

bound for his outfit in New Guinea. Had we made connections, that would have been some reunion!

A day later, we sailed down the east coast and around the Australian Bight. We learned of the reversal of seasons below the equator first hand. It was still winter down there and we had to wear jackets on the outside decks. The ship's gallery began serving hot soup at noon during this phase of the trip.

When we reached Freemantle, we were permitted to go ashore for the first time since leaving San Francisco. We lined up on the dock in columns of fours, then marched uptown. As we were marching, the citizens would come out of the bars and pass mugs of Aussie beer to us. Each person took a sip and passed it on. The empty mugs were passed back to bystanders further up the line. We thought this was a friendly gesture on the part of the town's people. We continued on up Freemantle's main street to a little park where we sat and talked with the natives for about a half hour, then marched back to the ship. Everyone enjoyed this little break.

After we were back on the ship, an Aussie stevedore came into our room to sell wine. He was wearing an oversized suit of coveralls and when he opened the front we could see row after row of pockets which were sewn into the inner side and each contained a bottle of muscatel wine. I don't know how he managed to avoid having a major breakage problem! However, he sold several bottles and was gone before anyone had a chance to sample the stuff and complain. One guy in the cabin next door,



Senior Vice Commander Joe McGuire listens to Mitch Opas, General Joseph Stilwell Basha, as he explains "The Way Things Ought to Be" at the Tampa Spring Board meeting.

Taylor photo

who obviously had an alcohol problem, said he poured his wine down the commode and went back to drinking after shave lotion!

After we pulled away from the dock and out into the Indian Ocean, the Captain began to put the ship and its steering mechanism through its paces. We did figures 8's and left and right circles to make sure the rudder was working properly. We were now in Japanese waters, more or less, since they held everything to the north of us. Malaysia, Indonesia, Siam, Burma and the islands in the north part of the ocean were occupied by the Japs. We began to worry about having an escort and the next morning when we went topside there was a Dutch raider, bristling with guns, off our starboard bow. We all breathed a little easier.

It stayed with us across the Indian Ocean until we reached the vicinity of Ceylon and dropped off. Then, we picked up two destroyer escorts - one on each side of our ship - which stayed with us until we reached Bombay. The night before we reached the Ceylon area there was a bright fire just over the horizon and the crew reported that it was a tanker that had been hit by a Jap sub.

It was a leisurely cruise up the west side of India into Bombay. We arrived off shore at daybreak and had to wait for the pilot a couple of hours. I guess he was a slow eater and took a lot of time for his morning ablutions. Meanwhile, we enjoyed watching the native fishermen in those little dingy-like boats, no bigger than a bathtub, with a short mast and a scrubby

sail, out there more than 20 miles from shore! I guess that hunger and food for their families forced them to risk their lives in these unseaworthy crafts. I suspect there was a good part of their catch that was sold to provide income for their family's other needs.

Finally, the pokey pilot appeared on the scene and took over the guidance of the ship into Ballard docks where we tied up and ended our big adventure.

Later, that day, the combat troops and the engineers began to debark and move over to waiting troop trains which were parked on the docks near our ship. This left the ship practically deserted as only about one-quarter of the 4,500 original list were left behind. That afternoon, a friendly British USO troupe came aboard and sang some songs and did a few comedy skits, which our ears heard but our brains could not decode the British accent, as yet. However, it was good music and we enjoyed it.

This ended our cruise which was about five weeks long. Only a few of us had ever been to a foreign country before. Here we were now in an unfamiliar and mysterious land whose customs, miseries, peculiarities and shortcomings were being paraded before us in a life-sized panorama. Some of it was a shock to our sensibilities. These were all new experiences as we were cast into the teeming midst of



Pictured on page 39 of the Spring SOUND-OFF was a photo of the newly-constructed Winchester Theater at Chabua. Above is a picture of its predecessor, the Bamboo Music Hall, taken by me following its demise by a horrific monsoon storm in March 1945. With typical Gren humor, I posted a sign, approximately 4' x 2' that read:

NOW PLAYING

"GONE WITH THE WIND"

The sign, too, was gone with the wind a couple of days later when another violent monsoon storm hit the base.

Caption and photo by Dr. Jack Gren



New Florida Commander Dudley Davis presents an American flag which has flown over the nation's capitol to Immediate Past State Commander Jack McGuire while Lowell Simpson is on the left and Ruth McGuire and Dee Davis are on the right.

Ivan Taylor photo

the populace of India with all our senses and emotions functioning. Some of the spectacles were shocking and heart-wrenching. There were so many first impressions that we quit trying to count or categorize them because there were always more disturbing ones ahead or around the corner that surpassed the one we had just witnessed. We foolishly tried to compare or evaluate our observations with something we had seen or known in our background in the States. It was a waste of time because our experiences and education could not possibly prepare us for perceiving this strange land. It was such a mixed bag of extremes, shortcomings, contrasts and paradoxes that it was perplexing to make any sense of it all. The language, dress, customs, mores and politics were so alien to us that we resolved never to be shocked at anything we saw, heard, smelled or touched.

The day that the troops and engineers left the Lurline, a work force of native carpenters and laborers came on board and began to put up barbed-wire enclosures on the lower decks. This was in preparation for the Italian POWs, who were being shipped to Melbourne, Australia, to another POW camp. They "Eyeties," as the British referred to them, had been captured in the North African campaign between the British 8th Army and Rommel's forces.

They were bringing in Italian POWs by trainloads on the day we left the Lurline. We boarded those Indian "pullmans" for the interior. Our contingent from Camp Campbell and a few hundred others were loaded on the Bengal-Nagpur RR



PNC Marvin Walker of Gen. Joseph Stilwell Basha, Kay Abner of Blue Grass Basha and co-hostess Mel Simpson, wife of Lowell, who was M.C. for the Saturday night affair. It was great to see our CBI friends again, May 20, 1995.

and headed for Calcutta to Camp Angus (On-the-Hooghly). There, to await trans-shipment to other Army Ground Forces in the CBITO.

I had acquired a feeling for the Lurline. After the war, I wondered what happened to her. So, in 1977, I made a special trip to the San Francisco docks to check. I was told that she had been scrapped.

Then in the Winter 1995 SOUND-OFF, Hugo Schramm revealed in the "Ships Column" that the Lurline is now the Britanis and plying the Caribbean cruise lanes. How nice for a grand old ship!

Col. Trevor Dupuy

By Joseph Shupe

Colonel Trevor Dupuy, a distinguished CBler, died on June 5, 1995, by his own hand; he had cancer.

The Washington Post and the Fairfax (VA) Journal carried glowing accounts of his career. A graduate of the U.S.M.A. in 1938, he served a long tour of duty in Burma as an artillery commander. He was one of the few American officers whom General Stilwell gave command authority over Chinese troops.

He wrote more than 90 books on military matters, and he collaborated with his father in writing and keeping up to date "The Encyclopedia of Military History." Borrowing ideas from military thinkers like Sun Tzu and Clausewitz, he came up with the idea of "quantitative military historical analysis," where lessons from previous battles are applied to current military situations.

At the onset of the Vietnam War, when he examined the risks of bringing foot soldiers into Vietnam, he concluded that it would be unwise. At the beginning of the Gulf War, he testified before Congress and provided a prognosis for success in that war. In fact, he predicted the type of maneuver that would end the war.

Letters

Drink Ovaltine

To the Editor:

I thought this story would be appropriate on the 50th Anniversary of WW II.

In 1944, during the Battle of Myitkyina, I came down with scrub typhus four days after the capture of Myitkyina, August 3, 1944.



Post meeting conversation of the All-East 95 reunion is being enjoyed by, left to right, PNC Lou Porto, National Commander Leon Lennertz and PNC Andy Anderson.

Edgar Wolf, Jr. photo

Many died from this deadly fever. I was one of the lucky ones to survive it. One of the things they gave me in the hospital to drink was hot ovaltine in powdered milk to keep my strength up. When I got out of the hospital I only weighed 115 pounds.

After I got out of the army, I continued to drink a cup of ovaltine for breakfast, which I have been doing for the past 50 years.

In 1993, ovaltine had a notice in an ad saying anyone with an usual story about ovaltine to contact them which I did telling them my story about drinking their malt for the past 50 years.

Three weeks later, I received a letter from the President of Himmel Nutrition that makes ovaltine telling me how delighted and gratifying they were for me drinking ovaltine for that many years and as a gesture of goodwill they were sending me a coupon worth 75 cents on my next jar of ovaltine. (Big Spenders -Ed)

James S. Fletcher

Send Address Changes to
Adjutant Charles Hollaway
5860 Amrap Drive
Parma Heights, OH 44130

Send SOUND-OFF Copy to:
P.O. Box 190374
Webster Groves, MO 63119

DEADLINES!
January 1 - April 1
July 1 - October 1

Very Early Days In CBI as Seen . . .

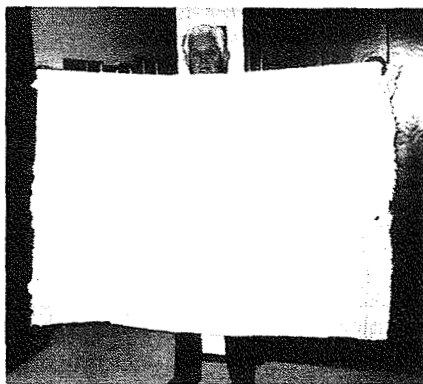
By Donald G. Fennell

Having graduated from Butler High School, Butler, PA, in 1939, worked on correspondence course in electrical engineering 1939-1940 and received wireman's card for wiring residences and businesses. I spent the remainder of 1940 working as helper on oil rigs pulling tubes and rods from oil wells, taking the 1940 census in Chicora, PA, and doing odd jobs, wiring houses, etc., until July 12, 1940 when I enlisted in the Army Air Corps and was sent to Bolling Field, Washington, D.C.

I had hoped to go to pilot training school; but, since one eye was 20-30, was turned down for that. So, I took the math and mechanical aptitude test (I.Q. tests were not used until later). Anyone who had passed math and mechanical aptitude test was given a grade of 110, as this would qualify an individual for other things in service, such as OCS, etc.

I asked if I could go to A/C Mechanic School; but they discovered I could type, so I was told I was needed in the orderly room but would be able to go to A/C Mechanic School later. I ended up in orderly room in an office with 1st Sgt. Rhone, HQ Squadron Commander Major Turner, and Asst. Sqdn Commander Capt. Ingram. (Later, I heard that 1st Sgt. Rhone was promoted to Major, Major Turner to Major General, and Capt. Ingram to Brig. General, all going to Europe.) I also worked in personnel office and was promoted to Private 1st Class with 1st Class Specialist rating.

After Pearl Harbor, I volunteered for overseas service in December 1941. Spent several weeks at War



Don Fennell holding big towel which he used as bedding in Chabua, India in early 1942 in CBI.

Dept. studying cryptography. (By the way, pre-Pearl Harbor, I had helped, along with many others to move the whole War Dept., in one night, to a larger building.) Six or seven of us were still not sure of overseas duty until we were told to go to Gate 1 for passport pictures. At this time, passports were needed, even by the military, to go overseas.

I met Mary Blair in Washington one week before Pearl Harbor. She waited until I got back to the States, two years and seven months later. We married and it has lasted 57 years.

Went to Bolling Field, D.C. to Tampa, FL. Then we boarded a B-24A to Trinidad, Belem and Natal, Brazil, Gold Coast, West Africa (Ascension Island was not open yet), Khartoum, Egyptian Sudan, and then Cairo, Egypt. Arrived in Cairo on Jan. 17, 1942. B-24A did not have self-sealing fuel tanks so could go a long way; therefore no need to land at Ascension.

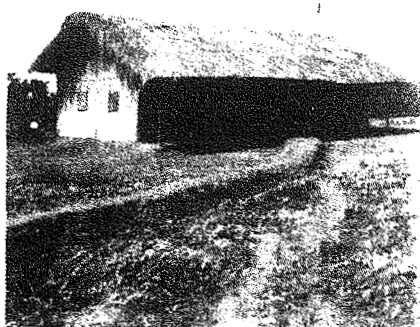
In Cairo, we were billeted in Helopolis House Hotel in suburban Cairo. Each morning we were picked up by a British WAC and driven to Cairo where we worked in the crypto room of the U.S. Consul Headquarters Air Section of North African Mission. We worked from 8 a.m. to 12 noon, then from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. so had some time to see pyramids, etc. On Jan. 20, 1942, I, a PFC with 1st Class specialist rating, two privates and one other PFC were promoted to sergeant. I took a cut in pay; but, since we were to live with British, we would have all privileges that British sergeants had. This promotion was made on Administrative Memorandum #14, rather than a special order. I was in charge of crypto office and message center U.S. Consul's office, Cairo, Egypt.

We heard that some of us would be transferred to stations elsewhere and would act as control officers to work with British at their bases and report arrival of B-17s at our base and estimated time of departure for next base. We were also to take care of billeting and feeding of crews, service of planes, and other needs, and report to North African Mission. I volunteered for this.

We first took off in late January in a B-24 to the Middle East. We, on board, did not know the route; but, over the Mediterranean, a fighter was spotted and identified as German. Gen. Adler was on board, and he ordered us back to Cairo. We were told that, in the dive down over the Mediterranean, we reached approximately 400 MPH. In any case, we got back to Cairo.

In the next few days, order and routing of B-17s would be from Khartoum to Aden to Karachi to Bangalore to Java or Sumatra. So, I was sent to Khartoum where several of us were told to hitch a ride on a B-17; and, when we arrived at the next base, we would be told by British who would stay or go on. I ended up not being stopped until I arrived in Ceylon (we did not stop at Bangalore). I was met by Major E. W. Alexander. That night the B-17 that I arrived on was having problems with one engine. Since B-17s could leave only at night, it would be the next night before we could take off for Java or Sumatra. Next day, Major Alexander told me I would stay in Ceylon with him. Major Alexander was the most hard-working American military man I ever met, yet, I have seen little written about him.

One thing I shall always remember - Major Alexander told me that we had to take a package to



One of two Bashas, Chabua April 1942



Early Construction, Chabua 1942 April

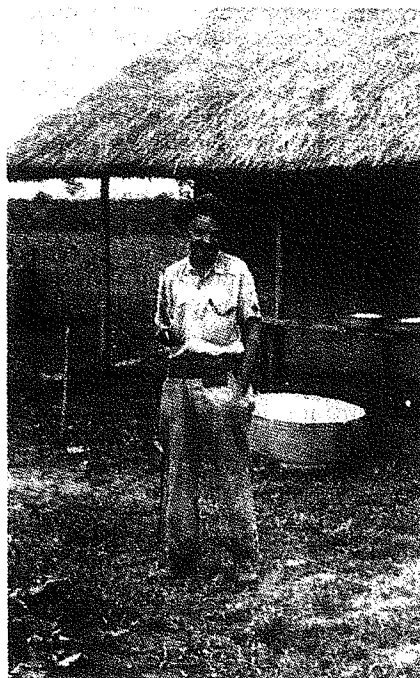
the Consul's office in Colombo to be put in his safe for safekeeping until the next day. Consul would not take package unless we had a couple of guards to come with it. A lieutenant (a crewman from B-17) was sent with me. Before we left for Colombo, Major Alexander told us that the parcel, wrapped and sealed in canvas, contained a half million dollars in cash to be used in paying for construction in Java. We guarded the package all night at the Consul's office. The next day we returned the package to Ratmalana Field, and it left that night for Java. We heard later that it was destroyed to keep it from falling into the hands of the Japanese.

On the night of Feb. 23, 1942, we were ordered to Bangalore, India. We left that night on a couple of B-17s. I rounded up all Americans I could find, but I believe three men who had gone to Colombo could not be found. Major Alexander told a British officer to have them come to Bangalore as soon as possible. They managed to get a ride to the northwest edge of Ceylon, got a small boat to India, then other rides to Bangalore. It took them about three or four days.

The day after we arrived in Bangalore, approximately 20 - 25 of, I believe, Blenheims stopped to refuel on the way to Ceylon. Several days later, we heard they had run the Japs off. Supposedly, the Japs were only 60 miles off the coast of Ceylon, thus our hurry to get to Bangalore.

In Bangalore, we set up office in Hindustani Air Craft Plant where they were making aircraft with pontoons for landing on water. There was a lake right at the end of the runway. I think they were using B-36 (not sure) engines on these planes. These engines were almost exactly like those on B-17s with slightly less horsepower. I lived in an old stone fort with British sergeants. I was crypto person here, as well as performing other office duties. I still had the strip cypher which was supposed to be under double lock. But, since briefcase had a zipper with small padlock, I slept with this, along with my .45 pistol. This was procedure for almost a year wherever I went.

On March 5, 1942 Major Alexander, myself, and crews on six or seven B-17s were sent to Asansol. Rope racks were installed in bombays. At this station, the British



Sgt. Dinty Moore in front of mess hall, April 1942. Moore served with Gen. Stilwell in WW II. They had long conversations when Stilwell visited us. Note our bathtub behind Sgt. Moore.

were to transport Inneskilling Regiment, and we were to transport supplies to Magua, Burma. British had only one transport - a large biplane with cloth-covered wings and fuselage. It was decided Americans would haul both personnel and supplies in B-17s, as well as bring out refugees. These flights were made in both directions at tree-top level. No planes or personnel were lost.

On March 15, 1942 Colonel Alexander and I left by rail from Asansol to go to New Delhi where 10th Air Force would be set up. Col. Alexander was able to go to the India bank and get cash for trip and our per diem. We went into a room where cash was all over the floor, and Indians sitting on the floor counted out the amount and gave it to Col. Alexander. We arrived in New Delhi and went to a nice hotel (I've forgotten the name) where two large rooms were set up with many army cots. Most of the officers there were full colonels, a few lieutenant colonels, one major, one captain and one sergeant (me). We were told this captain (don't remember his name) was one who flew around a mountain peak in the Philippines, came in behind some Jap fighters and shot down several of them.

I was in this room with all this rank for several days before being given a private room in another hotel (Hotel Marina). Right after moving to this hotel, I was picked up by a British soldier and driven to new offices where the 10th Air Force was being set up. Colonel Alexander told me they had an important message from Washington that was sent in code, called double transposition. He was the only one who knew this, but could not solve the code. After instructions from Colonel Alexander, I set about decoding this message. In several hours, I found two identical code groups. I left out one of them and decoded the message. I forget what it was all about, as I had been trained to do. Whatever it was, Colonel Alexander said my name would be put in records as having decoded this information, since this was the first received by 10th AF from Washington, D.C.

The captain mentioned previously came out of the Philippines on a B-17 with Generals Brereton and Brady and Clare Booth (Luce). I met all three of above, as I had to deliver some papers to Gen. Brereton's headquarters which was in another hotel in New Delhi. A few days later, a Signal Corps Team M moved into the hotel. With their arrival, I felt my strip cypher was no longer needed in the 10th AF.

Col. Alexander told me that he was being assigned to a new place to set up another headquarters. I told him I would like to go with him. He told me I wouldn't like it and would be better off in New Delhi. He finally agreed, as he would need the strip cypher. A day before we were to leave, his orders were changed to go to China as Chief of Air for Gen. Stilwell. Col. Old was assigned to take Col. Alexander's place.

I arrived in Dinjan on April 3, 1942, assigned as Sgt. Major. We were assigned quarters at a place called Chabua. There were two bashas for enlisted men and one mess hall. These two bashas had beds woven with rope. We had no bedding, so slept in our uniforms under mosquito netting. Everything was with us on our beds, since the floor was muddy. After a few days, the British took us to Dibrugarh to get supplies. While there, we bought large towels to use as mattresses. I still have one of these. Conditions were so bad that one of our men shot himself in the elbow and was taken to the

British hospital in Digboi where he remained for three or four weeks. He came back to the basha for a few weeks, but later was taken somewhere (I presume back to the States). It was a tough place. A dug well was our source of drinking water. Bathing was almost impossible. About three or four weeks later, the water was declared not safe and we received a lister bag to fill with water and treat with chemicals. Amazing, but no one got sick.

Chabua Field was just started by removing tea plants and trees and doing some grading. About this time, I was promoted to staff sergeant. Later Col. Caleb V. Hanes arrived as commanding officer. Col. Robert L. Scott and a few others came with him. It was at this time we became Assam Burma China Ferrying Command. Robert L. Scott had left the States as first lieutenant and still had those bars on his shirt. During this time reporter Eric Sevareid and State Dept. official John Davies bailed out over the Naga Hills. There is a whole story of keeping them fed and alive with a Naga tribe. This tribe finally led them back to India.

About this time, the British informed us that Gen. Stilwell would arrive by train in Tinsukia, India. He had walked out of Burma into Sadiya, India, which was the start of the India rail line going southwest. I drove a car to Tinsukia from Dinjan to pick him up. I understand Col. Scott went up to Gen. Stilwell and said, "Gen. Stilwell, I presume." When I saw them walking on a bridge over the

tracks, I went to hold the car door open for Gen. Stilwell. Col. Scott came up and asked me to move. He held the door for Gen. Stilwell. I drove them to Dinjan a few miles away. The only officer I remember meeting us in Dinjan was Colonel Hanes. No large contingent of generals was there to meet him.

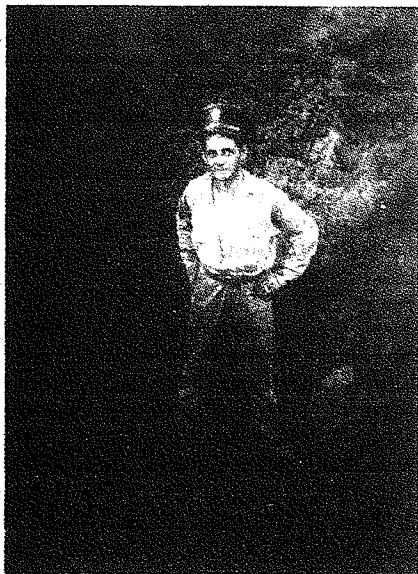
About this time, we had three B-25s but no crews. Three Doolittle crews were assigned to fly these. On their first mission, it was thought that the lead plane's nose wheel was almost flat. We could not contact this plane from the DC-3 tower, but managed to contact one in back. The navigator from that plane got out to run up and notify the lead plane. He ran into the prop and was killed instantly. Another navigator was found and they went on their mission about one hour later.

Our transports were one DC-3 with airline seats, etc., and C-47s. The DC-3 had some problems, and seats prevented it from being used as cargo carrier, so we used it as the control tower at Dinjan when the regular tower burned down, along with a fire truck underneath it. The fire started when some of our planes were trying to come in and flares were fired to tell them to disperse and one flare landed on the roof of the tower. The DC-3 was then our tower, parked near the runway. British kept the accumulator pumped up (battery charged). A new tower was built in a few weeks. It doesn't take long to build with bamboo. Reason for alert was arrival of P-43s (these were reported to be Jap Zeros) being flown from Karachi to China by one AVG pilot leading some Chinese into Dinjan and then to China. All P-43s crashed soon after takeoff from Dinjan except one flown by AVG and, I believe one by a Chinese pilot. I can't remember how many Chinese died in these planes. Only the AVG pilot had instrument training and the area was completely covered by dense clouds. Rumor had it that these Chinese were trained in Ryan trainers at Karachi. Later one Ryan trainer, with a drum of gas in rear cockpit, flew from Dinjan by AVG to China so they could train Chinese pilots in China. I believe P-43 is right. It had radial engine and four 30-caliber machine guns, two in each wing; and, if stressed too much, fuel tanks would leak and fuel go into super charger right under the pilot.

It was at this time, April 20, 1942, that I became 21 years old, and a little later the 1st Ferrying Group was assigned to Chabua, 3rd Squadron to be in Chabua, 13th Squadron at Sookerating, and 5th at Mohanbari. I moved to Chabua, India August 1, 1942.

I went to Sookerating October 10, 1942 and was designated sergeant major. Sgt. Ralph B. Baldrige was area communications sergeant under Base Commander Colonel Sexton. At this base we were bombed and strafed by the Japanese. Also, all planes going to China to pick up drafted Chinese kids to be trained at Ramgarh and sent back to Burma or China had to land here at railhead to Ramgarh. This was a very busy field in the evenings. I helped Sgt. Baldrige handle traffic in and out. I believe planes came from Dinjan, Chabua, Sookerating, and possibly Mohanbari. These planes were flown by Air Corps and CNAC pilots. We always got them in; but one night when it was almost dark, we talked in the last one of the day by radio.

On December 2, 1942 General Alexander came back to India (Sookerating), where I talked with him of happenings in Assam, India while he was in China. Next morning a sergeant from 13th Squadron came by officer quarters to pick me up. (Sgt. Baldrige and I had quarters under a tea bungalow that Col. Sexton had enclosed with bamboo for us. The officers lived upstairs in the tea bungalow). I was told by this sergeant that a major, the commanding officer of 13th Squadron, wanted to see me. When I arrived at the CO's office,



Don Fennell in Bomb Crater
Early 1942, Sookerating



Early Construction, Chabua
April 1942

he said, "I hear that you had a long talk last night with Gen. Alexander. I don't think you knew that he was going to be Commanding General of India China Wing Air Transport Command. I want you to get your things together and I will deliver you to his new office." He delivered me to Kanjikoah where new headquarters would be set up. Several days later, a Signal Corps team arrived. Due to small space available here, we were moved to Hoogrejan. I was in charge of radio section and helped with other duties. One more move was to Dumbastapor. After several months here, we again moved one more time before headquarters was moved to New Delhi. I believe this was due to insecurity in eastern India. I believe I was relieved of the responsibility for strip cypher about this time.

I was promoted to WOJG December 30, 1943 and made Assistant Adjutant of ICWATC. These duties were being done by me when I was a master sergeant. By now I felt that things were pretty routine, and eventually all headquarters were transferred to Hastings Mill near Calcutta. I was hospitalized for the third time with malaria in Calcutta; first time with malaria in Chabua Hospital; second time with malaria was in New Delhi Hospital.

One other thing I did back in early 1942 was go along on food-dropping missions to the Chinese. This food was rice with dried fish packed tightly in a burlap bag. This bag was then placed inside a larger burlap bag. When this hit the ground, inner bag would burst and be caught by outer bag. Usually three of us would go along with pilot, co-pilot and radio operator. Sometime before we arrived at drop site, we would stack bags by open door, and on each side of stack. At signal from the co-pilot, we would hang on to side of door with one hand and shove with the other. By the way, the loose bag kept us from ending up with stabs from fish bones.

Another trip I took in early 1942 was supposedly tried before into Ft. Hertz, Burma. I've read that that first trip took in food and brought out Ghurkas. On the trip I was on, I served as a guard while on the ground. We took in some food and radio equipment and an American soldier was to report on Japanese movements. We brought out one British soldier with badly

infected leg. When we landed in Ft. Hertz, the pilot caused the plane at end of runway to spin around 180 degrees so he could take off. This was one of the most exciting parts of the trip.

On July 22, 1944 I was promoted to Chief Warrant Officer. Also, same date received orders to return to the U.S. After 31 months overseas, I arrived at LaGuardia, New York, August 4 1944. I called Mary Blair in Philadelphia, the girl I knew for five weeks before leaving for overseas. We were married August 16, 1944, and she went with me to Las Vegas, New Mexico where I was assigned to Love Field in Dallas, Texas as Receiving and Shipping Officer (Personnel).

We celebrated our 57th wedding anniversary this past August 16, 2001. Have two sons, four granddaughters, one grandson and two great grandsons. It's been a great life!

Some Startling Statistics

World War II (1940-1945)

Total Servicemembers	
(Worldwide)	16,112,566
Battle Deaths	291,557
Other Deaths in Service	
(Non-Theater)	113,842
Non-Mortal	
Woundings	671,846
Living Veterans	
(As of May 2001)	*5,451,378

America's Wars Totals

Military Serving	
During Wars	42,348,460
Battle Deaths	650,954
Other Deaths in Service	
(In Theater)	13,853
Other Deaths in Service	
(Non-Theater)	229,661
Non-Mortal	
Woundings	1,431,290
Living War Veterans	*19,421,266
Living Veterans	*25,497,691
*(VA Estimates)	

The Sad Statistics

Here is VA's estimated number of WW II Veterans who will still be living in the years:

9/30/02	4,618,560
9/30/03	4,211,991
9/30/04	3,815,644
9/30/05	3,432,216
9/30/06	3,064,236
9/30/07	2,714,009
9/30/08	2,383,578
9/30/09	2,074,699
9/30/10	1,788,795

9/30/11	1,526,903
9/30/12	1,289,627
9/30/13	1,077,141
9/30/14	889,152
9/30/15	724,947
9/30/16	583,410
9/30/17	463,088
9/30/18	362,282
9/30/19	279,113
9/30/20	211,584

We have a long way to go so stay active, attend Basha meetings regularly. It'll keep you young. - "Honest!"

Command Changes

Carroll F. Moershel Basha (Iowa)
Henry Gatter, 4104 Belle Ave.,
Davenport, IA 52807

Alamo City Basha - Don
Wigington, 2127 Fort Donelson
Dr., San Antonio, TX 78245

Minnesota Basha - Peter J. Johnson,
6+1 HCR 73, Box 402,
Walker, MN 56484

Florida State Dept. - Eugene
Russo, 2028 S. Jean Ave.,
Inverness, FL 34450-7456

Central Florida Basha -
PNC James Lucas, 2836 Bon-
gart Rd., Winter Garden, FL
32792-2763

Gold Coast Basha - Charles
Bornmann, 3300 NE 36th St.,
#306, Fort Lauderdale, FL
33308-6725

Southwest Florida Basha - Loy
Harper, 2716 7th St., West,
Lehigh Acres, FL 33971-1470

Tampa Bay Basha - Charles Leh-
man, PO Box 5216, Bradenton,
FL 34281-5216

Space Coast Basha - George
Grantham, 1820 Banana Dr.,
Titusville, FL 32760-6779

Suncoast Basha - George Robin-
son, 1312 St. Thomas Dr.,
Clearwater, FL 34516-
22221 Emerald Lake Dr., Sun
City Center, FL 33573-3806

Century Basha - Carmen Eletto,
1225 NW 21st St., #1102,
Stuart, FL 34994-9324

Miami Basha - Leo Beck,
10505 SW 131 Ct.,
Miami, FL 33186-3437

White Beach - Roger Molina,
5803 Wood Duck Dr.,
Pace, FL 32571-9577

Pak-A-Okee Basha - John White,
621 Jacana Circle,
Naples, FL 34105-7400

University Basha - Charles
Moloney, 7605 SW 75th St.,
Gainesville, FL 32608-6108

Weeki Wachee Basha - Philip
Hughes, 6444 E. Gurley St. E,
Inverness, FL 34452-7196

Greenlees Writes

12 March 2001

Mr. David Dale, Editor

"SOUND-OFF"

PO Box 190374

St. Louis, MO 63119

Dear Mr. Dale,

In reading the last issue of SOUND-OFF (Winter 2001), I ran across the note of Mr. Joseph M. Hulnick of Miami, FL, concerning the lack of any writings, history or other information about the 14th Evacuation Hospital. This, I think is only too true as it also the case with the 69th G. H. except for the lone article copied from the diary that I kept during the war which was published in SOUND-OFF in the fall issue 1996, page 57.

When I joined the 69th, in April 1945, as Chief of Anesthesiology, it had been in service for several years with Col. DeYoung as C.O., and on the staff were many very prominent physicians and nurses. The 20th G.H. was nearby and at that time, Dr. Isadore Ravdin, internationally famous, was C.O.

I feel that it unfortunate that someone who spent much time and effort at the 14th Evac. hasn't given an account of what went on during the thick of the war. As we know, many wounded from Burma were treated there. My time there was when the war was drawing to a close with little activity. As stated, we went to treat Scrub Typhus. Both the 69th and 14th Evac. were declared surplus, one in July and the other in September. It was on the troopship Gen. Collins in the Bay of Bengal, while on the way to Okinawa that we learned of the atomic bomb being dropped.

The writing that I am submitting is very bland and unexciting, but it's about "what we did" in an interesting and very important link in the chain of wartime medical command. I hope that some of the remaining cadre and more will enjoy reading it if it makes the presses!!

Sincerely yours,

David L. Greenlees, M.D.,

1005 West 23rd Street,

Odessa, TX 79763

Dr. Greenlees' Diary

July 8, 1945 (Sunday)

More time has passed and quite a lot has happened since I last wrote here in, but nothing of great importance. I spent two abominable weeks in the jungle at the 14th Evacuation Hospital where I was

supposed to work with the typhus commission along with Capt. Lapirow but there had been a foul-up in orders and a group from the Navy was already there working with the typhus cases and we were placed in the Chinese wards taking care of terminal TB cases and 16 Chinese lepers: this was strictly "scut work." The place was filthy, with chickens roosting on the bamboo cots of the Chinese. (Each patient was raising his own chicken for him to kill and eat just before he died. It was pathetic, and I could not help but feel sorry for this poor segment of humanity.) The floor was wet with discarded rice, wash-water and chicken droppings. Calcium hypochlorite helped to keep the smell down a little. The lepers had to be injected with Chalmoorago oil three times a week, and since this was quite painful they would often run off out into the thick jungle. It was our duty to go chase those guys down and bring them back for their treatment, which at times was a timed-consuming job.

The hospital setting was almost idyllic in its jungle setting. It had been there about two years and the personnel had done a great job in improvising ways to make the place bearably livable. The buildings, of course, were basic thatch but most of the furniture was handmade by the personnel. There were large trees with lovely foliage and some bore flowers. I have never seen such huge vines. They were strung from one end of the area to the other and most of them were larger than my thigh in diameter. Since this was the last installation on the Ledo Road in India, it was also the last of the supply line, which meant that most of the supplies were exhausted before the supply trucks got to the 14th Evac. Food was therefore at a premium and many times our breakfast was comprised of apiece of half-burned toast and a cup of coffee. As a consequence, there was a hospital garden and most officers and enlisted personnel had their own garden near the basha. (I nearly got clobbered for pulling up a piece of celery from the officer's garden with whom I was sharing a basha.) At time, the meat for the day consisted of deer meat furnished by the GIs who would shoot the barking deer that inhabited the jungle. I heard of one time that a power-shovel operator, while dredging in the Irrawaddy River

just over the hill in Burma, uncovered a huge catfish in the gravel. The meat of that fish supplied several installations along the road for several days!

I had learned that there was a Naga village not more than three miles north of our hospital and when I expressed interest in visiting this friendly village, several corpsmen said they would like to go, too. None of us knew exactly where it was, but some of the other men had been there and told us just to follow the creek, that the trail went in the creek bed. We started out about 2 p.m., each with a canteen of water, a knife and little else. One GI carried a carbine. Needless to say, it was hot and in the monsoon season. I really don't know how far we got, but the going was quite rough and the humidity and heat was so severe that we soon decided that since we had made little progress and it was getting late that we better start back. Being a physician, I should have made certain that we all carried salt tablets before we started out, but I had not. Each of us was wet from head to toe, even our fatigue caps, with sweat, and I had to start rationing our water and calling rest stops every ten minutes, resting for five and walking ten. By the time we got to the hospital we were exhausted and some had developed muscle cramps.

One night, just before dark, we went to the large, long basha which served as a movie theater. I was sitting about halfway back on the center isle and could see down to the man on the front row on the isle. There was something familiar about his head: blonde with slightly curly hair, glasses, and ears that stuck out slightly. I thought, "where have I seen that head before?" Then, it came to me that I had sat behind that guy in college at Hampden-Sydney. I went down the isle and faced him, and sure enough it was P. D. Johnson from Tazwell, VA! He was a staff sergeant working with the chief of surgery at the hospital. We really had a great time relating our experiences and talking about college days. (Later, he visited me at the 69th.)

One other thing that I did while up there was to take the beautiful, but dangerous, ride up the Ledo Road to the 7,500 ft. Pangasau Pass which lies on the border of Burma and India. We rode up in a

jeep with a crazy captain driver who knew the road like the back of his hand, but who drove like a drunk Indian.

The road was winding and twisting with fills 500 ft. deep and cliffs 100 ft. or more high and finally led to the Pass which was shrouded with clouds extending into Burma, and the view was magnificent! We could see the great eastern extension of the Himalayas to the north in the distance and the great plain of India to the west. It was there, almost beneath the sign marking the division between India and Burma that I bought another Naga knife for 12 rupees - this one for my brother Sandy. We returned to the hospital and it was just a day or so before we went back to the 69th. This hospital has been declared excess for the whole CBI and rumors fly thick and fast as to where we will go and whether as a unit or whether it will be broken up and used as replacements here in India.

Michael Kan Still Searches for Cpl. Stuart

Michael Kan, a member of the Golden West Basha, and a regular participant in many National Reunion Puja Parades with his authentic Chinese costumes, was an interpreter for American forces in Yunnan who later came to the U.S. as a student, became a citizen, joined the Air Force, married, ran an import business and later a restaurant.

In the 45 years since the end of the war, Kan has searched for his closest American military friend in China, a Cpl. Stuart, who was a radio announcer for the armed forces. Michael had been adopted by an American missionary and in his early life he had been surrounded by women. He says about his friendship with Stuart: "He was a male figure, someone very admirable in both his habits and speech and someone I really wanted as a brother. We instantly became pals," related Michael in an interview in the *Orange County (CA) Register*.

"On a day after we had a very enjoyable picnic, I went to see him and learned he had shipped out. I have spent my life since then trying to find my friend, Cpl. Stuart."

Ken had contacted the Red Cross, Salvation Army, the Mormon Genealogy Library, military archives - where he was told that if

he couldn't supply a full name and serial number assistance was impossible. He still writes frequent letters trying to find his old buddy.

If a SOUND-OFF reader has any pregnant ideas of how Michael Kan might find a trace of Cpl. Stuart, contact him at: Cypress Sunrise Apt. 205, 9151 Grindley Street, Cypress, CA 90630.

- LETTERS -

Nostalgia

To the Editor:

I was present at the first reunion in Milwaukee where the CBIVA was founded, but fell away from the organization until I moved to Las Vegas five years ago. Through the years, my memories of India, Burma and China (that's the order in which I entered those countries) have never been far from my mind but I rarely encounter anybody else who had shared those same mind-boggling, culture-jolting images.

Ours was a strange little war; no huge Army Corps being moved across a tactical checkerboard to face a massive enemy. We had a strategic mission: to supply the Chinese through the back door at the end of the longest supply line in the world. And at the far end, whether it was flying "The Hump" or driving convoys across the Ledo Road, it was worth your bloody life to deliver those supplies those last few hundred miles.

We thought we were doing this to unleash the Chinese hordes on the Japanese. It never happened: Chiang Kai-shek had no intention of fighting the Japanese. He was squirreling away everything we gave him to fight the Communists later on for control of China. We eventually got some bombers in place to wreak a little havoc, but the Chinese couldn't even protect those landing fields.

But most of us had little awareness of grand strategy. Down at our level, we were usually concerned with the job we had been assigned to do and to do it despite the heat, humidity, rain, mud, leeches, snakes, jungle rot, rope beds, monotonous food, and lack of cigarettes or decent whiskey. But, we were part of an army and all that term embraces - a host engaged in a common purpose (and a pretty damn good purpose at that!) sharing uncommon experiences.

Is there any virtue in war? I've often pondered that question. The

answer seems to be obvious; as Sherman said, "War is hell." But, in World War II, I learned discipline, order, punctuality, neatness, a feeling of brotherhood, a sense of purpose, respect for other cultures, a determination not to fail, and not to let down anybody who depended on me. The War defined me, and those virtues remain with me still.

In my nostalgic moments, which seemed to come more often these days, as the memories of 76 full, adventuresome years crowd one another, the images of India, Burma and China still leap to the front. And, the chance to associate with comrades who share those unique memories of a distant place and a different time is a continuing virtue to be cherished.

Ours is a dwindling company. Let's keep it vital by attending all the meetings and sharing our memories and our fellowship as we head into the future.

George S. Cohan,
2048 Foxfire Court,
Henderson, NV 89012

USS Mariposa

To the Editor:

I was on the steamship USS Mariposa being shipped overseas from Los Angeles to Bombay, India, in 1942. In the CBIVA magazine, I noticed an article that brought to mind that I was never able to verify. For the last 59 years, it has rattled around in my mind. First, a little background is necessary. USS Mariposa was a pre-war luxury cruise ship that cruised the South Pacific. We departed in 1942 from Los Angeles with 5000 troops and 500 nurses. The ship was very fast and we went without escort towards Bombay until we reached the Indian Ocean.

As we entered the harbor of Bombay, I was watching the view of the city from a porthole. When we entered the harbor I noticed a lurch of the ship, and the anchor deployed. Checking around, I was told that we had gone as far as we could go until midnight when the tide came in.

The harbor at Bombay is different from most harbors around the world in that it is divided into two sections. There is the outer harbor at sea level and the inner harbor at high tide level. The only way to enter the inner harbor is to travel with the high tide. There are large gates holding the high tide water inside the inner harbor. Our ship was so large that we had to go to

the inner harbor to get to a deep-water deck.

After the ship was unloaded, which took about two days, the troops and nurses all departed on trains for other destinations. Our train left in the afternoon in 100-degree heat for Calcutta on our way to China. Our final destination was Chengtu, China. We were in Calcutta for several weeks, then we went off to the air base for transportation over the Hump into China.

After a few weeks in Chengtu, I met a fellow from the 20th Air Force who was on the boat with us. During the conversation he related the story that was in the article, of two ammunition ships, in the outer harbor that blew up and killed many people in Bombay. The two ammo ships were in the outer harbor and it was considered safe enough to bring the ships to the quay where the shore equipment could be brought in to fight the fires. The quay separated the burning ships and the berth where the Mariposa was.

The two ships exploded in mid morning doing much devastation. (From now on the Sept. 1999 SOUND-OFF completes the story.) He did say that part of their outfit was still in the Bombay area and they were called on to help with the fires and locating people. When we spoke, he thought there as many as 5000 people killed; none of this was ever in the papers. I checked around home and no one heard of it. Now, after 59 years, I finally have some verification of the incident. He related to me that one of the burning ammunition ships and a cargo ship were tied up on the quay on the other side from where our ship had been. As it happened, the Mariposa left on the high tide the night before the other ships blew up.

Sincerely,
Gerald H. Knitter,
22229 43rd Av. South,
Kent, WA 98032

- LETTERS -

Windy Words from Worcester
To the Editor:

Here's another communiqué from Worcester Basha, Basha #26, located in the population center of Massachusetts, and of New England.

We held our last 2000 basha meeting on 12/7/2000 with our annual Christmas party, having

about 25 attendees, at a local restaurant. Our next meeting is scheduled (after a "long winter's nap") for 4/19/2001.

Time is surely FLYING BY now, isn't it? Am I the only one who thinks so? I'll bet all you CBiers out there are feeling the "time-compression factor!" Wow, it was only a "few years ago" that we all boarded a troopship in Calcutta Harbor, on the Hooghly River, sailed down that river to the Bay of Bengal, the Indian Ocean, the Gulf of Arabia, the Red Sea, Suez Canal, the Mediterranean Sea, Gibraltar, North-Atlantic Ocean, New York Harbor. (That's the way I went!) I guess some of you sailed eastward thru the Pacific Ocean to California. Either way, it sure was good to GET BACK TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA!! There is NOTHING like a trip to the THIRD WORLD to give you an appreciation for THE FIRST WORLD, USA!!!

Now, am I the ONLY WORLD WAR II VETERAN who continually meets people, (the younger generation) who know little about WW II, and don't know that there were 245,000 US troops in the CBI at the end of WW II? It seems to me that, living in a small town (Holden, Mass - Pop. 17,000) for 21 years, I've become acquainted with a number of inhabitants who don't know that, and are quite surprised when I engage them in conversation and tell them that. Also, very few recognize my CBI bolo-tie logo, which I wear continuously.

Well, we WW II VETERANS hold a special place in late-20th Century America. Most were raised in the hard-times of the 1930's Depression, then either went to work, or trade-school, or college. We immediately changed-course and were drafted or enlisted in the US Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, got trained, went on duty overseas or US, AS ORDERED OR ASSIGNED. I personally SALUTE THE COMBAT VETERANS. I did not get into combat in my 35 months active duty, 6/43-5/46. I understand that about 20% of all US military personnel saw combat in WW II. What would be .20x16,000,000 or about 3,000,000 men seeing combat men seeing combat. I got these numbers from a college professor/historian in Texas at a Veterans Reunion in 1995. Can anybody supply a different, more accurate

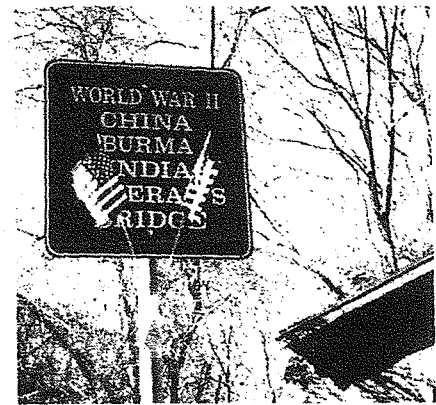


Photo by Stanley Bockstein

estimate of my 20% combat-ratio?

What I am still looking for is an estimate of the percent of US Forces that went OVERSEAS during WW II. Any suggestions? I THINK it is about 75%, but that percent is just MY guess. I cannot find these percentages in books about WW II. I've got at least 100 of them, and have looked intensively. What I have found is that about 408,000 US Forces were killed in WW II.

OK, SOUND-OFF: I'm about done here. I enclose a photo of a Worcester bridge-sign that was erected in 1995 by our basha. Can you print this photo? We here in Basha 26 are watching the AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION WW II WASHINGTON DC MEMORIAL Hope it gets going. So, best wishes from Basha 26 and all its members.

Respectfully,
Stanley M. Bockstein,
Public Relations Officer, Basha 26,
ASN 11119954 - ERC 10/30/42
US Army - 6/43-5/46 T/4

Tiger in the Village

By Carl J. Sutherland

(From the Nov. 2000 Valley of the Sun "Khabbar," Editor Jim Kissinger.)

During World War II, American soldiers, stationed in India, were doing their part to defeat the enemy. They had one job that was to haul supplies over the Himalayan Mountains. It took soldiers with numerous qualifications. That included clerks, typists, cooks, M.P.s, truck drivers, aircraft mechanics, pilots, and other air crew members. The air bases for transporting the supplies were located in the Assam Valley in the north-eastern part of India. They were close to the Tibetan border, so the mountains were quite high and

rugged to fly over.

At the air base in Jorhat, six radio operators were in their bamboo hut playing cards. Some of the American GIs lived in bamboo huts. Some in tents. Indian villages were located around the bases. Some GIs were friendly to young Indian lads whom they hired to keep their hut clean.

One night as the six radio operators were playing cards, their native boy came running into their bamboo hut, screaming "Tiger in Village - Tiger in Village!"

Cpl. Bob Cole and Cpl. Tom Smit grabbed their .45 cal. Colt automatic pistols and one flashlight and rushed off with the native boy to his village. It was pitch black outside, the moon was not shining that night. The native boy led them into his village. He showed them where the tiger was trying to get into a native hut. Natives were running around, screaming, and yelling at the tiger. Some had torches trying to drive the tiger back into the jungle.

The tiger managed to grab one native by the leg and was dragging him down the dirt street toward the jungle. Cpl. Cole walked closer to the tiger and fired his pistol over his head. Instead of running away, the tiger dropped the native and charged Cpl. Cole, knocking him down. He, then, grabbed Cole by the shoulder with his teeth and drug him toward the jungle. In the meantime, Cole had dropped his pistol and flashlight. The pain of being dragged by the tiger was more than he could stand, he passed out.

Cpl. Tom Smit didn't know what to do. He couldn't shoot at the tiger in the light from the native torches; he might shoot his friend. Finally, he found Bob Cole's flashlight. With the help of the braver natives, Tom would run toward the tiger and shoot over its head. The tiger would drop Cole and rush at Smit. Tom Smit would run while several natives would try to creep up to Cole to rescue him. They knew that if the tiger got Cole into the jungle, he would be dinner for the tiger. As this occurred, the tiger would rush them again and take another hold onto Cole's shoulder and begin to drag him down the street. This went on for what seemed like hours until other soldiers arrived on the scene with rifles and shotguns and good flashlights. As a few soldiers would advance toward the

tiger, those with shotguns would fire at the tiger's face. Finally, the tiger ran off into the jungle leaving Cole lying in the street, bleeding very bad from his wounds.

Someone had the sense to call for an ambulance. It finally arrived and took Cole to the base hospital where the doctors patched him up as best they could with what they had to work with. They finally ordered his removal to a better hospital at Chabua, Assam, 50 miles away, where the medics worked to save Cole's limbs and his life. Naturally, he got infection in all the bite wounds. With the new sulfa drugs, the infection was beaten, and the doctors did a good job sewing him back together.

After he was on the road to recovery, his Commanding Officer gave him a good lecture, and he was sent back to the States with an arm not fully usable.

That was the last time I heard of Bob Cole. I'm sure he was glad to return home, even with an injured arm. A lot of his friends are still resting in the Himalayas between India and China.

The moral of this story is don't go hunting tigers with a pistol. A shotgun is the only thing to slow them down so the one with a rifle can shoot them. Tigers are tough; tigers are mean, so don't mess with them.

Khabbar editor's note: Trying to kill a tiger with a .45 pistol reminds me of a story I wrote in the Khabbar some years ago about a BS artist who told of killing a cobra snake with a bean shooter (in those days we pronounced the word differently), right between the eyes, he said.

Book

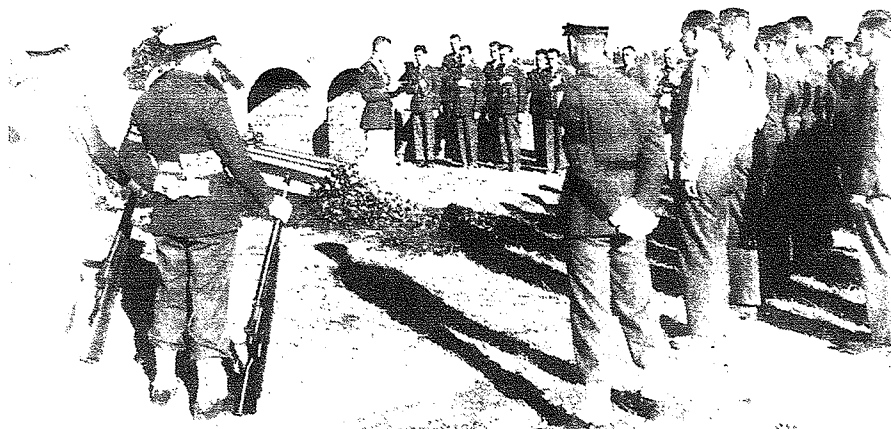
Pictorial History of the 7th Bombardment

Group/Wing - 1918-1995

This 8 1/2 by 11 inch hard-bound book contains approximately 1,580 pictures (including 18 maps) with captions on 316 pages). The price of each book is \$50.00 plus \$5.00 for shipping and handling. Submit orders (with check or money order) to: 7th Bombardment Group (H) Historical Foundation, P.O. Box 4851, Riverside, CA 92514-4851.



Governor Lung Yun, of Yunnan Province, greets General Pick upon the arrival of the first convoy in Kunming, China, on February 4, 1945.



Who is he and how he died in China is unknown but his comrades pay their last respects as a chaplain leads the graveside services for this fallen CBI soldier. From a deceased veteran's collection brought home from Kunming.

Combat History of the 612th Field Artillery Battalion (PACK)

**North and Central Burma Campaigns
18 November, 1944 - 18 April, 1945**

On the morning of 17 November, 1944, under the command of Lt. Colonel Severn T. Wallis, the 612th Field Artillery Battalion marched from Camp Landis, near Myitkyina, Burma, on its first combat mission. Attached to the 475th Infantry Regiment, it constituted the artillery element of one of two Combat Teams which together formed the 5332nd Brigade, known as the Mars Task Force.

From 17 to 26 November, the march led generally southward to Tali, a distance of 95 miles. At Tali, "A" Battery was detached from the Battalion and with the 1st Battalion of the 475th Infantry struck for Swegu to the southwest on a separate combat mission. Following three day's rest during which supplies were received by "air drop" the Battalion again proceeded southward, a distance of 98 miles, arrived December 9th in the vicinity of Tonkwa and the Nansin airstrip. This march was conducted primarily during hours of darkness, the column at one time passing within a few miles of Japanese forces which had escaped during the last five days of the siege of Bhamo. No contact was made, however.

At Tonkwa, on 10 December, contact was made in force between the 2nd Battalion of the 475th Infantry and A Regiment of the once famed 18th Japanese Division. The 2nd Battalion deployed into a perimeter extending both north and south of the Tonkwa River. B Battery moved within this perimeter, went into position on the north bank of the river and furnished approximately 40 of its men to man a sector of 300 yards between F and G Companies. The next day, its guns were the first of an organic American Artillery Battery to bring its fire upon the enemy in Burma. Meanwhile C Battery, with the 3rd Battalion, established a perimeter approximately 1200 yards to the north near Ma-Hlang. Its fire was used in direct support of the 2nd Battalion perimeter.

Between 12 and 24 December, B and C Batteries gave direct support to patrolling actions undertaken by the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, fired on targets of opportunity, undertook harassing and interdiction missions and conducted counter-battery. In all approximately 2500 rounds were fired by

the two Batteries. Observation by the two Battalion Liaison planes and by the forward observers was very successful and considerable casualties, verified by later advances, were inflicted upon the enemy. The Japanese employed four 75mm guns, using numerous single positions, and although they succeeded in placing numerous rounds within the Battalion's gun positions and mule parks casualties were extremely light. One man died of wounds received and two were less seriously injured.

On 24 December, the 3rd Battalion moved forward and occupied new positions in readiness for attack. C Battery, likewise, displaced forward. However, contact with the enemy was lost, their forces apparently retreating southward, and the day after Christmas the American forces deployed around Tonkwa were relieved by units of the 50th Chinese Division.

The action at Tonkwa enabled the 22nd Chinese Division to be safely flown from the airstrip at Nansin without fear of harassment by the considerable enemy forces deployed in that vicinity.

On 28th December, A Battery together with the 1st Battalion rejoined the 475th Combat Team, and on 1 January 1945 the 612th Battalion moved out to embark with other elements of Mars upon its second combat mission - to cut the Burma Road north of Lashio and so isolate the Japanese forces falling back before the 30th and 38th Divisions of the Chinese First Army in the valley near Namkham.

The first leg of the arduous march from Tonkwa to the Burma Road led eastward to Mong-Wi, a distance of approximately 53 miles over rugged mountainous terrain, cut by swift-flowing mountain streams. The trail was narrow and generally difficult. On the 3rd and 4th, the Shweli River was successfully crossed, and on 8 Janu-

ary the Battalion reached Mong-Wi. Supply on this march was entirely by "air drop," the only communication with Rear Echelon being by radio. At Mong-Wi, the Battalion rested in bivouac and received by air some replacement of clothing and equipment. The march was continued on 14 January, B Battery being detached and marching in serial with the 2nd Battalion. Proceeding eastward, the terrain became increasingly difficult, the narrow, tortuous trails ascending and falling thousands of feet within a distance of a few miles. At several points, a height of 6700 feet was reached. Rain fell intermittently rendering the trail almost impassable. Even though steps were cut in the mud, and alternate routes hacked from the jungle, many mules fell with their loads into the deep ravines. In order to arrive at the Line of Departure on D-Day, 17 January, the Battalion on 16 and 17 January marched 36 hours with only one two-hour halt. Much of this march was undertaken along the beds of rock-bottomed streams, the men and mules often chest deep in water for several hours.

The immediate objectives of the 47th Infantry Combat Team included three hills grouped around the Hosi Valley and overlooking the Burma Road at approximately the 76-mile marker (mid-way between Namkham and Lashio). On 17 January, A Battery went into position on Namkham Ridge approximately 5500 yards from the Burma Road and was the first Battery to open fire on Japanese motor traffic on the road. C Battery occupied position near-by and also opened fire on the 17th. Both Batteries, together with Battalion Headquarters were within the perimeter of the 1st Battalion which had taken its objective, Nawhkam Ridge, during the afternoon, meeting light opposition and sustaining slight casualties.

On the night of the 18th, B Battery made a rapid occupation of position in darkness and under fire in the valley, the 2nd Battalion having met heavy opposition and having failed to take its objective, Loi Kang Ridge in the afternoon. The next morning, B Battery likewise opened fire. Its position was adjacent to the "drop" and Liaison fields which were receiving intensive artillery and mortar fire from the enemy. In spite of harassment from this fire and from "free-

dropped" grain bags, its guns were able to fire missions successfully.

It may now be revealed that had the 475th Combat Team failed to secure the Hosi Valley on D-Day for use in receiving supplies by air it could not long have sustained itself. Rations were exhausted on the evening of the 17th and ammunition supplies were very limited, there being no ground supply route to the rear.

To the north, the 124th Cavalry Regiment with the 613th Field Artillery Battalion jumped off against similar objectives near the Burma Road and by 20 January all units of the Mars Task Force had been committed; none were held in reserve.

By D plus 3, the 2nd Battalion had secured the northern tip of Loi-Kang Ridge, the remainder and highest slopes of the ridge and its three villages still being occupied by strongly entrenched Japanese forces. Nevertheless, in order to fire directly upon the Burma Road, B Battery moved from the valley to the ridge and within the 2nd Battalion's perimeter, it being assigned a sector between E and Headquarters Companies. From this position, the road was at one point merely 1700 yards away and direct fire was possible. The gun position was, however, in plain view of the enemy from the road and from the hills to the west, as well as being within 300 yards of their perimeter on the ridge. On the 24th, A Battery moved its position on Nawkam ridge and B Battery retired from Loi-Kang Ridge to occupy the position thus vacated. The Battalion was now concentrated within an area of less than 1000 yards and for the first time was brought under centralized control.

From 24 January through 5 February, all three firing Batteries and Headquarters received intensive and very accurate fire from well camouflaged and defiladed Japanese artillery in position along the Burma Road to the north. In spite of frequent changes in position, the firing Batteries received again and again direct hits in their gun positions. According to Brigade Intelligence reports it is believed that three 150mm Howitzers, four 105mm Howitzers, eight 75mm guns and numerous 70mm Field Pieces were employed by the enemy in an effort to neutralize the fire. By 5 February, the 612th and 613th Battalions assisted by Tenth

Air Force P-47s had forced a cessation of all enemy artillery action during this period, however, the Battalion took rather heavy casualties; four men were killed and 46 wounded. In all, nine of the Battalion's 12 Howitzers were rendered unfit to fire by direct hits or near misses. These were quickly replaced by "air drop" and consequently at no time did the Battalion have fewer than seven guns in action. A and B Batteries received direct hits in their ammunition pits and only through the gallant action of their gun crews in extinguishing the resulting fires were very serious casualties averted. During this period of almost three weeks, the Battalion through air, forward and OP observation fired approximately 9500 rounds. The missions undertaken by the Battalion as a whole and by its Batteries separately included close support of combat patrols deployed from the Battalions of the 475th and accompanied by artillery forward observers, interdiction and harassing fire on the Burma Road (numerous enemy trucks and several tanks were destroyed by direct hits), and direct support of the infantry in attack. During the final attack on Loi-Kang, 3 February by the 1st and 2nd Battalions, the Battalion fired in preparation more than 2000 rounds, laying down a

barrage within 75 yards of the advancing infantry. The last enemy fire was received on 5 February and on the 6th, the Battle of Hosi Valley was successfully concluded. On that day, elements of the Chinese First Army, including medium and light tanks, hove in sight on the Burma Road and the Mars Task Force was considered to have been relieved.

Throughout the Battle, the Air Corps lent direct support with strafing and dive-bombing while the 5th and 115th Liaison Squadrons evacuated from the valley more than 700 casualties, their planes being subjected to enemy fire, both on the "strip" and in the air. Nine of their planes being destroyed by artillery and mortar fire.

A "rest bivouac" was established in the valley on 8 February, the Battalion using parachutes from the "drop field" in the construction of tents. On the 11th, Lt. General Dan I. Sultan arrived by air, commended the 612th Field Artillery Battalion for its part in the battle and presented decorations. Two days later, Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, likewise, arrived by plane and spoke informally to the troops, praising highly their part in the reopening of the Ledo-Burma Road to China.

On 5 March, the 612th together with other elements of Mars began

Combat Statistics

Number of days engaged in combat missions	152
Number of days in actual contact with the enemy and under fire	36
Number of rounds of ammunition fired against the enemy	12,000
Distance covered on combat missions	412
Men killed in action	5 1.18%
Officers and men wounded in action	48 11.2 %
Men evacuated for illness and disease	46 11.1 %
Number of men and officers decorated	Purple Heart 48
	Air Medal 3
	Bronze Stars 4
	Soldier Medal 1
Howitzers put out of action through enemy fire	9
Japanese forces known to have been engaged in whole or in part during North Burma Campaign.	
18th Division	
56th Regiment	
55th Regiment	
2nd Division	
4th Regiment	
56th Division	
148th Regiment	
146th Regiment	
33rd Armor based at Lashio	

This information and statistics included in this history are based on the Unit History, the Unit Journal and various personal diaries and journals kept by the officers of the Battalion. It is believed that its accuracy is consistent with these records.

the long march southward, along the Burma Road to Lashio. The intense heat and humidity of early spring and the hard surface of the road rendered this march grueling and exhausting even though it was conducted for the most part during hours of darkness. Hsai-Hkao was reached on 6 March, camp being made there until the 23rd when the march was resumed, a semi-permanent bivouac was finally established at Ina-Lange, near Lashio on 25 March, the fall of this city bringing to a close the employment of American troops in Burma. On 3 April, B Battery was flown to Kunming, China and on

the 18th, the remainder of the Battalion followed.

What I Did Before CBI

G. Robert Fox

When I was a junior at the University of Michigan, I completed my military training through the Citizen's Military Training Program and qualified for my commission as a 2nd lieutenant in the Infantry Reserve. I had planned to go on to medical school but elected to change my major to German. We were in a national emergency at the time, and my peers were registering for the draft.

Upon graduation in 1941, I applied for a position at the Dow Chemical Company but was informed that with my commission I was a worse employment risk than a 1-A draftee. I volunteered to go on active duty for two years with the Air Corps, which was seeking officers for duty abroad, and was given my choice of Foreign Service area.

I chose the Philippines, but was assigned to Panama. Orders came for duty in August 1941, and with some 30 other officers I reported to Ft. Hayes, Columbus, Ohio, working at the Reception Center there, awaiting travel to Panama. In November, all of us were shipped on the S.S. Siboney to Panama, where we were assigned to various bases in the area. I was ordered to France Field at the Atlantic end of the Isthmus, where I became assistant adjutant of the 25th Bombardment Squadron.

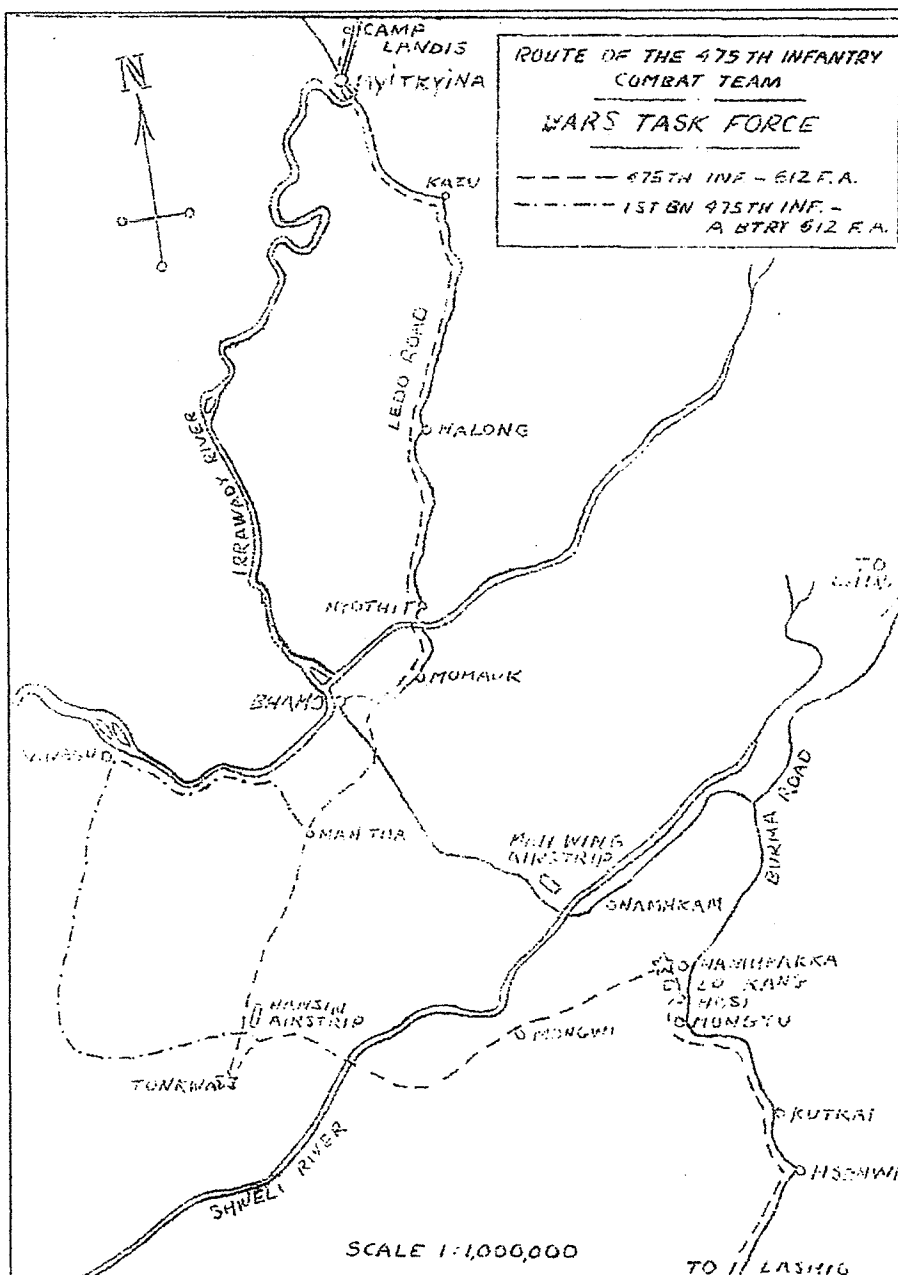
On December 7, 1941, I was serving as officer of the day at France Field when it became a wartime base. In January 1942, we moved with our aircraft to Rio Hato in the Republic, north of the Canal Zone and I was subsequently designated to take an air task for to Ecuador, continuing our squadron's anti-submarine patrol of the Pacific. We were billeted in a hotel in Salinas, Ecuador, until the rest of our squadron came by sea to construct an air base at Salinas.

In September 1941, I received orders from the War Department transferring me from the Infantry Reserve to the Signal Corps Reserve, and served for a couple of months as Signal Officer of Fort Davis, CZ, before returning to Signal Corps School at Fort Monmouth, NJ. Eventually, I ended up as a Communications Inspector with the Air Force, serving with the Inspector General of the China Wing of the Air Transport Command, ending my active duty in 1946.

I retired in the Air Force Reserve in 1978 as a lieutenant colonel.

G. Robert Fox,
LTC USAFR-Ret.
Basha Provost Marshal
Central Florida Basha
2485 D. Glencagles Dr.
DeLand, FL 32724-8456

Middle age is when broadness of the mind and narrowness of the waist change places.



Bob Stevens'

"There I was..."

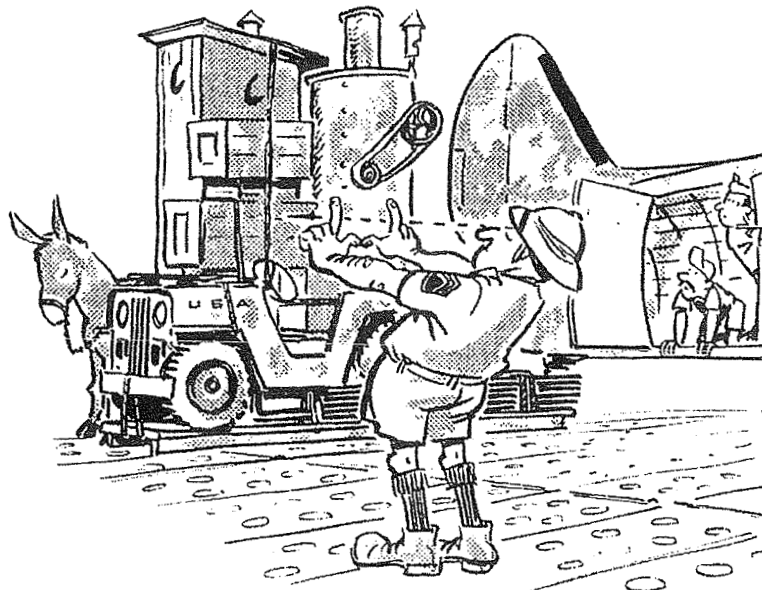
THIS MAGAZINE ONCE RAN A STORY WHICH FEATURED A COLUMN CALLED, "YOU KNOW YOU'RE OVERSEAS WHEN..." THIS PROMPTED THE FOLLOWING FROM THE EX-CBI (CHINA BURMA INDIA) ROUNDUP FROM WW II -

"YOU KNOW YOU'RE A **REAL** CBier WHEN YOU OPEN YOUR BEER CAN WITH A BAYONET..."

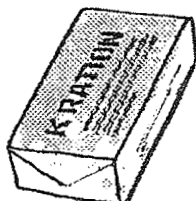
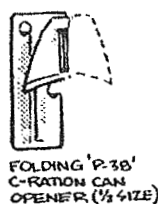


TROPICAL VERSION OF G.I. BROGANS

"REAL CBiers DON'T CALCULATE THE LOAD OF AN AIRPLANE. THEY EYEBALL THE CARGO and TAKE OFF WHEN THE PLANE LOOKS FULL"

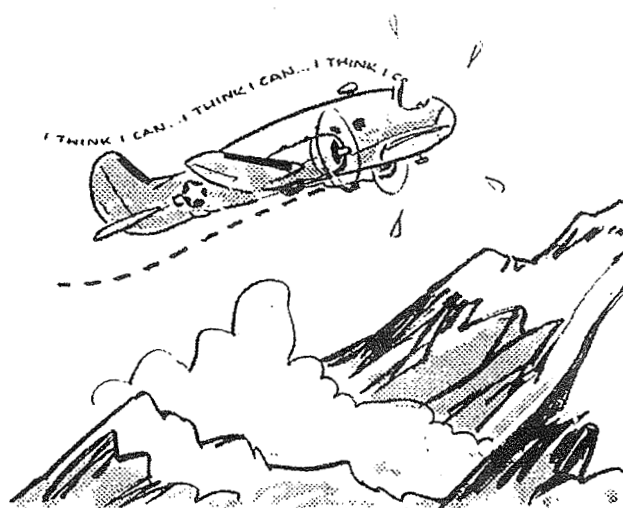


"REAL CBiers WEAR JACKETs WITH STRANGE FLAGS and CRAZY WRITING ON THE BACK"



(PROCESSED CARDBOARD)

"REAL CBiers TRAVEL ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD FOR ANY LENGTH OF TIME WITH ONE BEAT-UP FLIGHT BAG"



* WITH SPACE, OF COURSE, FOR CAMEL CIGARETTES, HERSHEY BARS & LADIES' SILK STOCKINGS!

Bob Stevens

86th Airdrome Sqdn. Burma Road Operations

Chabua to Myitkyina to Luliang

In preparing for the trip, all vehicles which would make the journey were overhauled and put in perfect condition. All other vehicles were turned over to the 52nd Service Group. During the week, all personnel cooperated in getting the organizational equipment packed, crated and properly weighed.

The truck drivers were flown to Ledo, 14 June 1945. Lt. Siskin and a group of EM picked up the jeeps, five GMC trucks, and the weapons carriers at Ledo. The remaining drivers went on to Chabua, India, to pick up the Studebakers. On the trip from Chabua to Myitkyina, some difficulty was encountered. One truck developed a leaking pan and had to be left behind. Another was found to have burned out a clutch and was abandoned just outside of Chabua. Not far from Ledo a third truck, driven by Cpl. Winston C. Pledger, snapped the bell crank and plunged off the road down the side of the mountain. Pledger's quick thinking saved him as he bailed out (through the window, not having time to open the door) just as the truck went over the edge. This was the last mishap during the trip to Myitkyina.

At various intervals during the day of Sunday, 17 June 1945, the trucks pulled into Myitkyina. They were immediately loaded with Squadron equipment by the remaining enlisted men of the 86th Airdrome Squadron. That evening, the trucks were assigned to their location in the convoy and the drivers given final instructions for the next day's expedition.

On the 18th day of June, 1945, the entire squadron was awakened at 0400 hours. After a quick breakfast of K Rations and some feverish last minute packing all was in readiness for the take-off at approximately 0800 hours. The convoy was divided in four sections of about 25 vehicles each. The sections were to leave at 20-minute intervals. The schedule called for 45 minutes of driving and a 15-minute break each hour. In the second section, the first ten trucks hauled bomb trailers and dollies. Everything went off smoothly as the entire convoy got underway.

86th Airdrome Squadron A.P.O. 430

23 July 1945

SUBJECT : Commendation.

TO : Cpl. Donald W. Irons, 33739717, 86th Airdrome Sqdn.

1. I desire to express to you my profound appreciation for the excellent driving which you performed in bringing a recent convoy over the Ledo-Stillwell-Burma Road.

2. The Ledo-Stillwell-Burma Road is, without doubt, one of the most - if not the most - hazardous roads in the world. Despite the severe handicaps of particularly the night driving through rain and fog and the poorly-constructed and ill-equipped bridges, the vehicles were brought through in good condition.

3. It is with gratification that I forward to you the above commendation. In whatever task the future holds for you, it is my most firm conviction that you will continue to display equally high devotion to duty. I know that your successes will be even greater in whatever task you are called upon to do.

WILLIAM R. HASTINGS
Captain, Air Corps
Convoy Commander

(Submitted by Donald W. Irons, 12806 Mink Farm Rd., Thurmont, MD 21788. Why would you expect Air Corps Capt. Hastings to know how to spell 'Stillwell'? - Ed.)

Just outside of Myitkyina, one of the personnel trucks broke down and despite some heroic work by Pvt. Ed (Snafu) Sidle, it had to be left behind to the mercies of the 52nd Service Group (Again). S/Sgt. Bill Smith returned later from Bhamo, Burma to rescue the marooned passengers.

Many of the inexperienced drivers were having their troubles learning the various gear changes (up and down hills) the hard way but gradually mastering them. About 60 miles from Bhamo while climbing a steep hill, a truck driven by Cpl. John A. Ruiz hit a soft shoulder as it rounded a sharp curve and immediately disappeared over the cliff. Luckily, neither Ruiz nor his relief driver, Cpl. John J. Fronczak, were hurt as the truck righted itself and came to a stop about 50 feet down the embankment. The truck, plus more than half of its load of oil drums was salvaged and proceeded onto Bhamo. Just outside Bhamo and the ration truck also hit a soft shoulder at the foot of a hill and was seen lying on its side in a ditch with C & K Rations scattered all over the terrain. This caused a slight delay of about three hours in our supper that night. We hit Bhamo about 1700 hours but did not stop there. Instead, we continued on an additional 25 miles to our rendezvous. (A God-forsaken crossroad far out in the middle of no place.)

Everyone was covered with an inch of dust so we spent the inter

vening hours to chow time attempting to wash it off in a mountain stream back in the woods. Though it may not have been exactly cleansing, it was cool and refreshing. A kitchen (of all sorts) was set up and we were treated to our first meal of meat and beans (C Ration style) and some of that famous 86th coffee. At the completion of this first day on the road we had traveled 144 miles.

On the 19th of June 1945, the convoy laid over at this same spot and the drivers performed first and second echelon maintenance work on their respective vehicles. After a morning of hard work, the remainder of the day was spent getting in some much needed "sacktime" and cooling off in the aforementioned mountain stream. Late in the afternoon, the convoy was regrouped and lined up for the morrow's take-off.

On the 20th day of June 1945, the convoy, after chow, hit the road at 0600 hours. It was drizzling slightly as we came to the hills not far from camp. The road, at this point, being constructed of dirt and clay was slick as grease and very narrow. After the happenings of the first day, everyone hugged the inside of all curves. We crossed this first range of mountains without too much difficulty except for a few skidding incidents. About 1200 hours, the rains had stopped and the condition of the road seemed to improve with the weather.

We came to the junction of the

Ledo-Burma Roads soon after this and, of course, turned right instead of left. After a couple of miles in the direction of Lashio, Burma, we had to turn off the road and maneuver through a field to get turned around in the opposite direction. A few more miles and we came to the China border. Here we refueled and, after being checked by the MPs, proceeded on into China.

Once more, we hit the hills; the initial one being the highest we had encountered so far. We traveled almost straight up it seemed and had to use every gearshift in the books in order to reach the summit. Reaching the bottom on the opposite side of this hill we had an idea that our day's trip was almost finished, as we had traveled 120 miles and were quite willing to call it a day.

This was just a dream as we soon found out, much to our disgust, and we continued our trek across a huge valley of rice paddies. The deeper we moved into this valley, the worse the roads became. In many spots we drove through the paddies themselves crossing small bridges of 2X4s only wide enough to accommodate the trucks scarcely afraid to look behind at times to see if the trailer was still following (by now we were secretly hoping the damn thing had gone over the side of the mountain somewhere along the trail). After our session in the rice paddies we were again plunged into the hills.

By this time, it was dark and the rain had appeared once more to keep us company. Going up these hills, we did have fun attempting to navigate the narrow roads and the antique bridges which loomed up so unexpectedly in the dark. We encountered a detour which we were supposed to guess at, I suppose, for there were no signs indicating it. The result of this being that three trucks and trailers continued up the dead-end road. During the ensuing confusion of backing up trucks and trailers (two of which had to be detached) a good hour was wasted but since we had been driving for a solid 15 hours, what was 60 small minutes more or less in our young lives? Around 2400 hours, most of the trucks had made the parking grounds at Toppa, covering 195 miles this day and night. A bit of engine trouble and a few cases of running out of gas were the only

difficulties experienced this rugged day. It was raining yet, still and already

On the 21st day of June 1945, we laid over at Toppa performing the usual maintenance work on the vehicles and dismantling two of the trailers which had taken such a beating the previous day that they couldn't possibly go any further (they said). During the day, the fellows amused themselves by bartering with the natives and trading cigarettes and candy for fresh eggs and peaches which really were a treat after our diet of C & K Rations. The convoy was again regrouped for a quick take-off the next morning.

June 22, 1945. We had been warned that this would be the roughest day of the trip. We started to roll at 0800 hours and about a mile from camp it began. At the foot of the mountains, we hit a hairpin curve which stalled many of the trucks causing the use of low low gear and much backing up and maneuvering before it was successfully rounded. Again, we commenced climbing and finally reached the peak of the mountain where we stopped for a break and a view of the surrounding countryside. Looking down into the valley we noticed the rice paddies for the first time (constructed like giant staircases) extending for miles down the side of the mountain. Each step was about 50 feet wide.

We soon descended from the opposite side of the mountain to

the Salween River. We followed along the river for quite a ways coming at last upon a suspension bridge spanning it. The bridge would accommodate only one truck at a time and as we waited for our turn we could see the reason for the preceding truck causing the bridge to sag a good three feet when it was half way across.

After crossing, we immediately began our longest climb to date, said to be a height of 8,000 feet. The road was a continual zig zag up the face of this mountain and from many points we could look directly down below us and notice the bridge becoming smaller and smaller. It took us about three hours to make the ascent.

After descending once more, as usual, we passed through many small villages and across a large valley and along a level road for a change, bearded on either side by the inevitable rice paddies. The Chinese in this section of the country seemed to be very poorly clothed and fed from all indications.

For the next hour it was smooth sailing and we hit Paoshan, China at 1500 hours covering only 85 miles. Paoshan proved to be a fairly good-sized settlement and we were surprised to see an airfield located here. We gassed up at a pumping station and proceeded to the parking area. After checking our trucks once more (all trucks came through once again in very good shape and, except for the one



Photo entitled "Burma Road" but roadbed looks more like the "Ledo Road" portion of the Stilwell Road.

R. Johnson Photo

long pull up the mountain, it was a very easy day) we were driven over to a mess hall. This certainly was a surprise and a pleasant change from the usual routine.

We experienced another surprise when we spied the chow they handed us – roast beef and all the trimmings. We were waited on by the Chinese coolies also. Dessert consisted of cake and tea. This was the first town of any size we hit and some of the fellows were anxious to inspect the local clientele (and muscatel). The rest of the gang engaged in a softball game with a local colored engineering outfit and were soundly trounced. The fellows by now were becoming quite ingenious in the art of providing comfortable sleeping spots. We pulled our trucks close enough together to be able to suspend a canvas over the intervening space and then set up our cots underneath (mosquitoes and malaria be damned). Most of the men were still taking their atabrine which had been provided at our first stop. There had been some talk about the Medical Department providing sulfadiazine and benzadrine tablets to the men to ward off colds and driving fatigue, but as none had made their appearance as yet, we took it to be just another idle rumor.

June 23, 1945. After a big evening in town, a few big heads made their appearance this A.M. (one sad sack J.K., almost made the area, being found in the rice pad-

dies just 50 feet short of his objective). We had another fine meal of bacon and eggs and got underway at 0830 hours. Passed the town of Paoshan, the first walled city we had seen. A brick wall, 40 feet high and 20 feet wide, completely surrounded the town. We rolled along pretty good this morning though it was terribly dusty; first bad dust we had hit since Bhamo. We caught up with a bunch of U.S. Engineer Corpsmen on horseback. They had hundreds of packed mules hauling their equipment and really clogged up this narrow road.

We had to be extremely careful passing them as a mule or horse would belt all of a sudden in front of a truck and we wouldn't like to nudge any of them over the side. We hadn't been led to expect anything rough today but soon we began another long climb. After a couple of hours of this, we began to suspect we never would reach the top. The road wasn't very steep but kept winding round and round continually ascending. After rounding a bend, we could look up ahead in the distance and see far above us what seemed to be a tiny path. This was the toughest climb to date and we were quite tired on reaching the top from jockeying our jalopy all these hours. We finally reached Yung Ping at 1700 hours, having made only 94 miles. Everyone of them being rough. After gassing up and parking the trucks, we headed through a field of rice paddies to a small stream

three inches deep and attempted to scrape off some of the day's accumulation of dirt and dust.

This evening, a bit of excitement occurred when an improvised gas stove turned over beside one of the trucks, the resulting flare-up menacing the entire convoy. The quick thinking of Sgt. John Gustafson, who came running with a fire extinguisher saved the day.

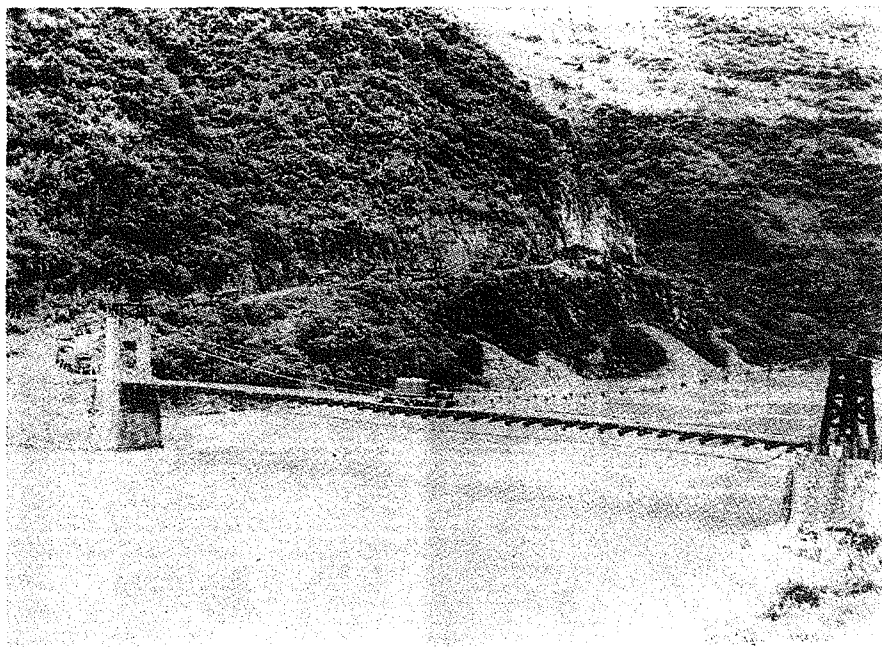
June 24, 1945. Hit the deck this morning at 0400 hours and the convoy started out at 0530 hours. It was raining lightly and very dark. Half way up the first hill, we caught up with another convoy which was parked there. During the attempt to pass this convoy on the narrow road – in the dark – the pouring rain – with visibility almost zero – two of our trucks had the misfortune of encountering soft shoulders resulting in the usual journey over the side and out of sight. Our luck continued to hold and only one man, Cpl. Charles Payne, suffered any ill effects, being badly shaken up.

The trucks were hauled back on the road and continued on their way. Lt. Bliss, the trail officer, did a fine job of keeping the stragglers moving. Sgt. Ludlow, the trail mechanic, was right on the job at getting the stalled vehicles in running order again. Today was another rough outing due mostly to the terrible conditions of the roads and the rain which fell steadily all day long.

We traversed a few more suspension bridges which sagged and swayed in the breeze. Awaiting our turn at one of these bridges, we had a chance to scrutinize more closely one of the small Chinese villages. In the various stores situated along the roadside we noticed the different display cases loaded with every brand of American cigarettes and whole boxes of K Rations, together with various cans of C Rations. A lively exchange of various items between the GIs and the natives took place at these stops. A box of K Rations brought about 2500 Yuan and a pack of cigarettes brought 1,000 Chinese Yuan.

After a sloppy, dreary and rough ride of 137 miles, we pulled into Yunnanyi. The parking area here was ankle deep in mud but we were again treated to a mess hall which helped our dispositions improve slightly.

The poverty of the people in this section was again brought to mind



Crossing the River at the bottom of the Salween Gorge – one truck at a time.
Raymond Johnson Photo

as we observed one poor kid outside the mess hall picking up the remains of the food and crackers the GIs were tossing in the garbage can.

This convoy camp was the largest we had hit so far. About six convoys were scattered throughout the area. Also, here for the first time a latrine had been provided for the men. This was a blessing to some of the poor guys who had not gone for a week as they could not bring themselves to squat out in the middle of a field of rice paddies and get any results.

June 25, 1945. Due to the beating the trucks (and men) had received the previous day, the wheels decided to give us a day of rest at this spot. A few more trailers had come apart at the seams and had to be left at the salvage pile. The morning was spent doing the usual maintenance work on the vehicles. In the afternoon, Steiner's All Stars entertained some of the boys and natives with a touch football game.

June 26, 1945. Started out at 0800 hours. This day proved to be the easiest yet encountered. We traveled only 92 miles and ended up almost before we knew it at Tsu Yeng, China. In fact, we reached here in time for noon chow. The roads were exceptionally good and we had only to plug over one small hill. Our total mileage now was 750 miles and he had about 130 miles to go to Kunming. From there no one seems to know where.

Our campsite was another a nkle deep quagmire. Major Wasung (squadron leader) gave us a short briefing on what we might expect in China - also a few rules and regulations of the XIV Air Force, neckties, etc., which sounded like the well-known crock of ---- after our days of informality down in Burma. We were also told to clean our guns which resulted in, naturally, a bit of griping.

June 27, 1945. Started out at 0800 hours and we were treated to another easy day's ride - except for one spot in a mountain pass where we met another convoy coming toward us. It required a bit of dexterity for the next five or ten miles to ease past them. The hills we were now rolling through were a great relief from the mountains of the past week. We stopped on a hill not far from Kunming and received some final instructions. Off in the distance, we could see what

we figured was the city of Kunming.

We now proceeded through the outskirts of Kunming. The street we rode along was quite a busy thoroughfare with all sorts of transportation buzzing up and down it. Busses and taxis made of small cabs mounted on truck wheels replete with tires and tubes and pulled by small ponies and donkeys were numerous. Some local "stuff" was spied out greeting the boys who immediately began to think up some swell ideas. We didn't stay long on this road, however, and soon turned off onto a by-pass to the parking area.

The scenery, plus the thought of these olive-skinned tomatoes was a little too much for the nerves of Cpl. Gaschamber Weintraub who almost ditched the trucks in a nearby rice paddie. We left the trucks in a parking area, got out our equipment (bags, cots and blankets) and were hauled over to a tent area where we made ourselves at home. We piled on a truck and set off in search of a mess hall. After a half hours search with a good meal in mind we finally found an ATC Transient Mess. Our wish came true for we had a meal of fried eggs, chop suey, cake and tea. We began to hope we'd hang around this neck of the woods for a week or so.

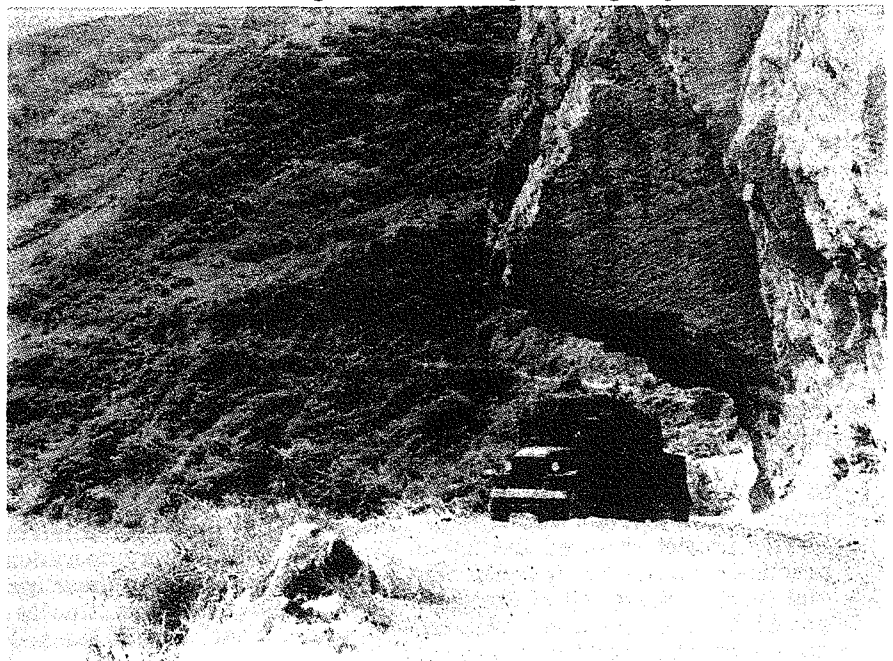
June 28, 1945. The 28th and 29th were spent enjoying the comforts and fine food of ATC Hostel No. 4, and relaxing and re-

cuperating from the vigors of the past ten days. We had covered only 882 miles in that time but it seemed like thousands. I knew many a man who had a sneaking idea in the back of his mind at various times during the trip that he might never make it.

The greatest of these ATC comforts consisted of showers - every one sure did make good use of them. Besides the good eats at Hostel No. 4 it was possible to visit one of the many restaurants along the road for something a little different in the way of food and possibly a slug or two of wine or vodka. A marathon crap game had been operating and the boys were getting a big thrill betting thousands (of Yuan) on a roll.

On the afternoon of the 29th, Captain Antonakos informed us that our destination would be Luliang, China, about 150 miles east of Kunming, and that we would be attached to the XIV Air Force Service Command. Whether this was good or bad, no one seemed to know. An advance party was to leave the next morning at 0500 hours to set up tents, etc., at our new base.

June 30, 1945. (Saturday, Pay Day.) The remainder of the convoy got going this morning at 0830 hours. As we drove along this morning we spied the first railroad we had seen since Burma. Noticed some GIs riding in the cars and everyone wondered where they might be going in this desolate



Burma Road along the Salween River.

R. Johnson Photo

area. Although we were passing through what seemed to be more hills compared to the mountains of the past week it seemed we were quite high up.

We noticed that the vegetation was quite sparse and there seemed to be an abundance of fir and pine trees with less and less rice paddies. As we approached the vicinity of Luliang, we could see that the main occupation of the natives in this section was farming. The natives seemed to be quite rugged and fierce-looking up here, substantiating a story we had heard that this was the worst part of China.

From a distance, we could see

Mileage Covered Day by Day, City to City

Town	Miles	Date Departed
Chabua, India	000	15 June, 1945 (Friday)
Ledo, India	62	16 June, 1945 (Saturday)
Shingbuiyang, Burma	103	17 June, 1945 (Sunday)
Myitkyina, Burma	187	18 June, 1945 (Monday)
Bhamo, Burma	144	20 June, 1945 (Wednesday)
Toppa, China	195	22 June, 1945 (Friday)
Paoshan, China	89	23 June, 1945 (Saturday)
Yung Ping, China	94	24 June, 1945 (Sunday)
Yunnanyi, China	137	26 June, 1945 (Tuesday)
Tsu Yung, China	92	27 June, 1945 (Wednesday)
Kunming, China	132	30 June, 1945 (Saturday)
Luliang, China	150	
TOTAL MILES - 1374		TOTAL DAYS - 16

POM INSPECTIONS

When our basic training was completed for the 1891st, it then meant the battalion would begin training in its specialty, which was the construction of Forward Airstrips. There would be several phases of training that the unit would have to engage in. Foremost was the operation of the heavy equipment used in construction of a runway. In addition, training would have to be held in building the various installations needed on a forward base, such as buildings of various types, a control tower, hangars, bomb revetments, etc.

All of these training projects would be under the inspections of other officers than our own battalion officers. These were called POM inspections, which meant Preparations of Overseas Movement.

One of the required projects was to construct a mile of concrete paved roadway in one week.

This project required the use of practically all our heavy equipment and trucks. Nearly all of the manpower in the battalion was required on this particular project.

various aircraft circling and suspected this would be our base. Shortly after, we passed by the walled city of Luliang and were soon bouncing over the road leading into the field. Reaching our tent area, we found we had traveled exactly 150 miles from Kunming making a total of 1,374 miles for the trip from Chabua, Assam, India, to Luliang, China. This day's trip was quite uneventful and except for a few ragged spots in the road it was a very easy day.

One of the most appreciated conditions we found in China was the fact that we were to live in barracks again and have access to an indoor movie (with seats).

breathed a sigh of relief, as we could then take it a little easier.

(Submitted by Joseph Mackay, with the 1891st Eng. Avn. Bn., PO Box 297, Lake Forest, IL 60045-0297 and member of the Chicago Basha.)

FRIDAY, NOV. 16, 1945

776,532 Tons Over Hump In 2 Years

SHANGHAI, Nov. 15—The famed Himalayan "Hump" route which closed today moved a total of 776,532 tons of cargo from India to China since Dec. 1, 1942, it was announced by Brig. Gen. Charles W. Lawrence, commanding general of the India-China division, A.T.C.

A total of 594 planes were lost in Hump operations, with 910 crew members and 130 passengers killed or listed as missing in the Himalayan terrain where their aircraft crashed, he said.

Speaking on behalf of Brig. Gen. William H. Tunner, former commanding general of the ICD who has been recalled to the States, Col. Richard F. Bromiley, commanding officer of the China Wing of ICD, said that the air route over the Hump was the most congested air route in the world, but despite bad weather and limited repair facilities, each plane averaged four and a half tons per East-bound flight.

TRAINS NEVER WANDER
ALL OVER THE MAP
FOR NO ONE SITS
ON THE ENGINEER'S LAP.
BURMA SHAVE

OUR CREAM IS LIKE
A PARACHUTE
THERE ISN'T ANY
SUBSTITUTE.
BURMA SHAVE

We passed this project in fine style.

Suddenly, we received an order to speed up training. A similar battalion to ours that was to precede us into Overseas Duty had failed their POM inspections. Not only had they failed to construct a suitable mile of concrete pavement in time, but a hangar that they were constructing had collapsed, and I believe killed one or two men. We had to take over the completion of the collapsed hangar. Our men did an excellent job on this also, and as a result we were to take the place of the other battalion, and would be shipped overseas in their place.

It wasn't just on the field that POM inspections were held. Everything concerned with the operation of the battalion was given a close scrutiny by the inspecting teams. Mess halls, kitchen operations, supplies, administration, medical and military operations of all types had to pass these inspections. When it was finally announced that we had passed the POM inspections, everyone