenant that was sitting near me. First he asked him his name and then he asked him where he was from. I immediately whirled around and told him that was none of his damn business, that he would get the name, rank and serial number of my men and that was all. He then asked who in the hell I was--he spoke perfect English--and I gave him the usual song and dance of Major Jim Beane, 0-413562. With that he went over and had some words with another individual in the room, and this other individual came over to me and in perfect English with an Oxford accent, and being very subservient, he said, "Major, you know we have to go through this interrogation routine, it's just a matter of form, would you like to get your over with now?" I said, "It doesn't matter to me whether it's now or later."

So he took me to a private room and handed me a printed form, which started out all right with name, rank and serial number and then rapidly evolved into what group were we in, what was our mission, what was our salary and things of this nature. Upon seeing this immediately after my name, rank and serial number I just took the pen and drew a big X through the remainder of the form. The lieutenant was quite angry and he said, "Do you mean to tell me you're not even going to give us your home address, Major?" I said, "I'm not giving you anything except my name rank and serial number and I'll tell you the same thing I told the colonel at Ploesti. If you don't want to be bombed, get the hell out of the war!" This seemed to shake him up considerably, and he said, "Do you mean they attempted to interrogate you at Ploesti?" I said, "Yes, and your army isn't very well trained because that is something that is only supposed to be done by trained intelligence officers in our armed forces." I later heard that the colonel at Ploesti was shipped to the Russian front which the Rumanians considered a death sentence and which was used as the most severe type of punishment meted out other than a court-martial or a death sentence.

Thereupon the lieutenant called for the sentries and they escorted me to a room where I was locked up in solitary confinement in a wing of this garrison. I spent a week in solitary confinement where time can become very boring, so I started thinking of all of the songs that I had ever heard and started singing at the top of my voice. So, from morning till night I was singing every song that I could think of, and they seemed to come one right after the other. It was a wooden barracks and I learned later that my voice could be heard all throughout that particular wing. Finally they released me from solitary confinement and one of the Rumanian noncoms, who was friendly to the American forces, told me that my constant singing as a prisoner of war was demoralizing the Rumanian soldiers housed in that particular wing of the building.

After being taken out of solitary confinement I was placed with a group of my officers in a room which contained twenty-seven of us. As we picked up a little Rumanian this became known as the Nuieapadozeyschapt Club--this means "no water, twenty-seven"--it stood for the fact that when our bombers had struck Ploesti they had also struck Bucharest and it seemed that by luck we had blown up some of the central water mains of the city. When the Rumanians tried to repair it they found there was no blueprint to show them which pipes to connect to get water into the city and distribute it, so for a period of two weeks all water to the city was hauled in kegs on oxcarts. It was quite a mess. For some two weeks we went without washing our faces or brushing our teeth, and I tell you that, after two weeks of not brushing your teeth, when you are used to brushing them, they feel like they have grown not moss but sweaters all over them.

The next episode with the Rumanians occurred over the fact that they did not furnish us with toilet paper. We found out that only the wealthy in Rumania used toilet paper, and when they found out that we were tearing up the one sheet that we had over the straw-tick mattress to use as toilet paper they were horrified. I promptly informed them that if they did not get us toilet paper we would not only tear up the sheets but that we would tear up the ticking of the mattress as well. We got toilet paper!

The next thing that stands out in my memory is the visit of King Michael, who was known as the boy-king many years ago, to the prison. And since I was the senior officer of the prison he talked to me, and his words were rather peculiar. He said, "Tell your men that I will do everything that I can for them, unfortunately, in the last several years they have done the exact opposite of everything that I have said." I remember thinking to myself at the time that, if I was the king of a country and had to make a statement like that to a prisoner of war, I would consider that I was a very weak ruler. At that time, and for several years prior, Rumania was actually ruled by Marshall Antonescu who was known as the Iron Duke, I believe, or Iron Marshall.

The latrines were located out in the middle of this big square that the garrison formed, and this helped us in escaping from the prison. In the middle of the night one of the prisoners would indicate to the guard that he had to go to the toilet and some other prisoners would immediately follow his lead, and in the pitch black dark this one Rumanian sentry would be there with perhaps twenty or twenty-five men out trying to take them to the latrine. Under those circumstances my men would be going over the wall five, ten, fifteen or twenty a night.

Another thing that contributed to the ease of escape was the fact that the Rumanian soldiers were essentially afraid of us because they had been told that the American bomber crews had been recruited from the gangsters of New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and every other large city--and that we were paid five thousand in gold for every raid that we ran. They made the comment to me: "You don't act like prisoners. We tell you to go over there and you stay here; we tell you to stay here and you go over there."

In this Nuieapadozeyschapt Club of twenty-seven that I spoke about, our nightly amusement was the attempt of the sentries to count us to make sure that everyone was there. The room was quite small. It had double tier bunks with just enough room to get a human body in between, and the sentries would herd us down to one end of the room and then try to pass us through one by one down the aisle between the cots on both sides of the room. My men took great delight, while the counting process was going on, in that some of the group that was supposed to be counted would crawl between the beds and join the group that had already been counted. Thus, instead of twenty-seven they would come out with seventeen or eighteen and a great deal of furor would immediately take place. They would again herd us down to one end of the room and repeat the process. This time the men would reverse it, and those men that had already been counted would creep back between the cots and, therefore, instead of twenty-seven they would come up with thirty-four or something like that and again a big uproar would occur. When they discovered what we were doing then the men hiding under the cots would attempt to fire off the sentries rifles by reaching from under the bed so you can imagine the poor sentry there trying to count a bunch of obstreperous prisoners and them trying to fire his rifle off while he's trying to count. They couldn't understand us at all!

One amusing incident that I recall happened in one of the rooms in which I was not located but where a bunch of my men were. There was one Rumanian sentry who if not a moron was just one step above one--of that I am sure. He had gone out one night and gotten all liquored up, came back and entered the room where the men were sleeping and started raising all kinds of hell waking the men up. On the top bunk there was a very large, tall, Texas boy and without saying anything he just reached over, grabbed the rifle out of the sentry's hands, grabbed him by the scruff of the neck, by his clothing, the seat of his pants and literally threw him through the door and then threw his rifle after him! The next morning there was a great to-do about this because their statement was we had insulted the Rumanian army. I don't think you can insult the Rumanian army.

Let me stop here to pick up a paper, which describes the food that was served in the prison camp, which I submitted to Washington at their request. The prisoners food was served in individual metal bowls and as I recall the menu was as follows: breakfast, a small slice of bread, approximately one and a half ounces, and ersatz tea or coffee. Let me say here that the substitute tea was good because it was hot and sweet and it tasted like tea--however, the substitute coffee was horrible! You had to drink it almost scalding hot and keep it circling in the cup or else the ingredients would all settle down to the bottom and there was nothing but a clear liquid on top. The taste of it was nearly indescribable.

For lunch we normally had thin bean soup, approximately twelve ounces, one or two small slices of bread--or goat cheese, approximately six to eight ounces, a small slice of bread--green onions in season. The cheese was strong and dirty and so offensive that some prisoners were unable to eat it. May I also say that I never saw any goat that had hair as long as we found in those slices of cheese! We used to play a game seeing who got the longest hair out of their slice of cheese and I have literally seen hair come out that was a foot long, and as I say I have never seen a goat with hair that long so we really didn't know what animal they made the cheese from. In speaking of the green onions, I might say that as a Southerner I was a little more fortunate than the other men because we in the South learned to eat green onions from the bottom and the top, so that when we received this on our menu I not only had my share of my onions but I was also able to pick up the green tops from quite a few of the prisoners and eat those.

The evening meal was a thin mutton soup with one or two slices of bread, or green peas thinned in water with one or two slices of bread, or on rare occasions a scrambled egg. This mutton soup almost defies description. We used to say that they did not slaughter the animals before they made them into the soup, that what they did was to take them out and tie them to a post and throw a hand grenade into the midst of them, take a shovel and shovel up what was on the ground and throw that into a pot. This was because there were identifiable eyes, ears and bits of the hide and hair in the soup. At a later date this became quite an amusing item to the old prisoners when they saw the new prisoners first become acquainted with the food in the camp.

Second servings of any meal were never allowed with the result that we were constantly hungry, and many personnel found the diet inadequate for maintenance of normal weight. Here I would like to make a comment that large men who had been used to eating a lot of food and had a lot of exercise, very rapidly began to lose weight under these conditions. Some of them lost thirty or forty pounds whereas, the thin wiry individuals did not seem to suffer. For what physiological reason I do not know, but we did not seem to suffer nearly as much as the large men did.

About this time I had a new crew arrive at the prison with a pilot who was a captain. When he was shot down he had a three-day growth of beard already, and when they were out in the courtyard during the day the enlisted men were crawling all over each other like a bunch of puppies--you couldn't tell who was who. This captain sat in a daze there for several days, and I thought it was the shock of being shot down and made a prisoner of war. In the meantime we had received toothbrushes, soap and a towel and the water had been again regulated so there was plenty supply of that. Finally I couldn't stand looking at this raunchy, sloppy captain any longer and I walked up to him one day with a razor, bar of soap and a towel and I told him to go wash his face, shave and comb his hair. His reply was, "Why?" I told him because in the first place I'm telling you to as the commandant of the prison and in the second place because conditions are bad enough in this prison without you sitting here looking like you just crawled out from under a rock." From that day on, the captain hated my guts and caused me some trouble I will relate at a later time.

The Mihaivestcue garrison was only located some five hundred yards from the marshalling yards which was a constant target of our own bombers and those of the RAF, and it seemed like on every raid we got hit by stray bombs. Actually, we were hit some seventeen times by our own bombers: it was that old song, The USA By Day, and the RAF By Night, and the men had gotten very, very jittery. I recall one night I was standing up in the window and I heard a bomb whistling down, and I dove off of the table on which I was standing and hit the floor--the bomb struck, blew the window in, blew the door off the room and I thought that that was it. And in the glare of the search light, the flack and the signal flares that the British used, one of my men made a mad dash to the door, saying "I'm going to get the hell out of here!" My comment was, "Where are you going? You're as liable to get hit out there as you are in here!" He said, "By God, that's right!" and he turned around and dove down on the floor with the rest of us.

However, the bombing got so severe that my men were ready to rebel so I had to do something in order to get us out of that place. I wrote a petition to King Michael explaining the circumstances and wound up giving a direct threat that there were some 300 of us in the garrison versus a handful of Rumanian garrison troops and that my men considered they might as well be killed attempting to escape as to be killed there in the prison by our own bombs. The commandant of the garrison was really a nice old 'joe'. He took the petition and apparently bypassed Antonescu and got it to Michael himself. I heard later that he was sent to the Russian front for this, as was also a captain who was directly responsible for us prisoners in the garrison because of our escaping.

One thing that I forgot to mention was that one day the captain came up and asked me why we kept escaping when we knew we couldn't get out of Rumania and he was going to be sent to the Russian front for it. My reply was that I realized we couldn't get out of Rumania but that we were just playing a game to see which man could get the furthest away from the prison and that man would win the prize. The captain said, "Playing a game!?! And I'm going to be sent to the Russian front for it!" I might say that no prisoner ever escaped from Rumania. There was no underground, there were no friendly forces in the country whatsoever, and you were 200 miles from the Yugoslav border and you would have to swim the Danube to get across that border. And then, even if you got into Yugoslavia you still only had a 50-50 chance of being picked up by friendly troops. The man who was gone the longest was gone eight days, and he said that in those eight days all he had had to eat was a few frozen turnips. So, therefore, attempts to escape were a futile act.

About this time a German Luftwaffe Intelligence captain came into the prison; apparently my comments about getting the hell out of the war and there being only two of us in the aircraft were still reverberating. He came to my room, saluted and frankly introduced himself as a captain of the Luftwaffe intelligence. He said that the German pilot who shot me down would like me to have tea with him, and would I mind having tea with this German pilot? The first thought that I had was that it was a trick to get me out of the prison and shoot me on the pretense that I was attempting to escape; my next thought was that I was running a bluff on the Rumanians and I could not afford to let them see that I was afraid; then the third thought was that the food was so poor in the prison that I would have tea with the devil himself in order to get something decent to eat! I said, "No, not at all." He said, "Then would next Wednesday afternoon at four be convenient with you?" I said, "Well, hell, I'm not going anywhere--anytime would be convenient with me!" He saluted again and started to leave. I said, "One moment, captain, will you apologize for the clothing that I am in?" We were eating and sleeping in the same clothing in which we were shot down, and we were beginning to look and smell very raunchy. And he said, "Of course, I understand, major."

The following Wednesday the captain came to the prison, presented himself all spick and span and spruced up, and we started to walk out of the prison. One of the Rumanian sentries started to protest and the captain cut him down with a few sharp phrases and we got out and into his car. To show the difference, we could not move anywhere in the prison there without the sentries right behind us with their guns stuck in our backs because of the escapes that we had been making. There was nothing like this with the intelligence captain, he was of course armed with a pistol but there was none of this foolishness.

We got into this big, chauffeured open touring Mercedes and started across the city. As we went down one street there was an apartment house that had been struck by a bomb, which had gutted it top to bottom, and at that time the American press was making a great to-do that we only bombed military targets. So the captain turned to me and he said, "Really, major, do you call that a military target?" The first thought that flashed through my mind was that this was the kind of an afternoon it was going to be, so I said, "Well, major, being a member of the Luftwaffe of course you understand the value of psychological warfare." He hummed and hawed and said, "Yes, yes I understand."

We went across town, drove outside the city limits and went to an airbase, with a beautifully furnished clubhouse. It was the ME109 field, however the captain had made a mistake and the tea party was not there. He then got on the telephone and a call, and we got in the car and drove to another field. This field was crowded with aircraft, and as we drove across it I was looking from side to side, taking note and counting airplanes, so the captain with a wry grin on his face said, "Do you recognize anything, major?" I said, "Yes, this is an ME110E field equipped for night fighting and you have approximately two and a half squadrons stationed here. He said, "I don't think that information is going to do you any good, major", and I said, "Well, you know captain, in this war you just never know what's going to happen."

As we drove up to the clubhouse on this field, another Mercedes drove up and five officers got out. Immediately upon seeing the captain and myself they threw up their arms in a *Heil Hitler* salute. The Geneva Convention says that prisoners of war and their captors will exchange all the common military courtesies, but it doesn't say anything about a *Heil Hitler* so I just stood at ease, so again they threw up their arms and did a *Heil Hitler* and again I just stood at ease. They looked at the captain and the captain shrugged, and then they forgot the matter and we went into the clubhouse.

On a large table they had every type of drink--bourbon, scotch, you name it--plus these great big German donuts with jelly in the center. I took a look at that and then I took a look at the five men, and it wasn't the pilot who shot me down but the various squadron commanders stationed around Ploesti. One of them was about twenty-three years old and as handsome as a Hollywood idol, and he had five iron crosses including the one studded with diamonds, which Hitler, himself, hung around his neck. He was the commanding officer of the ME110E field. Another one was a major who was the commanding officer of the ME109 field and had fought on every front from Russia, France and down on into Rumania. The third one that I recall was the major who was in command of the Hienkel 111K bomber squadron, that is a twin-engine German bomber and, according to his statement that I didn't doubt in the least, he had made eighty-eight missions over London alone. Then there was a captain of an observation squadron.

Apparently, aside from the curiosity of talking to a captured ranking officer, there was an idea that perhaps I would become intoxicated and give them some valuable information. What they didn't know was that I had cut my teeth on a corn liquor bottle in Georgia and it took a considerable amount of alcohol to get me inebriated. In the beginning of the evening everything that the Luftwaffe intelligence captain said I had to twist and turn upside down to see what he was getting at, and there would be an infinitesimal pause around the table when this was going on. And then I would just shrug my shoulders, grin at him and turn back to the table and the fighting men that were represented there, with English and German spoken so fast that it was just like all of us speaking English.

The evening went on for quite a while and they were considerably interested in what I thought of their airplanes. As I had come into the clubhouse I had noticed the latest issue of Time and Life on their table, so I told them that I didn't have to give them information, that they had the latest news there from the United States! Their reply was, "Yes, but we want to know from you as a fighting man, your reaction to our aircraft." I had a beautiful opportunity there because there was the 109 major and the ME110 colonel so I said, "Well, the one thing that I have noticed is that your 110s seem reluctant to close with the bomber formations, that is come in close." Well immediately the colonel's face flushed a fiery red and the other German officers jumped on him with great glee, saying "ahah", here is a man that is flying against you and he says you are reluctant to close on him!

Things went along for a while, and I thought it was time to put a little more grit into the machinery and I turned to the major of the 109 squadron and I said, "You know, major, the men who shot me down should really only get about 1/20th credit." Immediately there was a big to-do and they wanted to know why. I said, "Well, did you know that it took five of your 109s twenty minutes to shoot me down when I didn't have a gun firing aboard my ship?" With that they all turned on the ME109 major and proceeded to give him holy hell. The observation captain had been very quiet during all this, and finally he came out with a statement that almost had me stumped immediately. He said, "Major, don't you realize that after you have conquered Germany, if and when you do, that you are going to have to fight the Russians?" This was really a problem to answer because whichever way I answered it, yes or no, could be used for propaganda--I could just see the headlines, "U.S. Major says as soon as they conquer Germany they are going to turn on Russia" for exterior propaganda; and I could see for interior propaganda, "U.S. Major says they are blood brothers of the Russians, and there will ever be intimacy between them". So I took a course that was rather unexpected to them and I said I didn't care, and the observation captain said. "What do you mean you don't care?" I said, "I don't care whether I'm fighting the Russians, the Germans, the British, the French or who. All I care about is whether I've got good pay, good food, plenty of women to kiss and a good airplane to fly." He said, "You mean to say that you like war?" I said, "Yes, it's just like a big game hunt, except that we use guns against one another rather than fangs or horns. You shoot at me, I shoot at you--if one of us gets killed, why hell, we're dead; we don't know a thing about it. If we get shot down, we're treated like officers and gentlemen. I don't care who I fight, it's just like a big game hunt." With that, the commanding officer of the ME110, the 109 and the Hienkel 111K almost got to their feet and said, "Ya, ya, ya that's just exactly what it's like, it's just like a big game hunt, what do we care who we fight!"

For the remainder of the afternoon they would not permit the observation captain or the Luftwaffe Intelligence captain to open their mouths, and it was just like a bull session amongst pilots back at a US air base. They wanted to know about Casablanca, and they still remembered the two blond prostitutes that I had spoken about who had the 45-minute routine. They laughed when I told them that they were still there and still operating, and what ensued was just general pilots talk of that nature.

Earlier in the evening the Luftwaffe Intelligence captain had gotten a little angry and he had said, "I don't need any information out of you. Listen to this..." and he pulled out a

folder which had my name, rank and serial number, and that I was commanding officer of the 724th bomb squadron, 451st bomb group, stationed at San Pancrazio, that I had left the States on Thanksgiving day in November of 1943 and the route that I had come--he had all of this information. I said, "Then you don't have to ask me anything and I don't have to take the trouble of listening to you and ignoring your questions!"

When the evening finally came to an end and we went outside, instead of a *Heil Hitler* the German pilots threw me the snappiest GI salute that you have ever seen. I thanked them for the evening, and I said that I hoped and I expected to be able to return the favor at some time in the future. With this, there was a general laughter among them and they said, "Oh, no!!" I said, "Yes, I expect to be able to return the favor." With that we got into the automobiles and the captain returned me to the garrison.

That was the only time that I had any close, personal contact with the Germans. It seemed that there was a pact between the Germans and the Rumanians that prisoners would not be traded back and forth between captors. I'm pretty sure that this that this was true because part of my crew were captured by Germans and were sent all the way back to Germany to a prison camp there whereas those of us picked up by Rumanians stayed in the Rumanian garrison.

Apparently my letter to King Michael did some good (I don't know whether it was him or Marshall Antonescu) considering our threat to make a prison break. At any rate, a few days later we were moved to a new location, which we called the schoolhouse. This, in actuality, had been a girls' school and was located some 12 kilometers from the marshalling yards and almost in the center of the city. It was bordered on one side by a very large park, which played an amusing part in later incidents, which I will relate.

The prisoners were all herded into the second and third stories and there was barbed wire on the windows, plus barbed wire around us, and we were forbidden to come near the windows. If one of us got near the windows and the guard outside saw us there was an instant cry of "Napoi!" meaning "retreat!" This went on for some period of time until getting weary of the conditions I decided to take drastic action one day. This action consisted of going to the window and openly defying the guard and letting him yell all he wanted to. He immediately called for the sergeant in charge of the guard and by this time all the civilians were gathering on the street. The sergeant of the guard called for the lieutenant in charge of the guard and the lieutenant apparently told the Rumanian soldier to shoot at me. However by this time the Rumanian sentry was rattled that I hadn't run off as usual and just stood at the window laughing at the sentry and his commanding officer outside who were yelling at me to retreat from the window, until finally the lieutenant ordered the sentry to shoot at me.

I continued to stand there and the sentry had by this time become so flustered that he tried to get his rifle to his shoulder and pulled the trigger too early and damned nigh shot the lieutenant and some civilians who were standing there watching. My action was not quite

as foolhardy as it may sound because I had an eight-inch brick wall between us that I could get behind before he was able to get his rifle to his shoulder. The troops that were assigned to guard us at the schoolhouse were of a tougher character than the garrison troops that we had been used to. However despite them after that we tore down the barbed wire at the windows and the men amused themselves by watching the passers-by. All vehicular traffic was prohibited on this street, only foot traffic was allowed and they were forbidden to stop and look at us or to say anything to us.

At this time I would like to say something about the difficulties of being a commanding officer of individuals in a prison camp. Every man, as soon as he pulled that ripcord, thought that he had reverted to civilian status so it was very difficult to maintain control in the first place. As one sergeant said to me one day, "Hell, I didn't know there was any rank in prison camp--I thought we was all just a bunch of prisoners together!" I quickly disillusioned him on this point because I was faced with a problem. Half of the men in the prison camp wanted to tear up the furniture, break the windows, fight with the guards and things of this nature and the other half wanted to remain peaceful and quiet and wait out the term of their involuntary imprisonment. You can't have both situations going on at the same time and it is up to somebody to make the decision as to which you will do. I very quickly made up my mind that the men tearing up the furniture meant that we would sleep on the cold concrete floor rather than in beds, that we wouldn't get our meals on time and that we wouldn't get the luxury of showers which the schoolhouse offered. So, therefore, I told the men to sit down and shut up and let me do all the yelling because I was in a better position to do so because of my rank.

The raunchy captain that I have spoken about having to be told to shave and bathe attempted to give me some backtalk, and I immediately jerked him by the collar into a private room and told him that I had no interest in his opinion of me, how I ran the prison or whatever. I was responsible to only one place and that was the War Department in Washington and there would be an accounting after the war was over. He attempted to justify his popping off by saying that other men in the prison felt the same way that he did and I informed him that I wasn't interested in how many felt that way, I was still responsible to only one source and that if he ever opened his mouth again in front of junior officers and enlisted men that I was going to have him thrown in chains on bread and water. His reply was that I couldn't do it, and I told him if he didn't think I could do it just make an inquiry of any of the Rumanians because I was causing them so much trouble on behalf of the men that they would have done just about anything that didn't cost them anything to slightly appease me.

He next said it wasn't legal, and I informed him that I didn't know what he knew about the articles of war but that they had one basic premise and that was under combat conditions you could do anything to the individual for the good of the whole. He thereupon shut up and I never heard anything out of him thereafter. After the war was over I asked the war department about my situation under those circumstances and they told me that if I had gone to the lengths that I said I would that they would have upheld me completely.

I think now is a proper moment to speak of the Rumanians as people. They consider themselves the most Latin of Latins; Actually if I remember my history well, they were only an outpost of the Roman legions. However, the Roman legionnaires left them their

language, or part of it, and they also left them their law and enough of the Latin blood so that the Rumanian of today is really a Slav with a Latin veneer. The men are rather queer looking and unattractive from our standpoint, but I must say they really had some good-looking women, especially the well-to-do classes. They had a peculiar psychology in that they must have an awful inferiority complex. I very quickly learned that they could not stand to be laughed at or insulted. It didn't make any difference whether you were talking to the lowest peasant or someone like Valjan from Oxford. Their reaction was exactly the same: they would immediately get red in the face, perspiration would pop out all over the place, and they would just turn on their heels and usually without a word just walk off. Valjan was, I found out, a member of the very wealthy Bragidura family there in Rumania and actually he could have had any rank he wanted in the army but due to his command of English and his ability to pose as a pro-allied officer they had placed him in the prison to pick up whatever Intelligence information that he could.

The colonel who was in charge of the prison (the schoolhouse) was named Colonel Ionid. He was a big, fat blubber-lipped, pot-bellied peasant and he and I went round and round continually. Using the psychology of laughing at him, and also this saying I had picked up in my younger days from this Irishman who would say "Bat Shit!" when he was ready to swing, I tormented the Colonel repeatedly. One day he asked some of my men exactly what that phrase meant. He said he was sure it must be the direst insult in the American language, but he would just like to know what it meant. My men, fortunately, picked up the ball and said, "Oh no, colonel, that's too terrible to even tell you what it means!" So it continued to be quite effective. Also, in their army the louder you yell the more rank you have. Well, having a very heavy voice and able to assume most any volume I desired, I had more rank as a major than any of them had ever seen. I used it quite effectively.

In our correspondence to our families we were prohibited from saying anything derogatory about the country, the people, and especially the prison conditions but we very soon got around this because we learned that they didn't understand American slang and the censors would let it go through. If they found anything objectionable in your postcards they tore them up and informed you of it. I can recall that on one of my cards I call their army a bunch of keystone cops--they never caught that. At another point I refer to their country as a poor white country and they never caught that at all. They were a people that you could not talk to or reason with. They would promise you the world with a fence around it and then never do a thing about it. For example, just a mere matter of my men getting out into the yard for daily exercise required my fighting with the guard every time by pushing him out of the way. I was very careful not to ever strike one, because with his Latin temperament he might have shot me on the spot but by just yelling at him and pushing his rifle aside one of the senior noncoms would come yelling, "No, no, no. Major, major!" Then they would let me, and the men, out into the yard for exercise.

At this point I will bring up again the subject of the food with a story that I find rather amusing. As I say, it was always fun to us to watch the crews that had been recently shot down become accustomed to the food. On one particular night I recall there were two officers sitting about two tables from me. One of them dipped his spoon down into the

bowl of sheep soup we were having, pulled something out and said, "Joe! Joe! What the Goddam Hell is that?!" And his friend replied, "Jesus Christ, it's a jawbone!" whereupon they started yelling at the sentry who was serving the soup. By this time the sentry was used to the idiosyncrasies of prisoners of war and he turned to him and said, "Nuiebun?" ("no good?") This officer yelled at him, "Hell no!" and the sentry replied, "Bun, bun!" ("It's good, it's good!") He reached out and picked up this jawbone and put it in his mouth and sucked. The teeth went rattling out across the floor and the officer's face was something to behold.

On another night I recall a young Australian officer, who looked like he hadn't even reached his eighteenth birthday, after tasting the sheep soup dropped his spoon and said in a tearful voice, "I can't eat this. I ain't never been used to no food like this!" An old American sergeant down at the end of the table looked up and said, "What the goddam hell do you think we've been used to, lieutenant?" And he went right on eating.

As I say, I was causing the Rumanians considerable trouble on behalf of the troops so at this point they attempted bribery since nothing else had worked: they offered me a private apartment, my meals to be brought in to me from Bucharest, and female companionship whenever I wanted. Of course this would have been highly irritating to my men and so I flatly refused on their behalf.

Sometime later I really became worried because I had men getting sick and I did not know what was wrong with them. They would be walking along and all of a sudden they would fall over in a faint. When we got them to bed they could not eat, or swallow, and there were big white ulcers in their throats. It finally got to the point that I had twenty men in bed like this and we had no medical care from the Rumanians. The only thing I could do was to scare them so I told them we had some kind of epidemic in the prison that would pass from us to the sentries and out to the general population and they had better get some doctors in there and find out what it was. They did so, and it turned out to be diphtheria. They gave the men shots and all of them recovered. They wanted to give me an injection, but I had had diphtheria as a child and was protected against it--I also thought this would be a good opportunity for them to inject me with arsenic and get rid of me, so I refused.

Generally, men with wounds never got to the prison, they either lived or died in the Rumanian hospitals. I recall that we did have two wounded men get to the main prison: one of them had had part of his foot shot away, the other one had had a 20 mm armor-piercing shell pass through his ribs and come out the front leaving a large hole under his ribs. Fortunately, it did not puncture his intestines, just passed through the membranes. In time these wounds became very serious because they were suppurating, and there were large yellow and reddish streaks running out from them, which indicated to me blood poisoning.

There was one room in the prison that was completely filled with gear that they had picked up from our aircraft, however the Rumanians would not permit us to enter it and they always had a sentry at the door as we passed near it. We formulated a plan to save these two men that, the next time that that door was open, one mass of the prisoners would immobilize the guard by pressing against him with their bodies while another

group of prisoners would rush into the room and grab all of the medical packets that they could find and a third group would have the two wounded prisoners stripped down so that we could immediately pour the sulfa into the wounds. The next time the door was open this was exactly what happened. We rushed in, we got the medical packets, and we immobilized the guard, poured the sulfa into the wounds and the two men recovered. If we had not done so I am sure they would have died.

The conditions of the prison were, to our way of thinking, very bad. We were still in the same clothing, in which we had been shot down, and this clothing was full of lice, the beds were full of bedbugs, and the walls were full of fleas—and these were a torment to the majority of the men. No matter how they tried to wear gloves, tie their sleeves, pull up their socks, tie their pants—they still had big bands of bites all around their ankles, wrists and necks, which became infected. For some reason I must be immune to bites of this type because I never had any trouble, but they would not give us anything to get rid of them. I should mention that we did not get any Red Cross parcels at all. The first parcels reached us after we were liberated, and in general, they had been looted.

In that country almost anyone can be bribed, and we prisoners used it for our own purposes, making life a little more tolerable in the prison. For example, if a man had been able to hang on to his possessions—that is his money, wristlets, watches, fountain pens, things of this nature—we were able to give these to a sentry who would smuggle them out of the prison, sell them on the black market there in Bucharest, and with the proceeds buy straight-grain alcohol--monopole alcohol--which was 180 proof. We took this to the cooks, who added burnt sugar and raspberry juice to it, and that was what we drank. It was really rough—in fact, we called it, “Who Killed Who!?”. It was so rough, that we had to ration it--not the amount that any one individual should drink, because we figured if anyone sold all his possessions and wanted to drink himself to death it was his business—but we had to ration the number of personnel on it at any one time, so the remainder of the prisoners could look after them. It was set up that Room 1 could go on a drunk one day, Room 2 the day after and so on...and this continued to the end of my imprisonment.

Another day that is very vivid in my memory is the day that they tried to get a particular Lieutenant in the prison. This Lieutenant, after he was captured and was being transported by a couple of soldiers to the prison, overpowered both of them, beat the hell out of them, took their car and tried to make an escape. He was subsequently recaptured and brought to the prison, but at a later date the prison authorities were trying to get him out and court-martial him—I don't know what they would have done with him. They were never successful in getting their hands on him, because as they herded us from floor to floor, looking for him, we kept passing his dog tags from prisoner to prisoner—men who were very unlike him in description, giving him another's tags in return. They ran us up and down stairs for one whole day, before they just gave up and realized they were never going to get that Lieutenant. They never did.

Another incident, that I recall, was an attempt to get the ancestry of all the prisoners—that is, the nationalities and bloodlines of all the prisoners. I can only surmise that what they wanted this for was to identify any prisoners who still had relatives in Germany or occupied areas so they could put particular pressure on them. I absolutely forbade my men to give them any type of ancestry whatsoever. The way they had put it to

us was that the word had gotten out that we had Jews and Negroes in the prison, and they wanted to refute this story because they knew we wouldn't like it. My reply was that, if there were a Jew or Negro in this prison, he would be treated just like any other man in uniform. Valjan, in his usual cocky manner, asked me if I was ashamed of my ancestry and I proceeded to relate it to him in no uncertain terms. I told him I was Scotch, Irish, Welsh and Dutch and he could put that in his pipe and smoke it and see what he came out with.

Another thing was the air raids. As I have said, we were hit seventeen times with our own bombers, and I don't think there is anything that can lift you out of your bed faster than an air raid siren going off outside of your living quarters. It will raise you about six inches off of your bed! They herded us down from the upper floors of the schoolhouse into the mess hall, which was really not of much use in a direct hit because it was not a dugout, and merely semi-underground about halfway up to the windows, and we would have had the floors from above fall down on top of us. It was here that I observed blind panic. We very soon became able to distinguish whether the bombs were short, over or on the target—the target being us. In an air raid, you feel just like a quarter sitting on top of an orange, with everyone aiming bombs right at you, directly. I have seen the men panic and blindly run from one end of the mess hall to the other, and pile up like a bunch of frightened rabbits. No matter how much you cursed them and told them to sit down because it didn't matter where they were in the room if a bomb hit, they were in an absolute blind panic.

One trait of the American soldier was that he seemed to be able to operate with women, regardless of the fact that he was behind barbed wire on the second-floor of a prison. The prison street facing the park very soon became the promenade of the young girls of Bucharest. As I say they were prohibited from stopping, and they were supposed not to say anything, but very soon we had men who got girls to throw a word up and they would then throw a word down. We had one enlisted man there who was of Romanian ancestry, who wrote and spoke the language, and he was able to coach the remainder of them. By this time, we had torn out all the barbed wire, and were hanging out of the windows constantly. The men were soon able to recognize the various girls as they strolled down the street, and would yell out, "Hey, Joe, here comes your girl friend!"--and Joe would rush over to the window and throw down a few love words in Rumanian. The next step was to make up love letters in the form of paper airplanes and to sail these out of the window and down into the street. The men became expert bombardiers, sailing these letters right to the feet of the girls walking down the street, whereupon the girls would grab them and run out across the park, with the Rumanian sentry yelling and waving the butt of his rifle, but it never did him any good.

The next point of interest was our intelligence room. On the pretext that the men needed something to do, I got colored crayons and some colored twine from the Rumanians for the purposes of arts and crafts; instead, what we wanted was to make a map on one of the white-washed walls of Europe to keep track of the fighting lines. We were able to do this very successfully because the navigators used the escape maps, which they had been able

to retain as handkerchiefs. Soon, we had a map that extended all the way from England on one side to Moscow on the other, and from Norway south to Africa. Supposedly, the map in your escape kit was supposed to cover the particular area you were bombing, but when we opened them we found that this was not true. We were bombing Rumania, and some had maps of North Africa, Norway and even Russia. This enabled the navigators to draw a very large map with rivers, mountains, and cities and then to put in the battle lines with the colored twine.

Every man who was shot down and brought to our prison was interrogated to learn the latest information on what our troops were doing. It was surprising how little the majority of them knew, just that they had hit this target the day before or this one the week before, once in a while we got a prisoner who had assiduously read Time and able to give us information. In addition, we had bribed the Rumanian sentries to bring us the Rumanian paper. Very soon, we learned to read Rumanian enough to understand; the Rumanian language is a Latin language, but interspersed with Slavic words which were indecipherable, like running into a brick wall. From these dispatches, though they always claimed a glorious victory for the Axis troops, we were able to find the battle line by where the dispatch came from—they would claim a victory from the Russians, but the dispatches would drop back twenty miles from the last dispatch. We kept our battle lines accordingly, allowing us to even follow the invasion of France and the battle lines there. In fact, so accurate was our map that very soon Rumanian officers began dropping in to take a look at our map. The colonel, of course, was very irate about this and threatened to wash it off the wall and we promptly informed him that, if he did, he would have a riot on his hands and then we would just redraw the map and put the battle lines back in again. Not wishing any more trouble than he was already having from the troops, the colonel never carried out his threat. It may still be there to this day.

The climax of my time at the schoolhouse occurred when we had what the Rumanians called our bread riot. The bread that we had been eating was not the bread that the Rumanian soldier ate; it was a light brown nutty loaf that was really delicious. All of a sudden, one night, the Rumanians tried to substitute the Rumanian soldier bread. Their bread, which most of us had tried at one time or another during our captivity, tasted like sour sawdust swept up from a stable floor and had cockroaches, glass and everything else in it. I was always the first one served, so the instant that I noticed this I immediately stood up, told the men what was going to happen and that if we accepted it once we would be eating it from here on out. Those who had already tasted it didn't need any warning but I ordered all prisoners to taste the bread and throw it immediately back into the basket. They did so, much to the horror of the Rumanians--refusing to eat the bread was almost sacrilege on our part because bread is one of the main staples in the Rumanian peasantry.

This resulted in the high command of the Rumanian staff responsible for the welfare of the prisoners coming down and interrogating me. It consisted primarily of Valjan interpreting for Colonel Sislescue, who was apparently the overall man responsible for the prisoners of war. Valjan started out by telling me that my attitude was such that the Rumanian officers found me impossible and that they had come to the conclusion that the best thing they could do was to send me to Slobozia. I said, "Yes, I've heard of Slobozia,

Valjan.” He said they had sent Russian colonels there, and they were entirely different men when they got out. I thereupon pulled my old trick of laughing right in his face, and he exploded, “I know exactly what you’re thinking! You don’t care if we do send you to Slobozia, all you’re thinking about is how the Russians are going to slit our throats when they get here!” I said, “That’s exactly right, Valjan, tell Sislescue that!” He turned around and repeated what I had said, in Rumanian, and all hell broke loose. That ended my stay at the schoolhouse.

But before I leave the schoolhouse, I must relate one of my favorite stories of the war about an Englishman named Pop, who was also a prisoner there. Sitting in our room one night we were listening to each others stories about how we were shot down—many of which we had heard before—and getting somewhat weary of this, someone turned to Pop, who was reading a newspaper and said, “How ‘bout it, Pop, how were you shot down?” Lowering his newspaper a couple of inches, Pop looked out over the top and said, “Which time?” That really set the Americans back on their heels. In the ensuing conversation, we found out that Pop had been shot down three times. The first time he was shot down behind the German lines in Africa, had slugged his way across the desert, found his way through the lines and had then gotten back to his Group to find he had been reported as dead, and his wife had collected his insurance and taken off with a boyfriend.

The second time he was shot down out in the Adriatic and he swam home. The third time, he was over Bucharest and, as he told it, the bloody Messerschmidt stood off at a bloody thousand yards and lobbed a rocket into us. Someone excitedly asked, “Did you bail out, Pop?” He said, “Hell no, I fell out!” It seemed that the Wimpy, which was a wood and fabric construction aircraft rather than metal, just collapsed, and the whole crew fell out.

Some two days later, which was early in August 1944, Captain Stone and myself were transferred out from the schoolhouse to Timisul del Sus. Its location was 130 kilometers north of Bucharest in what we called “the Gut”; that is, it was the main thoroughfare for traffic between Rumania through the mountains and up into the plains of Hungary. The prison was located within rock throwing distance of the road. This was a summer resort area for the Rumanians.

When I got there, I found the low level prisoners. There had been one raid run in the fall of ‘43 from North Africa led by Colonel “Killer” Kane, which had struck the Ploesti oil fields first. This has been recounted in other documents, so I will not go into the details of that raid except to say that the survivors in prison described it as a mess. Apparently, there was minimum damage to the target, and maximum casualties on our part.

In the prison, also, were some very interesting characters: one of which was Admiral Von Dorman, a rear Admiral in the Dutch navy and his Aide de Camp, Baron Von Lynmann. I was never able to discover how these two wound up in a prison in Romania because they were very reticent. In addition to them, there was Robert Johnson and Jerry Caminada, both Englishmen—neither were military personnel. Johnson was an agricultural expert for the government who was doing research in one of the Scandinavian countries when the Germans invaded. As he told it, he got into a rowboat and tried to row across into one of the neutral countries but the tide turned and pulled him back to shore and he decided it

was hopeless. He then went down to the bank, drew out all of the money the British had deposited for his use during his stay in this country, got the best suite in a hotel, got a couple of cases of Scotch whiskey, picked himself up a blonde and proceeded to shack up in the hotel until the Germans knocked on the door and took him to prison.

Jerry Caminada was a news correspondent for the London Times, who was captured at Dunkirk. What was particularly amazing about these two men was that they had been placed in the northernmost German prison and had learned to speak perfect German. They had been in prison for four years, and in those four years they had escaped eight times; and each time they had escaped they were captured and placed in the nearest prison, thereby working their way in four years time to Rumania. As I have previously stated, it was impossible to get out of Rumania, and even these two experts found it so. Life here was very quiet unlike Lagarul 13, the schoolhouse prison in Bucharest. These men had been imprisoned for almost a year, and had resigned themselves to staying there until released by the fortunes of war. Also, their life was made much easier by the fact that they were receiving Red Cross parcels, which we were not receiving at our camp.

In late August, one day, it was my room's turn to drink our monopole alcohol. We started at eight o'clock in the morning, because it made no difference since you weren't going anywhere anyway. We passed out at three in the afternoon, and slept until the early morning hours—that is, I did. About two o'clock in the morning, I woke up with a blinding headache and thought that if I didn't get a drink of water, I would die. I staggered over to the washbasin and was slurping water up into my mouth with my hand when all of a sudden a sentry on the outside yelled, "Razboui Gata!" and it means the war is finished! At first I thought I had the d.t.'s, however, it turned out to be true—King Michael, in an astute stroke, had imprisoned Marshal Antonescu and had taken Rumania out of the war. The difficulty was that the fighting troops really didn't know, and there was still a three-sided war going on between the Rumanians, Germans, and Russians with everybody shooting at everyone else and us in the middle just trying to keep out of the line of fire.

The Rumanian prison authorities kept trying to get me to sign a release relieving them of all responsibility for the prisoners there and giving me all responsibility for them. This I flatly refused to do, stating that we were prisoners of war and it was their job to get us to a main camp, meaning the prison in Bucharest 130 kilometers south. Admiral Von Dorman volunteered to go to the nearest army headquarters and see if he could get transportation to get us out of this precarious location. I say precarious because it was the main line of retreat for the German troops getting out of Rumania and back up into Hungary.

Three times, during the first day, we took to the hills as large detachments of Germans moved up the road. My men were divided, with about half of them wanting to go over the hill and start fighting the Germans and the other half wanting to take off and start running toward Yugoslavia some two hundred miles away. They were not any condition to do either one, and I flatly forbade it and ordered them to stay in one group and see if we could get to the main camp.

That night, trucks arrived from the army headquarters, which Admiral Van Dorman had reached. There was a driving rain, and we evacuated from Timisul de Sus, hiding under the tarps, and on the way passing detachments of Germans going in the other direction.

However, the general of the 5th Army Rumanian Corps said he did not know exactly where the fighting was, and so he refused to do more than to evacuate us 10 kilometers south and then 15 kilometers off to one side of the main retreat of the Germans. So we were dumped in a little village called Pietrosita. We stayed there approximately two days with my men getting more and more nervous with guns going off around us, and I realized that I wasn't going to be able to hold them much longer, and they were going to get scattered and God knows what would happen to them.

I decided to go to Bucharest myself, and get transportation to evacuate the men. I chose Robert Johnson, because of his knowledge of German, to go with me. I left the captain in charge, to his dismay, with the instructions that I was going to Bucharest and I would be back in three days. If I didn't return in three days, the command was his and he was on his own, because I would be dead. We went out to the bridge across the little creek near the village, which was the main road, and told the sentry to stop the next car that was not filled with women and children regardless of whether it was going north or south.

The first car answering this description was going north, which was opposite to the direction in which we wanted to go. The Rumanian sentry stepped out in front of the car, and with a loud, "Stey!" stopped the car. Johnny and I stepped up, one on each side of the car—and, of course, we were armed by this time—and we informed the driver he was taking us to Bucharest. The driver became very excited and nervous, waving his arms around at a mile a minute. I merely cocked the gun that I had and held it to his head, and he very soon realized that either he cooperated, or he was going to be a dead man.

He then calmed down suddenly and explained to us very carefully, in German, that he was Dr. Gerota, the foremost doctor of Rumania—and that he was en route back up to Timisul de Sus where we had come from because his wife and two children were there in his summer home. He was afraid of the Germans picking them up in the same way we were afraid of them picking us up. He explained that he knew the new Minister of War and he could be of great assistance to us if we would go with him to Timisul, and then he would take us back down to Bucharest.

Johnny and I agreed that this was a logical and sensible thing to do, but we told him if there was any funny business he would get shot right between the ears. I got in the front seat and Johnny got into the back seat behind him. He drove up to Timisul, and he hadn't been lying, because he had a beautiful wife and two beautiful children there in his summer home. It was getting late so we decided it was safer to spend the night there and attempt our run to Bucharest in the daytime.

The following morning we took off and started working our way through the fighting. By that I mean that whenever the fighting started sounding loud on the left, we began taking side roads off to the right—and vice-versa. In this way, we arrived at what was his country home outside Bucharest just about nightfall to find that some of the key diplomatic personnel who had been stationed in Bucharest were there in his home. The doctor refused to take us into Bucharest that night because they had been fighting on his property during the day, and there was still street fighting in the city itself.

Dinner that night was really extraordinary—there were some five languages being spoken, with everyone needling everybody else. There were insufficient beds in the home to accommodate all these unexpected visitors, even though it was quite large, so Johnny

and I had to sleep out on the porch. I remember telling Johnny that night that all we needed to make this a Hollywood film was for someone to get murdered in their sleep, and the Germans to make another sweep through there and pick us all up in the morning. The next day we drove to his city home, a luxurious affair in Bucharest, and he immediately took us to the Minister of War's office and sent in a note as to what we needed and who we were. I still have this note in my possession as well as a safe conduct pass that was issued to me to get through the Rumanian lines. The Minister of War agreed to give us six trucks and an automobile to get me back up there as fast as possible the following morning. Next morning, a big black touring car drove up and Dr. Gerota recognized it as immediately as Marshall Romanescu's private automobile and his driver. Wee took off for Pietrocity at full speed; it was a very powerful automobile, scattering ducks, geese and peasants off the road as we drove.

I got back just in time, because the captain was about to lose control of the men. The trucks followed me shortly thereafter, and we loaded all of the POWs aboard and started back to Bucharest, again working our way through the lines. That night I delivered them to the main camp and put them under the officer in charge at that time, and Johnny and I went back to spend the night at Dr. Gerota's.

In the meantime, some very amusing things had been going on. When the word got out that the American prisoners were going to be released, they opened up the gates and a thousand Americans came out to a thousand Rumanian girls waiting for them. About that time, the air raid sirens went off, and they all took off for the shelter and were in there for forty-eight hours. One Rumanian officer said this "was the damn sorriest sight Rumania had ever seen". There was another story told about an old sergeant who turned to the Rumanians and said that he expected them to be somewhat civilized by the next war, because we had left enough American genes here in the past few days to make them at least partially civilized!

In the meantime, an officer by the name of "Pop Gunn", a lieutenant colonel, had flown to Italy to let the 15th Air Force know that we were free. What he had done was to climb up into the tail of a Messerschmidt 109, the Rumanians painted American flags on the wings and then Captain Cantacuzino, the leading Rumanian ace, flew right above the water-tops to confuse the radar, landed at Colonel Gunn's base, and--holding up his arms to surrender-- taxied up to the line, and then told them to take the inspection plate off the back of the plane and they would "see something that surprises you". They did, and there were two big G.I. boots in view. They pulled them out and there was their commanding officer, who had been shot down the week before.

For the next three days, Pop Gunn spent all of his time in Beri trying to convince them that this was true--we were loose and trying to keep out of the way of the three forces fighting in Rumania.

The 15th Air Force at first suspected this was a trick to get a squadron of B17s shot up on the ground at Bucharest, but he finally convinced them, at least to the extent that they sent the B17s with an escort of P51 fighters. The P51 fighters came in and swept back and forth across the field with the B17s waiting upstairs, waiting to see if anyone was going to take a shot at them. Then they landed, but left their engines running so they could take off immediately if necessary, while the first load of prisoners was evacuated by the squadron of B17s. It took several days for all the prisoners to be evacuated, and

Johnny and I stayed as guests of Dr. Geroda until the last load, having a wonderful time with a pocketful of money, which the Rumanians gave us.

When it came my turn to be evacuated, the Rumanians turned over to me two suitcases of money that had been taken from prisoners of war, primarily money from their escape kits. When I got to Beri, I was trying to get rid of it and had a hell of a time because nobody wanted to assume responsibility for the money. When we first arrived, they had us strip and burned all of the clothes we were wearing, then we had scalding hot showers and they deloused us with DDT.

To get rid of the money, I spent a whole day recording circumstances as to how I got it, the treatment by the Rumanians of POWs when they captured them, and whether we considered this to be government money or private monies of POWs. Americans flying did not ordinarily carry their own money, so we explained that it was primarily from the escape kits. The colonel finally condescended to accept it, but he told me I would have saved him one hell of a lot of trouble if I had just dropped it in the Adriatic when I was flying back from Rumania. I didn't say so, but I would very much have liked to have that \$50,000 for myself, but I'd still be answering questions on it to this day, had I kept it.

There came down an order for Captain Stone and myself to be flown back immediately to our Group, and we arrived there late one afternoon, for what reason we did not know. That night, the colonel had us talk to the whole assembled Group from a stage, so I recounted some of our experiences and I must say the colonel was almost rolling in the aisles, laughing. I imagine he was comparing his difficulties with me with what the Rumanians went through with me when I was a prisoner of war.

The following day we learned why we had been rushed back to our Group, because the Group had been assembled and the commanding general of the 15th Air Force appeared to present to the Group a Presidential citation for the Ploesti raid. I could not believe my ears when I heard them read off the date of April 5, 1944; and as soon as the formation broke up and Colonel Eaton and General Twining came over to where Stone and I were standing on the sidelines, I burst out, "My God, Colonel, do you mean we hit something that day?!" and he said, "Well, you ought to know, you were leading it!" I then explained to him how I had dumped the bombs without even a bombardier in the plane in the hopes of just hitting some anti-aircraft gunners on the head. General Twining's comment was, "Jesus Christ, shit-house luck!" As the pictures they showed us later in the day indicated, all of our bombs had gone right into the center of a refinery some ten miles outside of the main target area on which we had not been briefed. It was just plain luck that came with a Presidential Citation.

We were then sent home by ship, and aboard ship they kept pressing more and more food on us and our stomachs were unable to absorb the food because we had been used to such a poor diet. In New York, we were immediately sent to Camp Shanks where we were incarcerated—no telephone calls or telegrams to our families, who had already received official word of our release from Allied Control. They kept us there for some three days, during which time there was intensive interrogation of all personnel and a debriefing of what we could and could not say about our imprisonment. We were all paid the back money due us, and completely uniformed in brand-new uniforms at government expense. Then, one day they said we could contact our families and they conducted us to a very large building that had been converted to a communications center, where there was just

row upon row of telephone booths and telegraph clerks to take telegrams. There was considerable confusion, because many of us did not know where our wives were and I remember sending off about five telegrams to various relatives asking where my wife and child were at that moment. One of them sent back an answer that she was in Tuscon, Arizona.

They gave us a month's leave, and sent us by train to us various destinations within the United States. We spent a month at home with our families, and then we were gathered at various points around the country for further briefing, and to determine what was to be done with us. Some of us asked for immediate discharge, and they were given it. The rest of us were told we could select almost any assignment we wanted, and we would receive it.

I think we were given the red carpet treatment because we were the first prisoners to be liberated from the Axis powers. The newspapers in New York had made a great splash about the Ploesti raiders, and I still have the newspaper clippings in my scrapbook. My decision at this briefing point was that I would like to attend the Commanding General Staff School and I was thereupon assigned to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, Commanding General Staff School. I went there and was graduated.

One comment I would make is that they made a bad psychological error in sending us home for one month with nothing to do, after a long period of internment. Most of us really did not need—except those who were quite ill—a period of rest and recuperation at home. What we needed was to be put back to work immediately, to get our minds off of what we had just come out of.

I subsequently was assigned to Albuquerque, New Mexico as a Provost Marshal, and then went to Panama, Allbrook Field where I was the exec officer. I even had a brief interlude after leaving the service as a mercenary with the Jewish Air Force in their war with the Arabs. I was recalled to active duty for the Korean conflict, and spent one year with Strategic Air Command in Topeka, Kansas and another year in Korea itself as the Wing Inspector of the 17th Bomb Wing.