#19

Jack Young

OPTION # 1

(O.K. to Check-out & O.K to Make Copies)

Preface

I live in the present and look to the future. But to get to where I am now, and where I am going, means that I go to the past for much guidance and experience. My thoughts of the past often bring forth pleasant memories. There have been some sad experiences, but they have been few and far between. The world is a happy place to be in, at least it should be.

Some time ago I had quietly thought of writing my memoirs, but had done nothing about it.

Then one day not too long ago, my son, Doug, confronted me. "Dad, have you thought about writing your experiences in the Army? I'm interested, and I know the rest of the kids are. I'll do the paper work and compilation for you."

"Well I'll have to think about it."

"If you don't, you're out of the will."

"OK, you've just talked me into it."

That was an easy decision to make, but time consuming to follow-through.

As I started writing, more and more memories came forth. I would have to pause and think, and reminisce about the "good old days".

Dates and events might not be in the correct sequence at times, but I promise you the basic facts are accurate.

I dedicate these memoirs to all of my children (you're all pretty big and OLD now). All of you - Janice, Jim, Jack, Dick, Doug, Katie,

and Crea play very important roles in my life ("Hey, I love ya, man - Nobody's got a beer?")

Doug, I have to give you special thanks. Without your suggestions, encouragement, and printing, this might not have been accomplished.

Enjoy, everyone. You might never see another manuscript this great from me.

The Beginning

It has been said that all great philanthropists, scholars, warriors, and family men write accountings of their life. They do this so they can pass on to their children their memories for which they can proudly think of their fathers.

I had been thinking lately of my life experiences, but that scared me; so I quit thinking. Keeping that in mind, its best that I just start at the beginning.

Unlike a famous president that was born in a log cabin, I was born in the Swedish Hospital in Seattle to Bernice G. and Jack W. Young. The date of birth was July 31, 1924 - 8:30 A.M. I believe I was two years old when my parents moved to Cedar Falls, Washington. This is about 45 miles east of Seattle - in the foot hills of the cascades. My father was employed by Seattle City Light.

Cedar Falls was a great place to be raised. It was a small community of eighteen families. There were no stores, gas stations, theaters, etc., so we children of the community had to invent our own entertainment - hiking, swimming, tennis, "Kick the Can", "Red Light", "Sorry", "Monopoly", and the likes. The nearest town was North Bend, so we would often ride our bikes there, a distance of seven miles, if we wanted to see a movie.

I went to school at Cedar Falls through the Eighth grade. This was a two room school, with two teachers, and not over forty children. Lois Graybael and I were the only kids in this one class for all eight grades. We "graduated" from here in 1938 and were then prepared for the big world of "upper" education at North Bend High School.

To get to school in North Bend, we had to take the school bus leaving home at 7:30 and returning at 4:30. Where there were the two of us in our grade school class (we stayed together all through high school) our high school class size expanded to a total of sixteen for these next four years. I believe there were about ninety students for all four grades during my years there.

We had a fantastic athletic program at North Bend - Basketball, Track, Softball, and six-man football. My specialty was track. I could do the hundred yard dash in 10.3 seconds (once in a while).

The winters were great. On weekends, we would drive to Snoqualmie Pass or take the ski train to the ski bowl at Hayak - just past the Snoqualmie Pass summit. The ski bowl had the best slopes, and I became quite an accomplished downhill skier. I would take the tow rope to the top of the hill. I would point my skis toward the lodge at the bottom of the hill and then LOOK OUT!! There were only two things I couldn't do - (1) turn, and (2) brake. When I'd get to the bottom of the hill I would have to fall on my keester or go head over heels. I preferred the first method.

A Prelude to War

While in my last year in High School, everyone could feel the world getting restless. President Roosevelt started the national draft lottery - drafting those over twenty-one by drawing names out of a "Goldfish Bowl". Being just seventeen, I had no concerns - nothing could happen to us anyway. But then - Sunday, December 7th, 1941 came around. The news flashes around the nation were not good. Pearl Harbor had been attacked by the Japanese. Thousands of young Americans were killed on the Arizona, Utah, and other battleships that were trapped in Pearl Harbor during the attacks by those "yellow slimeballs". There were things going on that I didn't

understand. It was a time of frustration, anger, and excitement - all at the same time.

I can remember on Sunday, December 7th, some of us went to bible class at the North Bend Community Church - we did nothing but discuss the Japanese attack. My comment: "I find it hard to believe the Japanese have attacked us - they're our friends". Response: "What about Harold and others that joined the Navy after High School graduation last year and may be on the bottom of the ocean now?". No comment.

On December 8th, President Roosevelt, with Congress, declared war on both Japan and Germany. This brought great elation and pride to all of us in our country. Our national honor was going to be upheld.

Shortly after Pearl Harbor, new situations developed - blackouts, rationing of coffee, sugar, AND of all things, gasoline and tires. How could we survive? But it was all for the good of the war effort. Soon things gradually turned into a normal routine and we were accepting our changed life.

In spite of all the changes around us, the rest of my senior year at North Bend High School was normal. In June, 1942, I graduated, and prepared myself for entrance into Washington State College (WSC) in Pullman in September.

The War Years

In September, 1942, I enrolled at WSC, spent a few restless months there, and joined the Enlisted Reserve Corps (ERC). In March, 1943, I requested induction into active duty, and was sent to Ft. Lewis for a physical, tests, clothing, and assignments.

On my way to Ft Lewis, I was able to spend a few days at home to visit my parents, and say my farewells to friends and relatives. I'm

humbled to say this, but they were really proud of me - and then off to Ft. Lewis and the war.

We had no choice in what our assignments would be, and after a few days we found ourselves on a troop train headed for parts unknown. When we finally pulled out of Ft. Lewis, they told us that we were headed for basic training with the Army Air Corps at Fresno, California (Oh, for joy!!). This was about April 1st.

Upon arriving at Fresno, and before actually starting our training, we learned a little about the modified manual of arms, called the short arm inspection. They wanted to see if we had V.D., or something like that. Every time we made a transfer, we had to go through this same old ritual.

During this time in Basic Training, we had much close order drill, firing of the M-1 Garand Rifle on the firing line, and physical training (Oh yes - good old P.T. Oh my aching back.), push-ups, sit-ups, "and all them good things".

About June 10th, 1943, I left for Amarillo, Texas, for Aircraft Mechanics School with many of my Basic Training class. Not all - many were sent to other types of advanced training.

We were assigned to a class after being there for about two weeks, and doing much KP while waiting. I've never seen so many pots and pans, and potatoes in all my life.

Our school was quite interesting. It went through all phases of the B-17 (we knew somewhat a little more of our future now); sheet metal, engines, hydraulics, instruments, fuels, electrical, carburation, etc.

We were allowed some freedom and passes while there. I liked to explore, and once two others and myself decided to see how far we could hitch-hike out of the great state of Texas. We got as far as Clovis, New Mexico, just across the border when it was time to turn

back. Kind of wondered if we were going to be prisoners of Texas for the rest of our lives.

By the way, I also turned 19 on July 31, 1943 (Happy Birthday to Me!) in Amarillo. Big deal - Oh well...

Finishing my first technical school, I got a promotion - all the way to Corporal. From here we were transferred to gunnery school at Kingman, Arizona, where we arrived about November 10-15. We learned how to dismantle 50 caliber machine guns and reassemble them - blind folded. We also learned to lead our targets from a moveable skeet range (shooting from the back of a moving pick-up. After all the fundamentals were covered, we finally got some flying time in - shooting at moving targets, and just flying around to learn the B-17.

My first flight ever was over the Grand Canyon. I became so impressed with seeing it from an altitude of 18,000 feet. BEAUTIFUL!! White snow on the plateau, bright, rusty red in the canyon.

After completion of Gunnery School, and after a delay en-route home to Cedar Falls, I reported to Tampa, Florida, about February 25, 1944, prior to being assigned to a crew at Avon Park. Along with this came another promotion to Staff Sergeant. The crew members I was assigned with were John Udy, pilot - Ogden, Utah; Billy Hockaday, copilot - Orlando, Florida; Ray McMahan, Navigator - Southgate, California; Dale Youel, Bombardier - Gordon, Nebraska; Harry Knowles, Radio Operator - Houston, Texas; Earl Oviatt, Right Waist Gunner - Pocatello, Idaho; Bob Jencks, Left Waist Gunner - Yacolt, Washington; Russell Albert, Ball Turret - Wheeling, West Virginia; Al Warn, Tail Gunner - Baraboo, Wisconsin; and me, Flight Engineer/Top Turret Gunner (between pilots and bomb bay).

Sunny Florida was cold and foggy in March and April. Then afterward was hot and very humid. Then we were flying where we were cooler - above the clouds, so most of the time it wasn't too bad.

To England...

About July 10, 1944, after our transition training was completed of learning to work with each other in the crew, we headed for Camp Kilmer, New Jersey for the same old processing we had where ever we went. Then off to the Brooklyn Navy Yard to catch an ex-Italian luxury liner for anything but a luxury cruise.

With over 5000 troops on board, bunks (canvas stretched over pipe frames) five tiers high, two meals a day, and just plain crowded, I knew it was going to be a GREAT cruise. We left in the middle of the night, so I never saw the Statue of Liberty. That kind of ticked me off!!

On awakening the next morning, and being able to get on deck, I looked around to see us at sea with nothing but ships around us as far as I could see. I counted around forty ships in our convoy, and I knew that wasn't all of them.

To keep from starving, I volunteered for night K.P. Then I got three meals a day.

One thing that impressed me, and I've never forgotten, is how rough the North Atlantic can be in a storm. For at least four days the weather was so bad that we were riding fifty to sixty foot waves at the same time.

Eleven days after leaving New York, we dropped anchor in Liverpool Harbor, debarked, and proceeded to a staging area to wait assignment at a B-17 base. While here I turned Twenty on July 31 (remember that date? Happy birthday to me). No cards, no presents, no cake.

Then August 5 rolled around and we got orders to report to the 401st Bomb Group. This was near the village of Deenethorpe - 70 miles north of London. After a little bit of interrogation, briefing, and

practice flying in our newly assigned plane, we were ready to conquer "Der Fuher". Our plane was an old B17E - combat weary, lots of patches because of flak damage and the same old O.D. (olive drab) paint that was painted on it in Seattle. All of the arriving new B-17Gs had shiny aluminum finish. They discovered unpainted aircraft were harder to see. So you know what happens. The name of this plane was "Pakawallup II", and it had been in service since early 1943.

Off Into The Wild Blue Yonder

The big day finally arrived. On August 16, 1944, at 2:30 A.M., we were awakened for our first mission. At 4:30 we had our mission briefing. When they uncovered the mission map, we discovered our target was Leipsig. I believe the target was a ball bearing factory.

We started our engines around 6:30 A.M., waited our turn to taxi into position, and then took off into the wild blue yonder. It was a beautiful day for flying. At ten thousand feet we put on our oxygen masks, and then I got up into my position - the top turret. Here I spent most of four hours checking the heavens for enemy fighters. We climbed to 27,000 feet and flew our mission to the target at that altitude.

("Hey, what are those black puffs of smoke out there? Oh, that's anti-aircraft flak. That's interesting. Holy cow - it's getting closer, and there's a lot more of it. My God! It's so dense, so close to us - they're trying to shoot us down!! Oh, shit!!".)

"Bombs Away!!" Our plane jumped upward as all 6000 pounds of bombs were dropped at one time and we were free of our load. It was up to me to check the Bomb Bay to be sure no bombs hung up. Everything was OK!

Our formation then turned back to England. We were shot up, but no planes were lost - one copilot killed though.

Nine hours after take-off, we landed at our base. The brakes had been shot out, so John (pilot) had to ground loop the plane at the end of the runway ("Thanks John"). As soon as we could after landing, we checked our battle damage. Besides losing our brakes, we counted over 250 holes in our plane.

The next few missions were rough also, but not as bad as our first. In a sense, it was better to have our first mission be the worst, because all the rest seemed so much milder. We would come back with only 200 holes from anti-aircraft fire - and flat tires. Once we had to crank down our landing gear.

After five missions we got a "stand down". We got a four day furlough for "Flak Leave". Three of us, Harry, Earl, and myself who always chummed around together decided to see London. FANTASTIC! Westminster Abbey, St. Paul's Cathedral, Buckingham Palace, Tower of London. We were able to get to London twice more, and to Edinburgh and Nottingham.

Concerning these cities, I thought Edinburgh was the most beautiful and friendly city. It was not damaged by German bombardment, was not overcrowded as was London, and was so tranquil. There was one site I would liked to have visited. That was the Palace of Mary, Queen of Scots. Impossible!! It was home for over 5000 German P.O.W.s.

It was during a "stand-down" starting September 28, that we had our chance to visit Edinburgh. After arriving, the three of us - Harry, Earl, and I, purchased a very good bottle of 7-year old Scotch. The next thing on the agenda was to get a room in a small hotel. We asked the proprietor to bring us three glasses - "And bring one for yourself." Well -- that bottle went down in a hurry, and the proprietor's nose got redder and redder. But as he was imbibing, he told us much about the history of the region and pointed out the bridge across the Firth of Forth, which is one of the harbors of Britain.

We probably had too much Scotch ourselves, because I don't remember too much more, except that the weather was beautiful. Anyway, we had a very relaxing vacation.

After coming back to our base from Edinburgh, we noticed our plane was not in its hard stand area. "Hey, where's our plane? What happened?" - "The day after you left on flak leave, it was shot down over Cologne. The crew got out OK." The end of an era.

By the way, our last mission before our leave was to Cologne on September 26, 1944. It wasn't that rough a mission. It was a beautiful, sunny day, snow on the ground, and I could see the shadows of the Cologne Cathedral on the ground. Even at an altitude of 22,000 feet, I could visualize the extreme beauty of the Gothic architecture used on this structure.

Shortly thereafter, we were assigned a brand new, shiny B-17G. We named it "Net Results".

Most missions after this seemed more like "Milk-Runs" - very little flak damage. Oh, sure, we had missions like Meresburg, Frankfurt, and Peenemunde, where the flak seemed thick enough to land on, but we had minimal flak damage. We had to have a guardian angel. At some of these targets, it was estimated that over 10,000 anti-aircraft weapons were firing at each group that flew over the area (48 B-17s in each group).

"Net Results" was a great plane - got us "There and Back". But it had one little quirk. On every mission, right after crossing into enemy territory, the gyro compass would QUIT. It would just go "round and round". When we crossed back over to friendly territory, it would stabilize to give us correct readings again. We thought the cause could be cold, altitude, vacuum lines, vacuum pump and/or the compass itself. They eventually changed everything and we even flew for two hours over England at 38,000 feet, and -65°F, and could not get

it to malfunction. The next mission over enemy territory - the same thing happened. The problem was never solved. The conclusion: The compass was "chicken".

On October 6, 1944, we were slated for a very long mission to the Politz/Stettin area in Poland. The round trip distance of at least 1500 miles at an average air speed of 160 M.P.H. made for almost 10 hours of flying time. A very long time when we're watching for both flak and fighters - much of the time right into the sun. One consolation though, was the beautiful scenery. To the South we could see the Alps; to the North we saw the mountains of Norway - a distance of about 1700 miles between them.

When we got to the target area, I believe it was oil and fuel, we could see nothing on the ground. Smoke screens covered the entire target area. We saw no flak or fighters.

When you can't bomb the primary target, you then go to a secondary "target of opportunity". So we bombed an air field. Later we found out it was a Luftwaffe training base, and the only damage done was to trainers that could not fly. Oh well, you can't win them all. With that long flight behind us, we got a good night's sleep.

Bright and early the next morning on October 7, after a delicious breakfast of scrambled eggs, hot cakes, sausage, orange juice, and coffee (they fed us every breakfast as if that one was the last meal we would have), we went to the mission briefing. When they uncovered the map of the target area, we breathed great sighs of relief ("Oh, boy! Milk-run!! Long but easy!"). The target was Politz again! No flak - no fighters.

One thing we didn't think of (which was good) is that the Germans would gamble on us coming back the next day. They would be ready for us - with everything they had. That was a pretty accurate assumption. As we went in toward the target, the sky got black (Oh,

God. The flak is so thick we could land on it, and its getting thicker ahead.").

Then - "Poof-Poof-Poof-Poof." Twenty millimeter shells were exploding in our right wing. "Bandits - 4 o'clock high!!". I got one burst of 50 caliber A.P.I. (Armor Piercing Incendiary) into a FW 190's underside, and he was gone - no more fighters.

As we neared the target, the flak got worse and worse. The heaviest we'd ever seen. It seemed everything was against us ("Oh, God, help us with this mission. Help us get through it safely, Lord. We're the good guys.") - "Bombs-Away". I checked the Bomb Bay - all bombs released OK. But BOOM! A burst of flak barely missed exploding directly in the center of the open bomb bay. I slammed that armor plated door closed in a hurry and checked myself for wounds. I was OK - but SCARED. No place to dig fox holes at 27,000 feet.

On our way North to the Baltic Sea, I could see two or three planes going down - parachutes opening - thank God. We passed one crippled B-17 whose crew was jettisoning everything they could - machine guns, ammunition, whatever they could to lighten the load to get to Sweden.

After this Politz-Stettin "affair", our entire group had a stand-down for several days of "R&R". It gave us a chance to relax, breath, play games, and talk. During this time, we had some enlightening conversation with members of another crew. "The first crew that slept in your bunks were shot down on their first mission. The second crew went down on their second mission, and the third crew went down on their third mission. You are the fourth crew to make these bunks "home", and you've made it through your fourth, fifth, sixth missions, and many more. You've broken the trend and will made it through your tour OK." That conversation helped make my day. And, oh yes, about this same time I got my final promotion to Tech.

Sergeant. They finally realized I was an asset to the organization and worth more money.

Not all periods of relaxation were spent around the barracks or on leaves to London, or other large cities. Instead, many afternoons and evenings were spent at the smaller city of Kettering. This was fourteen miles from our base at Deenethorpe, and an easy ride by the one and only bus that made the run every two hours or so.

The people of this community were very easy to talk to, and very proud of their heritage. The houses were like row houses - made of stone with a common wall between them. Most of them had no plumbing, and many had no electricity (three rooms and a path). The dates of construction? The cornerstones dated about 945 A.D. These dates are unbelievable but factual.

One Sunday in early September, 1944, the sun was shining, it was 86 degrees, and we (Harry, Earl, and I) found ourselves walking around a very peaceful park with hundreds of other people enjoying the last warmth of summer. Suddenly, we found ourselves near a Tea House - why not? So we went in and had tea and scones. It was neat! We thoroughly enjoyed our first English experience with High Tea. You know? For a while this brought us back to the real world.

There were other ancient landmarks that we had toured and forgotten, but specific places that we frequented occasionally. They had established dates from the 1500's to the 1700's, and they had names like "Black and White", "White Horse", "Pink Elephant", etc. The buildings were old, but the refreshments were newer. Bitters and milds, pints, cellar temperature. The old saying was that we had to drink it before it got cold. I remember one time at the "White Horse" where I had imbibed a few pints. I really had to go. I walked my way through a door, down a hall, around a corner to a privy, where I found relief. Oh, how great. As I was doing my thing, I could hear women's voices outside. I pulled the chain, buttoned up, opened the

door, and heard feminine squeals. "Oh! You're in the wrong one!". I never did find the men's John. Oh well, you can't win them all.

Meanwhile, the war continued, and we continued flying. Not all our missions were hazardous. Some could be classified as "Milk-runs". One beautiful sunny day as we were traveling south at about 25,000 feet, basking in the sunlight at a balmy 56 degrees below zero, and relaxing since there was no anti-aircraft or enemy fighter activity. Suddenly, directly in front of us - WHOOSH!! "Hey! What was that? Where did it come from?". From nowhere (it seemed), a V-2 Rocket was fired toward and through our formation on its way to England. All we had seen was a contrail, with no beginning or end - at least as far as we could see.

Occasionally little things happen to individuals that have no effect on a mission. I was that individual once. On some forgotten mission, flying toward our target on a beautiful day, John asked me to get something for him from behind his seat. I got out of my turret, stepped down, picked up what I had to and handed it to him. I then proceeded to climb back up into my turret. As I was just straightening up to be able to look out - "BANG!" - I heard a very loud explosive sound. I suddenly had pulverized plexiglass throughout all of my flight gear - from head to toe. Even inside my long johns next to my skin - even in my heated flying slippers and boots. Something had gone through the windows of my turret. When I finally got up enough courage to stand up and inspect the damage, I discovered something had come in through the back glass, behind where my head would have been, and exited at the front left panel. If I had been in position, whatever it was would have gone right through my skull. This cat would have had one less life. There was no enemy activity around, so I thought it was the accidental firing of a machine gun from one of the planes in our flight. The hole made by the missile was so large that I could get my entire arm out and wave at the other planes. They all waved back.

When we saw some fighters - ME 109s and FW 190s, they could be deadly. On three of four different missions, we were hit by 20mm shells and we were able to fire back and do damage to them. Unconfirmed, but we think we got a "kill" - possibly downing a FW 190.

Then came December 24, 1944 - the Battle of the Bulge. Very cloudy and foggy on the continent. We were flying at 27,000 feet near Koblenz to bomb German troops and transportation. Our troops fired some anti-aircraft in front of us to show where we should start our bomb runs. And guess what -- the Germans fired at us to show where they did NOT want us.

The first burst of enemy flak got our number one (left outboard) engine. I tapped John on the shoulder and pointed out the stream of black oil that was pouring out of the engine. "We need our power for the bomb run. Shutting down number one will over load number two. Remember, that one is a new engine change, and overloading it can burn it out prematurely. Then we are REALLY in deep trouble. We'll feather number one when we have to."

When that time came, we found there was no oil reserve for feathering the prop and the engine started running away.

We had to break formation and turn back. Normally, our engine cruising speed was around 1200 R.P.M. But this one was running away at 10,000 R.P.M. Since there was no oil, it was "freezing-up". The engine would seize, stop, and buck down around 45 degrees, twisting the wing. It would then relax, speed up, then repeat this performance four times more before shearing the propeller shaft so the prop could windmill freely.

We had to travel as slowly as we could to prevent the prop from running away, and still be able to maintain a proper altitude to get across the English Channel. Over the channel, we dropped our bomb load - a safe area. No "innocents" could be hurt here. It ended up

that we got back to "Mother England" OK. Despite being very foggy, we were able to find a Canadian training base to land at.

Then is when we learned the extent of our damage. We could rattle the number one prop in any direction. Little holes were punched all over the left wing near the aileron (these are used to stabilize the plane in flight). The counter balance for this had broken loose and punched hundreds of holes, but fortunately had not jammed into the aileron. This would have caused us to lose control and crash. We also found the main spar to the left wing had snapped. We could have lost the wing and we would have crashed anyway! (God Bless the B-17).

Then our Christmas holiday began. After getting our billets, we were able to get dinner and TEA (England, you know). Then off to the Sergeants Club. They wouldn't let us buy a drink. WOW!! Then off to a dance. I was OK, but Harry was spending a lot of time leaning over a Quonset Hut. I understand others had the same problem. Merry Christmas - 1944. One of the most popular songs with the G.I.s at this season was "I'll be Home For Christmas".

Our tough missions were finally over. We had some very bad missions, many rough missions, and a few milk runs. I flew my last mission on a milk-run to Paderborn on January 17, 1945. It was great that this was an easy mission, and there were no fighters or flak. At this point our minds were starting to think of other things ("Oh, God. I hope this mission doesn't go bad. I'm ready to go home."). The only things I remember about this final mission is that it was short - probably five to six hours long, and it was sunny with scattered clouds below us.

Whenever we completed a mission and the plane had taxied into its hardstand area, we would have to clean our machine guns, turn in our parachutes and Mae West (floatation device), and then go to debriefing. Here we would get a straight shot of Scotch, cake, and

coffee through the Red Cross gals, and tell all we could think of about the mission.

After our last mission on January 17, we turned in the rest of our combat gear - flight helmet, electric flying suit, insulated coveralls and jacket, and winter fur lined boots. And then to debriefing....

This last debriefing was slightly different than the others. When we sat down we didn't get one shot of whiskey - we got the whole bottle! (And I was only a minor - not even twenty-one yet). We started a celebration that ended up at the N.C.O. club. Obviously we slept in the next morning.

We had completed our thirty-five mission tour (the "Memphis Belle" only did twenty-five).

Homeward Bound

During the next few days we went through our records, processing, and preparing for return home, and you guessed it - the proverbial physical manual of arms inspection.

We received our travel orders to come home as individuals - not as a group. I do not remember any of my crew members being assigned to the same ship as I was. Oh, well...

The group I was with, three hundred Air Force personnel, eventually boarded the General Mays, a large troop ship, at Southampton. There were two other special groups that also boarded the ship - about three hundred nurses returning home, and three hundred German P.O.W.s, plus their guards. At least Gerry was going where a lot of other G.I.s wanted to be.

Since we were going home in the middle of winter, about February 10, and since there was no longer any danger of U-Boat attacks,

we did not take the Northern short circle route through the stormy North Atlantic seas as we did going to England. Instead, we took the Great Circle route through the mid-Atlantic, where the weather was warmer and the seas calmer. We also had no escort. Not having a convoy of ships to hold us back, and no heavy seas to worry about, we could travel at much faster speeds.

As always with these "Luxury" cruises, there's so much to do - sleep, eat, look at the waves. Would you believe? Not even a seagull to look at three thousand miles from land. So what to do to combat boredom? Volunteer! (and we were always told not to volunteer. They might make you a truck driver - with a wheel barrow). I volunteered to be a projectionist showing movies each day. Old but good movies.

With something to do, time went by much faster. Before I could say "I'm bored", we were docking at Newport News, Virginia. This was about February 20.

It was great to be "Home" again. Shortly after being assigned to a barracks, we had a customs inspection to be sure we did not have any souvenir weapons, combat gear, whatever. We laid everything out on our bunks, then they came for the big showdown, running through the barracks not checking a thing. What a farce.

Immediately, the personnel division at the base was working on our travel orders for delay in routes home - Thirty day leave plus travel time to the next base. My next base would be Santa Ana, California, and my travel time to get there was sixteen days. So that meant I would have forty days at home.

We boarded civilian trains and pretty much headed our own way across country on the way to our homes. To sit and sleep in coach facilities is not too much fun, but to drink the water on the train is a terrible experience. You can't sate your thirst.

Somewhere around Nashville, or Memphis, Tennessee, the train slowed and stopped at the station. I noticed a snack and coke bar out on the platform. I made a mad dash for it - along with many other returning G.I.s. There was a captain and his lady already luxuriously sipping soft drinks. I had almost got up to the counter where a little old lady was selling pop without really paying any attention to who was buying, when another G.I. ran up. "Gimme about six cokes.", "I'm sorry, we don't have any". "Well, gimme six 7-up". "We don't have that either". "Well, what do you have?" " We have Dr. Pepper". "Well give me six or seven of those, whatever you happen to grab". He paid for them and left. Without looking up, she shook her head and said, "Some people don't know there's a war going on." The Captain, chuckling, said, "Is there a war going on Sarge?" "Beats me, I haven't heard, sir.".

Eventually I ended up in Seattle. I called my Aunt Emma. She called Mom and Dad, and they came to Seattle from Cedar Falls to pick me up. Oh what a rejoiceful reunion. How proud my parents were, and how relieved they were that I was home and OK.

I had a chance to see many of my friends and relatives, teachers from elementary and high school, but not too many of my high school buddies, for most of them were in the service.

When I was home it seemed as if I did little but lay around and play. It also seemed as if I no sooner got home and it was time for me to go again. I could read between the lines and knew it was time to report to Santa Ana, California.

The end of an era? Basically, yes. After temporary assignment at Santa Ana, from about April 5 to April 20, then to La Junta, Colorado until about June first, and then to Roswell, New Mexico until I was discharged. While at Santa Ana, however, I was able to see many of my crew members one more time. A coincidental meeting of John Udy, Dale Youel, Earl Oviatt, and myself at the home of the

parents of Ray McMahan. Ray was shot down while flying as a navigator for another crew. He was still in a Prisoner-of-War (POW) camp in Eastern Germany.

While in La Junta, they awarded me another 30 day leave (they owed it to me). So back to the Northwest I headed. I spent more of my time at W.S.C making up to my sweetie - Dorothy Morgan, whom I went with before I went into the service. She had broken away from me an was going with an Air Force Cadet stationed temporarily at Pullman. So I was trying to win her back. We had a nice but quiet time together. Later, after I got out of the service, we got together, married, and she became the mother of my five children. But that's another story (or five).

But getting back to my visit to Pullman. I was staying at the Pullman Hotel, and on the morning of May 8, I woke up (alone) to the ringing of the Victory Bells on the W.S.C. campus. The war was over in Germany!! I spent as much of the day with Dottie as I could, then had to leave for La Junta. My leave was almost over.

In June, 1945, Ray was liberated by the Russians from Stalag II. I had the good fortune of getting on flight status and flying to Los Angelos for one weekend to see him. Was he living it up while home!! I think in the evening that I was able to be with him, we hit practically every big dance hall and saw every big band in L.A. And then back to Roswell....

As time went by, the Axis powers were finally defeated. V.E. Day was May 8, 1945, and V.J. (Victory in Japan) Day was September 2, 1945. Oh, what a time to celebrate!!

Everyone at Roswell A.F.B. (Air Force Base) was prepared to celebrate after the defeat of Japan, including me - a sweet, innocent twenty-one year old. But there were others that wanted me to remain sweet and innocent. I was assigned to M.P. (Military Police)

duty with a regular M.P. Oh, how sad. I had to stay sober. I wanted to have much fun, but who was I, a lowly Tech Sergeant (T/Sgt.), to defy the requests of Colonels, and Generals? But I did have fun, anyway, watching the antics of others, and listening to the beer garden bands slur all of their songs. I venture to say that the next morning I was probably one of the few people on the base not to have a hangover.

Shortly after the surrender of Japan, troops began to be separated from the military. Those with the most points were discharged first. Every day I eagerly checked out the bulletin board to see if they were down to my point level yet. That day arrived shortly with a list of names of those being discharged, my name was on that list!! Hallelujah!! "Report to personnel at 0800 to start separation procedures." This was about September 25, 1945.

It did not take a long time to turn in supplies, sign documents, get discharge, back pay and travel pay, and pack my belongings. I was on my way home, finally demoted to "PFC" (Poor F____ Civilian). I was discharged on October 1, 1945. My total tour of duty was 2 years, 6 months, 8 days.

This was the end of my World War II military era. Other eras follow - college, marriage, family, Korea, college, family, teaching, etc., but that's another twenty words.

No. of aircraft scheduled for missions		7,748
No. of effective sorties		6,850
Tons of bombs on primary targets		10,594
Tons of bombs on secondary targets		5,485
Tons of bombs on last resort or target of opportunity		1,705
No. of aircraft failing to return		94
No. of aircraft lost to flak		46
No. of aircraft lost to enemy aircraft		32
No. of aircraft lost, reasons unknown		10
No. of aircraft lost through accidents		3
No. of aircraft lost through ditching		3
No. of aircraft lost otherwise than on operational missions		40
(a) Crash landings	5	
(b) Bail out	9	
(c) Crashes on takeoff	2	
(d) Salvage	3	
(e) Abandoned on Continent	20	
No. of aircraft lost on non-operational flights		8
No. of accredited sorties		7,413
No. of enemy aircraft claimed (confirmed)		193
No. of enemy aircraft destroyed (confirmed)		72
No. of enemy aircraft probably destroyed		28
No. of enemy aircraft damaged		93
Rounds of ammunition fired		916,920
No. of bombs on primary targets . . High Explosives		74,576
Incendiary		29,491
Fragmentation		4,251
No. of aircraft battle damaged		1,872
(Major damage)		159
(Minor damage)		1,713
Cause of battle damage:		
Due to flak		1,773
Due to fighters		21
Due to friend		10
Due to combination		64
Total of battle casualties		1,078
Total personnel entering enemy territory		69,910
Percentage of casualties		1.56%
No. killed in action		41
No. missing in action		904
No. seriously wounded		35
No. slightly wounded		98
Percentage of aircraft available for each mission		95.6%

Please, Dear God,

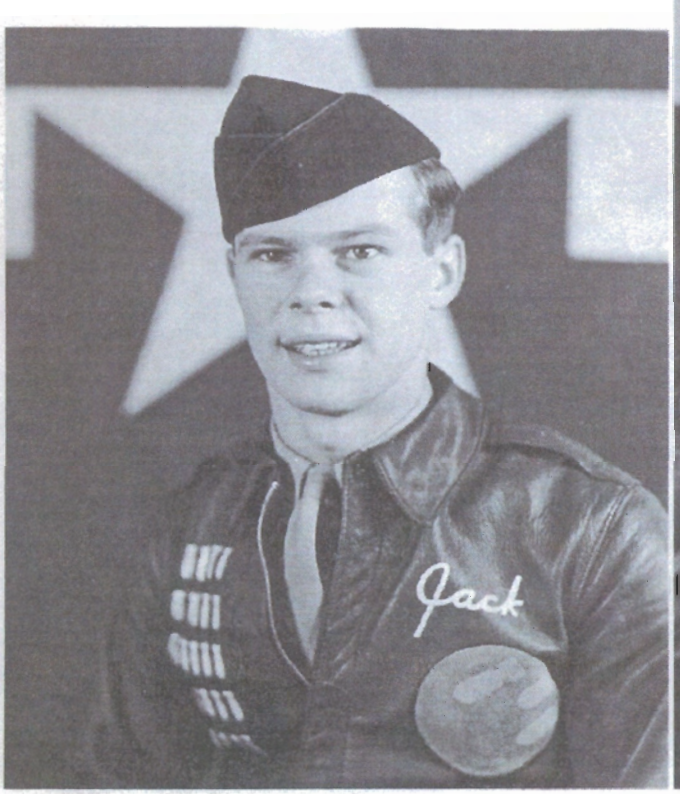
Don't Let Them Shoot Us Down.

We're The Good Guys.

This is Politz, or Meresburg, or Frankfurt or one of a hundred other places.

John Udy

Daale Youel



Crews from Our Barracks

Net Results

Net Results

January 1945 - Net Results

Smoke

Koblenz Rhine River

(marker smoke)

13505

Army of the United States

Honorable Discharge

This is to certify that

JACK B. YOUNG

19134413, Technical Sergeant, 3030th AAF. Base Unit

Army of the United States

is hereby Honorably Discharged from the military service of the United States of America.

This certificate is awarded as a testimonial of Honest and Faithful Service to this country.

Given at Separation Center, Roswell, New Mexico

Date 1 October 1945

--the end--

O. A. ROBINSON
Lt. Col., Army Air Corps