

made but one pass, and damage was minimal.

There were a few patchable holes in the runway, and one man from the Control Tower received a scratch which qualified him for a Purple Heart. None of the planes were hit. Later that night, when we were completely fogged in, and asleep, the plane returned. The subconscious association of unusual engine sound with the bombing, awakened the entire Battery instantly.

Promotion - Finally

I was the Battery Commander, but still a 1st Lieutenant. No promotion. Once your name was on

the Rotation List, you were frozen in grade. Then someone pointed out to me that instead of rotation, you could take 30 days R & R, return to your unit, and be promoted. The regulations did not limit where the R & R could be taken.

I had my name taken off the rotation list, and for romantic reasons, requested that my R & R take place in Hawaii. In due time, my orders and promotion came through. After 27 months, I departed Warazup and the 684th AAA Battery in February 1945. My R & R did not work out quite as I planned, and I did not return to the 684th. But that is another story.

Mac was already at the airstrip when John and his buddy arrived. About this time, small arms fire began to erupt along the airstrip. The Chinese Nationalists and the Chinese Communists had started a fire fight for control of the airstrip. The pilot of Mac's plane told the Operations Officer that he was getting the hell off the airstrip as soon as possible and if anyone wished to join him they should get going.

After the past two weeks of Road travel and now seeing the fire fight going on, it didn't take long for John and his buddy to decide they were getting on that plane. The engines of the C-47 were already turning and the plane was ready to start its roll down the runway when John and his buddy came running toward it.

The cargo door was open and as they dove in a helping hand pulled them aboard and they lay face down on the floor as the C-47 made its way down the runway through the hail of gunfire. The helping hand was that of Mac getting those two guys safely aboard. Evidently, the aircraft was of little concern to the Chinese and the C-47 lifted off and the flight to Myitkyina was uneventful.

This event happened 50 years ago and it was at a recent meeting of the newly chartered Free State Basha where idle discussions among CBI veterans brought these two men together.

George "Mac" McCrea and his wife Anna are members of the Free State Basha where Mac is the charter senior vice commander. John and his wife Mildred are also members of the Free State Basha.



National Historian Don Adcock of Florida's Gold Coast Basha receives photos from Betty Taylor, wife of Ivan Taylor. We know that Cmdr. Lee Lennertz will be pleased.

It Happened At Kunming 50 Years Ago

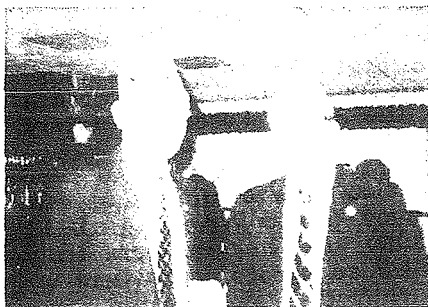
By William J. Pribyl

The aircraft was a C-47 with flight engineer George McCrea on board. George was better known as Mac to his buddies and on many of his 409 combat missions, Mac flew the right seat. His missions included the dropping of supplies, picking up wounded from small landing strips in the jungles, and flying in supplies and materials wherever needed. He flew in the 10th, 14th and 20th Air Force to places in India and Burma and in China's Upper Mongolia to the China Sea. On this particular day, in 1945, Mac was flying into Kunming. This flight was hours long and was uneventful if there was any such thing in the CBI. The aircraft landed at the airstrip and was directed to its revetment.

In Burma, Dr. Gordon S. Seagrave returned to Namkham with the advancing Chinese/American Army. Rebuilding the hospital was a major objective and within months this task was well underway.

In the fall of 1945, Dr. Seagrave asked for two volunteers to drive two ambulances to Kunming where a medical station was to be established. John Novotny and his buddy volunteered.

John was an ambulance driver for Dr. Seagrave's Medical Unit and his unit was the 151st Medical Battalion, 889th Ambulance Company. This trip would be a hazardous and dangerous one since they would be traveling alone and unarmed and since the Japanese soldiers were still in pockets along the Burma Road and infiltrated whenever possible.



Left side of picture with hat, John A. Novotny. Right side of picture without hat, George H. McCrea. Anna McCrea photo

The Road was only graded, single lane, with occasional turn-outs so traffic could move in the other direction and also to give the convoy drivers time to refresh themselves. The two ambulances took two weeks to travel the Road from Namkham to Kunming. At one point, a landslide separated the drivers.

John was in the second vehicle, he could not turn around, it was too far to backup, and he knew the ambulance was needed in Kunming. He put the vehicle in four wheel drive, opened the driver side door, himself hanging out the door, said a powerful prayer, and drove over the blocking dirt and rock. In doing this, a rear spring leaf was broken that punctured the gas tank starting a light gasoline leak. He managed to make it to a combat engineer camp where two days later all was repaired and he continued on his mission. Arriving in Kunming, John and his buddy went to the airstrip building and reported to the Operations Officer.

CBI Veterans Composite Unit 45/95

By B/Gen. L. Robert Castorr
(Ret.)

The above caption formulated by a consensus of the stalwart veterans of the Burma Campaign of 1943-45 and with a few grandsons and nephews of our past comrades that accompanied those of us in returning to the land where we fought the Japanese 50 years ago; best describes this group for the history books, for there never will be another!

Motivated by all the fanfare given to commemorating the 50th anniversary of the War's End in Europe, Brig. Gen. L. Robert Castorr, Army Inf. Ret. and a former Merrill's Marauder and later becoming the General Staff Officer G-1 to Gen. Joseph Stilwell in the Burma Campaign, decided there were those of us who also played a part in the big war and so, should be recognized. Months of organization and preparation launched the movement day on January 22, 1995. Twenty-five men coming in from all over the U.S. into Washington, D.C., did depart to a country, nostalgic in memory of the bad times in hardship and death all around that they endured a lifetime ago. Most of the group were of the Marauders. A few were assigned to NACC HQ and attached to the Chinese. Others in supporting roles.

Upon arrival in Rangoon, or Yangon as known today, much festive greetings were showered upon these "Jungle Warriors" as one large sign on the many curb lined streets of the local citizenry



General Castorr and Roy Matsumoto place a CBI wreath at the Allied Forces Cemetery at Yangon (Rangoon).

signaled their salutation as our convoy passed. Anyone could readily see that we were truly hailed as heroes everywhere we journeyed. Appreciation and thanks were evident by the sincere warmth of affection shown us for our fight in their freedom and independence from the aggressor.

A light day of rest to pay tribute and honor the Fallen Heroes Memorial at the Hytauk-Kyant War Cemetery and laying a beautiful CBI-inscribed wreath with prayer and a salute, highlighted our second day. Courtesy calls upon high ranking Generals in the per-

sons of the Minister of Trade and of the Deputy Prime Minister of the Government of the Union of Myanmar also was arranged.

Sightseeing took in our third day to the huge Shwedagon Pagoda layered with tons of solid gold leaf as well as to other worthwhile points of interest.

Our American Military Attache was kind enough to host a luncheon for us at his residence enabling us to meet personnel representing our interest within our Consulate there.

Traveling by air, we departed for the city of Pagan, known as the World's Capitol of Pagodas, and there are literally thousands of them dating back to the 1st century.

"On the Road to Mandalay" we went by coach which gave us a closer look to the villages and the people enroute. Mandalay itself is a step back in the time of Rudyard Kipling with its British colonial atmosphere. The focal point being the Golden Palace of their former King and which was destroyed during the war by Japanese bombers, but is now being fully restored preparatory to the big offensive tourist trade the Government is gearing up for 1996.

Our big day of anticipation has arrived as to where we fly to where we all wanted to go in the first place when this trip was conceived - Myitkyina. Who could forget those days back when the airstrip was taken by us and thus the event became the beginning of the end of all the nightmares we were a part of in the war that the rest of the world almost forgot.

From the juncture of our journey, Mandalay - Myitkyina - Bhamo - Lashio - the wonderful, and I mean wonderful, host of our Myitkyina government officials, took over full control and all responsibilities for our welfare, comfort and transportation. We traveled by their military planes and other conveyance. Personified efficiency prevailed, unbelievably like clockwork. Nothing was left unturned in providing each of us the hospitality and graciousness that one would have to see for themselves to appreciate, as we did. We were given every access to our wishes to see our old battle sites and to seek answers to our questions that laid dormant for so long. Security was all around us at times just in case there might have been a dissident



This is the famous airstrip at Myitkyina, 50 years later, after it was captured by Col. Hunter and the Marauders on 17th May, 1944. Myitkyina and the airstrip became one of the most famous battles in Burma during WW II. Today, this same airstrip is called the Pamati airstrip. Photographed by honorary member Gary Layton. Sent in by Jim Fletcher.

lurking around but to the contrary, all we saw were contented happy faces prevailing everywhere we traveled.

Lavished banquets for us and gaiety was part of our course of stay where on the moonlight waters of the Irrawaddy River reflected upon us as we dined on its banks alongside of our accommodations within the quest quarters of the military compound of the Commanding General of that Myitkyina Province. Same extended hospitality at Bhamo and Lashio. At Lashio, the General included music and a stage show of beautiful girls in their native costumes for our pleasure besides gifts galore for each of our men.

Here at Lashio, situated on the Thailand border, we witnessed the on-going site of construction for a school of general education and sponsored by our esteemed OSS-101 Detachment Forces who initiated the finances as a thank you to the Kachins who played such an integral part of their intelligence gathering information in order for those of us to gain our objective in the war zone.

So, we came, we saw and now have time to leave with further memories to reflect upon. Flying back to Yangon, the climax of our visit was yet to come. We were assembled for the "frosting on the cake" as it were and there escorted to a beautiful building obviously reserved for dignitaries of state and therein, dressed in full military dress, were the General Military Staff of the Government of Myanmar. We were each to be presented with the Burma Medal of Liberation as freedom fighters for their independence long ago. It was a heart rending ceremony when, in this historical assembled occasion, the Minister of Defense and also as the Vice Chairman of the State Law & Order Restoration Council of Myanmar General Maung Aye, pinned the medals upon the chest of each of us and further presented each with a green beret, with their coat of arms insignia thereon. Citations will be sent to each recipient after their Armed Forces Day on March 27th, at which time our names will be officially proclaimed and recorded in their military archives.

With that chapter of our lives closed forever, we necessarily had to "get our show on the road" and so, with bag and baggage we were



Four of the famous Guerrilla Kachin Rangers who risked their lives to obtain vital information for the Americans and British they fought with during WW II. Shown here are these same men 50 years later on the famous airstrip at Myitkyina that the Ma-rauders captured in 1944. Photographed by honorary member Gary Layton. Sent in by Jim Fletcher.

off to Bangkok. More sightseeing, more shopping and more exotic food was the course of our stay until it was time to depart by a luxury type coach for our day's journey to "The Bridge Over the River Kwai." It was noted, of course, for the infamous Japanese concentration camps and the brutality upon their British captive slaves. We laid another wreath on the memorial grounds of this British cemetery in tribute to the valor of these gallant men.

To complete that memorable visit, we actually rode on the train that took us over and across that Historical Bridge onward for some

40 kilometers to its end and near the border of Burma on the Thailand side. Our understanding, is that, the Thai Government is now about to extend the RR into Burma for the tourist trade they hope to induce.

Reflecting backward on this wonderful adventure, to those of us who made it, there were many trials and tribulations in the organizational aspect of such a tour of this nature. Many unponderable and unknown questions were never fulfilled simply because of the complexities in the cultural, political and communication difficulties

(Continued on page 22)



Members of the CBI group that went to Burma in January of this year who were veterans of the CBI received the Liberation Medal from the Burmese Government. Shown here is Tony Colombo receiving one of the medals. Photographed by honorary member from the Atlanta Basha Gary Layton. Sent in by Jim Fletcher.

Return to Burma -- Lost C-47 Found

By Leroy E. Fisher

During the latter part of January and the first part of February, 1995, 25 CBI veterans returned to Myanmar (Burma) at the invitation of the Myanmar military government. The courtesies extended to us were far above anything we had anticipated, including the presentation of an honorary medal - "The Liberation Star."

We made the journey to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the surrender of the Japanese to the Allied Forces in Burma.

While in Yangon (Rangoon), we learned from a Lt. Col. K. M. Thein of the Myanmar Military Intelligence that in 1991 one of their patrols had located a downed C-47. It was found very near to Lake Indawgyi. They retrieved a number of objects from the crash site including three dog tags, from which they were able to establish the identity of three servicemen:

1. Jas. B. Heise 751322 T4243A
2. Roy D. Torbert 15040 326 T410
3. F. P. Reynolds Jr. 0720408 T4344

The Burmese state that at that time the information was turned over to our embassy in Yangon and, somehow along the way, "fell through the cracks."

Of the group, I was the only Air Force member. During the war, I was a flying crew chief on a C-47 with the 1st Combat Cargo Group,

3rd Combat Cargo Squadron, and felt very much obligated to pursue this information.

Upon my return to Houston, I contacted Jan Thies, executive secretary for the Hump Pilots Assn. in Poplar Bluff, MO. She was her usual efficient self. I gave her the names on the three dog tags and within 10 minutes she gave me the following information which came from the book, "The Aluminum Trail," by Chick Marrs Quinn:

28 June 1944 C-47 #3385

Dinjan - Dead: 7

Crew: Pilot. 2nd Lt. James B. Heise, 0-751322; C/P. 2nd Lt. Fletcher P. Reynolds, 0-720908; R/O. S/Sgt. Roy D. Torbert, 15040326; A/E. Cpl. Harry L. Leyda, 33433574.

Food Droppers: Pvt. J. Edwards, 4919621; Pvt. F. Cooper, 5052451; Sgt. H. Magee, 3768651.

This aircraft nicknamed "Phyllis Hi-C," took off from Dinjan, India, at 0646 IST. There was radio contact over target at 0830 IST. This cargo was medical supplies and medical equipment. The ship is missing in flight. The plane was seen to crash by a British column. Later report aircraft nor crew have been found. Crew presumed dead.

Mrs. Thies determined from the Hump Pilot roster that the 2nd Troop Carrier Sqdn had been based at Dinjan and, in turn, sent

the above information to 47 members of that squadron. I received a number of calls in response and want to thank all who replied. Especially helpful was Francis Yancee of Hinton, WV, a platoon sergeant Company A, 478 QM Reg. who had been responsible for overseeing the loading of cargo planes that went out of Dinjan during this time frame, and assigned kickers for those planes going on drop missions. He kept a personal diary of the planes and kickers that did not return and he confirmed the date that plane #3385 left and did not return to Dinjan - and the names of the three kickers listed as food droppers. These men could have been from either the 478th QM or the 518th QM Regiments.

We also have reason to believe that this plane could have been on detached service from the 315th Troop Carrier Squadron, 9th, 10th or 11th Combat Cargo Squadron's of the 3rd Combat Cargo Group; as well as an ATC plane.

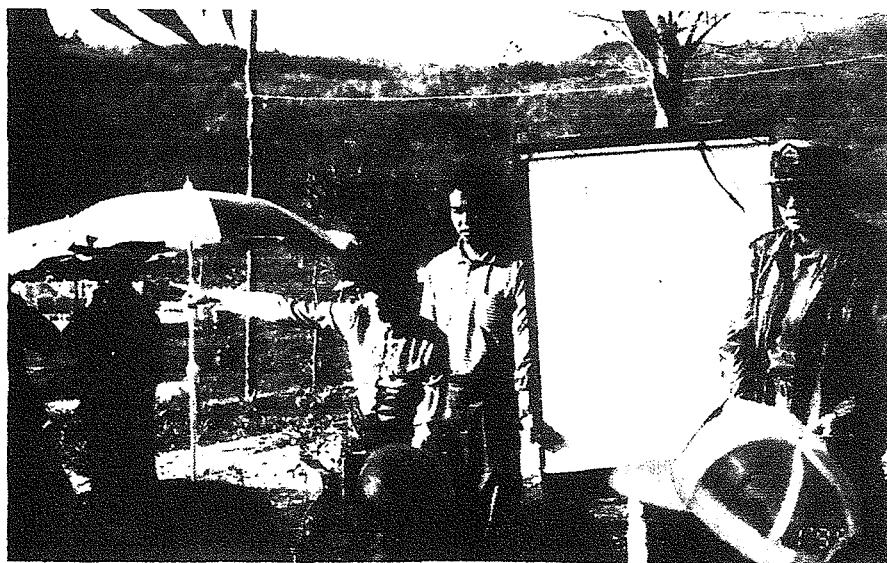
If anyone has information pertaining to any or all seven men listed, please contact: Leroy E. Fisher, 602 N. Eldridge, Houston, TX 77079; phone (713) 497-5873. Thank you.

BURMA TOUR . . .

(Continued from page 21)
encountered from our point of view and theirs. However, it did take perseverance, trust and a prayer that all would work out in a manner upon which it did. There were no mishaps to dampen our spirits, we had no problems individually, we all took things in stride and enjoyed all.

Much praise and appreciation must go to Ambassador U Thaung of the Embassy of Myanmar in Washington, D.C., for his dedication and thorough conscientious follow through of the many details and coordinating efforts on behalf of Gen. Castorr, otherwise this trip could never have been accomplished in the manner in which it was finalized.

One regret that our Composite Unit 45/95 wishes to express and that is, we are sorry that we could not have had all of our dear comrades on this journey of the past and sharing our grand visit. It was a great success and we are happy and glad that we of our 25 contingents did go and represented you who could not.



Site of the Agricultural College that is to be built for the Kachins in Lashio, Burma, by Det. 101-OSS. Photographed by honorary member Gary Layton. Sent in by Jim Fletcher.

Dog Days in the CBI

By Richard J. Zika

China-Burma-India of WW II had to be the least known and misunderstood Theater of Operations in the course of the war. And, of all the outfits that sweated, cursed, and fought in this area, I have no hesitation in nominating my own unit, War Dog Det-CBI, as the least known and misunderstood of the lot.

Our group was formed late October, 1943, at the War Dog Reception and Training Center, San Carlos, California. Consisting of 100 E.M. and dogs, plus two officers, we were at that time designated the Casual Dog Det. Made up of smaller units from all four major training camps across the country, San Carlos, Fort Robinson, Cat Island, and Front Royale, our training had been oriented to attack-sentry and scout and now, at San Carlos, intensified preliminary to being assigned overseas. It was also at San Carlos that a disastrous wind/brush fire ripped through the camp costing the lives of seven dogs and numerous burns and injuries to ourselves as well as camp cadre.

On 1-24-44, we boarded the Liberty ship, BENJAMIN IDE WHEELER at Wilmington, L.A. and discover we were to share the trip with a casual company of Remount, also consisting of 100 men and two officers, plus four casual officers being shipped over. None of us knew our destination but we did know that 208 men, their sleeping quarters, their galley, and their dining area all crammed into the number three hold did not hold promise of a luxury cruise. Our dogs (108 of them including our "spares") were quartered in their crates in the protection of two large sleds on the port and starboard sides of the ship just aft of the 'mid-ship house and, when it came to housing, had much the better part of the deal. But neither they, nor we, had the faintest idea of what our future held much less that this overloaded freighter would be our home for the next 72 long days and even longer nights.

Completely without escort of any kind we zig-zagged our way across the Pacific and South Pacific. The food, abominable to start, went



Dick Zika and "Jack." (Zika is the one wearing the cap!)

downhill from there until finally we were subsisting on canned salmon that tasted spoiled, soda crackers, and black, unsweetened coffee. On the other hand our officers, dining with the ship's officers, ate very well indeed and the growing resentment led to a miniature mutiny food riot with "Swill o' the Day" being thrown every which way. It brought the desired attention but the only result was we were promised fresh provisions would be stocked at our first port of call (which turned out to be Fremantle, Australia). While it sounded good it's pretty hard to make a sandwich out of a promise between two imaginary slices of bread and feelings still ran high.

It was in the South Pacific that we had our first glimpse of the war. Sailing through debris that could only have come from a sunken ship we finally came to an overturned, bullet riddled, wooden life boat bearing the identity of the Dutch freighter that had left Wilmington just 24 hours prior to us. No survivors. It was a sobering experience that had many of us wondering what the odds were on seeing another sunrise.

But, it was the Tasman Sea that showed us the power of nature. There we ran into a typhoon that had us scared to death not only of our dogs sheds being swept overboard but of the ship breaking up

as well. Three days of storm shoved us back (we were later told) five days worth of travel time and, remembering the size of those waves and the damage done the ship, there certainly were no disbelievers among those aboard. And, don't let anyone tell you dogs can't get sea-sick as well as humans. Whew! What a mess!

At 10:30 A.M. of March 4th we docked at shed B, Fremantle, for our two-day refueling and reprovisioning stopover and, most important for us, two days of gorging our long deprived bellies. The first few hours of our leave was spent in only that and only after the point of glut had been reached were we able to enjoy the hospitality and other delights of Fremantle, Perth, and those wonderful Australians. But, on returning to the ship on the evening of the second day almost all were carrying large bags of fruit or any other edibles that could be garnered. While we had been promised improved rations, Army promises do not always coincide with Army realities and a little commissary of one's own was just common prudence. But, surprisingly, our food larders had been restocked and while nothing to get excited about, anything was an improvement over the swill we had suffered on earlier. Now, we wondered what was in store for us as we headed north by west into the Indian Ocean.

This ocean, as it turned out, was a bit of a bitch for extreme heat and humidity combined, forced us to eat the fresh fruit we had brought aboard in a hurry or lose it to rot: no way of rationing it out. Worse, the decks became veritable frying pans, blistering the pads of our dogs' feet opening the way for infection. We tried fashioning canvas booties for them but this did not work out so the best we could do was keep the decks flushed with the fire hoses and the salt water used created problems of its own. The only thing left was to keep our charges under shelter as much as possible and check closely for oncoming problems but, even so, we lost two dogs to heat related causes. It was also in the Indian Ocean that the ship's Captain, D. J. Caughlin, informed us that this would be the most dangerous leg of the trip and doubled the lookouts. Eagerly aided and abetted by a couple hundred pairs of eyes searching for God knows what. But

this prediction was true as we passed through wreckage of other ships including machine gunned life rafts and — again, no survivors. Our worst worries came when we had a power breakdown of about a half hour's duration just at sunset on a dead calm sea making us all feel we were sitting ducks.

In the morning of March 21st, we dropped anchor in the Bay of Colombo, Ceylon, and this time there was no shore leave. For four days we swung at anchor in the sweltering heat. We were concerned over the effects of this floating oven on our dogs, the gun crews constantly hosing down the ammunition lockers in a vain effort to hold down the temperature. Each to our own worry.

It was a relief to leave Colombo on the 24th and this time in a convoy of 17 ships, with an escort of three corvettes and an occasional land based scout plane for the last leg of our journey, up the Bay of Bengal and the Hooghly River to Calcutta. An older, small, freighter had to drop out of the convoy with engine problems and try to limp to shore and we heard (but it was never confirmed) that it had been torpedoed by a sub trailing behind the convoy looking for just such stragglers. Actually, after having traveled all those miles and weeks completely alone, we felt foolishly secure at having so much company.

Our trip came to a close at King George Docks, Calcutta, on 4-4-44 and we were immediately trucked to Kanchrapara where we began several weeks of frustration. After two weeks of inactivity a dozen man/dog teams were flown to Myitkyina to join Merrill's Raiders on a sort of experimental basis and on the first night one of our dogs there was killed by a leopard — an inauspicious start. Meanwhile, the rest of us were held at Kanchrapara giving demonstration after demonstration of both sentry and scout work to Calcutta Command Officers but — no assignment. It was little wonder that we began to think of ourselves as a U.S.O. show unit for the (expetive deleted) brass.

Next, several teams were assigned to the main Calcutta supply dump and were so successful at helping cut down the enormous theft problem that people began paying attention. At the same time, word began filtering back of the exploits of our teams in Burma.

One of the Jap sniper's favorite tricks was to tie themselves in a tall tree, allow a patrol to pass by, and then attempt to pick off the rear men in a column. They soon learned that when a dog, trained to sniff out hidden decoys, led a patrol this gambit was hazardous to their health. By the same token, no patrol led by a dog was allowed to walk blindly into an ambush.

But, it was also a time of learning for ourselves. Our dogs had been trained by two methods. One was the agitation method in which the dog was trained to find, alert, and then attack. The other road was the praise system whereby the dog alerted, found the decoy, and was rewarded with much praise and possibly a tidbit. In actual practice the praise trained dogs were the best for scouting for when they made a find they would merely alert and point out the direction to their handler. However, the attack dogs were inclined to charge and one of them made the cardinal error of barking thus giving posi-

tion away and in the ensuing fire fight two people were wounded. While this resulted in some harsh criticism cooler heads pointed out that it was far better for just two men to be wounded than for the entire patrol to blunder into an ambush which would not be sprung until the enemy was ready for an attempt at a "wipeout." In the end, it was the praise trained dogs that were preferred for I & R and the attack trained that proved their value in the night infiltration menace.

Another problem was the country itself. No matter how well the dog had been trained in the states, there was nothing that could prepare it for the alien scent, say of a herd of wild elephants or a large cat nearby. This did result in false alerts early on until the handlers could sort it all out.

Regardless of problems, the successes were enough so that the call went out for more dogs and we suddenly found ourselves a hot property. Forty-three of our number



Jim Harrison and "Tony; Bob Fischer and "Butch." Myitkyina, November 12, 1944

were sent to Ramgarh, detached to the 475th Infantry and 124th Cavalry in training for the next push into Burma. The rest were shipped to Assam for sentry and interior guard work at the many air strips, ammo dumps, and Signal Corps outposts in the province. It was at this time that the entire scattered unit was designated the War Dog Detachment-CBI.

Our people served with Merrill's Marauders, Mars Task Force, Air Force, Ammo Ordnance, Signal Corps, M.P., and OSS Det. 101 in both Burma and China. One of our number, Don Pascoe, was killed while serving with the 124th Cavalry (he was not using a dog at the time) and the rest had their fair share of wounds, malaria, typhus, dengue, and all the other fringe benefits of service in the CBI.

We were usually dispatched to new assignments in small units and the first question on our arrival (without fail) was, "Who the hell are you guys?" followed by, "Whatta y' do with the dogs?" Each time we had to explain who we were, what we were and what we were trained for. Not too much of this was needed before we began referring to ourselves as orphans and bastards and the phrase, "Nay Momma, nay Poppa," became our personal slogan. Nevertheless, if used for the purpose we and our dogs were trained for, we could turn in credible jobs and become accepted members of our temporary military family even if it was only on a step-child basis. If misused, and what in CBI wasn't

many times misused, things could become, as our British friends might say, "A bit of a sticky wicket."

Eleven months after our arrival, another six K-9 men arrived and with them twelve dogs as replacements for those who had succumbed to the ravages of disease and climate, bringing to 120 the total number of dogs used by our unit during our CBI service.

The end of the war found the detachment pretty well scattered over the theater resulting in our being sent home in dribbles and dabs rather than as a unit. Possibly this was the cause of the erroneous story that our dogs were destroyed rather than being returned stateside. A story completely false for two very good reasons. First of all, the Army procured its dogs through "Dogs for Defense," a civilian agency who in turn obtained them from patriotic citizens donating their pets for war work. The explicit agreement was that any surviving dogs would be returned to their original owners after the war if so desired. Secondly, our men had a deep commitment to their dogs and had a policy of euthanasia been proposed the hell that would have been raised could not have been hidden. While it is possible that this thought could have crossed the minds of some transportation people, to the best of my knowledge it never went further than a thought.

While actual figures are not available, the consensus of opinion among War Dog Det. survivors is



Ed and Vi DeCapita bracket Pat Cram at Westlake, Ohio, meetings.

Lou Porto Photo

that 85 of the 120 dogs survived and were returned stateside. Given the disease factor, the climate and combat conditions these dogs endured, it is a tribute to the highest order to the expertise and dedication of Captain George Miller, our veterinarian officer and Captain Ryland Croshaw, the veterinarian officer who was the final CO of our unit and "turned off the lights" for us in CBI. These men were outstanding.

An interesting situation developed at the close of the war. The dogs had been promised back to their original owners, yet most handlers had such a deep attachment they wanted to keep the animals themselves. To resolve this dilemma, the Army supplied the name and address of the original owner and it was up to the handler to write these people requesting them to waive their rights. While there were, of course, some turn-down many people saw the love and logic behind the request and resulted in many of our men returning to civilian life side by side with the four-footed buddy they had been through so much with.

In closing, it might be well to note that at gatherings of detachment survivors the dogs, long since gone, are remembered with every bit as much love and respect as others of our comrades who have fallen by the way. A true example of "till death do us part."



First place squad - obedience trial at San Carlos. Bob Gross with white poodle donated by Greer Garson.

**Come to Lancaster, PA
April 24-28 for
All-East, Dept. of PA and
National Spring Board Meeting**

THE HIMALAYAN ROGUE RETURNS

A complete journal written by Peter Goutiere, author of The Himalayan Rogue, and WW II CNAC pilot, upon his return to China last fall.

It all started around June of 2000, when my nephew, Tony deGoutiere, suggested that we take a trip to India during the months of January and February of 2001. Our planning got underway with visas and the route to be taken. The main purpose of the trip was to locate my grandfather and grandmother's grave sites in the town of Gorakhpur, North-Central India. Also, to find my father's gravesite as well, which is somewhere near the town of Monghyr (now called Munger). Then, as luck would have it, Tony developed some sort of foot ailment and had to cancel out. The trip would be too costly for me to handle alone, so I canceled as well.

Previous to all this, I had been introduced to a Chinese gentleman from Hong Kong by the name of Mr. Wong How Man. The introduction was given by my good friend, Fletcher "Christie" Hanks. Christie flew for China National Aviation Corp. (CNAC) during the war, as I did.

Mr. Wong How Man, whose nickname I later found out was Herman (or "Hermie"), is a graduate of Wisconsin University. He majored in journalism and art. In the year 1974, he began exploring China's remote regions and documenting their disappearing cultures. In the 1980's, Hermie was now making several expeditions on behalf of National Geographic Magazine. One was a ten-month expedition for National Geographic tracing the Yangtze River from the mouth to its source.

By 1987, Mr. How Man had established the China Exploration and Research Society (CERS) of which he is president. The purpose of this is to better understand and preserve the cultural and natural heritage of remote China. Also, to restore Tibetan monasteries in western Sichuan Province.

Through my friend Christie, I was able to send Hermie my autobiography, "The Himalayan Rogue." From this, Hermie and I have been exchanging correspondence through the e-mail. Also, he was gracious enough to send me

his book entitled "From Manchuria to Tibet." It is a hard-covered book and oversized. I found the book most interesting, to say nothing of the spectacular photography that was taken by Hermie. It is a treasure worth having.

I had previously mentioned to Mr. How Man that I had planned to visit India by way of Hong Kong flying on Cathay Pacific Airlines. After having canceled my India trip, I had mentioned to Hermie that I still would like to visit Hong Kong and meet him. Perhaps I may then take a quick trip to Kunming for a look-see after nearly 55 years. Hermie responded by suggesting why not come over in November 2000, in time for a gala banquet given by he and his CERS people at the Foreign Correspondents Club, which was to be held on Nov. 10th in Hong Kong. I talked this over with my ever-loving wife Evelyn. After all, if I went, she would have to stay home, watch the store, and baby-sit our mini dachshund "Tiger" for around six weeks!! Being a most understanding wife, she knew I wanted to go on the trip very much, and so it was agreed!

I had my travel plans to go via Vancouver and Victoria, B/C, Canada. This was to visit my Goutiere nephews that lived in the area. I hadn't seen them for nearly 30 years. One week's visit would be great. And CPA flies from JFK, NY, via Vancouver to Hong Kong.

While all the above arrangements were in the mill, I received an e-mail from Hermie that he and some of his staff were planning an expedition by flying to Kunming and then taking their Land Rovers from there, all the way to Tibet. Would I like to join them part of the way? My goodness! What an offer! I responded that it sounded great and count me in.

After my week with my nephews in Canada, I boarded Cathay Pacific Airlines on Nov. 3rd and was on my way to Hong Kong which I hadn't visited since 1969, when I was giving a Pan Am crew a check flight from Bangkok to Hong Kong on a B-707. At that stage I was an

FAA, Air Carrier Inspector. The airport in those days was good old Kai Tak Airport. But, here I was on a Cathay Pacific B-747-400 jumbo jet. Before landing I was ushered into the cockpit to witness the approach and landing at the new Hong Kong Int'l. Airport. It was almost like old times sitting in the jumpseat of a passenger airline, giving the crew a flight check. Only, the cockpit layout of the 747-400 was a bit dazzling with its array of unfamiliar instrumentation. The captain did a fine job maneuvering the big plane around and made a perfect landing. If that was for my benefit, he impressed me!

I zipped through immigration and customs and then found myself whizzing along a grand highway in a special limo from the Panda Hotel, where I was the guest of Mr. Wong How Man.

After checking in and a quick wash-up in my room, I was asked to join Hermie down at the coffee shop. Here, for the first time in more than a year, I officially met Hermie and his assistant, Mrs. Berry Sin, a cute and charming young Chinese lady. I also met the hotel manager, Mr. Joachim Burger.

Even before my introduction to Mr. Wong How Man and his receiving my autobiography, I was attending the Oshkosh fly-in in Wisconsin. I was seated at the author's corner at the fly-in gift shop hoping to sell my autobiography books. A rather tall, heavy-set, good-looking individual approached my table. I noticed he had my book under his arm. This was in July or August of 1996. He introduced himself as Captain Ian Quinn of Cathay Pacific Airlines. Egad! Way over here from Hong Kong! He said he actually had bought my book a year ago from my good friend Joe Rosbert of Flying Tiger fame and CNAC. However, he had left that book in Hong Kong, so had bought another one for me to autograph! This I did and we had a good laugh over it. I then told Ian that we would be invited to a gathering of CNAC people that would be having a dinner party at the end of the Oshkosh show. That was our introduction and we became good friends. When he returned to Hong Kong, we corresponded by e-mail.

Back to present time. I also e-mailed Ian Quinn about my plans

of coming to Hong Kong for a visit and perhaps a tour into China. He hoped I would consider staying as his guest at some time during my tour of Hong Kong. I promised I would give it a good try. Unbeknownst to me, he had contacted the CPA crew that would be flying me from Vancouver to Hong Kong letting them know that I was aboard, and to give a chance for me to sit in the cockpit to observe the approach and landing.

At the Panda Hotel coffee shop, Mr. Wong How Man mentioned he had arranged for me to give my talk on the evening of November 6 and to be sure to wear my CNAC flying jacket with the "Blood Chit" on the back. The blood chit was the Chinese flag and in Chinese writing that stated we were allied friends and to escort us to safety. This was in case we were shot down or forced landed in Japanese territory. I told my audience it might also mean, "If you catch him, shoot the son-of-a-bitch!!" After the talk, Hermie said the people really enjoyed the stories of my flying experiences over the "Hump." Also, that quite a few wanted to buy my book. I was elated.

I was enjoying my stay at the Panda Hotel. The buffet breakfasts and lunches were superb. One could put on an awful lot of weight hanging around that areal Joachim was also a great host and had his staff at my beck and call. He also mentioned that he was planning to set up a special bar that he wanted to call "The Flying Tiger and CNAC Bar." Joachim is most keen on the Flying Tigers and has models of the P-40 with the tiger shark on the nose. He was wondering if any of the Flying Tiger and CNAC people would be willing to come over and inaugurate the bar when it is finished. I promised him I would get in touch with the people back home and let him know. I really think it would be a great idea to have a reunion at the Panda Hotel bar before we are too old to hoist one for old time's sake! Perhaps a quickie over to Kunming and hoist a few more, for there is another Flying Tiger bar there!

It seemed to me that Hermie was always a jump ahead, and in the right direction! After the reception and my talk at the Foreign Correspondent's Club, I thought I would be on my own to find my way around Hong Kong for sight-seeing and shopping. Not quite so.

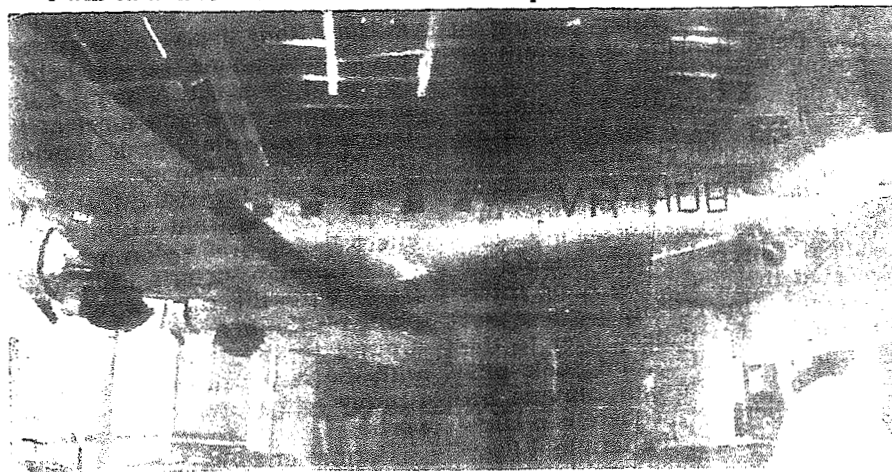
Hermie had arranged a great Chinese dinner at one of the popular restaurants, whose specialty was Peking duck. The roasted duck was brought out and carved in front of us. Not only did it look tempting, it was delicious eating. On another occasion, Hermie and Berry took me to the once famous Floating Restaurants in the section called Aberdeen. Well, the old restaurants had long gone. In their place was one large floating barge and restaurant called the Jumbo Floating Restaurant. Again, it was another sumptuous Chinese meal. Though there are thousands of Chinese restaurants in the States, none came close to the authentic thing in Hong Kong and China. I took many pictures of the whole area. I hope they come out. The videos, I am sorry to state, I somehow lost in my travels.

Back at the Panda Hotel I did get a breather, but not for long. My good friend Ian Quinn of Cathay Pacific had been working up something special for me. I had mentioned to Ian that I knew Roy Farrell and Syd DeKantzow who originally had started Cathay Pacific Airlines in 1946. He had also read about it in my autobiography, as had Mr. Wong How Man. So this was no secret. I had also mentioned that I once flew with Roy and Syd from Shanghai to Hong Kong in the DC-3 before it became CPA and nicknamed "Betsy." Ian and Hermie must have told the VIPs of the current airline that an old "Hump" pilot from WW II was in town and knew a bit about the start of their great airline. Unknown to me, Ian said he was taking me on a tour of Hong Kong Island.

I will take a few lines to describe

the new Hong Kong (HKG). It is divided in two areas: Kowloon and Hong Kong Island. They are divided by Victoria Harbor. In the old days I remember the only way across from one side to the other was by famed Star Ferries. Now there is a tunnel for cars and one for a fancy electric train that can glide you all the way to the New International Airport in about 30 minutes. The Star ferries are still operating, just as they did in the time of the movie "The World of Suzie Wong." North of Kowloon is a new area called New Territories. This area is fast growing up with high-rise buildings, including the Panda Hotel. The new airport is located west of Kowloon and Hong Kong Island on the tip of Lantau Island. It covers more than 3,000 acres and was one of the largest excavation and reclamation projects in history. It took thousands of workers working around the clock. It was started at the end of 1992 and completed end of 1998. There are high bridges that span the island with the mainland. Motor-ing across reminded me a bit of Whitestone and Throggs Neck bridges.

Ian Quinn called and said to meet him on the Hong Kong side, that he would take me on a small tour, then to his apartment in Stanley which is located on the southern tip of the island. I took the Star Ferry across the Bay and met Ian. We then took a taxi and wove our way around numerous skyscrapers to a good size building. He led me through several corridors to a large, spacious room. He told me this was the Museum of Modern Science. I could now see various odd-looking objects around the place. As I looked around, a



Suspended in lobby of Cathay Pacific Airlines Headquarters is "Betsy," the C-47 with which CNAC pilot Roy Farrell started Cathay Pacific.

young man came up to us, and Ian introduced me to Mr. Patrick Garrett who was Communications Manager for Cathay Pacific.

Patrick Garrett took charge and led us to an escalator. I noticed that Ian and Pat had big smiles on their faces and told me to look up above the escalator. There I saw an old DC-3 hanging from the dome of the building. Pat and Ian couldn't wait to tell me that was "Betsy," the plane that Roy Farrell and Syd DeKantzow started Cathay Pacific with back in 1946. Pat stated that Betsy was placed here in 1989. That the great plane was placed here as a fitting memorial, not only to those who started the airline, but as a lasting memorial to every member of the company, past and present. I immediately started taking pictures and video of Betsy.

As I mentioned earlier, I lost those video shots, but do have the still pictures. So, this is the tour that Ian had planned for me. It sure was a great and pleasant surprise.

At the top of the escalator, we were greeted by police officers guarding the area. The whole area where the plane hung was cordoned off by a yellow ribbon. Ian and Pat talked to the guards for a few minutes. The guards had big grins and escorted us past the boundary so we could take pictures of Betsy. Pat really got to work with his camera and was taking shots from all angles, even lay on his back to get me with the airplane. He said he hoped to have a story about me and Betsy in one of the Cathay Pacific's magazines. Wow! As I walked around Betsy, Pat kept firing questions at me about flying C-47s and the Hump operation during WW II. I hope I answered his questions correctly, especially if it was going into the CPA magazine! After staring at poor Betsy hanging up there, I felt nostalgic and thought back of the old days in Calcutta with Roy and Syd. It was sad to see Betsy strung up to the ceiling with very little light for people to see and ask questions. I suddenly realized this was not the place for such a magnificent aircraft. Betsy should be over at the new Hong Kong International Airport, and I knew just the place. I had been over to the terminal building and took pictures of the Farman biplane on display there. Right there is a large unused space of the terminal floor where I know Betsy could proudly



Peter Goutiere having a scotch at the "Flying Tiger" bar in Kunming, November 2000.

be displayed. I mentioned this to Pat and he took notes as to what I suggested. I also wrote to the Managing Director of Cathay Pacific with the same suggestion. Yes, Betsy, we'll get you there!

Ian and I took leave of Pat and headed for Ian's place in Stanley. We drove past Repulse Bay and I couldn't recognize any of it. That goes back 49 years since I was last here!

After meeting his girl Friday, a Filipino named Ellie, and a wash-up after the long tour, Ian took me to his favorite pub called the Smuggler's Inn. It was a small tavern on the only street along the beach. It was crowded with people and the overflow wound up on the sidewalk and the street. It sure was a busy place. I also had mentioned to Ian that Syd DeKantzow had a son named Peter. Sort of a namesake; and I believed he lived in Hong Kong. Ian went to work on his cellular phone. Lo and behold, he found Peter with whom I talked and agreed we would meet at the famed Peninsula Hotel, Kowloon the following afternoon.

In the old CNAC days, the Peninsula Hotel is what we used as a check point and pylon when we came through Victoria Harbor (the Gap). With the right wing of the plane on the hotel we would circle around to the right and line up with the major runway which was runway - 12 or 13? of Kai Tak Airport.

Hermie and Berry were waiting for me at the Peninsula and I told

them that I would also be meeting Peter DeKantzow, Syd's son. So many things seemed to be happening all at once. Hermie had already made plans for me to visit the Pan-American China Clipper museum which was located on the top floor of the hotel. Hermie said he would be back a little later to escort me to the museum.

I waited for about 15 minutes for Peter to show with his two little, blonde daughters. I recognized him immediately when he arrived at the lobby. He was tall, blonde, and looked a bit like his dad. I mentioned to him that I would have to leave in a few minutes and visit the museum with my host. The lobby was crowded with people waiting to get a table for afternoon tea. Peter said that would give him time to get us a table.

Hermie led the way to the special elevator that took us to the top floor. Here we met a guide to show us around. I did not realize there was a PanAm museum in Hong Kong. It was a rather unique layout. The windows were shaped like the porthole windows of the old clipper flying boats. These looked out over the Hong Kong harbor. There was a display of the old metal toilets and washrooms. There were many pictures of the flying boats, with one at the docks. Hermie told the guide that I was a pilot that flew the "Hump," etc., and belonged to the Pan Am Retired Pilot's group called the "Clipper Pioneers." The guide retrieved a book for me. It was all about a DC-3 called "Betsy"!

I returned to the hotel lobby and Peter DeKantzow had procured a table for us. He couldn't wait to ask questions about his dad whom he didn't really know, since Syd died when Peter was no more than two years old. It was a good get-together, though only for a short time. We agreed that we would keep in touch from here on, and this I intend to do. Peter is now 45 years of age and doing well as a resident of Hong Kong.

Next day, November 13th, Berry and Hermie met me at the Hong Kong International Airport for the departure to Kunming. Excitement was building up in me, for I was returning to a place I had not seen for over 50 years. I had heard stories of the change in Kunming, but I had to see it for myself. I was loaded down with film for my cameras and video because I was going to take pictures at every turn pos-

sible. Hermie wouldn't be on this flight with Berry and me. He planned to come a couple days later. I had a window seat with the hopes of seeing the old airport and the approach, with Kunming lake and the scarface, bald mountain on the west side. However, the pilot made a left-hand approach which would be to runway 18, therefore I didn't have a chance to see the lake.

After taxiing, I was unable to recognize any part of the airport, though it was the same old Kunming airport we CNAC pilots used during the war, also the headquarters for General Chennault's 14th Air Force. It appeared that the whole area had been scraped clean and the new airport rebuilt over it. I was a little surprised that everyone coming from Hong Kong had to go through immigration and customs. Also, the currency was different. The Hong Kong dollar was not accepted. The Mainland China here used Yuan. They both were about eight to one US dollar. Berry said it was okay to take pictures around the airport.

On the drive to the hotel, the Holiday Inn, no less, I was pleasantly surprised to see such fine, wide, clean streets. The traffic moved right along and was orderly. But the bicycles? There were hundreds of them. And to handle them, the police had special lanes, plus traffic lights. I was beginning to like Kunming already!

After I sorted out my things from the suitcase and placed them in the closet, I looked out the window and watched the traffic below with the hundreds of bicycles following their regular ways. I couldn't believe how orderly they were handled. I started with my video taking shots of this traffic scene. This video I did not lose!

That evening Berry and I ate dinner at a Thai restaurant on the top floor of our hotel. All waitresses were dressed in the traditional Thai dresses. We ordered Thai curry and rice, and I had to have the good old Chinese hot rice wine. That was a mistake! At about one o'clock in the morning it hit me. I started vomiting and then diarrhea. I didn't know which end to put in the pot first, and I didn't care!

By five thirty, I was still going through the motions of throwing up and found myself very weak and dehydrated. I phoned Berry



Entrance to Flying Tiger bar in Kunming.

and told her of my problem. She was over in a few minutes and decided we better get a doctor. The hotel made the arrangements. The Chinese doctor showed up with two nurses and after a quick examination, they thought I should go to the hospital. By six thirty, I was on my way to the Kunming hospital in their ambulance. I next found myself in a rather large room with lots of furniture and a bevy of attractive Chinese nurses around me! They had me stripped to the waist and sponged me down. Next, they stuck probes to my chest and stomach that were attached to a computer that was all in Chinese except the clock which gave the local time in English.

The head doctor came by around nine o'clock to check on me. In the meantime, one of the nurses had also hooked me up to be fed intravenously. This was to give me some kind of sugar and water because of my dehydrated situation. Every once in awhile someone had to go along with me to the bathroom and hold up the sugar-water bottle that was hooked to my wrist. What a charade this was turning into! Every couple of hours one of the cute nurses stuck a thermometer under my right armpit. I also noticed that these nurses seemed to gather around me and touch my chest and giggle! Come to find out they were more interested with the hair on my chest than my ailment!

That night I spent at the hospital. To keep me company, Berry insisted that one of CERS people by the name of Stephen sleep in the next bed. Stephen was half Chinese and half German, a fine young lad of 27. He carried two passports, one German and one American. He had been in China a little over a year and was interested in studying Chinese. I was

given a shot in the arm so that I would be able to sleep.

I was awake early the next morning feeling just fine, though weak. Oh yes, my four cute nurses arrived early to look me over and study the gimmicks on the computer. They still giggled and touched my hairy chest! I told Stephen to tell these nurses in Chinese, if he could, that they were lucky I was tied to the computer, or I would be chasing them all over the hospital. God only knows what I would have done if I caught one! I guess he got through to them for they all had a good laugh. By nine, I had my first meal of rice and chicken broth, followed by a glass of warm milk. It stayed down. By eleven, I was ready to leave and go back to the Holiday Inn. Before leaving, Stephen had his camera and took several shots of myself with the nurses and the doctor. I hope he will send me a copy.

Back at the Inn I rested most of the day. Hermie then showed up from Hong Kong and was worried about my illness. I said I would be okay to travel in two days' time.

I guess I must have lost a lot of weight through that siege. My pants seemed baggy and my belt was at its last notch. But, I was rarin' to go!

Another member of Hermie's CERS team was a Chinese from Kunming by the name of Zhang Fan, and he did pretty well with the English language. So the next day, after visiting Hermie at his Kunming office, which was not easy to do since I had to climb six flights of stairs! Zhang took me in his van for quite a ride all the way south to Kunming Lake. I wanted very much to take a picture and video of the lake and of old scarface, bald mountain. However, it was late afternoon and the sun was setting right over that range of hills. I took several shots, but they did not turn out well. I did notice that the lake had shrunk quite a lot and Zhang said that it was also polluted.

Zhang mentioned that the population of Kunming had grown to near 500,000 people and had been using up a lot of the lake water. He said that Kunming now exports about 70 percent of fresh flowers in China. All along the shore of the lake there are thousands of hothouses to grow the flowers and a lot of the chemicals flow into the lake. Gone are the old fishing boats that used the large

cormorant birds that dove for fish. Zhang also said that another industry that has picked up here was tobacco and cigarette manufacturing. A third industry that has Kunming booming is tourism. Thousands come from north China and Hong Kong. The town now sports four first-rate golf courses. It was hard to believe, after what I remember some 55 years ago. On our way back, Zhang stopped at two large ornate gates. He said this was where the old gate to Kunming city used to be. These new gates are called "Golden Horse" gates. I had Zhang stop there. Though it was getting dark, I took videos and still shots and they haven't come out too badly. I told him I had a picture of the old gates (thanks to my friend Jim Dalby) and that I would send him a copy when I got home. He also knew about my book and asked if I would be kind enough to give him a copy. I guess I will be sending him a bundle of old Kunming photos along with the book!

Back at the hotel I decided to take it easy. I had lost my appetite after the siege and could only handle soup and toast. I hit the sack early for the next day would be a long and hectic one. We would be riding in Land Rovers across south China for about 13 hours. I sure didn't wish to pass out on the trip. I still had trouble getting to sleep, thinking of the forth-coming trip and all that I had seen here in Kunming. I took a sleeping pill and that did the trick.

I was up early and wandered down to the coffee shop for breakfast. I was able to have dry cereal and a soft-boiled egg and to chase it down with Chinese green tea.

The morning of November 17th arrived bright and clear. Kunming is about 6500 feet above sea level, which makes the climate very dry and void of humidity. It was chilly, near freezing temperature and great for travel and photography. I had my breakfast and joined Hermie, Berry and the rest of the CERS group in front of the hotel. Stephen and Zhang were already packing things into the Land Rovers. Excitement was building up for me. I decided I better go use the bathroom before we took off. I didn't know what the toilet situation might be along the way! By the way, in China they drive on the right side of the roads, as in the States.

I was given the co-pilot's seat

next to the driver. This would give me an advantageous spot to take photos and video. Hermie and Berry had the lead Land Rover and ours brought up the rear. I noted that Zhang would not be on this trip. He would attend to office business in Kunming.

We drove through town during the rush hour with autos and bicycles stacked up. In about 40 minutes we were passing the last section west of town. I was able to get a glimpse of Scarface Mountain to the left, and it was not too far off. It showed that the lake had shrunk quite a bit in the past 50 odd years. The road developed into a super highway out into the country. It then started to climb over the high ridges of mountains that formed the west bank of Kunming Lake. I was informed that this whole area was now a national park. I noticed the heavy foliage of pine trees and some eucalyptus as we drove along. The highway we were on was now paralleling the old famed Burma Road.

We stopped once in a while so I was able to take quite a few pictures. There were many villages along the mountainsides and I saw quite a few white objects among the adobe-type houses. I asked our Chinese driver what they were. He smiled and said they were satellite dishes for television. These village folks were in touch with the outside world. And, no doubt, probably laughing at the mad voting going on in Florida!

After about four hours of driving, Hermie and Berry had stopped at a way station and ordered lunch. This could have been anywhere along Route 95 on the east coast of the USA. There were several gas stations as well. One caught my eye; it read ESSO! They still use that sign throughout China. The meal was a simple Chinese fare, but good. I'm glad I never forgot how to use those chopsticks. It was coming in handy now.

As we cruised along about 60 mph, I could see some mountains looming up in the horizon. Within an hour, I saw a sign that caught me off guard; it read Yunnani. We were going too fast to stop; but never mind said the driver, there is another one ahead. Sure enough, there was another sign. Hermie had stopped by it. I got out and started taking pictures. It was interesting to note that all signs were in Chinese and English. Also, like

this sign of Yunnani, it showed a picture of a gas pump, knife and fork, and wrench for mechanic and P for parking. Hermie said we would not be able to visit the old Yunnani, USAF base of long ago; it was now a military base.

As we drove on, the mountains ahead loomed higher, and I knew they had to be the old Tali Mountains that I had flown over many times. The town and the lake are now called Dali. In fact, the ride so far was our CNAC flight route that we used when we flew the southern course from Dinjan to Kunming and back, over Yunnani and the town of Tali (Dali). We passed through the town, which was now a city, and mostly farm people and fishermen. The highway skirted along the west shore of Lake Dali, with the 14,000-foot mountains to our left. It was around this area too, that our friend "Fuzzy" Ball crashed and was killed on a dark, stormy night approaching Yunnani Air Base. That would have been in January of 1945.

Hermie had stopped and waited for us to catch up to him at the north end of Dali Lake which was most picturesque. After a breather, stretching of legs and a smoke for those that did, we climbed aboard and started off again. Once more the terrain started to get mountainous, and the sturdy Land Rovers kept on grinding their way up the steep country. We must have reached over 10,000 feet altitude when we pulled over again. There was little or no traffic to worry about. At this altitude, there was a clear view of the lake, and far south and left, we could just spot a sugarloaf peak, with what looked like a white pagoda on top. I told Hermie we were now on the direct course we flew from Dinjan; and that pagoda was one of our check points. I have an old photo of it I took back in 1943. I have given him a copy of it.

It was now getting cold and the sun setting over Dali Mountains. We drove over some steep hills and hairpin turns in the highway. Here and there we passed some strange type of rural tractors. They were three-wheeled affairs with one-cylinder engines. They had small, fairly bright headlights, but no tail lights. We had now driven about 12 hours and it had become dark. The highway had leveled off on a plateau. Our driver would not use his high beam light; when all of a sudden Stephen gave a yell from

the back, and I saw at the time, one of those tractors putt-putting along with no tail lights. We had been going about 60 when the driver made a quick swerve to the left and missed the tractor by inches. Egad! What a close shave. We were all now wide awake. Soon, we could see the glow of Likang (now called Lijiang). In another half hour we were in the brightly lit city. We had made it in just over 13 hours!

I was pretty well tired out by the time we got to our little hotel that I am sure Hermie arranged ahead for us. It is the one he uses when he makes his numerous trips through to Tibet and beyond. Likang (Lijiang) is about 9000-foot altitude and now in November it became quite cold at night. It didn't take me long to curl up in my small bed and fall asleep.

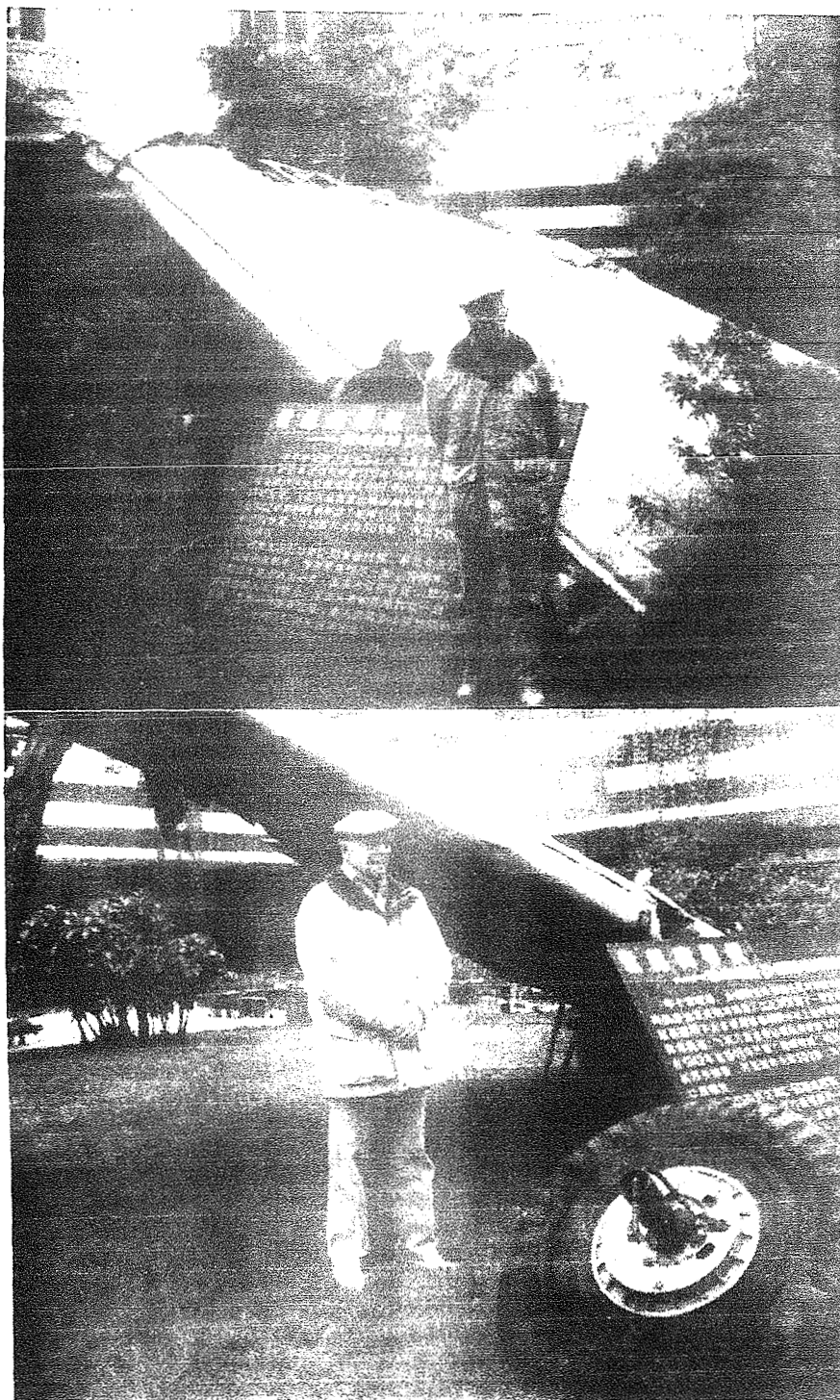
Stephen knocked on my door early next morning to say that the group was getting ready for breakfast. I got myself ready and met everyone at the hotel courtyard. Here I took pictures of the group. Hermie had planned that after breakfast we would drive out to Lijiang Mountain. It is actually called "The Jade Dragon Snow Mountain." In the old days we called it the "Green Dragon." He wanted to find the old, abandoned landing strip where CNAC used to land once in awhile to drop supplies off for our radio station. The radio station was essential for navigating around the mountain during the monsoon period. We would be on instruments all the way from Dinjan around Likang, on way to Suifu (Iping) on the Yangtze River. The monsoon season was usually the months of July, August and September. The station came in handy also during some of the severe winter months. Not many landings were made at Likang. I know I made about three during the years I flew for CNAC. I believe Jim Dalby was in there a couple of times. Once to pick up an American by the name of Dr. Rock. Dr. Rock wrote many articles on China for National Geographic.

After our Chinese breakfast, the two Land Rovers headed out of the city, and coming to the end of the highway, we rolled along a bumpy dirt road. Up ahead rose the great 20,000-foot Green Dragon. The top of it was shrouded in clouds. No matter, I started taking videos and still pictures. We drove quite a ways toward the base of the

mountain, and finally found what was left of the old gravel runway we used during the war. I couldn't recognize much of it. I looked around at the surroundings, and the only thing that came to mind was a pointed peak in the distance that I had used as a check point to line up with the runway. The runway was now a cow pasture.

(We'll leave Peter at the end of the runway and conclude his journal next issue. Save these pages because the photos are of sites yet visited but it will all become clear in the Summer SOUND-OFF. - Ed.)

Oklahoma City - OK



Peter Goutiere in two photos of the wing and wheel of Ship #53 which Peter had flown. This plane crashed March 11, 1943, killing Pilot Jim Fox and was located in June 1997 by fellow CNAC pilot, Fletcher Hanks.

THE HIMALAYAN ROGUE RETURNS

A complete journal written by Peter Goutiere, author of The Himalayan Rogue, and WW II CNAC pilot, upon his return to China last fall.

Part II

Hermie had me stand with my back to the mountain while his people took pictures. He also kept asking questions about the runway and why we used it. I think he plans to use all this in his next magazine. I, too, kept taking pictures, as I might never be coming back this way again. Perhaps, like some of CNAC friends, I will when I head for Hoky Taw!

It had been a great gathering that cold, breezy morning. As I talked to Hermie and answered questions, I felt nostalgia setting in and a lump in my throat. I couldn't believe I was reliving the past of more than 55 years ago.

After about an hour at the base of Lijiang Mountain, the Land Rover motorcade returned to the city. It was here that I had to say goodbye to my wonderful friends, Mr. Wong How Man (Hermie), Berry Sin and Stephen. They were ready to drive on further to a town called Zhongdian in the Tibetan area and then further into Tibet. They planned to be gone another three weeks. As I mentioned earlier, Hermie was always one jump ahead. He arranged that I should

have a guide here in Lijiang. Of course, he picked a charming young lady by the name of Cai Kui, also from Kunming. Cai spoke good English and knew her way around all of this area. She has a Ph.D. in Human Geography. I don't know what that means! She also works for CERS out of Kunming.

Cai immediately started to show me the ancient city of Lijiang. There were many arbored, cobblestone streets, most of which seemed to run north and south. The reason being, that a couple fast-flowing streams were flowing in the same direction through the Lijiang City. All the old buildings that probably dated back to the eighth and ninth century and mostly constructed with adobe-type bricks were now converted to small hotels and inns. All along the streets there were many restaurants of various kinds. Once could get pizza, hamburgers, Western or Chinese food. Along with all of this, there were many gift shops of all kinds. There was disco music in just about all these shops.

The evening Cai and I had dinner at a quaint café. It was a Ti-

betan style place. My appetite had still not caught up with me from Kunming! I was shy of what I ate. I did continue to eat mostly Chinese dishes and drink green tea. I noticed that Cai ordered Tibetan tea. This was regular tea served with yak milk, a little butter of the same and sometimes a dash of salt. She wanted me to try it, but no thanks!

During dinner I asked Cai why so many hotels and inns? And, so many restaurants? She stated that Lijiang had become a great tourist attraction. The season was from spring to October. Right now it was off season. Cai said that it would be difficult to get a room during that time. People come from all over China, Hong Kong, and many parts of the world, including the States. One of the big attractions is to see Lijiang Mountain. As I mentioned, now they have built a cable-car that goes half way up the mountain. I didn't wish to have a look.

I slept like a log that night. However, I had developed a bad sore throat and cough. I noticed that Hermie also had a bad cough. I hoped he would get over it, because he would be going to a higher and colder region. After breakfast at the Tibetan café, Cai took me to the old residence where the governors of old had lived and conducted official business. The residential palace was on a steep incline that overlooked the city.

November 19th was our last day at Lijiang. Cai and I drove out toward the mountain and the local bank. I needed to get some money to pay off the hotel. They didn't accept any type of credit cards yet. After getting the money, I looked toward the Jade Mountain, but it was completely overcast. I guess our old Green Dragon was hiding from me. It didn't want to show its craggy old face after more than 55 years. "So, Old Dragon, watch out for that cable-car they are erecting along your scaly back!" With that, I waved goodbye and we headed back to town. The sight-seeing was over, so I did a little curio shopping. Cai and I ate at our favorite Tibetan café. It was then I heard some strange music. I listened a minute and "I'll be damned!" The café was playing Christmas carols! How about that! Way over here near the border of Tibet!

Next morning, the 20th, Cai and I hopped a taxi to the new airport. The airport is about a 30-minute



With Mr. Wong How Man outside Yunnanyi.

drive and is located southeast of town. It's a first class one at that. Cai said it was needed here for the amount of tourists that arrive during the season. About 20 flights a day. It was impressive.

We waited about an hour for the arrival of our flight back to Kunming. The aircraft was a B-757. Cai suggested I hand my business card to the stewardess to give to the captain of our flight. She also muttered to the gal in Chinese; I think Cai was telling the gal that I was an old WW II pilot that flew once in this area. The stewardesses spoke and gave their announcements in English and Chinese. Later in the flight, the stewardess handed back my business card and on the back the captain had written a message to me in Chinese. Cai translated as: "I thank the American people for their support in WW II, and hope the friendship will live between the Chinese and Americans." Signed, Zhou Hongivo. After landing at Kunming, the captain greeted me. He didn't speak English, Cai did the honors. He said he once was a fighter pilot on MIGs for the Chinese Air Force. He was delighted to meet an old China (CNAC) pilot who flew the "Hump." I wished him well and hoped that maybe we would meet again.

Back at the Holiday Inn, I checked into the same room. I had a bunch of dirty laundry piled up from the Lijiang trip. I was informed that I would have it back that evening. I had said goodbye to Cai and thanked her very much for all the tours of Lijiang and help getting through the airport ticketing, etc. She was married and wanted to get home. I took it easy the rest of the day and just walked around some of the streets. No one paid much attention to me with the CBI patch on my cap. Among many of the autos that traveled the streets, I noticed quite a few Jeep Cherokees. I later asked my CERS friend if China imported these Jeeps. No, the Jeeps are manufactured in China!

The same evening, Mr. Zhang Fan of CERS phoned to tell me he would be taking me for an interview with the local Kunming paper called "The Metropolitan Times" first thing in the morning. Sure enough, after breakfast, Zhang showed up in his van. I was beginning to become familiar with some of the streets we kept driving over. He then turned into some side

streets and onto another area with large buildings on one side. He stopped in front of one of these and we got out. He said it was called Tai-gang Business Center. It looked like a large shopping mall. I followed Zhang into a courtyard or small park, and there in the middle of the park was a wing of an airplane. This whole area was roped off like old Betsy in Hong Kong. There were a couple of police guards standing nearby, and two or three well-dressed young fellows with cameras. Zhang didn't have to mention it, I knew what this was. The wing, which rested on a stump of a tree had to be the right wing of ship #53. This was Jim Fox's plane that crashed in March of 1943. I had flown this plane while in the process of checking it out. It was the same thing that stuck out when I took pictures of it in May 1943. The Chinese government had brought the wing down from the crash site on the Hump after my friend Christie Hanks had gone to find the plane back in June of 1996. Along with the wing they had also brought back a complete wheel and a crew oxygen bottle. The tire on the wheel looked in very good condition after having been in the rough jungle for 57 years. It probably still had smoggy Calcutta air in it!

At first the police were reluctant to let anyone past the roped area.

A lot of Chinese talk went on between them and the newspaper people. It was finally agreed that all of us could go on through. From then on, the reporters started asking questions about the plane and what I knew of it. I mentioned I had seen pilot Jim Fox crash the plane into the mountain; that I had taken several pictures of the C-53 plane before it hit the mountain in a snow storm. I promised that I would send them copies of those pictures and my book. The interview lasted for about half an hour. They said I would get a copy of their newspaper next day. We thanked the guards and left.

I was not through for the day. Zhang had arranged for two young ladies and a man to give me a tour of the national park where the Chinese had erected a huge monument for the American pilots and crews that gave their lives during flying the Hump in WWII. The girls' names were Cathy Na and Li Mei. They seemed excited that they were taking an American on a tour. They chatted and giggled a lot. This worried me a bit, because Li Mei was driving her little mini van and would gesture and giggle, etc., while we were ascending the high mountain area of the park. We finally did reach the spot where the monument rose up about 50 feet or so. Of course, the



Standing on old CNAC runway, Lijiang.

girls wanted their picture with me as well! Have no fear, the girls were married!

On the way back from the Hump Pilot's monument, the girls stopped at another interesting sight. It was the Tang Dynasty monastery. It was all walled in, but visitors were allowed in for a small fee. Along the main entrance there were several large-type urns that were burning incense. I was able to take quite a few photos, but there were certain areas with signs saying no cameras allowed. I would have liked to have spent more time there and learned more about this dynasty. However, my attractive guides and the gentleman that was with us (chaperone??) said they were taking me to the center of Kunming where the old lake is located. They called it Green Lake. I remember a lake of sorts when I had been in Kunming city during the war. I had forgotten all about it. The trip back was just as exciting as going up the mountains. The two gals kept up their talking and giggling even the girl driver, Mei, talked when hairpin turns were approached. I guess she didn't notice my putting on brakes on my side!

We got down to the city limits without mishap and found our way to the Green Lake. I had to admit it was quite beautiful. We found a parking spot and walked to the lakeside. Here I saw a wide walkway that circled the whole lake. Also, there were many apartment buildings that appeared to be on the expensive side. My escort then showed me some of the nice gift shops in the area. Here I found some gifts to take home for Christmas presents. When I approached the water's edge, there were thousands of terns and seagulls. I was told that the birds had started coming to the lake only a couple of years ago. I think one reason for that is that people were feeding them with handfuls of bread. I never did recognize the lake, though I do remember coming by those 50 odd years ago. It was now getting late and I had another appointment with Zhang. So, I was dropped off at the hotel, and I thanked my lovely hosts, and the man, for a wonderful trip to the park and Green Lake.

Zhang came by with another of his friends and drove me to one of his favorite restaurants for a Chinese dinner. At the entrance there

were two beautiful Chinese girls dressed in some sort of traditional costumes. I couldn't resist this, so I asked Zhang if it would be okay to have my picture taken with them. No problem! They were most obliging. I guess they must have been asked this many times over. The dinner was sumptuous. Yet, I couldn't eat too much. I still had to take it easy. It was a shame to have to refuse a lot of tasty dishes that came my way. I think Zhang understood. He then dropped me off at the hotel and said he would be around next morning to do some more shopping.

The next morning, Zhang couldn't make it due to some work at the office, but sent one of his friends instead. We toured the city and Green Lake. I wanted to get back to Kunming Lake again and try to get another shot of Scarface Mountain. However, there was trouble with the car engine, so we canceled it.

Late that afternoon, Zhang did come and pick me up. We drove to a place I hadn't seen before; it was one of Kunming's new schools. Zhang stopped nearby and pointed to a sign on the front a building. The sign read "Flying Tiger Bar!" As we entered the bar, I was greeted by some of the people from the local newspaper that had in-

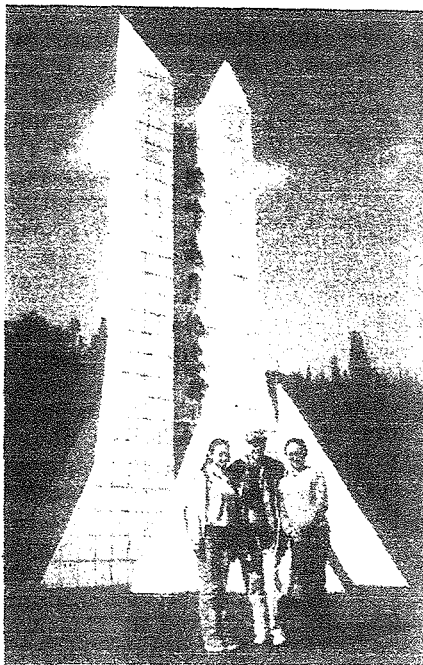
terviewed me the day before. They handed me a copy of the paper and there I was making the headlines! The bar, come café, was neat and clean and not too many customers. Perhaps the reason being, they served Western food and not Chinese. The place was covered with many photos of the war time Flying Tiger personnel, with one of General Chennault. On one of the corner walls was an enclosed frame with a very old A-2 flying jacket. The jacket was back to front and displayed the "blood chit." It was so old that the Chinese flag was hardly noticeable. I had to get close to recognize it. There was no name as to whom it had once belonged. On a further wall there was a large oil painting of a P-40 with its shark face; and in front was a group of pilots. It must have been copied from one of the Flying Tiger books. The owner of the bar showed me a list of the Flying Tiger names. I went through the long list of names and recognized many of them; especially the group that came to work for CNAC. After that, I was shown their guest book. I had the honor of being the first foreigner and American pilot to sign it. Then the owner insisted I had to have a free drink from the bar. What would I like? I said I would like a Johnny Walker Black



Captain Ian Quinn and Peter Goutierre in the cockpit of a B-747-400 in Hong Kong.

Label! And damned if they didn't have it! I made the mistake of saying in Chinese that I would like cold water with it. They looked at me in surprise, then brought me a glass of hot water! Anyway, it was good for my sore throat! I might add that every WWII pilot in China is known as a Flying Tiger Pilot.

After my "hot scotch" drink, Zhang and friends drove me to another bar and café. This place evidently was Zhang's and reporter friends' hangout. I was surprised to see the place packed with people. They had arranged for me to give an informal talk here with an interpreter. They even had a mike set up for us. I talked about the Hump flying and about seeing Jim Fox hit the mountain. Also, about Joe Rosbert hitting a mountain at 16,000 feet and living to tell about it. The group seemed to enjoy all that I had to say. Later, while enjoying hot ginger tea for the sore throat, one of the girl reporters asked me about my love life! Somewhere I think Zhang must have known about my book where I had mentioned being married several times and making love to a girl going across the Hump one dark night! This must have been passed on to friends. I skimmed over most of it and they seemed satisfied. When it was all over, I gave the girl a big kiss and everyone cheered! It had been a great day and evening with my new found friends. I found it difficult to break away and head back to the hotel with Zhang. But the time had



With my guides at "Hump" pilot memorial, Kunming, Nov. 2000.

come to say goodbye; perhaps one day I may return.

I can't say enough about the city of Kunming. My new friends were most gracious and helped me a lot to get around and see places. They wine and dined me, and I had a hard time trying to pay my way. The streets were clean and spacious. The bicyclers kept in their lanes. Many women riding them did so with papoose-like rigs on their backs with one or two kids in them! The women also dressed neatly and looked trim with very

little makeup. Most of them wore slacks and jackets. Men were dressed in casuals and not Chinese style. The place seemed to be very westernized. The police cars were the same as in the States. The Holiday Inn was clean. The staff was polite and spoke good English. The restaurant served a variety of foods. Everyone used knives and forks. If you wished chopsticks; be my guest! I could not see or identify any part of the city that would remind me of 55 years ago. I truly hope I can visit Kunming again.

Next morning, November 24th, Zhang came to take me to the airport. He got me through most of the ticketing and baggage handling. Finally, after going through immigration, the time had come to say goodbye to my good friend Zhang. I promised I would write and send him my book. This I plan to do as soon as the holiday season is finished. I will continue to keep in touch with him and also the group who interviewed me at their favorite bar.

I realized the area where I stood in the terminal could very well have been where our CNAC building was located. It was all very strange. I boarded the B-757 and realized we would be taking off to the south as we did in the old C-47s! The flight was less than two hours to Hong Kong. I also noted that there appeared to be four major domestic airlines operating in China. Namely: North China, South China, West China and East China Airlines. I learned too that old CNAC is also operating domestically, but didn't see any of their planes. I did see some of their airport vehicles on the ramp with CNAC written on them, but not the old "Chung" logo sign. The aircraft used were mostly Boeing 737, 757 and 767. Again, there was no stampede to get on. There was no hold up while passengers placed carry-on baggage in the overhead racks. Everything seemed to be so orderly. I liked that.

At Hong Kong International Airport I was met by the Panda Hotel limo that whisked me back to the hotel.

After checking in, there was a message for me from Captain Quinn. It seems Pat Garrett of Cathay Pacific Airlines had arranged for me to meet a group of their high officials at a luncheon for me and asked if I would be kind



Receptionists in traditional dress at entrance to Chinese restaurant in Kunming, November 2000.

enough to give a talk. The word was out that I had known Roy Farrell and Syd DeKantzow and had ridden in old Betsy back in 1946. Ian said he would pick me up on Sunday, 26th, to stay at his place. We would go next day, Monday, for lunch at CPA Headquarters, located at the airport. It meant riding the smooth, electric train from Hong Kong Island to the airport. It's a great little ride.

Next morning I said goodbye to Joachim Burger of the Panda Hotel. Ian didn't meet me; it was his Filipino girl Ellie instead. Ian was on standby. Ellie and I took a cab all the way back to Stanley. Ian was taken off the CPA standby around two that afternoon. So, it was down to Smuggler's Bar! After that we went around the corner to an Indian restaurant. As we sat and mulled over the menu, Ian asked if I had retained any of the Hindi language. I said I would give it a try with the Indian waiter. The waiter was a Nepalese, but did speak Hindi. We had a good conversation about India. I told him about myself and why I was able to speak the language. I mentioned that I was born in India and had lived many years there, including the time of WW II. Ian said he was impressed! I still could not eat any hot food, so I just had simple lentils and rice.

Monday morning Ian and I were on our way to the airport. I told him I enjoyed the train ride. It was most comfortable and not jammed pack with sweaty people. After the train, we took a CPA bus to the operations building. After showing me around the first floor that consisted of a fancy cafeteria and gift shops, etc., we were met by some CPA personnel that escorted us up to the top floor and on into the restaurant. I think it was called the Catalina. It was a fairly large place that overlooked most of the airport and sea, with the high hills in the distance. We were seated at a long table with about ten to twelve people. I was introduced to my CPA hosts by Ian, and during the meal I was asked to talk about Roy Farrell and Syd DeKantzow, my two good friends.

I talked about Syd and Roy and the old days we had with CNAC; also about the tiger hunting at the Maharajah of Cooch Behar's Palace. I talked about the old C-53 places we flew before getting the more modern C-47s that the Eng-

lish called Dakotas and how we flew the infamous "Hump." While talking, I didn't get to do much eating! But, I enjoyed being with this group from CPA and felt almost part of them. When I had finished talking and answering questions, one of the members, I think it was Captain Alder, asked if I would like to take a flight around Hong Kong in a small aircraft. I would really like that, but I had another thought. I asked, that instead of such a flight which I appreciated, I wondered if it was possible to just sit in the cockpit of one of their B-747s and have my picture taken. I said this would then complete a circuit from flying in their first DC-3 "Betsy" in 1946, to be in one of their jumbo jets as a finishing touch for a great airline and in memory of two wonderful friends that started it. This would be for them. So, it was arranged.

After saying goodbye to most of my hosts, I was taken to the training center and simulators. I was then ushered into the left seat of a B-747-200 with the instructor pilot in the right seat. Ian was behind with the video all set to take pictures.

As I sat in the left seat of this 747 simulator. I started to look around at the instrument panel and pedestal to familiarize myself with all the bits and gadgets. A lot of it appeared strange and some came back to me. After all, I hadn't been in a cockpit of a 747 for nearly 16 years. However, I was not expecting to fly this machine and was waiting for Ian or someone in the back to let me know they were ready to take my picture. I was wondering if I should give a big smile or not! About then, the CPA captain in the right seat said all was set for take off. Oh no! I was going to fly this thing? I looked around at the back and there were several people grinning at me! Ian had the video going and making motions for me to go.

I looked ahead and saw the visual display was on and we were lined up on the runway. I think it may have been runway 25. Wow! The check pilot said again, "Clear for takeoff." I gradually eased the power levers forward and we started down the runway. Somehow I think I was doing the right thing according to take off procedures! The pilot called the airspeeds and required V-speeds. I rotated and we were airborne with

the gear and flaps up. Before I knew it, the airspeed was building up fast to around 300 knots. The pilot, at the same time, was giving me vectors for an ILS approach to the same runway. I leveled out at 2500 feet and tried to get the darn airspeed back to around 250 knots. I finally got the correct headings and airspeed. I eventually got the plane lined up with the runway and the speed necessary for landing. I was given the flaps and gear down command. I felt that I was getting the hang of things. I just hoped he would not cut an engine on me now! I had all I could do to keep her coming on down on the glide-slope for the runway. I could make out the runway ahead with the approach light flashing (rabbit). I asked if all was clear for landing and the final check list complete. I was clear to land. Everything seemed in order, even the airspeed was on the mark. We came over the runway threshold and the pilot called out the required altitudes. Fifty feet, thirty, and then ten. By this time I had cut the power and flared. I held my breath for a hard landing, but, lo and behold, the only indication I got was the spoilers (speed brakes) deployed to say we were on the ground! My audience in the back gave a cheer and clapped. I turned and said, "Please pass the scotch!!"

Though my new friends did not hear it, I also said, "That one was for you, Roy and Syd." I asked Ian if he had taken a few shots with the video. He stated he hadn't stopped since the takeoff. I thanked all the CPA members in the cockpit for having allowed me to be here and have this opportunity to give the last "hurrah" for my two friends. I was then told we were to go back up to the lounge and meet the rest of my hosts for a drink and have a few more pictures taken. All of a sudden I felt I was back in the training department of Pan-American and TWA. It was difficult to tear myself away from the cockpit. But the time had come!

I was led back up by the check captain, Ian and the others, to the top floor again as the bar is near to the restaurant where we met the others at lunch. I had mentioned to the group at the luncheon, that Syd DeKantzow and I had bought a surplus military L-5 observation plane that we kept in Calcutta.

However, I later crashed it on the lawn at Cooch Behar Palace! One of the group picked up that statement and told me he learned to fly in an L-5 down in Australia. Captain Bent also stated that he still owns the aircraft in Sydney; should I be able to find my way down there, he would be happy to check me out in the plane. It would certainly be a great thrill for me. Perhaps one day!

A B-747 model plane of Cathay Pacific was brought into the lounge and photos were taken of all of us standing behind it. After that had finished, I mentioned to the group about moving the old DC-3, Betsy, from its present location at the museum over to the new Hong Kong International Airport where it truly belongs. One person thought it a great idea, but instead of the terminal building, he suggested that it be placed at the entrance of the CPA administrative building where we were. That sounded good too, but would there be enough room for it? I hope these folks will pursue the project further and let me know the outcome. Farewells were now in order and I wished all of them a great forthcoming Holiday Season and a successful 2001 year.

Ian and I then took the train back to the Island and then on to his apartment in Stanley. My head was still buzzing with all that had been happening these past few days with CPA. Being allowed to fly their 747 simulator around and make an approach and landing was a highlight for me at age 86! Then, a chance to meet some of the top executives of the airline and talk about the old days of CNAC and knowing Roy and Syd. I doubt that I would ever forget any of this, and just hope I can continue to keep in contact with them.

The next few days I spent at Ian's home. He was a great host and friend. He took me shopping at the local market where I was able to buy quite a few items to take back home for Christmas presents. Ian and several of his chums share a good size power boat that is kept at Aberdeen Yacht Club. One day, he arranged for some of his friends and myself to take a ride around the islands. It was a beautiful day for boating. It was a wonderful outing and a pleasure to meet some of his friends. Again, all good things have got to an end. This was it!

Ian had informed me that his schedule had been changed. He was going to be the captain of my flight back as far as Vancouver. I would then be continuing on to JFK, New York and home.

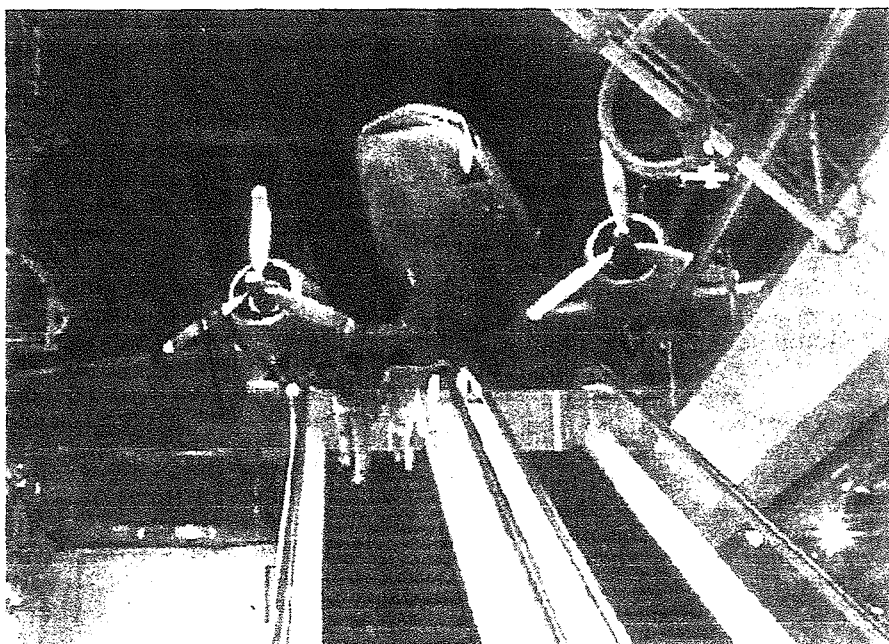
The day of my departure was December 1st. Ian and I took a taxi this time to the airport. He made sure I got through the ticketing and then pointed me in the right direction for the departure lounge. Once on board the 747-400 jumbo, a stewardess ushered me up the stairs to the upper level near the cockpit entrance. I guess Ian had arranged my seating for me. In due course, I entered the cockpit and had the jumpseat and watched Ian and the first officer navigate (INS) their course along the west coast of Taiwan and on to Vancouver. Ian made a straight in approach and perfect landing. This is when Ian would get off and a new crew would take the flight on to New York. I said goodbye and thanked him again for all his hospitality.

The new captain had me in the cockpit for the approach into JFK. It was night and the whole of New Jersey and New York were glistening with lights. As always, and as far back as I can remember, JFK airport is difficult to locate visually because it seemed obscured by the amount of lights that surround the whole area. Thanks to modern navigation, I saw we were lined up to land on runway 31R. Again, another smooth landing and cleared to taxi in.

Since I joined the FAA in 1962, I have made and witnessed hundreds of landings into Kennedy Airport. During the old days, a mechanic of the airline would usually direct the captain by using two wands. At night the wands would be lighted for better vision. Sometimes, when the plane is getting close in to the docking area, it may be necessary for the mechanic to stand on the hood of a ramp vehicle for the captain to see him. When the 747 arrived in the early seventies, the airports invented red and green lights situated right in front of the parking spot. This method did away with the mechanic and the wands. Now, here we were in the 21st century with a Cathay Pacific Airlines operating the most modern B-747-400 equipment; and what does JFK offer to guide the big jet to dock? Right! A mechanic with lighted wands standing on the hood of a ramp vehicle. I was now back in the dark ages! I felt embarrassed. I thanked the captain and departed.

I spent a few days with my daughter in Connecticut. My throat and cough was now bad in this cold climate. The temperature being down in the teens. She took me to a doctor that diagnosed it as a bad case of bronchitis. I was given a bunch of antibiotic pills to take and hope for the best. In a few days I felt better and thought it okay to travel south and home.

At LaGuardia Airport I went to Delta Airlines ticket counter where



"Betsy," Cathay-Pacific's first plane suspended from a Hong Kong ceiling. Peter's revelation that he had flown this plane created quite a stir.

I had reservations for a direct flight to Tampa, FL. The agent looked at my ticket and said, "Sorry, that flight has been canceled!" Why? "No crew!" Only in America!

Delta stuck me on another flight that went via Atlanta where I had to cool my heels for a couple hours, then catch another Delta flight to Tampa. I finally arrived home around 6:30 in the evening. A normal two-hour flight. LaGuardia to Tampa, had taken me 12 hours to get home. Evelyn and Tiger were there to welcome me back. I told Evelyn I really needed a scotch now, antibiotics or not. I settled back in an easy chair with my scotch and relaxed.

I had been gone a little over six weeks and so much had happened during that time. My mind had become a bit confused and boggled. I showed Evelyn some of the videos I had taken on the trip. I then had to figure out how to make prints of the still, digital photos I had taken. I gave up and got a friend to help me out. Most of the shots looked pretty good. But, I was still sorry to have lost the first video I had taken around Hong Kong.

The first few night I was restless and kept thinking about my trip. Not so much of the present, but mixing it up with the past. I remember the time I made my first trip to Hong Kong early in 1946 from Chungking. I was way off course and made a dead reckoning let down amongst some craggy mountains, when I thought I was well over the sea.

After seeing the right wing of Jim Fox's C-53 plane in Kunming, I recall seeing Jim, Sharkey, and Welsh flying ahead of me, looking for a pass in the mountains to get through at 10,000 feet. Then, the vicious wind and storm came over the ridges. In the meantime, I had taken several pictures of the planes ahead with Fox nearest me. It was moments later when the storm sucked Fox's plane into the mountain and crashed. I had flown in that plane before and now it was gone with my friend Fox. In Kunming, the year 2000, I was standing by the wing of that airplane, 57 years later. It was hard to believe. My friend of CERS, Zhang Fan, had taken me to the area where once those of us in CNAC had passed through the main gate of the city. The old gate had gone, in its place what he called the "Golden Horse Gate." Zhang took

my picture at the new gate. I now look at the picture and compare it with the old one I was given to me by Jim Dalby.

Mr. Wong How Man, after seeing a picture in my book of Joe Robert's ship #58, has shown interest and perhaps will make a trek to it. I thought back of the time when Joe and Hammell had survived that crash and were telling some of us at our CNAC bungalow about the harrowing experience. When on instruments he had turned back to Dinjan because of severe icing conditions; had suddenly slid into a mountain glacier at 16,000 feet. The only instrument telling the truth was the altimeter, reading 16,000 feet. I hope Hermie makes the trip. I have shown him basically where the crash site is. The plane later slid down the mountain to about 12,000 feet. That was about the height when I took the picture a year later in 1944.

I thought about Hermie and the CERS group that took me to Likang (now Liliang) about a month ago. In the morning we had driven to the base of the high Likang Mountain. Back here at home, I was thinking again of the old days when we flew around that high peak, which is around 20/21,000 feet, we would experience a lot of rough air. CNAC installed a radio station at Likang to help navigate around the mountain during the bad weather months. I remember landing on the old gravel runway and hoping none of the pebbles would hit the spinning props. I was remembering all this again now at home.

There was Lake Tali (now called Dali). How often had we flown over that site and the 14,000-foot mountain that protects the lake. Having flown over that mountain on a clear day, I saw where two military planes had crashed on top. I was reliving all this again after more than 50 years. I told Hermie some of these stories as we drove from Kunming through Tali (Dali) and Likang (Lijiang) when we were at the Green Dragon Mountain. He seemed very interested to know that I remembered so much after all those years. To me, it was like yesterday.

Back home here in Port Richey, Florida, I find it difficult to settle down to my normal way of life. So much has taken place in the past few weeks. I have been on cloud nine and find it difficult to come

back to earth! I guess I did when I found myself mowing the lawn again!

Now in closing, I wish to thank my new found friends, Mr. Wong How Man, Berry Sin and Zhang Fan of China Exploration and Research Society (CERS) for their kindness and hospitality shown me when I was their guest in Hong Kong and mainland China. It is a highlight of my life and an experience that will live with me always.

Also, many thanks to Captain Ian Quinn, Patrick Garrett, and all the executives of Cathay Pacific Airlines that I had the pleasure of meeting and may our association continue.

I also wish to thank Mr. Joachim Burger for the hospitality shown me at this splendid hotel called the "PANDA!"

— LETTERS —

Burmese Panda

To the Editor:

I enjoyed reading "Tiger in the Village" by Carl J. Sutherland in your Spring 2001 issue.

Back in November '43, about 50 of us from the 502 Combat M.P. Battalion were reassigned to Composite Unit 5303 and sent up the Refuge Trail into Burma. It was a grueling march over the foothills of the Himalayas (Naga Hills), but we encountered no serious opposition from the animal kingdom. The monkeys in the jungle canopy did a lot of chattering but there were no big cats.

Surprisingly we did have one guest at Shingbuiyang. In mid-December 1943, a young panda, about 20 inches tall, was found in our area. He (or she) was a welcome curiosity for a few days - it was kept on a leash by our mess basha. But, alas, after a few days it was gone. Apparently it chewed through the leash and escaped back into the jungle.

None of us, I'm sure, were aware of how rare an animal we had encountered. I suppose we were one of the first units in the US Army to play host to a panda!
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DEADLINES!

January 1 - April 1

July 1 - October 1

A Tale of Lots of Searches and Few Rescues

By Leon Toussaint, Service Office, Chicago Basha

I left New York on the HMS Mauretania on my birthday, May 8, 1943. I thought to myself, "Here we are on an English ship. We must be going to England." So, for a birthday present I was given a small book, "Learning to speak Hindustani." I almost jumped overboard. Here I was with 12,000 plus troops on this boat packed like sardines, below the water line on D deck, unescorted, with probably a zillion miles of ocean to travel, possibly running into Nazi sub-wolfpacks, or surface raiders. All these happy thoughts were running wild through my mind.

We crossed the equator twice with stops at Trinidad, Rio de Janeiro and then a layover in Capetown, South Africa, of 24 hours duration. All the Mauretania troops were marched through town to the cheers of the Afrikaners (Boers) who tossed food and candy to us. Girls along the march route grabbed some of the lucky GIs and hugged and kissed them. I was one of the lucky ones. In fact, I corresponded with Renee Wagener, one of the prettiest along the route, while 'vacationing' in the CBI.

We arrived in Capetown on June 1, 1953, and winter down here was close to setting in . . . and the seas around the Cape of Good Hope were very rough. I just barely kept down what the British called food! We passed Madagascar on June 12th and came into Colombo, Ceylon, on June 18th. There, we disembarked and boarded another vessel, it was the Strathmore. In convoy with two other ships we headed for Bombay. We had a variety show on board the ship and I sang my very own composition to the tune of the Pennsylvania Polka. I recall vividly the last two lines in the song, "Everybody had the mania . . . to get their a . . . off the Mauretania."

We reached Bombay around June 22nd which made it a total of 45 days at sea. How do you like 'dem apples? From Bombay, we took one of the plush Indian trains to a beautiful British resort called Deolali. It was truly a delightful place. For a couple of hundred years the British soldiers had used



Chicago Basha Past Commander Leon Toussaint is shown holding the award presented to him by the city of Silvis, IL, for the part he played in honoring the veterans of that city who died while fighting with U.S. Forces in Burma in WW II.

Carl Heinze Photo

it as a rest camp! A place where they waited and waited for some ship to take them home. Thus, the British idiom "I'm going deolali," meaning, of course, "I'm going coo-coo."

Then, several others and I came down with gastroenteritis. We were hospitalized and I must say the British sisters (nurses) gave us darn good care. At this time, also, the monsoon was at the height. Anyway, we were soon discharged and left for Calcutta on one of the Indian streamliners, arriving there July 21st. We reached Chabua on July 24th and our final destination, Jorhat, on the 27th. I was assigned to the 77th Squadron of the 22nd Transport Group. Things were rather routine until August 2nd when word came that flight number 2420, carrying John Davies, political advisor to General Stilwell, Eric Sevareid, war correspondent, along with four crew members and 15 passengers, including two Chinese officers had crashed near a Naga village. (Sevareid later wrote a book about this

mission: "My Friends, the Head Hunters.")

The co-pilot, Lt. Chuck Felix, had stayed with the plane so that the others could bail out. But, it was too late for him to jump when his time came. We found his body under the plane's wreckage and he was buried at the site with an appropriate eulogy for a hero such as he. Sgt. Walter Oswalt, RO, broke his leg jumping from the C-46. Wing Flight Surgeon (I-C Wing) Lt. Col. Flickinger and two good friends of mine, Cpl. MacKenzie, from New Jersey and Sgt. Passey from Montana, bailed out over the crash site with food and medicine . . . and lots of silver rupees as well as salt for the Nagas who later would act as guides and litter bearers. They hiked about 140 miles through thick jungle before we finally met them with jeeps and an ambulance.

Cpl. MacKenzie gave the eulogy for Lt. Felix. As a result of Lt. Felix's heroism, all lives were saved. Hopefully, he received the C.M.H. Lt. Col. Flickinger went on to becoming a full general and was transferred to aero-space medicine at Camp Kennedy, later.

We had another air-raid on August 5. The enemy was up there in the sky alright but when our P-40s scrambled, the Japanese flyboys skeddaddled. August the 9th, a C-87 with five friends of mine on board was reported missing on a flight from China to Jorhat. Air search proved futile. September 10th a C-87 crashed in an inaccessible area. All five of the crew were killed. September 21st, a C-87 crashed several miles in the jungle from Jorhat on takeoff. Could not get sufficient lift due to overload. Five were killed and buried at Jorhat. I took the only survivor, a Lt. Wall, to base hospital. Hopefully he recovered. November 26th, another C-87 on route from Kunming to Jorhat radioed all were bailing out. Crew of four. We found two eventually. The other two were MIA. November 30th, flight #7270, also a C-87 coming from Yunnanyi, China, to Jorhat got lost and disoriented and the four crew people bailed out over Tibet, of all places.

(Leon Toussaint's story of Crashes, Searches and Rescue will be continued in the next SOUND-OFF. Save this page for that issue. - Ed.)

ATLANTA IN AUGUST!

A Tale of Lots of Searches and Few Rescues

By Leon Toussaint, Service Office, Chicago Basha

(In the Spring issue of SOUND-OFF, Leon described his voyage in 1943 from New York to Bombay on the HMS Mauretania; his attack of gastroenteritis upon arrival; his move to Chabua; and his part in the search and rescue of crews and passengers of downed aircraft – including that which carried Eric Sevareid. We left his account with flight #7270, a C-87 from Yunnanyi to Jorhat, lost and disoriented and the crew of four bailing out over Tibet. – Ed.)

* * *

That flight; and loss made an interesting news story in YANK Magazine, CBI ROUNDUP and the news media back home. Colliers, for example, had a lengthy article about it and about Lt. Bob Crozier and his men in the 9/23/1944 issue. Photographs of the guys taken in Tibet were included with the article.

December 20, 1943, a B-24 with Lt. Jean De Long and a crew of four, all friends of mine, collided in mid-air with a C-46 carrying a crew of four. All were killed. January 4, 1944, another C-87 crash. This one remains the most vivid in my memory. Just after midnight we were jolted from our bunks by a loud explosion, followed by another, then still another. We jumped into our fatigues, gathered the necessary medical supplies and raced to the scene a few miles in the jungle from our base. Just as we got to the site, another explosion. This particular C-87 was also overloaded with fuel and bombs for China. It appeared that the plane struggling to gain altitude struck a basha hut. The ironic twist to this is that the radio operator had attempted to be put on DNIF (Duty not involving flying). He was a sick man and a total nervous wreck. I've forgotten his name but recall the incident well. He was in no condition to fly, but since he had no replacement, the flight surgeon had no choice but to deny him DNIF and thus he had to fly.

The problem was this: Here he was, still only a corporal after 2-1/2 years of service, in the CBI with umpteen hours of flight time. This was usually the case. You see,



Leon P. Toussaint was recently honored by his home community of Naperville, IL, when the Naperville Jaycees presented him their 1992 Distinguished Service Award in the Cultural and Historical Category. Leon dons the costume of a French voyageur and relives the history of the settling of Northern Illinois by his ancestors for the benefit of audiences, both young and old.

Carl Heinze Photo

rank (promotions) didn't come easy for FLYING non-coms. It was different with officers, of course. But, flying non-coms were overlooked. So, now come those 90 day temporary duty high ranking non-coms fresh out of the States. They were supposed to take their turn flying the Hump . . . these guys had maybe 1-1/2 years in the service accumulated in the States as permanent cadre – so when they came to CBI they passed the flying buck to the lower ranking non-coms, who had already flown beyond their limit. It just wasn't fair to treat men that way – but that's the way the cookie crumbles . . . Life is like that at times . . . and death, too!

Most planes were overloaded, especially the C-87s. There were just not enough planes nor crews to meet the demand of the stuff needed in China. Although official reports never mentioned over-

loading as the cause of a crash, take my word for it . . . it was. Our base commander, Col. Bob Greenlee, was killed in the rescue attempt when an unexploded bomb went off on a C-87.

My immediate commanding officer, Major John Walke, (one heck of a nice guy) had a piece of his skull torn away and huge gouges torn out of his flesh by shrapnel. Brain surgery had to be performed. Yes, his life was saved after just hanging in there by a thread for about a month. He retired as a Colonel and lives in Virginia. We keep in touch.

Capt. Bob Jordan lost a leg and an eye. This is recorded by Capt. Wage, our Catholic chaplain, in his booklet, which I have and is called, "Five Miles Closer to Heaven." He, too, had to bail out over the Hump and spent several weeks in the jungle before being found. I don't recall the names of the crew on that flight and I believe all of them were blown to bits. There was just nothing left to bury.

January 25, 1944, a C-87 crew of four was flying from Jorhat to China. They didn't make it. It was either engine failure or wing-ice. Only Sgt. Paul Beauchamp, the crew chief and who was my dear friend, survived the bail-out. He walked for 38 days before finding refuge.

January 25 Flight # unknown was reported missing. It was either a C-47 or a C-46. A crazy buddy of mine, Red Hughes, was the R.O. on the flight. About 4-5 weeks later, while watching cartoon films at the 'Mosquito Drome,' . . . remember SNAFUPERMAN? here comes this guy, Red, haggard, bedraggled, skinny, dehydrated . . . and what was worse . . . constipated. Several of us carried him first to a shower and then placed him in sick bay. He began to sob. "Leon, I think I'm gonna die. I think I busted my appendix. Here, feel this, the pain in my belly here is awful. Can you do something?"

I felt around the area he mentioned, sure enough, it was hard as the Rock of Gibraltar. I told someone to get their butt in gear and get the Flight Surgeon. I then told the Surgeon what I thought was the problem with Red. He also felt the area and said, "Aha, give Red a strong dose of an epsom salt enema."

By this time, Red was really

bawling because he didn't want to die. He really didn't. "I'm only 21, I'm too young to die," he carried on. Needless to say, Red didn't die. The Flight Surgeon began to laugh, all of us standing around began to laugh and then Red began to laugh, too. Red laughed so hard . . . he didn't need the enema. He just got us and said, "I've got to go fast, watch out!"

What a happy day that was for good old Red. As a civilian, he had been a drummer with a number of swing bands, including a short stint with Tommy Dorsey. In our group, Red was the drummer for a very successful GI stage show called 'Hum Happy.' You've probably heard of it. It was produced by CBler Melvyn Douglas at Jorhat (APO 466). I can tell you, it was the most hilarious stage comedy we had ever seen. Did you ever laugh 'till you cried? Well, that was us in 'Hump Happy', hysterical. No other word for it. Wherever you are, Red, I hope you're still in the "swing of things."

March 18, 1944, another C-87 crew of five was killed on flight from China to Jorhat. Bodies could not be recovered due to inaccessibility of the terrain. Lost three friends, Capt. John Arnold, Cpl. Lloyd Desormeaux, R.O., and Win Gage, C.C.

June 22, 1944, a C-87 with four crew members were killed on take-off, due to overloading, about four miles from the base. It took several hours to reach the crash site and bring back parts of bodies for burial in the Jorhat U.S. Military Cemetery.

September 6, 1944, another crew on a C-87 was killed. The pilot, 1st Lt. John Dietzel, was well liked by everyone. All were buried at the site. Most attempts at rescue were not successful. Some men we found, many we didn't. Exact location and terrain were the determining factors, and enemy patrols.

I've recorded here those whom I deciphered from my WW II diary. I was injured on one mission with shrapnel in back. The time was the earthquake of October 23, 1943, which almost did me in. It was about midnight when the earthquake hit on a clear full moon night. I jumped from my bunk, thinking it was an air raid and just made it to door when the roof and heavy stone walls fell in on my head. I received deep cuts, bruises and a concussion. My bunk had

been smashed to pieces and clothes torn to shreds. And, there I stood B.A.N. trying to find my shorts. Boy! Talk about modesty at a time like that. I recall I was having double vision just before I passed out.

Anyway, some nice guys from the base found me and I awoke at the base hospital . . . just thankful to be alive.

There's much more to my story, but that will come later, if you wish. Boy, it's a good thing we were young then. If I had to do it over again . . . like now . . . I'd never make it. So, stay fluid, keep moving and stay tuned . . . for the rest of the story.

Aussie Response to Singapore Story

(SOUND-OFF exchanges publications with the Burma Star Association of New South Wales, Australia. The editor of the "Aussie Dekhol", Ken Joyce, responds as follows to Hugo Schramm's Ships Column treatment of Singapore in the Winter edition of this magazine. - Ed.)

* * * * *

SINGAPORE. We veterans have had to suffer the wide application of hind-sight by various writers over happenings in World War Two. Regarding Singapore, here in Australia we have had loud-mouthed politicians spreading distortions and down right lies about the ill-fated campaign in Malaya and Singapore.

The Brits are castigated for not being better prepared but people seem to forget that by early December, 1941, the British along with their Dominion allies such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa stood alone to assist Russia against the might of Germany, Italy, Vichy France, plus Finland, Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria. At the time her most important American ally, President Roosevelt, was near powerless to help in the face of Congressional opposition supported by Joseph Kennedy, most vocal in opposition to all things British as compared to the Nazis.

The German Army was only 20 odd miles away across the Channel. The Luftwaffe was able under the cover of darkness to bomb British cities at will. Rommel was hell bent for the Suez Canal, the

U-Boats were having a field day in the Atlantic. It is not our place to defend the wartime leaders for many of their questionable decisions but who could possibly have foreseen a Pacific Ocean with the capital ships of the U.S. Navy and the Royal Navy so completely out of action.

The whole matter can better be put into perspective by recalling that at about the same time the French had given up without a fight in Indo-China, the American forces in the Philippines amounting to 140,000 men, including 30,000 from the States, had succumbed to a much smaller force of Japs than that which took Malaya, the gallant Dutch forces of 98,000 had been obliged to surrender in Java. In Singapore, the British had a garrison of 38,000 from the U.K. plus some 18,000 Australians. The bulk of the forces were men from the Indian Army, not well trained and nowhere as effective as they turned out to be in the Burma Campaign where eventually they helped to account for some 180,000 Japs out of a force of 350,000.

As Viscount Slim, the son of the 14th Army commander, said at the last Burma Star Reunion in London in 1992, "*... no matter what these young politicians say, after the military disasters of early 1942, you didn't go to water, you went out and did the job, you stuck together and with the help of your comrades from the old Empire and the United States, you rid the world of the Japanese menace.*"

One correction in the article: Sir Shenton Thomas, the Governor of Singapore did not leave the city. He and his wife refused to be evacuated and were taken prisoner by the Japs. The Island of Sentosa is worth a mention. Sentosa means 'peace and tranquillity.' The Island had been always called Blackang Matti, i.e., 'cleave to death,' and had been part of the seaward defence of Keppel Harbour. On this island the Japanese massacred a large number of the Chinese civilian population and also a number of allied POWs. It is now a very pleasant resort island.

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History of Company "B" 758th Railroad Shop Bn.

By Sergeant George C. Pratt

The following story is the history of one of these cogs in the big machine. The story of a Railroad Shop Outfit, men of the rails, iron backbone of the Corps. Herein you will find the birth and growth of Company "B" - 758th Railroad Shop Battalion.

On the outskirts of the picturesque town of New Orleans, near the banks of the Big Muddy, lies the United States Army Camp Harahan. Standing in the shadow of the famed Huey Long Bridge, its long rows of two story frame barracks and wide drill fields present an impressive sight to the traveler and the native alike.

During the first few days of April, 1943, in an area marked No. 7 was found a nucleus of men that would become the framework of which Company "B" of the 758th was to be formed. The Army decreed that at 2401 hours, 6 April 1943, Company "B" would be established. This Company would make up the boiler, blacksmith and foundry portion of the 758th Railway Shop Battalion. At the helm of the newly formed Company stood Capt. Cecil R. Kirkwood. The other officers were 1st Lt. Walter J. Shiffer and 2nd Lt. Howard Shreffler. Now the work of making an effective unit began. A way of life was to be changed "en mass" from that of civilian to that of the Army way. Collective thought and collective action were to replace the individual in order to meet a common cause.

To bring about this change in the best and easiest manner, the Army uses close order drill, the fundamental basic of all Army training. The men of Company "B" can, without effort, recall to memory many an aching limb and sore feet caused by the sun-grilled heat of Harahan's drill field which was composed of white oyster shells. The heat bore down out of a cloudless sky and turned Army fatigues into a sodden mass that clung to perspiration soaked bodies. The "treadmill of Hades" was the Company's classroom.

7 May 1943: On this day a string of "side door Pullmans" pulled into the camp siding. We



Chuck Hall is shown with Jim Rutledge in Jim's room at the new Missouri Veterans Home in North St. Louis County. Jim, one of the first occupants of the 200 room facility, served with the 758th R.R. Bn. in India.

Dave Dale Photo

entrained with full field packs and rifles at 1400 hours, off to the Slidell Rifle Range to put into effect our past training. After a bone bruising ride of 40 miles that took us along beautiful Lake Ponchartrain and north over swamplands and lightly timbered flat land, we arrived at Slidell, LA. It was here that we were to master the use of the 1903 Enfield rifle that kicked like a mule.

Back at Camp Harahan, Army routing and training continued. Overnight maneuvers followed and it was here that we learned to share a pup tent with a fellow, Joe, who invariably snored and kicked like a Missouri mule. It was here that we broke camp and relocated at night. In the process, many were introduced to poison ivy. For some time thereafter, many men looked like zombies. The wildlife of Louisiana joined in the fun to make sleep and rest impossible. Snakes, spiders and everything that either walks or crawls came into the tent to pay its respects. To top all of this, we were subjected to the ceaseless strafing by the Louisiana dive bombing mosquitoes that somewhere in the scale of life must have been crossed with an elephant!

It may be of interest to the reader that the Army has a practice called "dry run." This is used for anything and stretches to meet all needs. So, one bright day we rolled a pack, marched to the already mentioned spur track where we proceeded to load a simulated train. At last we were ready to say "good-bye" to this burning heat of the south land. Little did we realize or suspect, that one year later this much cussed heat would be as cool as a mountain breeze; but all of this we were to learn later in the Land of Mystery and Sacred Cows.

19 June 1943: More cars were backed onto the siding. This time they proved to be of the daycoach variety and of ancient vintage. 1855 hours found us aboard and all done according to Field Manual so and so. We left in true military style even to the brass band sending us off with military music.

21 June 1943: 1800 hours, and we were pulling into the busy little town of Bucyrus, Ohio, the Mechanical Training Camp for all Railway Shop Bn. Tired, dirty, unshaven and dressed in uniforms that looked as though we had slept in them (and we had), the strains of travel plainly showed. Camp Millard was to be our new home. Where do we stay? See those tents on the hill - that's where you will stay! There were rows of canvas apartments - waiting. The cool of an Ohio summer evening does wonders to restore one's spirits. It was a Godsend from the burning humid south of New Orleans. The next day we were formally introduced to the Camp Commander, Lt. Col. Frank E. Cheshire, Lord and Master of Camp Millard!

Time passed and soon the bite of fall was felt by the occupants of the tent city. We were very happy when on the 15 September we were able to move into new barracks. Quarters must now be strictly G.I.

The last week of October we joined forces with the townspeople in a War Bond Rally. The occasion took on the flavor of a small, local fair. Booths and concessions filled the streets. Our Battalion furnished a display of arms and equipment. Rails were set and two European style rail cars were moved onto the town square.

30 October 1943: Again we rolled in a motor convoy to Camp Perry and its rifle range. We were going to complete the mental con-

ditioning course. The infiltration course introduced us to the gentle art of walking 200 yards on our face. We crawled like worms since machine guns made other forms of locomotion impossible. We were in a fit match with the hogs, and our fatigues were in such condition they would make any supply sergeant swoon. The firing of our new carbines was a bright spot on this trip.

11 November 1943: Major Almes (complete with cigar) broke the news that this was the day we were waiting for. Preparations were made for moving out. 28 November 1943 was the day to move. The time was 1045 hours and we were off, or were we? We marched to the train and were waiting to entrain when we were told to drop everything and return to camp and to police the area. It was one last crack of the whip to satisfy his High Highness, Colonel Cheshire! 1204 hours same day - we were comfortably seated in Pullman cars and waved good-bye to Bucyrus and Ohio moving west, where, we did not know. (Ed. Note: We were not to discuss who we were and where we were headed. However, we could break out the battalion colors and parade down the main street of Albuquerque to impress the populace of the Major's home town!)

2 December 1943: We arrived at Camp Anza, California, 0200 hours. Here we were put through a further check of clothing and essentials. We were issued a duffel bag which we packed and included items from the PX.

9 December 1943: We entrained at 1545 hours (in prescribed manner) for destination unknown. After a short ride by Pacific Electric train, we were unloaded at a pier in the harbor of Wilmington, California, at 1910 hours. We shouldered, packed, kicked, and dragged those bungle-some duffel bags up the gangplank into the side of the waiting "Mariposa." There we were to meet the 705 "Grand Division" plus four operating battalions. These were 721, 725, 726 and 728, which together comprised some 5,000 GIs and 275 officers.

10 December 1943: At 1000 hours, official log time, we weighed anchor and left the United States for parts unknown.

18 December 1943: At 1815 hours we crossed the equator with

no ceremony. This phase of the Company's history should not be passed without mention of the chow aboard. The food was an insult and certainly a disgrace to the United States Army!

25 December 1943: Christmas was spent on the high seas. Church services for all were celebrated. A highlight was the distribution of Christmas gifts donated by the workers of Western Pipe and Steel Company, Shipbuilding Division at San Pedro. Remember the half-pound Hersheys? (Heaven Sent!)

26 December 1943: At 0540 hours land was sighted. Soon it was in full view - the Island of Tasmania, Australia. We steamed up the mouth of the Derwent River and what a beautiful sight! Flowers of all colors were in full bloom. Mount Wellington was in the background covered by fleecy clouds.

At 1020 hours we were tied up at the dock. Passes were granted until 2300 hours. We arrived on the British holiday known as Boxing Day, most of the town was shut down. The people were grand, the town was ours and their generosity overwhelmed us. We returned to the ship at 2300 hours with happy memories of a day well spent. The ship's log showed that we cleared the port of Hobart at 0720 hours on the 27th.

Once at sea, our sealed orders were opened and we learned that our permanent destination would be India. Heading northwest, we again crossed the equator, our second dose of tropical heat!

31 December 1943: It was the end of the year and New Year's Eve passed without "spirits," 'nuff said.

11 January 1944: After 31 days at sea, the shores of India were sighted. At high noon our ship tied up at the Ballard Docks in Bombay, the gateway to India. Mail call - our first and what a shot for the morale! On our first tour of Bombay we were torn between curiosity and disgust. The romantic enchantments were sadly lacking. This was our first chance to spend those odd looking cigar coupons called "Rupees," three per dollar plus two Annas. Instead of "brother can you spare a dime, it was "bacsheesh sahib" a greeting we will all remember as long as we live. (Ed. Note: In 1989 I spent five and a half weeks in India from Bombay to Burma and I can't recall hearing that sound once. There were

beggars a plenty but not that approach.)

In leaving Bombay, we were to become two separate units. Some would go to Saidpur, Bengal, (now part of Bangladesh); the remaining group went to Dibrugarh, Assam, for assignment.

14 January 1944: At 2015 hours we were ordered to entrain. The cars assigned were marked third class; hardwood benches, no cushions and equipped with a porcelain item in which one could place feet and aim for a hole. In order to control mosquitoes, aerosol was applied and we soon found out that we were outnumbered with cockroaches. That was the first and only application of spray for the remainder of the trip! As we traveled from Bombay toward Calcutta, there was the ever-changing scenery. Everything was a new experience: different customs, wild animals along the track, elephants, water buffalo, monkeys, and most of all, people.

20 January 1944: At 0420 we arrived at our destination of Saidpur which is located north of Calcutta. We detrained and marched to our new camp. Our new homes were to be British tropical tents. The native bed called "charpot" greeted us upon entering the tent. The men nicknamed these "Indian torture racks" and with good reason. Learning to sleep on one of these, means that one can sleep anywhere!

25 January 1944: Work started in the railway shops. By 1 March, work was in full progress. Later in the month some items were to arrive that made life more enjoyable. Our first American PX supplies arrived. Also, our first medications were supplied and for the first time "Delhi belly" could be treated.

1 September 1944: We received orders from Headquarters 705 Bn., that we were to proceed with the construction of 46 refrigerator cars for use on the Bengal and Assam Railway. These were to be used to supply refrigerated goods to the forward areas in Assam. Company "B" was assigned to the fabrication of necessary steel and sheet metal part required. All companies put their hands together, and in no time, an around the clock assembly line was established. By 4 November, Car #46 rolled off the line nine days ahead of the target date.

When this job was completed, it was decided to reunite the battalion. By 13 November, we were to leave and by the 17th the total unit was together in Dibrugarh.

Reverting back to January, the second contingent was headed for Dibrugarh, Assam. 20 January 1944, found us at the 49th British Rest Camp on the banks of the Brahmaputra River, one of India's largest inland waterways. We were to spend several days there, and on the 24th we arrived at Pandu to be ferried across the river to the Amagon side to again proceed by train. (Ed. Note: There is now a beautiful steel bridge across the river.) We arrived at our destination 26 January and spent the night on the train.

27 January 1944: We arrived in camp. Received our first mail in-

cluding our introduction to V-mail. We were quartered in bashas which are constructed with bamboo and thatch. Bathing was done pump style. Slit trenches were dug for protection. By the end of February, all hands were at work in the shops. Our responsibilities were for the maintenance and overhaul of all the rail equipment. This work was accomplished with the coordinated effort from the machine shop, erecting crew, boilermakers, foundry men and the car shop. Our shops took in work from other units not connected with the railroad.

4 April 1944: We gathered in a group to hear Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Commander of allied troops in the C.B.I. In his speech, he gave a clear picture of the war in India and the part we played . . . to bring supplies for the "Hump operation" and for the building of the Ledo Road. At that time the Japanese were attempting to cut the rail line at the Manipur Road. They did succeed in almost reaching the line before being forced out of India.

30 August 1944: Troops from "B" Company were selected to go to Burma to help re-establish rail service in that area. They were flown into Myitkyina which had just been cleared of Japanese. The first job was to get the railroad track in shape and start moving the much needed material. The versatile Jeep came into operation. Fixed with flanged wheels it was ready to roll over the rails. Jeeps

were used to haul combat supplies and military personnel before the bombed out railway and bridges could take a locomotive; one Jeep per two box cars. There were nine Jeeps connected to haul 18 cars of mules for "Merrill's Marauders." It took coordination for all drivers to start and shift gears simultaneously. "B" Company was detailed to clean up and set right the shops that had suffered damage. Sergeant Weaver was sent to weld up bullet holes in the overhead water tower. After two days work he counted 790 welded; at this point he gave up counting but it was estimated that some 1500 holes had to be repaired. It was possible to repair six locomotives by scavenging parts from six other locomotives. For their work, these men received a Bronze Combat Star. This was recognized by a special event in Dibrugarh.

4 September 1944: This day General Yount, head of our 705 R.R. Division, christened the new Red Cross Train mobile. This unit was a means of entertainment for troops in isolated areas. Virginia Cadle was in charge of one of the units.

25 December 1944: Major Almes issued an order for no shop work. The day was highlighted by a baseball game at Tinsukia, 35 miles away; the 758th was given a special train. The 758th Shoppers, final top team of the Tea Patch League, were in the playoffs. Celebrities of the baseball world were present. Luke Sewell of the St. Louis Browns, Paul Wainner and Dixie Walker of the Brooklyn Dodgers were present. A drizzling Assam rain made the field soggy and playing uncertain, however, this didn't dampen the fans' spirits who stayed on and cheered through eleven innings only to see the game called because of darkness.

1 April 1945: "Two years old." The 758th celebrated its second anniversary. Major Almes declared a shop holiday. Late in the afternoon, a formal retreat was held. That evening there was a treat for fans of boxing. The card for the evening was the semi-finals of the Assam tournament. The 758th played host. There was a large crowd around the Palladium Ring. Two of Company "B" boys, Miles and Recozie, were winners in their class.

13 April 1945: We were

shocked and saddened to learn of the death of Franklin D. Roosevelt. A solemn retreat was held and a fitting tribute was paid to the deceased Commander-in-Chief. Now we must reaffirm our official oath to the new President, Harry S. Truman.

6 May 1945: Major George Almes was relieved of command because of health reasons and was returned to the States for recuperation.

13 August 1945: We were awed by the news of the explosion of the first Atomic Bomb. How could an entire city be destroyed by a single bomb?

15 August 1945: At 0530 hours President Truman announced to a waiting world that Japan was no longer an enemy and that it had agreed to complete surrender. The lid was off and pent-up emotion gave way to riotous celebration and thankfulness. A two day holiday was declared but the second day was rescinded and now back to the shops.

2 September 1945: This was to be the big day for those who had passed their 38th birthday. They were returned to the States. This proved to be a dry run since transportation was not available. They would have to wait a few more days.

18 September 1945: A memorandum from Headquarters read: *29th September 1945 will be the last work day for the American Troops in the B&A Railway Shops. Dibrugarh Town, Assam.*

26 September 1945: Our leaving date of 15 October has now been changed to read 10 October - five days closer to "Uncle Sugar and Home."

6 October 1945: 1715 Indian Standard Time, we held our last formal retreat on foreign soil. Orders of the day read by the Adjutant put our leaving date back to the original time.

10 October 1945: The advanced guard of the 758th pulled out for Camp Hialeah, Calcutta P.O.E. Somehow these letters sounded better than they did in December of '43!

13 October 1945: This day should be recorded in red ink! We were finally saying good-bye to Dibrugarh. It was a hectic day, and the Assam sun took its final crack at us - it was hot! The day went about like this:

0430 First Call
0500 Breakfast

0800 Line up according to train roster outside our dayroom

"No, you can't have your camera showing."

"Why?"

"The Major says no!"

"No, you can't carry that duffel bag on your left shoulder."

"Why?"

"The Major says no!"

"No, there will be no trucks to carry those duffel bags."

"Why?"

The Major turned them down. "Pick up that bag, you American Coolie. If the heat gets you that will be all right to!"

We have since forgotten much of the dirt the Army dished out, but we will long remember the insults and stupidity! We right shouldered the bags and heartily cursed the Major every step of the way to the shop and the waiting train. We squeezed in and our Ragtag Special pulled out at 1105 hours. We had on board some of the Army's latest ten in one, and we agreed it's not at all bad.

14 October 1945: We arrived at Pandu and again we were expected to be pack horses! The p.a. system said that we were eating the "Army's best" beans! At 1200 hours, we, plus one coolie per duffel bag, started down the banks of the Bhramaputra River to the ferry boats. The entire battalion moved across the river in record time of 15 minutes.

The same process for unloading was used on the Amagon side but on this side, the M.R.S. snafued - the train was not there! We did not leave until 1500 hours - some three hours and 45 minutes of frustration later.

15 October 1945: The hour of 1400 found us at the gate of Camp Hialeah. Little did we at the moment know, that this was to be the first phase of our worst battle of being overseas - the "Battle of Hialeah." The casualties were the greatest on record - wiped out by a fountain pen. Persons without sufficient points or proper M.O.S. could not go home!

To add to our miserable state of mind our tents leaked! It appeared that someone had taken a shot gun and blasted the top of the tents. We got madder and madder as we got wetter and wetter! We sat in our tents and cussed and discussed this man's Army.

24 October 1945: Rumors were confirmed! The shipping list was

read and most of the battalion would be going home.

25 October 1945: About 0900 hours, members of the 758th were loaded into "six by sixes" and taken to Princess Ghat on the Hoogly River. There we embarked on the U.S. General M. B. Stewart, P. 140 Navy transport. She looks kinda small, doesn't she? But, Bub, she is heading for the promised land and that's for me!

27 October 1945: Our quarters were not bad and our first meal told us that the food would be better on this ship. At 0700 hours our ship weighed anchor and the small tugs nosed the ship out into the current of the river. Thus started mile one of our 9,000 plus mile journey toward New York. The trip down the river was highlighted by nearly getting stuck on a sand-bar. Some fast action on the bridge saved us from sitting high on the river bank. As we sailed out into the Bay of Bengal, we watched the land mass of India disappear from sight. What a wonderful feeling! We learned there would be two stops for fuel and water enroute to New York. Those were to be Colombo, Ceylon and Port Said, Egypt.

8 November 1945: We entered the Gulf of Suez. This gulf is rich in Biblical history, and how the Israelites crossed the parted water safely but the pursuing Egyptians were engulfed. As we were to enter and traverse the Suez Canal, Mount Sinai would be on our starboard side. The ship entered the canal at 0100 hours on 9 November and arrived at Port Said 11 November. At 2000 hours we cast off and entered the Mediterranean. 12 November we passed Malta and on 14 November we passed the Straits of Gibraltar at 1400 hours.

Having passed Gibraltar we entered the great Atlantic Ocean; nothing between us and New York now except a terrific storm which tossed the ship like a cork on a pond! For some reason the port anchor couldn't be lashed tight and the ship became a great bell each time the ship heeled to port and thus returned to list toward starboard.

24 November 1945: Red Letter Day! At 0600 hours Ambrose Light was sighted. We were given a musical serenade by a U.S. Army tug. About 1000 hours we passed that wonderful Liberty Lady. What a wonderful feeling! Then we told

her that if she ever wanted to see us again she would have to turn around! By 1030 hours we were passing Manhattan Island. We were saluted by all the whistles in the harbor. Fireboats shot streams of water and paper confetti fell from the skyscrapers!

We docked at Pier 88 in New York and disembarked and were taken to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. As only the Army can do it, most of our winter gear was taken away while at Camp Hialeah. We finally arrived at Camp Kilmer around 2200 hours and stood in a cold breeze for about two hours. When we did get in to the mess hall we were fed the most wonderful steak dinner with all the trimmings. From Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, we were dispatched to our respective separation centers. Home at last! Thank God, we are home at last!

Mission completed - well done men!

(Ed. Note: I have to take full responsibility for the condensing of this Company "B" history. I have tried to remain true to the content and style. I have added personal items from a recent trip to India.)

The tenth reunion of the 758th is being planned for San Diego during the 12th thru 15th of October, 1994. More later.

Contact me for further information: Andy Brydon, 875 Willow Tree Lane, Fallbrook, CA 92028; (619) 723-9435.

HISTORIAN NEEDS HELP!

Please send photographs, with captions, and basha articles to be included in the 50th Anniversary Historian's Book to:

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Cruising to the CBI on the USS Lurline

By Mag Magness
Razorback Basha

The biggest adventure of our lives began on a sunny afternoon at a dock in Pittsburgh, CA. It was September 20, 1943, when we loaded onto a coastal steamer for a cruise down the Sacramento River to San Francisco to board the USS Lurline for the China-Burma-India Theater of Operations.

Because our train had broken down in Kansas and it had taken two days to get it moving again, we arrived at Camp Stoneman, CA, two days late for our overseas processing. As a result, we spent two days and two nights in lines to get our shots, clothing items, physicals, indoctrinations and a score of other stuff the Army deemed vital for our welfare and survival in a combat area. At noon, we were told to don our woolen ODs for the trip on the river steamer. There was a howl of protests, which fell on deaf ears, as usual.

After lunch, we had to tie our A & B bags together and put them on our shoulders for the one mile walk to the dock. When we arrived, we felt like we had done a rigorous PT session in sweats.

We loaded onto the top deck of the steamer and spread out to sit on our bags. The PA system warned us not to congregate on one side because it would cause the boat to list and be hard to steer.

The wind was blowing cold when

we reached the San Francisco Bay. At last, we agreed that maybe the brass at Stoneman knew what they were doing when they imposed the OD wear mandate.

Before we left Stoneman, our steel helmets were chalked with two sets of numbers. Mine had 38/39 on it which meant I belonged to Provisional Ship's Company 38 and that I was No. 39 in the unit. The Army's sense of order and discipline had prevailed again - nothing was left to chance! We kept this number system until we got to Bombay. It reminded me of tagging cattle for shipment.

It was dark when we crossed the Bay and pulled up behind the biggest ship afloat, or it seemed that way to us landlubbers who didn't know a luxury liner from a shrimp boat. We learned the ship was the USS Lurline whose normal peacetime run was a weekly round trip between San Francisco and Honolulu. It was 632 feet long and 79 feet wide at the beam. Now, it was going to carry 4,500 of us unfortunates to Bombay, India, and points in between. Before the War, it had carried the sophisticates and common people to Hawaii in an elegant and delightful ambience as though it were a seaborne palace. Its splendor was something the passengers would boast about. It was a mark of grace and grandeur to say one had sailed to Honolulu on the Lurline!

We left the river boat and walked several hundred feet along Pier 4 (by Ship's Co. numbers, of course) to the Lurline's gangplank. We passed through a cordon of military police. They were taking no chances of someone making a wild dash to freedom at the last minute! They checked us off a roster as we called out our names. We proceeded up the gangplank to the deck and were told to go below to Dog Deck, Cabin 327.

Woody Jenkins, the old Army soldier, had made a trip to Hawaii or somewhere before on troop ships, told us to get a top bunk, if at all possible. He said it would save us from getting a seasick shower when we hit rough water. It proved to be sage advice. The skimpy cabin had three rows of bunks and

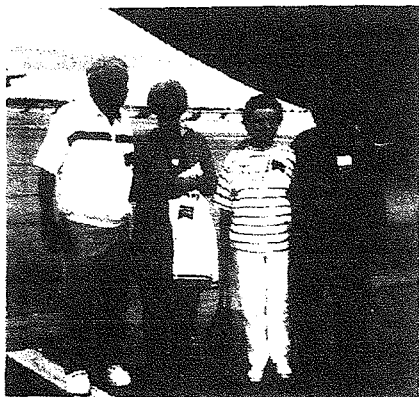


Lee Chalifour of the Tarpon Basha of Florida stands beside the station wagon he drove in an Elks patriotic parade this spring. Lee says the magnetic CBI signs remain on the vehicle at all times and have resulted in many CBI prospects and members.

a salt water bathroom. Each row was three bunks high. Al Marotta, Jack Luxom and I were first in the cabin, so we got the three top bunks. I got the middle top bunk which proved to be a choice spot when we reached the equator because it had a forced air vent above it.

There were no meals served on the ship that first night. However, we were so pooped out that it really didn't matter. We hit the hay early and slept like babes.

The next morning, we lined up in a chow line that moved at a snail's pace. We were hungry as bears while standing there and breathing the aroma of fried bacon, hot cakes and the eternal U.S. Navy beans. After breakfast, the ship began to pull away from the dock, so we hurried topside as we passed under the Golden Gate Bridge and



The sons of Gen. Claire L. Chennault, left to right: Pat, wife Mary, Ruth and Robert Chennault, all of Ferriday, LA, were all present for dedication of the exhibit commemorating the Flying Tigers of the 14th Air Force at Warner Robins, GA, April 12-13, 1995.



These CBI members support and honor "The Flying Tigers" of the 14th Air Force featuring the P-40 Warhawk at Robins Air Force Base, GA. Left to right: Brig. Gen. Wiltz P. Segura, Ret., of New Iberia, LA; PBC Ivan E. Taylor, Griffin, GA; Robert K. Chennault, Ferriday, LA, and son of Gen. Claire L. Chennault. Taylor photo

headed out to the open sea. Most of us stayed on deck during the daylight hours that first day. Then, about mid-morning the last vestige of the California coastline faded into the haze. There were some tears as each person was absorbed in his own thoughts. We were wondering how long, if ever, until we would see our homeland and loved ones again.

A Navy blimp escorted us until dusk. Then, we were on our own in the 500 mile wide patrolled ship lane to the South Pacific. The ship began a zig-zag pattern which it maintained for the remainder of the trip.

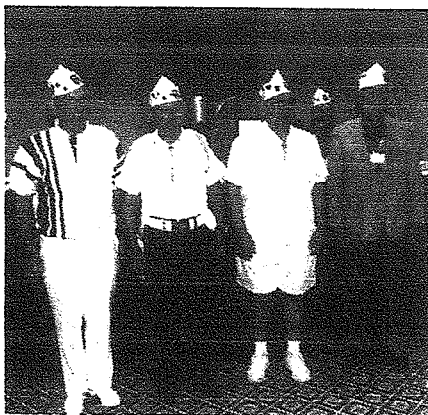
We decided to explore the ship. There was a PX in the foyer near our cabin. The troops began to load up their barracks with the sixty cents a carton cigarettes, etc. We went aft to the fantail and found a snack bar where we could watch the Navy gun crew fire at floating debris from time to time. Then, up to the top deck forward which was being used by some G-2 types to brush up on their coding and decoding.

Back inside, the foyers and hallways were jammed with poker and crap games. It didn't take long for the money to pass from the hands of the many to those of a few. An Indian GI from New Mexico won \$9,000 and salted it away in the purser's safe. Some poor souls lost



TWENTY GALLONS - 160 pints. That's a lot of blood by anyone's reckoning! It takes a truly dedicated donor to reach that level. On June 12, 1995, Gator Bowl Basha member Tom Egleston reached that amount with the Florida-Georgia Blood Alliance in Jacksonville, FL. Lynn Betros of the blood bank presented Tom with a gold watch to commemorate the occasion. Tom says the real reward is knowing that he's been able to help those in need of this fluid of life.

Ann Egleston photo



Florida Department's new officers: Commander Dudley Davis, Sr. V-C J. J. O'Brien, Judge Advocate John Frost and Provost Marshal John Gehron.

Woody Hudson photo

everything and had to bum from their friends for cigarettes and toilet items.

The ship had a wonderful library. It was well stocked with references, fiction, biographies and historical books. Also, some technical and engineering volumes. It included a liberal amount of nautical and navigational books. We were permitted to check out library books for a week at a time.

The ship published a small mimeographed paper several times each week which kept us up-to-date with the news and happenings in the States. The communications sections monitored Stateside broadcasts and supplied the copy for the paper. The World Series was in progress and there were several side bets on the outcome of the games from day-to-day.

En route, we loafed on deck, played cards, wrote letters and spent about three hours a day in the morning and afternoon chow lines.

After several days at sea, we began to see a variety of birds other than the ever present gulls. An old salt told us we were nearing port. In a few hours, we pulled into Noumea, New Caledonia harbor. The surf broke over the reefs at the harbor entrance and threw clouds of white spray several feet into the air, followed by myriads of small rainbows. It was a memorable sight and we never tired of watching it in the bright tropical sunlight. There were gleaming white buildings with red roofs on shore, set amid tall palm trees.

It looked like the perfect place for a vacation during peacetime. We had a visit from Admiral Bull Halsey to remind us that we were still in a war zone. We never saw him in person, only his glistening white and chrome gig when it was tied to the below decks gangplank. He met with the ship's Captain and some of the Army brass.

We were not permitted to go ashore at Noumea. However, some of the ship's crew did and they came back with tales of nice shops and a couple of French courtesans.

We thoroughly enjoyed the two days spent in Noumea harbor. We lost several hundred troops here. Also, we picked up some veterans of the island warfare in the South Pacific who had volunteered for service in the CBI. These people became the nucleus for the Merrill's Marauders.

The ship moved out to sea and we were on our way to Brisbane, Australia. About two days later, we crossed the Great Barrier Reef and cruised on down to a dock at Brisbane. We were alongside a warehouse which had a second floor porch that was at the same level as one of our decks. We observed the Aussie's daily routines and their break for the beloved "tye" each morning and each afternoon. There was a lot of banter going back and forth, also we threw them cigarettes and they threw back those enormous pennies.

A visiting GI came on board and I learned he was from my brother's Air Force unit in New Guinea. In fact, he said that my brother had passed through Brisbane the day before as he returned from a leave in Sydney and Melbourne and was



Wm. "Bill" and Jean Johnson of Destin, FL, enjoy Spring Board meeting in Tampa. He is an active member of 1st Air Commando Group.