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GOD IS MY CO-PILOT

Col. Robert L. Scott WNU RELEASE

(Continued from last week.)

CHAPTER X: Scott's group carried refugees out of Burma, heavily overloading the planes. He pays a visit to Gen. Chennault and tells him he is a fighter pilot and not a ferry pilot and is promised the next P-40 that arrives from Africa.

CHAPTER XI

I couldn't waste much time in practice, for after all Burma was just over the Naga Hills and the Japs were coming towards Myitkyina from the South and up the Chinwin and the Irrawaddy. It was open season and I needed no hunting license. Now I definitely knew that adventure was near.

On that afternoon of April 30, 1942, with a full load of ammunition and the shark-mouth seeming to drip saliva, it was so eager. I waited by my ship for an alert. Jap observation planes had been coming over at high altitude very regularly. If they came today I hoped to surprise them.

At two o'clock the alert came, but it was not observation. Many unidentified aircraft were reported by a British radio somewhere over the Naga Hills. I didn't ask for more than that scanty information—I was in my fighter and climbing over the "tea ranches," as Colonel Haynes called them.

High over the field at 22,000 feet, I cuddled my oxygen mask and circled, watching for enemy ships to the East, South, and Southeast—down in the direction of a course to Mandalay. I searched until my eyes hurt, but saw nothing. After about an hour, turning to a course that would take me in the direction from which an enemy had to come, I flew off to intercept—I now had barely two hours' fuel, and the farther away from my base I met them, the more successful my attack would be.

Lord! the ego that I possessed! I honestly believe I thought I could shoot down any number of Japs with my single fighter. Again I say, more of the valor of ignorance.

After forty-five minutes I turned for home and began to let down to eighteen thousand. Thirty miles from the field I suddenly tensed to the alert. Off ahead of me was a dark column of smoke, rising high in the air right in the position on the world's surface that the home field should be. My tortured mind flashed back to other results of bombings that I had seen.

"My God," I moaned, "while I've been away looking for the bastards, they've slipped in here and bombed hell out of the home base!"

With tears in my eyes I nosed over and dove for the Zeros that should be strafing the field. (Later I was to learn a lot about this method too.) The smoke was from base all right, but I could see no enemy planes. The only thing in the sky was a single Douglas transport, making a normal landing on the runway. "Calling 'NR-Zero-NR-Zero,'" I asked what the fire was. The reply was muddled, but everything seemed to be in order. For I noticed two other transports clearing the field for China. I circled, then dove on the smoking ruins of the RAF operations "basha." That building had been the casualty, and it was a total loss. I could see the operations officer sitting out in the open, some hundred feet from the charred ruins, calmly carrying on his duties.

When I'd gotten my fighter parked again I went over and heard the story. No Jap attack had come, and I felt relieved—my single-ship war and I had not let the station down. But as I heard the embarrassed operations man tell his story I remember choking discreetly and leaving before I laughed myself to death.

When the alert sounded, "Opps"—the operations officer—had hurried to the window of the thatch and bamboo "basha" to see me take off in the "bloody kite—that Kittyhawk." Seeing a transport from China about to land, and fearing that the Japs would bomb it on the field, he had then fired a Very pistol out of the operations window; the red Very light would be the signal for the transport not to land but to fly in the "stand-by" area. The Very light had gone nonchalantly out of the operations window, into the wind, had curved gracefully back into another window, and had burned the bloody building in five minutes. Operations was being carried on as usual from operations desk, which was located in front of the site of the former office. Bloody shame, wasn't it?

Well, it was tragic, but I guess it was better than a bombing. And so my first mission ended.

Came May Day, and I began the greatest month in my life. I flew every day in that long month, sometimes as many as four missions a day. By putting in a total of 214 hours and 45 minutes, I averaged over seven hours a day for the month. Most of this was in fighter ships—my little old Kittyhawk and I learned a lot, and we were very lucky. When I had come in from my first sortie, the day operations burned down, my pal Col. Gerry Mason kidded me a bit. Since the next day started a new month,

I vowed then on the sacred relics of my great-grandmother that during those thirty-one days I would destroy a Japanese plane if I had to go all the way to Rangoon.

We got pretty confident, the transport boys and I, for I used to go with them across Burma, and Joplin and some of the other daredevils would try to lure the Jap in to attack them. Jop would call over the radio, in the clear: "NR-o from transport one three four—I'm lost near Bhamo—give me a bearing."

Up there, some three thousand feet above them, I'd be sitting with my fighter, just praying that my "decoy" would work and some luckless Jap would come in for the kill. Then I'd imagine myself diving on his tail, my six guns blazing. But the

ruse never worked. Sometimes I think the "Great Flying Boss in the Sky" was giving me a little more practice before he put me to the supreme test.

May the fifth was one of the big days in my life. Waving good-bye to Gerry Mason as I taxied out, I saw him hold his thumb up to me to wish me good hunting. I waved back and was in the air on a sweep towards central Burma. I went straight to Myitkyina; then, seeing nothing, I swung South along the Irrawaddy over Bhamo. Continuing South I went right down on the Burma Road, North of Lashio, and searched for enemy columns. North of the airport at Lashio I saw two groups of troops in marching order. I would have strafed them immediately, but I was afraid they might be Chinese; after all, there were two Chinese armies coming North somewhere in Burma. I made as though to ignore them and they partially scattered to the sides of the road. Twelve trucks in the column kept rolling to the North.

Then I momentarily forgot about the troops—for in the northwestern corner of the field at Lashio was a ship. From my altitude of 2500 feet I saw at once that it was a twin-engine enemy bomber, later identified as a Mitsubishi, Army 97. It was being serviced, for there were four gasoline drums in front of it and a truck that had evidently unloaded the fuel. My gun switches were already on, and had been since I had seen the troop column. Now I was diving for the grounded bomber and getting my "Christmas Tree" sight lighted properly.

Hurriedly I began to shoot. I saw men running from the truck and jumping into the bushes to the side. My first shots hit in front of the plane, probably striking the fuel drums, for heavy dust covered the enemy ship. I released my trigger as I pulled out of my dive, just

The next day I went to Lashio again and strafed the hangar that had once been used by China National Airways Corporation—CNAC—but I couldn't burn it. There were no ships on the field except an RAF Blenheim that had been strafed by the Japs on the ground on the North end of the runway.

I turned back to the North to look for the gasoline stores that I knew had been at Myitkyina. I was determined they were not going to fall into Jap hands. Not finding them, I spent the rest of my time flying low on the Irrawaddy, looking for enemy barges. It was a pretty unprofitable day.

When Myitkyina fell, I went over there every day to burn the gasoline that had been stored in tins in the woods to the Northeast of the end of the runway. I had found out its location from British Intelligence, but the RAF Group Captain had exacted from me a promise that I would not fire into it until he gave me the word.

It seems that he was afraid that the firing and the burning of the fuel would excite the native Burmese who were in the village. I couldn't see what difference that would make, for after all the Japs would capture the thousands of gallons of aviation gasoline, and the natives were more than likely helping them anyway. Though I held off, every time I saw the shiny four-gallon cans in the trees my finger itched to burn the cache before the enemy could use it. I passed the three days of waiting in burning three barges on the Irrawaddy, South of Bhamo, and in setting a fuel barge on fire down on the Chinwin. In this last raid my ship picked up a few small holes; evidently some Jap sympathizers had managed to get my range.

Later in the week, the RAF Group Captain told me that his Commandos in Myitkyina were going to knock holes in all the fuel tins with picks before they left the field to the Japs. Nevertheless I kept watching the gasoline stores while the Japs moved to the North. On May 8, when I got in my ship and started the Allison, my friend the Group Captain ran across the field to tell me that the Japs could not get the gasoline—it had been destroyed without fire, and thus the villagers would not be panicked. Over the roar of the engine I yelled that in that case it would not burn when I fired into it. For I had waited long enough; the Japs were in Myitkyina and I wasn't taking any chances on their acquiring over 100,000 gallons of aviation fuel less than two hundred miles from our base.

When I came over the field at Myitkyina, the enemy fired at me while I was yet ten miles away; I could see the black bursts of the 37 mm AA in front and below me. I started "jinking" and moved to the Northeast, so that I could come from out of the sun and be as far as

possible from the enemy. There were only six now.

But I fired into all of them and two I saw burn immediately. On my second pass, as I "S-ed" across the road, I shot at each truck individually, then turned for the troops again. The road was so dusty that I could barely see the bodies of those I had hit on the first pass. I suppose the others were hidden in the brush to the side. As I pulled up, I could see the black plume of smoke to the South—my first enemy ship was burning fiercely.

I made as though to leave the area, then came in again from the South on the troops after the dust had settled. They had reformed but were not as closely packed as before. Again I strafed them, but this time I saw that they were firing at me. The trucks couldn't get off the road, and I exhausted my ammunition on them in two more passes. One truck that I caught dead center with a full two-second burst seemed to blow up. When I left, I knew that four of the trucks were burning, and further to the South I could still see the smoke of my first Jap plane rising high above the trees of Burma.

I could get from the field. With my first burst the whole woods seemed to blow up—I have never seen such a flash as that, which came when that veritable powder-train of high octane fuel caught fire from the tracers. I also fired at two of the gun installations on the field. But the bursts from the Jap guns were so close to me that I decided to let well enough alone, and turned for home in Assam. Many times on the way home I looked over my shoulder, and the smoke from the thousands of gallons of gasoline was visible when I was sixty miles from Myitkyina.

Next day, May 9, I made four raids into Burma. On the first of these I escorted two transports piloted by Saitz and Sexton to Paoshan, where they were going to land to pick up the baggage of the AVG, who were going on to Kunning. I waited for them to land and take off again, and then called goodby. They were going on East within the air controlled by the AVG, and I wanted to look for Japs to the South anyway. Two hours later Paoshan was badly bombed by the Japs; and so I missed a good party by not staying around.

(Continued next week)

been treated just as they had been treating Allied ground troops, and I was happy.

That afternoon I went back on the second mission. I found the wrecks of four trucks and baggage, and objects that could have been men, scattered all over the road. The place where I had caught the troop column showed about forty dead men. The grounded plane had burned, and with it had burned about ten acres of the jungle. I fired a long burst into the truck and into the four fuel drums in front of the debris of the enemy bomber, but they didn't burn; I guess the morning fire had finished them. I searched the country to the North for more troops, but didn't intercept any.

I went back home highly elated—I had drawn my first blood. I felt that the world was good again. With pride I radioed General Chennault that his "shark" had been in use, that I had caught lots of rats walking along the Burma Road, and that one Army 97 bomber would fly no more for the Japs.

Well, at last I'd seen an enemy ship. It was a grounded bomber—but after all, I've learned since then that these planes on the ground are sometimes pretty rugged business to get when you're flying down on them with all the anti-aircraft fire in the world seeming to converge on you. You've got to worry about small-arms fire from every enemy soldier, too, and it takes only one little slug in the prestone radiator or the oil-cooler to stop you mighty sudden.

The next day I went to Lashio again and strafed the hangar that had once been used by China National Airways Corporation—CNAC—but I couldn't burn it. There were no ships on the field except an RAF Blenheim that had been strafed by the Japs on the ground on the North end of the runway.

I turned back to the North to look for the gasoline stores that I knew had been at Myitkyina. I was determined they were not going to fall into Jap hands. Not finding them, I spent the rest of my time flying low on the Irrawaddy, looking for enemy barges. It was a pretty unprofitable day.

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CHRISTMAS TREES ARE AGAIN GLEAMING IN THE WINDOWS!

Just about time for us to be thinking of how much we are indebted to you. And just about time for us to call upon two little words that carry more cheer and good will than all the big words that have ever been coined—

Merry Christmas

Sixth Street Grocery

S. T. Eastburn, Prop.

FINDING Are you one who looks for evil. In everyone you see? Are there shrouds sent down by Satan, O'er every shrub and tree?

Or do you think that all is good, That comes before your eyes, And that the world is beautiful Until proved otherwise?

Mrs. Arthur F. Denney, Creswell, Oregon.

ENFORCEMENT DRIVE ON USED CAR SALES

Launching the first phase of an enforcement drive against violations on sales of used passenger cars, Portland district OPA enforcement officials have asked approximately 360 persons who bought used cars during the past few months to come into the OPA office bringing all papers pertaining to the transactions, Sol Stern, OPA enforcement attorney, reported today. The OPA will help buyers to get refunds if actual overcharges are found, he said.

Passing Plate When passing your plate for a second helping or when you are through eating, place the knife and fork parallel across the plate with the tines of the fork turned up and the cutting edge of the knife turned toward the fork.

FREE AIR

A column of Fun 'N Facts By Mike

Howdy Folks; A Chicago newspaper points out that the government prints and distributes the speeches made by congressmen entirely at a loss.

It might be added that they are read the same way.

One of our customers has decided that congressmen must be heavy drinkers. He heard about one who made a speech from the floor of the house.

The writer came from a long line of politicians. His grandfather ran for the border, once.

And we ran for work, once, when the alarm failed to go off.

BULL-ETIN Window screen—An arrangement for keeping flies in the house.

We'll try to keep you as a steady customer if you'll come and pay us one visit. Making friends out of customers is another one of our hobbies.

Kelly Springfield and Norwalk Tires CLARK'S SUPER SERVICE 129 North 9th Phone 252

THE SHORTEST DAY OF THE YEAR

Today is the shortest day of the year with about two hours less light than in the corresponding day in June. Short days means that most of us will have to travel in the dark whether on foot or by auto. Holiday traffic is the most hazardous of the year, made hazardous by the unusual activity of shoppers and by the weather with wet and slippery streets. The best safety devices yet practiced have not eliminated traffic accidents, but they have helped. Last week we heard a business man relate an experience which scared him within an inch of his life and ruined him physically for the day. He was driving to work early one morning and almost ran over two boys on bicycles because the bicycles had no reflectors and he was within three feet of the boys before he saw them. He was able to stop because he was driving slow. Since this was told us we have seen not only children but adults riding in the dark without reflectors.

Another thing we have observed is there seems to be no regulation of motor and pedestrian traffic along Main street. If a motorist enters Main from 5th, 6th or 7th, his progress is likely to be blocked on the opposite side of the street by a slow moving pedestrian and if the motorist is trying to cross the street, he either has to run the risk of being hit in the middle of Main or run the risk of running over the pedestrian. The situation gets the motorist or pedestrian in a tight spot almost every day. One way to eliminate this hazard is to widen the streets, but we are afraid this would not be very practical, otherwise we may have to come to a traffic light during part of the day.

POST WAR HEADACHES

The post war is being painted a rosy hue by some and the same impression went out following the first world war. The average individual isn't deluded. He knows there are many adjustments necessary and the sooner we start work on the adjustments, the better off we shall be and the more chance for peace; at least for a breathing spell.

One of the major questions facing the west coast is the resettlement of the Japanese in the relocation centers. This question does not bother us much here because we had no Japanese and the prospects are remote that we shall ever have them, but in some sections of the state this question is acute, particularly in the Portland and Hood River areas.

A good deal of feeling against the Japs is based on the record of the native Japanese soldier during the present war and to the fact that he has an oriental mind. Feelings such as exist in many places on the coast makes good political fodder for the politicians and we venture the assertion that many politicians will not pass up the opportunity in months to come when it's so easy to capitalize on the problem of racial heroes.

Commenting on this question the Oregon Voter says: Nothing short of the utter extermination of the Japanese will eliminate the Japanese problem from post war consideration. To be guilty of so monstrous a wholesale murder, we would have to change our nature into a ferocity, such as now we abhor in the German and Japanese war lords. It is likely that, like Germans who migrated to this country and became some of our finest citizens, we have enjoyed so many of the benefits of our kind of American civilization that we will not be willing to give up those benefits for the sake of being like the Jap or Nazi gangsters are now.

There is another way out and this would be to deport all native and foreign born Japanese to Japan. Before we could do this however, we would have to take into consideration the services of the American born Japanese who are fighting with the native American boys on several fronts, we might also run into further difficulties in trying to deport some of the loyal American born Jap citizens and we might also have to deal with the soldiers of Hawaii, about 60 percent of whom are of Japanese ancestry and also many loyal Philippine soldiers.

Such a move certainly would not promote understanding and the peace we say we want.

When (or If) V-E Day Comes

Under the head of "Warning to Editors," an item in a recent report of the Writers' War Board is phrased in these blunt words:

You have a problem. You may not know it, but you have, and it's serious. Surveys have convinced Washington that war workers are cherishing a grave misapprehension and plan to act in accordance with it. They admit that they expect some sort of Armistice or Victory day in the European war. They further believe that on that day they'll be miraculously freed from their labors—and from labor regulations—and morally free, too, to quit and take whatever other jobs they choose.

It's up to you editors to convince your readers that this is all nonsense—a dangerous fairy tale.

As you know, there may never be a V-E Day at all. Some Allied commanders have already publicly declared that they doubted that any German group of German leaders could command a surrender and be widely obeyed. Much guerrilla and civilian opposition is expected. It will die hard.

To avoid friction later, start now to educate your readers. . . . Tell them to forget V-E Day . . . that Jap bullets kill just as quickly as Nazi ones.

This is timely warning, coming as it does when an increasing number of service men overseas are expressing their concern over the unrealistic optimism in regard to an early end of the war, which they find in letters from the folks back home. GI Joe, who has fought the Germans in North Africa, in Italy and in France, has no illusions about the enemy's resistance "folding up" suddenly, or even soon. "Don't kid yourself—we've got a long way to go before we have these Krauts thoroughly beaten" is the tenor of their letters, in reply to their family's wishful thinking about having them home soon. "So you folks back there had better keep on the job, buying war bonds and keeping production of war materials up to schedule instead of making plans for what you're going to do on V-E Day."—Publishers Auxiliary.

Old Mill Stream The famous song "Down by the Old Mill Stream" refers to the Blanchard river running through Fremont, Ohio. It was written by Tell Taylor, who was born on a farm near Fremont in 1876 and lived there until his death in 1937.

Prevent Clouding A little glycerin rubbed over freshly cleaned windows or mirrors will prevent them from clouding over in damp or foggy weather. This may also be used for eye glasses, when the wearer is forced to stand over steaming hot water.