



# GOD IS MY CO-PILOT

By Col. Robert L. Scott

WNU RELEASE



The story thus far: In 1920 young Robert Scott cut 50 feet of canvas from the side wall of a Holy Rollers' tent in Macon, Ga., and decided to use it for the wing covering of a glider. He pulled off from a roof and crashed 67 feet to the ground. He fell into a Cherokee rose bush, which probably saved his life. He now goes in for building scale model planes and wins a Boy Scout aviation merit badge. At an auction sale he buys his first plane for \$75. He plans on going to West Point but meets with many difficulties. He goes to Ft. McPherson and enlists in the regular army as a private. Three months later he begins his training in the Fourth Corps Area, West Point prep school.

## CHAPTER II

Scott put in six months of study there, for there were some eight hundred of us soldiers trying in competition for about fourteen vacancies. As luck would have it that year, these fourteen were cut to eight. Once again West Point seemed a long way off. I got down to business then; I would shut myself in my room and almost memorize the lessons, especially every old West Point examination as far back as 1920. The study bore fruit. I kept at the top of the class and in March took the dreaded examination.

One day, some weeks after the annual competition for entrance from the Regular Army, I was walking guard duty. I was called from Post Number One, around the guard-house; I had just heard the familiar call, "Number One—two prisoners," and had replied, "Turn 'em in." The General had sent for me. As I stood before him my heart felt as though it would beat out through my blouse. He smiled and spoke.

"Son, you have won in the West Point competitive examination and I want to tell you you're starting out on the same road I started out on a long time ago. It's the greatest school in the world—but learn some common sense too. I'm sending you on furlough until you report for duty at the Military Academy. Congratulations."

The world was never so sweet. I gained two inches in the chest that day.

Thus, in July of 1928, I walked through the sally port with my suitcase and began the routine that is familiar to nearly everyone. I had heard of the strict discipline of West Point and the difficulty of studies for one handicapped by a Southern accent. My year of hard work had made me hate books again, but I resolved that after the work I had gone to I most certainly would not be kicked out or "found," as we say in Kaydet slang. I remember my father's ambition for me. He was of course proud of my appointment, and used to wonder why I didn't rank about number one in my class. During my Plebe year, which was easy, because I had just about learned the first year's work at the prep school, he used to write and tell me that while it wasn't too disgraceful to be number fifty in a class of over three hundred, he couldn't see why I didn't study a little more and get up into the first twenty. Well, as the first year went by and I got into the more difficult studies, I went lower and lower in a class that dwindled finally to some two hundred and sixty. During the last year, when I was very far down, Daddy would write:

"You just stay there, Son, just stay there."

I still heard the planes flying over and try as I would, I could concentrate on nothing but the Air Corps.

In 1930 I wrote an essay on flying, and it almost got me kicked out. You see, in Military History you have to write a monograph on the strategy employed in one of the major battles of the world. I had always liked military history and had been in the first section of that subject. (At the Academy each student is in a section commensurate with his scholastic standing.) My presence in that group permitted me to choose my battle. I had had a grandfather killed at Bull Run, and I therefore selected the first Battle of Manassas.

There was, as usual, many a slip. Before I was able to write the story we were permitted to travel to the West Coast to play Stanford in football. Coming back under the chagrin of defeat, I did not bother to open my books, believing that even West Point would not expect a student to recite within one hour of his return from California. But I reckoned without the rigidity of the Academy. Our train arrived across the Hudson at Garrison at 6:55, and we marched into History at 7:55. I was immediately assigned to recite on the battle of Valmy. I did not know what war it was in, and therefore knew nothing concerning it. To say that and get a zero, however, would be fatal and in fact could mean disciplinary action. I therefore resorted to the time-worn West Point tactics of evasion—known as "bugling."

Going to the blackboard with an air of confidence, I stood at attention with pointer in hand and began, "Sir, my duty for today is to explain the battle of Valmy. Napoleon declared after this engagement that the forces of an army must be concentrated for battle . . ."

At that instant the professor stood up and said he would wait five seconds for me to begin the recitation correctly. I tried again and was ordered to sit down.

The zero I received dropped me from the first section to the last. Furthermore, I found immediately that in this last section the subjects for monographs were not selected by the cadet, but were assigned. The new instructor gave me the battle of Sandepu—some insignificant engagement in an insignificant war. I looked for days in the library for data on the battle, and finally found about one paragraph devoted to it in the Encyclopaedia Britannica. It was Sandepu, Haikoutai, or Yen Kai-Wan, fought during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05.

A person with my imagination and initiative, I reasoned, would simply waste his talents on such a small battle. I therefore decided to create a fictitious battle. This extra work mattered not, for I had nothing but time, having been placed in confinement for getting the zero in history. I worked out an elaborate plan for the battle and introduced the subject in a manner that I knew would attract attention to even a last-section monograph. I dedicated the work of art to the officer in charge of Field Artillery, Lieut. Pete Nuby—a contraband nickname of a very tough officer. I illustrated the monograph with pictures of New York street cleaners and wrote under them that they were Japanese soldiers waiting to go over the top at the River Ho in 1905. Lastly I tied the book in red ribbon at least six inches wide, completed with a

ing the explanation I gathered that someone who lived there in the town spoke English. This of course was pleasant news, for I was, after all, a lonely tourist in a very foreign land. They now sent a small boy to bring back this connecting link between us. I waited and waited, while they all pointed and jabbered about me. Finally the steak came, and got cold while my mouth watered, but I felt I had to wait and ask the American if he would eat with me. At last there was a commotion at the entrance, and I turned anxiously to see my American friend.

Through the door waddled a dark, dirty little man—evidently a former fruit-vendor in New York. He saw me, stopped his Croatian talk, threw out his arms, and cried, "Son of a beetch! Son of a beetch!" To my discomfort, that was the only English he seemed to know. But I halved my steak with him and patted him on the back as he tried to talk, and in the end I guess his compatriots really thought their friend spoke American anyway. I could hear them calling me Americanski.

I continued on, keeping clear of the tourist routes, and finally, after a forty-five-day trip from Cherbourg, I rode into Constantinople. Here I came close to getting in a real jam. Back through my life I had concentrated on scouting, archery, and flying—anything but girls. I could remember crossing the street to keep from having to talk to them. But that real bashfulness was far behind me. Now I had about gone to the other extreme; I had found dates in Paris, Venice, and other cities, and had had a fine time.

Before reaching Turkey, I had been warned by the head of the American Express in Sofia that I should be very careful in Istanbul and should confine myself to the Americanized Turks in and around the Pera part of the city. They told me above all to stay clear of Galata—the old Greek and Turkish section. As luck ruled, however, my first acquaintance was from Galata, and that night I headed for the city of the veiled women.

Well, even with right ideas the men in that quarter had the wrong idea. I saw the danger just in time, and even then I had to jump through a window—glass and all—into an alley. I can hear the yells even these years afterwards as I ran through Galata back to Pera for my motorcycle. Stopping at the hotel just long enough to check out, I was off in more dust for Scutari and East in Asia to Ankara.

So raising the veil of a Moslem female shortened my stay in Constantinople. Even in my return to the West from Ankara, I found a way to dodge the city on the Hellespont by getting a Black Sea steamer and crossing North of Istanbul to land at Varna in Bulgaria. From here I crossed the Danube at Rustchuk and went to Bucharest.

My spirits had risen a little after missing the Turkish knives in Galata, but here I found a cablegram awaiting me. The Comptroller General had ruled that the Economy Act of June, 1932, affected all officers on leave. He had decided that I, like many others, was on leave without pay. My orders were to report to the nearest American Embassy for duty; I remember that they were signed by McColl. I sent my champagne back and ordered beer, for the money for this trip had been borrowed against my three months' leave pay. Here I was, thousands of miles from home and Randolph Field, where my flying training would start. If I reported to some ground officer in Europe, I would probably never get to fly.

Anyway, just to make sure, I hopped on my motorcycle that night and headed for Texas by way of Budapest—Linz—Bingen-on-the-Rhine—and Paris. I sold the motorcycle in Cherbourg and boarded the Bremen for a quick trip home. I had used pay that I was expecting to get during leave, and I'd be paying the bank for a long time. But I resolved right then and there that I would pay that money back from the Air Corps at Randolph Field and not from some desk in an Embassy.

And so I came at last to the Air Corps Training Center at Randolph Field, Texas.

It's hard to describe my feelings as I walked into the North gate of that field and down the nearly mile-long road to the Bachelor Officers Building, where I was to report. It seemed that all my life I had waited for this moment. Now at last the great day was at hand when I would begin my government flying training. There above me against the blue Texas sky I could see the roaring airplanes in their Army colors. As my feet carried me into the field I could hear the rhythm of the steps seeming to say in cadence, "This is it! This is what I've waited for all the days of my life!"

In October, 1932, I was assigned to Lieut. Ted Landon for primary flying training. I imagine this assignment was about as momentous for him as it was for me—for after all I must have been quite a problem, with all I thought I knew about flying and the eagerness with which I approached military aviation.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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## GI Joe Probably Thought Recount Was Fair Enough

He was a newly commissioned lieutenant in the army, and inclined to indulge in a little self-importance. A private sauntered by without saluting.

"I'll teach you a lesson," barked the second lieutenant. "Stand and salute me a hundred times."

Miserably the soldier began the performance just as a senior officer passed.

"What sort of drill is this?" he inquired. The embarrassed lieutenant told him.

"But surely," said the senior officer, "you are aware that you yourself must acknowledge each salute? Now please begin all over."

Tastes Great Anytime!

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"The Grains are Great Foods"—K. Kellogg

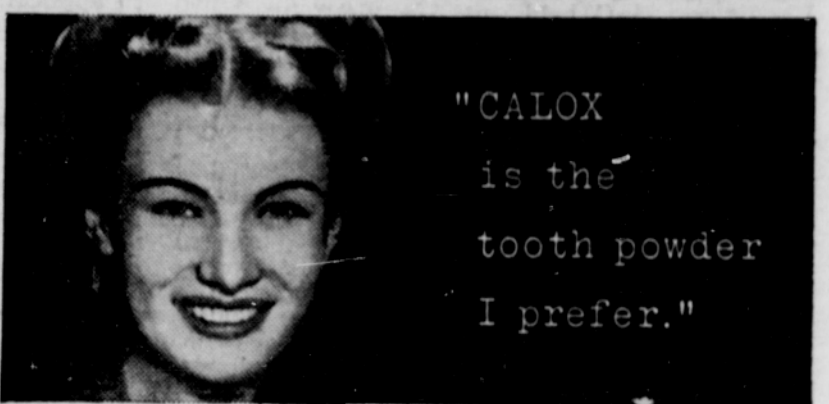
• Kellogg's Corn Flakes bring you nearly all the protective food elements of the whole grain declared essential to human nutrition.

## VERONICA LAKE speaking:

Co-Starring in "SO PROUDLY WE HAIL," a Paramount Picture.



"Keep groomed to the teeth!"

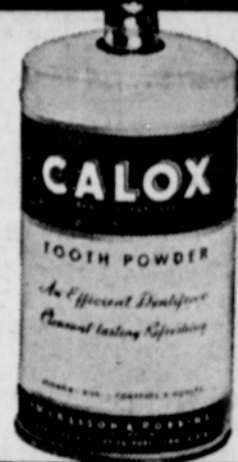


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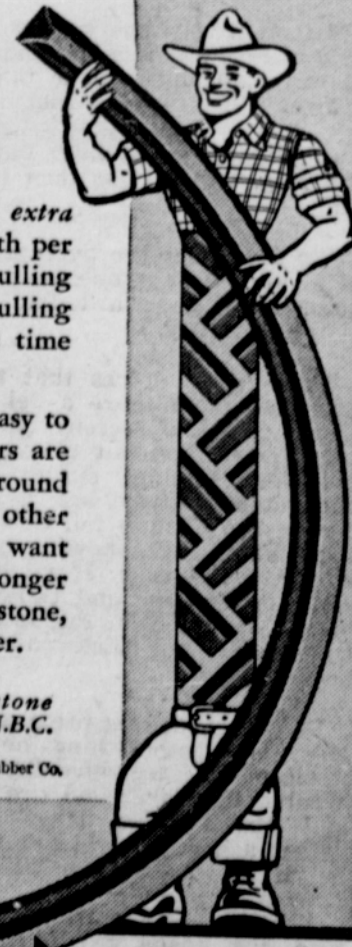
Remember that the Firestone Ground Grip Tread is patented. Its extra-long, triple-braced traction bars do not have "broken center" traction leaks, no trash-catching stubs or buttons. The wide spaces between the bars clean easily, even in soft soil, because there are no corners or pockets for mud to stick or hide. No wonder Firestone Ground Grips clean so much better in ALL soil conditions!

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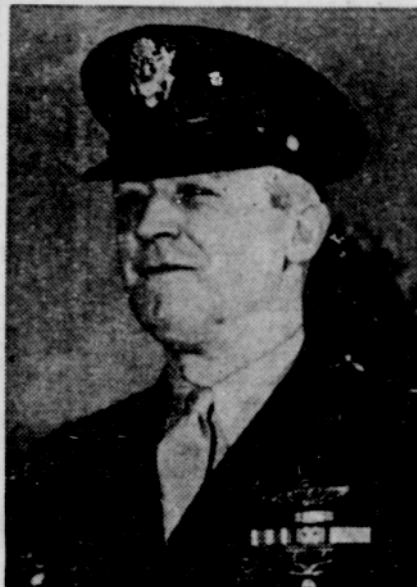
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General Henry H. Arnold, chief of the United States Army Air Forces, to whom this story is dedicated.