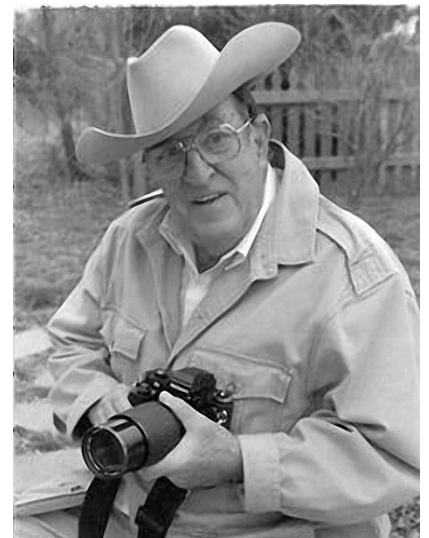


The Amazing and Wondrous Personal History of Ted Deacon



Preface

This project began in 2017 when I asked Dad to begin writing about his experiences at West Point and in the military. He loved the years he spent in the service and once told my husband Aidan that he wished he could do it all over again. Maybe that's just what he's doing now.

Dad had often spoken to us about this period in his life and how important it was to him. But we had only heard fragments of that time and we wanted to learn the whole story.

He began writing a chapter at a time and emailing it to me, Gwynne and David when completed. He got about as far as Chapter VI when his eyesight made it too difficult to continue, so on our trips back to visit him I began recording him and transcribing his words when we returned home. We had to curtail our visits for almost two years due to Covid so that slowed down the progress. Finally, in April of 2022 we completed the last chapter describing his experiences flying in the Berlin Airlift and the end of his military career. He dictated while I wrote down his words as fast as I could. This was to be our last time together before he became ill.

Dad's memory was phenomenal and while he had extensive records including his old flight logs, he rarely needed to use them for reference. I added some of them to this document and found other images online to include as well. I also added notes from various sources to provide additional background information.

Here is his story, a wonderful legacy for his friends and family to treasure.

Angela / Alegna / Angie
August 2022

Chapter I

Dreams of West Point

Okay, Gang, here is Chapter I in response to Alegna's earlier email about my West Point decision and experience in the military. But first thank all of you so much for your messages to me on Veterans Day.

My decision to go to West Point was solidified during my junior year (1939) in high school while we were still living in Dallas. But my interest and dreams about WP dated back long before that. I remember when I was probably 8 or 9, living then in Winnetka, Ill., going with my mom ("Buddy") to downtown Chicago for Christmas shopping.



Marshall Field Chicago toy store, 1930s

We walked through the toy dept. in Marshall Field department store and I stopped to look at a set of West Pointers in parade uniform. Boy, did I ever want that set, and "Bud" knew it! But she hurried me along, although I saw her sneak back later, when she thought I wasn't watching, to buy that set for my Xmas present. I never forgot that day, and even today I remember clearly almost every detail about it. My thoughts on and off of WP never waned during all the years that followed.



West Point toy soldiers, 1940s

As high school graduation neared Bud and Dad moved back to Clinton, Iowa. I stayed to graduate, then joined them there, and it was during that summer Dad and I wrote our Iowa congressman requesting an appointment for me to enter the academy. My school grades were good, but I needed more intense preparation for the entrance exams and for that first academic year at West Point.



Clinton, Iowa in the 1940s, bridge over the Mississippi River

There were several schools around the country, fondly known as "poop schools", specializing in study for that first year at one of the military academies. The study course given at these poop schools actually duplicated the academy plebe academic year. One of those poop schools was Marion Military Institute in Marion, Alabama, and I was accepted to attend there for that one year special prep course.



MMI was founded in 1887 as an academy and as a college preparatory institution. On May 23, 2009, the High School of Marion Military Institute graduated its final class of ten cadets, marking an end to an era. Today it is a public military junior college.

I entered MMI in late summer 1941, and the routine there, to put it mildly, was intense, both in academics and military (ROTC), which was good prep if we passed the required standards there approximating what we could expect at West Point. And this closes Chapter I as I prepare to be back to you soon with Chapter II, and that day which will live in infamy, December 7, 1941.

Chapter II

Preparing for West Point

I think the three of you will be very proud to know I was elected president of our class at MMI at the outset of our academy prep year there. I sent my mom and dad a telegram informing them about this, and they were ecstatic with pride. But there is a hilarious story about this I never told them, so here is "the rest of the story":

Shortly after our arrival there we were required to gather in the assembly hall for a briefing by the academic, administrative, and military staffs. At the end of the briefing we were told to elect one of us to serve as class president. We all looked around, none of us knowing each other, because none of us had ever met before. The only one I partly knew was the guy sitting with me at the briefing. He and I previously had been assigned to be roommates during our tenure there. Anyway, on a whim, he stood up and nominated me for class president. I think everyone was relieved that he had done this, thus saving them a lot of time and trouble, so they all waived further nominations, let out a cheer and proceeded to elect me. Keep in mind that no one there knew me, nor had ever seen or heard of me before. The only requirement they had of me as president was that we would be allowed to wear white gloves with our uniforms at class graduation.

Following all this historic drama our rigorous life at MMI proceeded with academic lectures and study, with primary emphasis on math, since the only degree to be earned at the academies at that time was a BS degree in Engineering.



Marion Alabama storefront, 1936

Sundays were our only leisure day, and I will never forget my roommate and me in our barracks goofing off, smoking cigarettes, and listening to the radio that infamous Sunday morning, December 7, 1941. There was no TV then. Only radios, newspapers, and news film clips shown with other short subjects at the movies. Programs on the radio that morning were interrupted with breaking news of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

Japanese Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, who planned the attack on Pearl Harbor would reportedly write in his diary, "I fear all we have done is to awaken a sleeping giant and fill him with a terrible resolve."

The President Requests War Declaration in an Address to the Congress. December 8, 1941

Mr. Vice President, and Mr. Speaker, and Members of the Senate and House of Representatives: Yesterday, December 7, 1941 a date which will live in infamy the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.

The United States was at peace with that Nation and, at the solicitation of Japan, was still in conversation with its Government and its Emperor looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific. Indeed, one hour after Japanese air squadrons had commenced bombing in the American Island of Oahu, the Japanese Ambassador to the United States and his colleague delivered to our Secretary of State a formal reply to a recent American message. And while this reply stated that it seemed useless to continue the existing diplomatic negotiations, it contained no threat or hint of war or of armed attack.

It will be recorded that the distance of Hawaii from Japan makes it obvious that the attack was deliberately planned many days or even weeks ago. During the intervening time the Japanese Government has deliberately sought to deceive the United States by false statements and expressions of hope for continued peace.

The attack yesterday on the Hawaiian Islands has caused severe damage to American naval and military forces. I regret to tell you that very many American lives have been lost. In addition American ships have been reported torpedoed on the high seas between San Francisco and Honolulu.

Yesterday the Japanese Government also launched an attack against Malaya. Last night Japanese forces attacked Hong Kong: Last night Japanese forces attacked Guam. Last night Japanese forces attacked the Philippine Islands. Last night the Japanese attacked Wake Island. And this morning the Japanese attacked Midway Island.

Japan has, therefore, undertaken a surprise offensive extending throughout the Pacific area. The facts of yesterday and today speak for themselves. The people of the United States have already formed their opinions and well understand the implications to the very life and safety of our Nation.

As Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy I have directed that all measures be taken for our defense. But always will our whole Nation remember the character of the onslaught against us. No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory.

I believe that I interpret the will of the Congress and of the people when I assert that we will not only defend ourselves to the uttermost but will make it very certain that this form of treachery shall never again endanger us.

Hostilities exist. There is no blinking at the fact that our people, our territory, and our interests are in grave danger.

With confidence in our armed forces with the unbounding determination of our people we will gain the inevitable triumph so help us God.

We were glued to the radio the rest of that day, and subsequently listened to President Franklin Roosevelt's address to the congress, announcing the attack and asking that a state of war be declared against the empire of Japan for that "dastardly" attack. We knew then we were at war and would be in that war one way or another.

As a side note we had not yet entered the war with Germany, Russia, and Italy. This was not to occur until almost a year later when US troops launched an amphibious landing in north Africa during November, 1942. Your uncle Don Bennett, then a 2nd lieutenant, participated in that operation.

While still at MMI I learned I had received my congressional appointment to West Point, but only as a 2nd alternate, meaning the principal and 1st alternate appointees would have to waive, or otherwise not be able to act on their appointments, for me to be able to enter the academy. So upon finishing my course at MMI I returned home to Iowa to await whatever destiny had in store for me. But fate stepped in and took over. The government and the military decided additional admissions for the academies were needed to produce more young officers for war service. I was notified that my appointment was accepted and I was to report for entry to West Point on July 15, 1942, subject to my passing physical exams to be conducted at Fort Sheridan, Ill. I passed those exams successfully. Now I was ready to pack my suitcase, board the train, and head for my new life as a cadet at West Point.



Soldiers at Fort Sheridan Illinois, 1940

This concludes Chapter 2 as I prepare for Chapter 3, which will cover some of my West Point experience, with special emphasis on my decision for flight training and my experience following that.

Chapter III

Entering the Military Academy



West Point Chapel



When I entered West Point in July 1942 the new plebe class totaled approximately 1200, about 400 more than previously in order to produce more regular army officers for wartime needs. The character, culture, and makeup of the cadet corps then were substantially different than now. The academy then was strictly all male. Females were inadmissible. Terms like "Politically correct", "Diversity", "Racist", et al were not in use. There were few, if any, foreign cadets. I don't recall knowing or even seeing one while I was there. Blacks were admissible, but not welcome. Two black men entered with my plebe class. They were to be "silenced" their entire time at the academy. We were forbidden to speak to them. The normal 4 year course was shortened to 3 years to expedite commissioning of new officers. Plebe hazing was severe, especially severe for the two blacks in my plebe class. Sadly, one of them committed suicide during that first year. The other one finally did graduate with the rest of us. He more than earned respect and admiration from all of us.

Another major difference in the academy at that time compared not only to now, but to its entire history prior to WWII, was the inclusion of flight training as a voluntary option for cadets while still pursuing all aspects of academic and other normal requirements for graduation. The Air Force Academy at that time probably had not yet even been thought of. It was during March of our second year that my two roommates and I opted for flight training and the Air Corps. This was something that had never entered my mind all those years in my thoughts about West Point. I had never even been in an airplane before. The closest I had ever been to flying was riding the Ferris wheel at the county fair in Iowa. But my roommates were gung-ho for the Air Corps and they goaded me into volunteering with them for flight training.

We were required to take special physical exams and other tests to qualify for flight training. Perfect vision, of course, was mandatory. Then there were other "space age" types, including the centrifuge and depth perception tests. The "centrifuge" used to assess our resistance to G forces and vertigo was a swivel office desk chair. We had to sit in the chair and be spun around once. If we could then stand up and not fall over, we passed. The depth perception test was a long wooden box with two

upright rods inside. Each rod had a string attached so we could move them back and forth to try and align them side by side while looking at them from one end of the box. If we came reasonably close doing this, we passed. Fortunately, my roommates and I passed all tests and were qualified for Primary flight school.

We, along with about 480 of our qualified class mates, departed West Point in mid-April 1943 to attend one of 7 different flight training facilities located primarily in Texas and Oklahoma. I was sent to Corsicana, Texas for the 9 week training course flying the PT-19 dual open cockpit, low wing primary trainer, a very rugged and versatile airplane.



PT-19 training plane, Corsicana Texas, 1943

Our instructors were civilian pilots contracted by the Air Corps for primary flight training. I will never forget that first flight when my instructor took off with me as his student in the rear cockpit. I was "hooked" the minute we were in the air, and I knew that becoming an Air Corps pilot was to be my destiny. During those first 8 hours of flying with my instructor I learned take offs and landings, stall recovery, spin recovery, snap rolls, slow rolls, loops, Immelmans (a maneuver used after an attack on another aircraft to reposition the attacking aircraft for another attack) and other maneuvers.



Instructor with his Kaydets—unidentified Cadet, Instructor, Deacon, Callahan, Curtis, Booth, Catron

Flight instructor with cadets; Ted is in the back row second from the right

Then that day arrived after 8 hours of instruction when I was required to make my first solo flight.....what a day to remember!! Talk about exhilaration!! I took off singing the air corps song at the top of my lungs, flew the pattern, and made an almost perfect landing. But a few of my classmates who were also soloing did not fare as well that day. We watched one especially come in on 11 different approaches, only to pull up to try again. He finally made it, but his flying career ended that day (I wonder if he still looks green!), as did several others who were unable to solo.

I completed 65 hours of primary training the end of May 1943 and returned to West Point, actually to Stewart Field, Newburgh, NY near the academy. At that time Stewart was assigned to the academy for Basic and Advanced air cadet flight training. There we flew the AT-6, a wonderful airplane for flight training, although tricky to land because of its narrow landing gear. Now known as the T-6 it is even today used in some countries as a fighter plane, and in the US as a WWII vintage aircraft show operational aircraft. I think this was my favorite of all the planes I flew while in the Air Force (I ultimately flew 9 different types during my time in the service).



The North American Aviation T-6 Texan is an American single-engine advanced trainer aircraft used to train pilots of the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF), United States Navy, Royal Air Force, Royal Canadian Air Force and other air forces of the British Commonwealth during World War II and into the 1970s.

It remains a popular warbird used for airshow demonstrations and static displays. It has also been used many times to simulate various historical aircraft, including the Japanese Mitsubishi A6M Zero. A total of 15,495 T-6s of all variants were built.

We lived at Stewart that summer until September, flying and taking ground school every day, studying and trying to maintain proficiency in our regular academic courses at night. Taking flight training did not excuse us from the requirement to take and meet the same academic courses and standards as ground cadets. Not easy!! We were tired a lot. There were flight accidents, some fatal, and there were drop outs. (Surprising fact: During the war more pilots were killed in flight training than in combat. Hard to believe, but true).

We left Stewart and returned to West Point in September to resume our full time academic study and normal cadet routine through that winter until the following March. During that period we flew only one day per week to maintain flight proficiency, traveling to and from Stewart via bus, weather permitting. Then in March we moved again full time to Stewart to complete advanced flight training, the final phase before graduation in June. A disappointment during that period occurred when one of my two roommates announced to me he was quitting flight training. He had developed a fear of flying. This was a shocker. We were so close to finally getting our wings, and ironically he was the one who really pushed me to opt for flight training. We tried everything to change his mind, but we were unsuccessful. So he did indeed go back to ground cadet status.

A Remarkable Coincidence

Ted had not considered training as a pilot until his two roommates ignited his interest. One of them was William "Bill" D. Raymond who completed his training in 1945 just as Ted did.

Many years later in 1988 Ted's daughter Angie was working as a consultant to high tech companies and became acquainted with an artist and consultant named Phil who helped prepare a brochure that included her bio. In the course of getting to know one another he mentioned one day that his father was a West Point graduate.

Angie: That's funny, my father is a West Point grad too. What year did your father graduate?

Phil: 1945.

Angie: So did mine!

Phil: I wonder if they knew one another.

Angie: Probably not, it was a pretty big class. But I'll check just to see. What was your father's name?

Phil: William "Bill" Raymond.

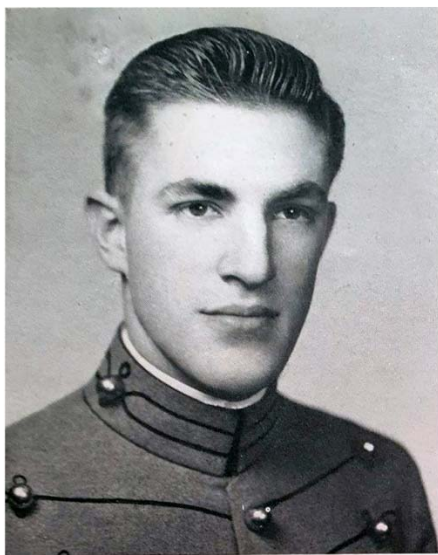
So my friend Phil Raymond was the son of Dad's West Point roommate who was responsible for Dad deciding to learn to fly.

June 5th finally arrived, a day to be imbedded in our minds forever.....The completion of flight training, Graduation ceremonies, the change from cadet gray to Air Corps officer uniforms, pinning on of our silver wings. Of the original 480 of us who entered flight training, about 250 of us earned those coveted wings. Parents arrived at West Point from all over the country to attend graduation ceremonies.

For our 'ground cadet' classmates it was their last full dress parade prior to becoming commissioned officers in the regular army. For the rest of us it was a mass formation flight from Stewart Field over the parade ground at the Point as the corps passed in review during graduation parade. Our parents were waiting at Stewart Field watching for our return. As we approached the field we dropped down to about 500 feet and did a mass formation fly-by, jockeying our prop rpm's to produce an incredible roar from those 750 hp Pratt and Whitney radial engines, then back up to 1,000 feet for 360 degree overhead landings on that huge concrete apron every 15 seconds. That was a day our parents (and we) never forgot. In other words, WOW!! and the conclusion of Chapter 3.



Advanced Flight training, Stewart Field outside Newburgh, NY



Edward Francis Deacon, Jr.

"DOLAN" Clinton, Iowa 2nd District, Iowa

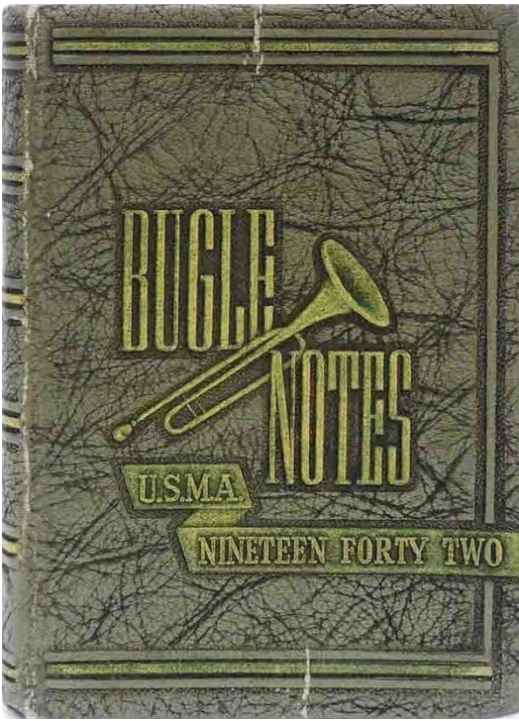
Dolan started on the road to becoming a general on July 15, 1942. He hailed from Iowa, and on request, was always only too glad to sit down for hours on end and tell the strange wonders of his home state. A rabid cartoonist, he thought nothing of forsaking his studies to put on paper some product of his fantastic imagination. Deke's personality made him popular, and his countless friends included numerous members of the fairer sex. Deke—your buddies wish you the best of everything.

Company F-1; Corporal (3); Sergeant (1);
Lecture Committee (3); Honor Committee;
Ski Club (3, 1); Handball (3, 1); Choir (4, 3);
Rifle Sharpshooter; Machine Gun Marksman.

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West Point Bugle Notes, 1942

Bugle Notes, also known as the "plebe bible," is the handbook of the United States Corps of Cadets issued to all incoming Plebes. It is a lengthy collection of traditions, songs, poems, anecdotes, and facts about the United State Military Academy, the army, the Old Corps, and the rivalry with Navy that all plebes must memorize during cadet basic training. At any time plebes may be asked and are expected to answer any inquiry about plebe knowledge posed by upper class cadets. Questions include:

How is the cow? "Sir, she walks, she talks, she's full of chalk, the lacteal fluid extracted from the female of the bovine species is highly prolific to the nth degree."

What do plebes rank? "Sir, the Superintendent's dog, the Commandant's cat, the waiters in the Mess Hall, the Hell Cats, and all the Admirals in the whole blamed Navy."

80 years later, Ted could still recite the required answers.



Movie poster for "Ten Gentlemen from West Point," 1942



West Point dining hall, 1942

A Brief History of West Point

West Point's role in our nation's history dates back to the Revolutionary War when both sides realized the strategic importance of the commanding plateau on the west bank of the Hudson River. General George Washington considered West Point to be the most important strategic position in America. Washington personally selected Thaddeus Kosciuszko, one of the heroes of Saratoga, to design the fortifications for West Point in 1778, and Washington transferred his headquarters to West Point in 1779. Continental soldiers built forts, batteries and redoubts and extended a 150-ton iron chain across the Hudson to control river traffic. Fortress West Point was never captured by the British, despite Benedict Arnold's treason. West Point is the oldest continuously occupied military post in America.

Several soldiers and legislators, including Washington, Knox, Hamilton and John Adams, desiring to eliminate America's wartime reliance on foreign engineers and artilleryists, urged the creation of an institution devoted to the arts and sciences of warfare. President Thomas Jefferson signed legislation establishing the United States Military Academy in 1802. He took this action after ensuring that those attending the Academy would be representative of a democratic society.

After gaining experience and national recognition during the Mexican and Indian wars, West Point graduates dominated the highest ranks on both sides during the Civil War. Academy graduates, headed by generals such as Grant, Lee, Sherman and Jackson, set high standards of military leadership for both the North and South. In World War I, Academy graduates again distinguished themselves on the battlefield. Eisenhower, MacArthur, Bradley, Arnold, Clark, Patton, Stilwell and Wainwright were among an impressive array of Academy graduates who met the challenge of leadership in the Second World War.



West Point today

Chapter IV

Commissioned Officers

Following graduation from West Point, those of us newly commissioned as 2nd Lieutenants and pilots in the Army Air Corps received orders to report to various units and air bases throughout the country. This would be our first assignment to fly combat operational aircraft. About 25 of my classmates and I reported to Enid Army Air Base in Enid, Oklahoma, A B25 base and home of the 2518th AAF Group, 33rd Wing.

The B25 was a twin Wright Cyclone engine, twin tailed attack bomber. At that time Germany had surrendered and the war in Europe was over. But we were still at war with Japan, and the B25 became living history to this very day for its retaliation against Japan soon after Pearl Harbor. During 1942 17 B25's led by then Col. Jimmy Doolittle took off from the aircraft carrier Yorktown and bombed industrial targets in Tokyo. Actual damage was not great. But the psychological and morale lift to America's determination to go all out against Japan was enormous. The B25 is still a symbol of America's commitment to victory in WWII.



Approximately 9,800 B-25s were produced during the war. They saw service in all theatres, though in larger numbers and to greater effect in the Mediterranean and Pacific.

So my buddies and I had the honor of flying that great plane as our first active duty assignment, and the reminder of "The Doolittle Raiders" and their Tokyo attack 3 years earlier was with us every time we revved up for takeoff during our time at Enid. We spent the greater part of almost every day at Enid in the air honing our proficiency in flying the B25. It was a wonderful plane to fly, very responsive and maneuverable, and probably the easiest to land of all the planes I flew while in the service. But it was tricky on the ground and a challenge to taxi, due to its free swiveling nose wheel. Care in braking was critical to avoid the plane swinging into an uncontrollable turn. Turning on the ground had to be done with throttles, not brakes.

Our free time from flight schedules was a time of dread for many of the regular base personnel. To put it mildly, we were a rather raucous group. But it must be recognized that this was our first free time away from 3 consecutive years of rigid discipline and regimented routine at West Point, a time finally to be able to relax and release our pent up spirits, vim and vigor. We tended to wreak havoc with our loud rough housing in barracks, and our evening sorties into Enid did not usually measure up to "Officer and a Gentleman" tradition and standards. Several reports of our conduct in town were communicated to base command, resulting in our finally being confined to the base for the duration of our assignment there.



Downtown Enid, Oklahoma 1940s before arrival of West Point cadets



Downtown Enid, Oklahoma after arrival of West Point cadets

Fortunately for base command we finally did successfully complete our B25 flight transition time there. Most of our group received orders assigning us to the 2114th Group, 76th Bomb Wing at Lockbourne Army Air Base in Ohio, a major B 17 "Flying Fortress" training facility for pilots and crewmen. The B17G was a four engine, Pratt and Whitney 1100 hp each, heavy bomber and the mainstay of daylight strategic bombing over Germany. It was a very rugged airplane that could take serious damage and still continue to fly. It was heavily armed with three 50 caliber machine gun turrets, 2 waist gunners, and a tail gunner, these totaling 13- 50 caliber machine guns. It could carry bombs weighing from 100 to 2000 lbs. in its bomb bay.

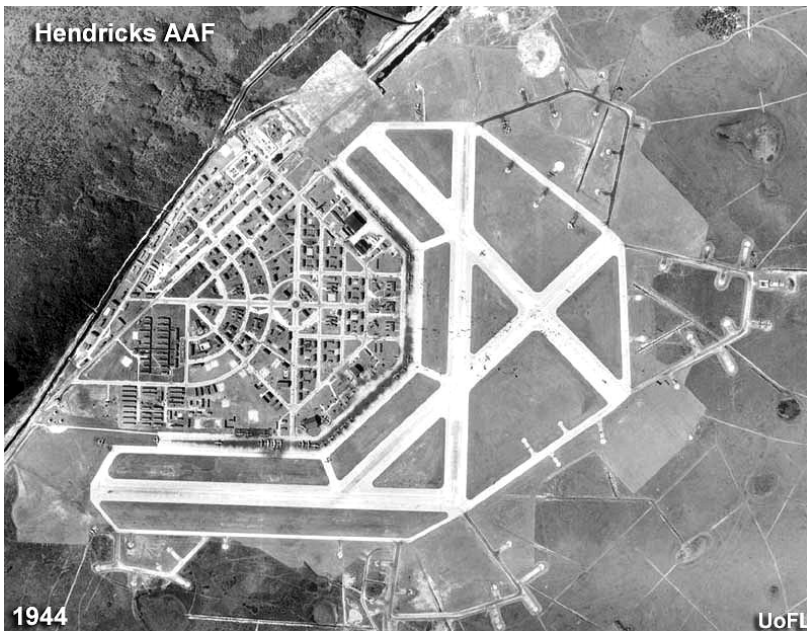


B-17G

With strategic bombing and the war in Europe ended many of us wondered why we had been assigned to B17 pilot training at Lockbourne, but it became apparent there were 3 possible reasons for this: (1) The plans underway for the possible invasion of Japan, requiring massive heavy bomber strategic bombing, (2) B17 transition training prior to being sent to B29 pilot training for (1), (3) to maintain in Europe B17 pilots, crews, and aircraft for the visibility of heavy bomber capability, to minimize the possibility of war restart there. (Think of Russia and our tensions with it today as our "ally" at that time).

In any case, I accrued about 60 hours of flight time at Lockbourne gaining experience and proficiency as a B17 pilot. A large amount of that time was devoted to formation flying and night flights of long duration over extended distances. I remember we were given amphetamine pills to stay awake and alert during those long flights. Those pills did the job, but they gave me a terrible headache and hangover back at base after returning from those flights.

It was during my busy flight schedule at Lockbourne that I learned of the atomic bomb drops over Hiroshima and Nagasaki resulting in the surrender of Japan on 15 August 1945. That nullified any possibility we were being readied for an invasion of Japan. Nevertheless we continued gaining B17 pilot proficiency, and that continued until the end of August, at which time I received orders to depart Lockbourne and report to Hendricks Air Base, Sebring, Florida.



Hendricks Air Base, 1944

This was also a B17 Group of the 76th Bomb Wing where I was to continue gaining proficiency as a B17 pilot. The routine there was similar to that at Lockbourne, formation flying, day and night long range "missions", etc. But there was one type of "combat tactic" a good buddy of mine and I really enjoyed; namely deep dive and low level "attack" on water targets. He and I would take off from Hendricks in our B17 and head out over the Atlantic Ocean looking for targets. The "targets" were Giant Manta Rays.

We could spot them easily spread out as though lazily sunning themselves near the water surface. We would put the plane in about a 300 mph dive from 2000' or so, then level off over one at about 200'. One day we were spotted performing this kind of unauthorized "tactical maneuver", definitely a no-no in a B17, and were politely requested to report back to base for a meeting with the base commander. We had an interesting conversation with him, resulting in our being grounded for a week with a one week pay deduction. But I like to think my actions back then enhanced my proficiency as a B17 pilot and gave me excellent awareness of the B17's capabilities.

Aside from that deviation from the flight rules at Hendricks I had one other mishap that got me into a little trouble with base command. I was on a routine flight one day returning to base. On final approach for landing I was advised by the tower to use caution and correct for a cross wind condition over the runway. I "crabbed" using right rudder as I leveled off over the runway, then kicked in left rudder just before touch down. But the plane "floated", drifted, and I landed on the far left side of the runway. My landing roll tore up a complete string of landing lights almost to the end of the runway. Careful inspection of my B17 later showed no sign of damage, but I did succeed in totally destroying a nice set of runway landing lights. This occurred near the end of September and the end of my tenure at Hendricks. I prepared to leave there following this act of glory upon receipt of orders for reassignment.

I was now heading for an undisclosed overseas destination. My orders read, ".....to a cold, wet, windy climate." This was typical wording for overseas orders at that time. Specific destinations were classified and not defined. In any case, and after racking up about 120 hours of B17 flight time at Lockbourne and Hendricks, I began the processing routine for overseas assignment, which I assumed correctly was the European theatre. I took a series of physicals, which included 2 hypo

shots in each arm, plus one huge hypo in my butt. Those shots zapped me with a terrible reaction – fever, aches all over, semi delirium, etc. lasting all night and through the next day. Then, to top it all off, I had to have a tooth extracted, due to an abscess right in the middle of my upper front teeth, with no time for bridge work to be done to fill that hideous gap in my face before overseas departure. No chance, looking like that, for what might have been a lucky romantic interlude before leaving the U.S.!! But ingenuity and fiendish imagination prevailed!!

I had a tooth brush with a white handle. I used a small piece of that to carve the shape of a front tooth. I cut small grooves on each side of it so I could wedge it into that empty gap. It didn't measure up to too close an inspection, but it worked! Of course, I couldn't eat with it, and it had to come out when I hit the sack at night.....and, regrettably, no romantic interludes occurred before departure to see if it would pass muster.

Finally, I and the crew assigned to me were notified we would be joining the 8th Air Force in Europe, specifically a 10th Bomb Wing squadron in Burtonwood, England. We were fully briefed on the flight plan, weather conditions, and navigational info for our flight course over the northern great circle route via Labrador, Greenland, Iceland, and on to the UK. We took off in our B17G one early a.m. near the end of September and arrived at Burtonwood about 35 hours later. The flight went well without incident. We navigated by dead reckoning, our course verified and corrected when necessary by our navigator and his sextant. We and other recently arrived crews were the replacements for the original flight crews being rotated back to the U.S.

Even though the war had ended, a certain level of wartime capability was to be displayed, kept visible, and ready, this undoubtedly due to the tense and tenuous relationship with our Russian "ally" and some of its provocative post war actions. As a matter of note, Russia was not our ally during much of the war. Russia was Germany's ally, thus our enemy. It became our ally by necessity when Germany turned against it and attempted to annihilate it, but ultimately failed. We and Russia then jointly defeated Germany. *"The Enemy of your Enemy is your Friend."* However, then just as now, there was never any love lost between us and Russia.

We flew high altitude large formation "Bombing missions" (no bomb loads) to targets in Bremen, Bremerhaven, and Hamburg. Those flights at 30,000 feet were **cold**, around minus 40 degrees outside the aircraft.

We were suited up with fleece lined leather boots and clothes wired for heat by plugging into the plane's electrical system. But after several of those missions our time at Burtonwood turned out to be short lived. Higher command decided to end Burtonwood's use as an 8th Air Force bomber base. It was to be reorganized and equipped to become a repair and maintenance depot, later the primary service center for Berlin Airlift C47's and C54's.

So after only a few weeks there I was reassigned to Wiesbaden, Germany (about 40 kilometers west of Frankfurt), thus ending, with regret, what had become my strong attachment to the B17, and my feeling of pride in being a B17 pilot. I never again flew that great airplane, which still today is regarded as the most famous plane of WWII. I've always regretted I couldn't have finished at West Point a year earlier so as to be with the 8th Air Force on its bombing missions over Germany during the war. Daylight B17 bombing of Germany was hazardous and costly. It cost the lives of about 50,000 American air crewmen, but it was a major factor in the defeat of Hitler and Germany.

Wiesbaden, my first station in Germany, was HQ of the 60th Troop Carrier Group, a division of the Air Transport Command (ATC). I was assigned to the 60th TCG for the beginning of an entirely new air

operation to be designated the European Air Transport Service (EATS). But the first order of business for me and several others there was to attend several orientation sessions on Germany, and regulations against fraternizing, war crimes, the black market, etc.

Following this we were taken to the concentration camps at Dachau and Buchenwald. This was a sickening experience. The smell of death permeated those camps. Bodies were still being uncovered from the long ditches where lines of prisoners were mowed down by machine gun fire to fall into those ditches, some still alive, and buried by bull dozers. German citizens from near the camps had been recruited and made to do the uncovering and to assist in identification so they would know what they and their countrymen had allowed to happen. There were other sights – the gas chambers, the crematoriums, all horrible beyond description. I've never forgotten that experience.

Following this I was given orders assigning me to the 323rd squadron of the 60th TCG stationed at Orly Air Base in Paris. Wiesbaden was to be the EATS base headquarters and the origin of EATS flights throughout Europe. It was here that I and about 20 other pilots were introduced to the C-47 which would be the primary airplane for those flights. We fondly called these aircraft gooney birds – named after the albatross, a seabird known for its endurance and ability to fly great distances.

The C-47, powered by two 1200 hp radial engines and manufactured by Douglas Aircraft, was the military modification of the DC3 commercial airliner flown by airlines in the US and other countries. It was extremely reliable, rugged, and versatile for carrying personnel, equipment and supplies. In some cases it was even further modified to be used as a gun ship. It was widely used in both the European and Pacific theatres of operation by us and our allies with great distinction during the war. Today it is still operating as a transport aircraft in many countries.



60th Troop Carrier Group and their C-47 Skytrain

It was General, later President, Dwight D. Eisenhower who said, "Four things won the Second World War – the bazooka, the Jeep, the atom bomb, and the C-47."

Such was the impact of this remarkable aero plane, and the C-47 was to go on to have an illustrious career around the world, both in military and civilian service, long after the end of the War.

No other aircraft has ever come close to replicating the sheer versatility of this Douglas design, even to this day. This is why so many are still in active service and why the popular saying exists: "The only aircraft to replace a DC-3 is another DC-3."

The DC-3 Dakota airliner was a development of the earlier Douglas DC-1 and DC-2 designs, and the original C-47 was a military adaption of the DC-3. The prototype DC-3 airliner first flew on the 17th of December 1935, and in June of the following year carried its first fare-paying passengers on an American Airlines flight from New York to Chicago.

With the advent of World War II, the US Military placed orders for a multi-purpose variant of the airliner that could not only carry freight and troops but also deliver airborne troops to invasion zones and behind enemy lines, tow gliders and evacuate wounded troops.

The first C-47s, as they were designated, were converted DC-3s but it did not take long to exhaust the existing supply of DC-3 airframes and production was quickly transferred to manufacture of the purpose-built C-47 'Skytrain'.

By the end of 1947, Douglas had built and delivered no less than 10,654 airframes. Today nearly 1,000 of these are still in service around the globe.

https://steamcdn-a.akamaihd.net/steam/apps/602801/manuals/DC3_manual.pdf?t=1501602710

We spent several weeks at Orly being checked out and gaining initial experience in flying the C-47, and also becoming familiar with some of the interesting sites and "pleasures" of Paris (Chapter 5) when not flying. We were then assembled for a special briefing on the next phase of the program designed to qualify us as highly proficient EATS C-47 pilots. This was designated CPS, meaning Central Pilot School, formed to train for maximum pilot and aircraft performance. CPS was what I now call the C-47 Top Gun School (No apologies to Miramar or the Navy!). It was located in the wind swept southern part of France just off the Mediterranean coast, outside the town of Istres and near Marseilles. A better location could not have been chosen to hone the capabilities and skills of the C-47 and its pilots. Much more on this to be covered in Chapter 5.



Istres Le Tubé Air Base

Brief Summary of WWII: World War II was a global war that lasted from 1939 to 1945. It involved the vast majority of the world's countries—including all of the great powers—forming two opposing military alliances: the Allies (Great Britain, the U.S. and the Soviet Union) and the Axis (Germany, Japan and Italy) powers. In a total war directly involving more than 100 million personnel from more than 30 countries, the major participants threw their entire economic, industrial, and scientific capabilities behind the war effort, blurring the distinction between civilian and military resources.

Aircraft played a major role in the conflict, enabling the strategic bombing of population centres and the only two uses of nuclear weapons in war.

World War II was by far the deadliest conflict in human history; it resulted in 70 to 85 million fatalities, a majority being civilians. Tens of millions of people died due to genocides (including the Holocaust), starvation, massacres, and disease. In the wake of the Axis defeat, Germany and Japan were occupied, and war crimes tribunals were conducted against German and Japanese leaders.

The war in Europe began on 1 September 1939 with the German invasion of Poland and the United Kingdom and France's declaration of war on Germany two days later. Americans entered the war in December 1941 after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor.

The war in Europe concluded with the liberation of German-occupied territories and the invasion of Germany by the Western Allies and the Soviet Union, culminating in the fall of Berlin to Soviet troops, Hitler's suicide and the German unconditional surrender on 8 May 1945.

Four months later Emperor Hirohito formally submitted the surrender of Imperial Japan on September 2, 1945 after the United States dropped the first atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima on 6 August, and Nagasaki on 9 August.

Chapter V

We Compete for CPS C-47 "Top Gun"

I was not aware of the active and varied history of the air base near Istres when we arrived there in August 1946 to undergo the grueling and competitive CPS C-47 "Top Gun" course. I had never heard of that base and didn't know it even existed. But it had an illustrious past as a pilot training center, test pilot base, French air force base, and both a tactical and strategic fighter and bomber base used by French, British, American, and even the German Luftwaffe during WWII.



WWII C-47

My first impression was that it seemed remote and rather barren, with little to echo its past bustling activity. And windswept it was! We soon learned that the wind sweeping the airfield was almost constant at 25 mph or so, often higher, often gusty. As to the living quarters awaiting us, not exactly the comforts of home! It was obvious that our purpose there was to fly and to do very little else. Istres seemed to be a nice town at that time, but it offered little in the way of night life or other kind of entertainment. Marseilles was only 30 to 35 miles from the base, and we all wanted to go there in what little free time we had. But it was considered to be a dangerous city, and it was off limits to American military personnel due to resident thugs, muggings, pick pockets, and worse. In addition, Marseilles was a major Mediterranean port city, and when the crews of the many ships that docked there hit the streets and night spots, all hell broke loose! So it was with deep regret that we soon realized our opportunities for entertainment and/or intriguing romantic interludes were to be virtually nonexistent during our assignment there.

But I have to relate one incident that broke us up with a lot of laughs, also illustrated how hard up we were for amusement. There was a goat farm near the edge of the airfield, and one day several of us wandered over to check it out. We stood there by the fence watching the goats and one of them came trotting over to us, probably looking for a food handout. We didn't have any snacks, but one of our guys knelt down with his pack of cigarettes and held a cigarette out to the goat. The goat not only grabbed the cigarette, he grabbed the entire pack, package and all, chewed up everything and swallowed it. Then the goat and our crazy guy started butting their heads together while the rest of

us practically had hysterics with laughter watching them. I've never forgotten that crazy scenario and can only say: Never let it be said that the USAAF didn't provide us with great entertainment to relieve the tension of our strenuous flight duty. Fortunately there were no witnesses to this ridiculous incident.



Je suis une chèvre française et j'aime beaucoup une bonne fumée

The program there consisted of two phases. Phase 1 was to execute maximum performance capabilities of the C-47, also to develop maximum pilot performance capability. This phase was stressful for us as pilots, also for the planes we flew. It began with short field take offs and landings. The normal take off roll for the C-47 was around 2500 feet. We learned to line up on the runway, hold brakes while applying full take off power throttle setting, and half flaps, then release the brakes and leave the runway in about 300 feet. The runway had been constructed to head directly into those prevailing high head winds, so that certainly was a factor in enabling such a short take off run. Short field landings were difficult. They required approaching the field at near stalling airspeed, cutting power and touching down at the very beginning of the runway while holding the pedestal elevator control full back and simultaneously carefully applying brake pressure. This procedure, done with precision and exact timing (and lots of luck), produced a landing roll of only about 300 feet. Again, the strong prevailing headwind assisted in our ability to accomplish this.

Other extreme situations were created, including shutting down one engine during takeoffs, and during landing approaches. The C-47 was a twin engine aircraft that could hold its own in flight with just one engine operational, but sudden loss of an engine during flight caused enormous torque, requiring immediate trim correction and other adjustments to maintain altitude and directional control. Continuous adjustments were necessary, especially during a single engine landing. The cockpit was a busy place in these kind of situations.

Probably the most taxing flight experience for both pilot and aircraft was flying into and through a fully developed thunderstorm. Today that is not an option for any pilot, civilian, commercial, or military. Strict standard procedure is to avoid these and go around them instead. But then, as a part of the CPS program, we were taught to go into them. Thunderstorm cumulonimbus cloud formations along the Mediterranean coast line were frequent, and they were huge, rising as high as 60,000 feet with their characteristic anvil shaped tops, and often 15 miles or so in width. Internally they contained violent storm activity, sometimes described as complete weather factories. So on one leisurely day, after a thorough briefing with details on procedure, and what to expect, I flew into one of these. The recommended procedure was to enter at no less than 10,000 feet altitude, reduced air speed to hopefully lower the impact of turbulence, radios and headsets off (static!), cockpit lights full on to help offset blinding lightning flashes, all loose gear and equipment fully secured.

I've never forgotten the experience of that flight, which included the abrupt shear effect of extreme turbulence from up and downdrafts, sudden gains/losses of as much as 2,000 feet altitude, very heavy rain, icing, hail, and St. Elmo's fire from lightning electrical discharge, which seemed to engulf all exterior surfaces of the plane. The noise of hail hitting the plane, and the sound of ice buildup breaking away from the prop blades and hammering the side of the plane near me in the pilot's seat, were slightly disconcerting, to put it mildly. Holding a constant heading going through all that was very difficult. Holding a constant altitude was totally impossible. I can't recall how long that flight lasted. I'm guessing maybe around 10 minutes more or less, although it seemed much longer than that at the time. After returning to the base a close inspection of the plane revealed numerous small dents from hail stone impact, and a larger dent on the left side behind the pilot's seat, probably from a chunk of prop ice. No damage was evident from the St. Elmo's fire, and there was no evidence of structural damage, in spite of the beating taken by the plane.

I sit here now and wonder why in the world we risked flying into those "monsters", especially since our planes weren't exactly hot off the assembly line. They had many hours of previous flight from the many missions they'd flown during the war. But, of course, at that time, and at our ages (I was 24) we considered ourselves immortal, plus our planes were well attended to by top notch mechanics and maintenance crews who checked our planes carefully for any needed maintenance before and after each flight. We had high confidence in them, and high respect for them. However, in all candor, the chain of command should have known better.

Phase 2 was almost the direct opposite of Phase 1. The emphasis was on smooth, precise control of the plane, also on very high pilot proficiency under instrument flight conditions. There were, however, a few "sticky" maneuvers to master in this phase, one being take offs solely by instruments under simulated zero visibility conditions. We had to control take off direction on the runway strictly by precise throttle control and gyro compass. A 1 to 2 deviation from the runway heading during takeoff roll could veer the plane off the runway before becoming airborne. Another one was maintaining control of the plane while making very steep turns under instrument conditions without falling out of the turn into a dive. And then there was emergency pilot reaction to loss of an engine, this also while flying solely by instruments under poor or zero visibility flight conditions. We practiced these and other types of flight situations until the time came for our final check rides to determine our success or failure in meeting the requirements of the CPS "Top Gun" program.

Of the 23 of us competing in the program I was ranked number 2 in overall performance, with the recommendation that I be assigned as 1st Pilot, later as Instructor Pilot, for EATS airlines. I hope the attached documents detailing this are sufficiently legible. I scanned the copies from 71 year old originals fading away in my Form 5 flight log records.

And so it was back to Orly Air Base and Paris (intrigue, romance, adventure!) to begin the next phase of my military experience, this time as a military airlines pilot with the European Air Transport Service, or EATS. Chapter 6 awaits my documentation on this, hopefully for completion and publication at an early date.

E.A.T.S. CENTRAL PILOT SCHOOL
 324TH TROOP CARRIER SQUADRON
 APO 125

Student Deacon, E. F. Rank 2nd Lt. ASN O-27533
 Home station Orly Class 46-E Date graduated 17 Aug 46

(Indicate in space provided item most descriptive.)

- I. a. Student's attitude: 1. Eager to learn. 2. Shows normal interest. 3. Lackadaisical. 4. Unconcerned. 1
- b. Judgment: 1. Consistently accurate. 2. Sound. 3. Erratic. 4. Unreliable. 2
- c. Progress: 1. Fast and steady. 2. Normal. 3. Slow. 4. Made little progress. 1
- d. General appearance (considering possibility of being Airline 1st Pilot): 1. Neat and clean. 2. Minor deficiencies in dress. 3. Generally untidy. 4. Slovenly. 2
- II. Procedures in C-47: 1. Consistently accurate. 2. Correct after normal training. 3. Occasionally erratic. 4. Makes mistakes often. 1
- III. Emergency procedures: 1. Calm and correct, with speed. 2. Normally executed. 3. Excitable. 4. Unreliable. 2
- IV. General pilot ability: 1. Excellent. 2. Very satisfactory. 3. Satisfactory. 4. Unsatisfactory. 2
- V. Recommended as: 1. First Pilot, E.A.T.S. Airlines. 2. First pilot, C-47, non-airline. 3. Co-pilot. 4. Non-flying duties. 1

VI. Instructor's remarks and explanations:
 Student displayed exceptional interest and marked ability to learn and retain new material. He has been thoroughly cooperative and courteous at all times. His judgement has been sound in all phases of flying and has demonstrated ability to cope with emergencies. I believe him to be competent and qualified for first pilot, EATS Airlines.

A TRUE COPY:
William L. Brantley
 WILLIAM L. BRANTLEY
 1st Lt., A. C.
 Ass't Director of Training

/s/ Raymond Sculley,
 1st Lt., A. C.
 Instructor

E.A.T.S. CENTRAL PILOT SCHOOL
324TH TROOP CARRIER SQUADRON
APO 125

19 August 1946

SUBJECT: Final Report on Student Officer, Class 46-E
TO : Commanding Officer, U.S.A.F. Station, **Orly**
APO 741.

1. Using the four point grading system, Un-
satisfactory (U), Satisfactory (S), Very Satisfactory
(VS), and Excellent (E), the following grades were
attained by **Deacen, Edward F., 2nd Lt., O-27533:**

a. Ground School Phase

Airline Piloting:	E	Know Your Aircraft:	E
Instruments:	E	Navigation:	E
Radio Aids:	E	Minor Subjects:	E
Weather:	E		

b. Flying Phase

Airline Piloting:	S	Radio Compass (Auto):	VS
Emergency Procedures:	S	Radio Compass (Aural):	VS
Basic Instruments:	S	SCS-51 and GCA:	VS
Radio Range:	S	AAF 50-3 (White) Check:	VS
		Airline Instrument Check:	VS

c. Link Trainer: **VS**

d. Attitude: **E**

2. This officer completed the course of instruc-
tion with a final rating of **very satisfactory**. In the
class of twenty-three students his standing was number **two**.
This officer is recommended for first pilot, EATS Airlines.

TO 3. Officer's Casual Form 5, Instructor's Final
Statement, Form 8-B, and 50-3 Card are attached.

For the Commandant:

RUSSELL POWELL,
Capt., A. C.
Director of Training

Enclosures



Ted on the right, hamming it up with another pilot



Ted having a rest

Chapter VI

European Air Transport Service (EATS)

At Orly field we had been informed that a new operation had been established for the European theaters. It was designated the European Air Transport Service, known by the acronym EATS. Upon arrival there we were assigned to an area of Paris called the Butte Rouge. We were quartered in a small apartment complex and it was very nice compared to some of the quarters we had previously occupied. In fact it was quite luxurious and even included a dining area with a special area for our mess for every day and for special occasions.

When we reported for orientation by the commanding officer we were informed that we would begin operation immediately as airline crews for EATS. Due to the results of my performance at the top gun school, I may have been the very first pilot to fly for EATS.

EATS was headquarters in Wiesbaden, Germany and its mission was to fill the complete void of commercial air operations in any of the cities in Europe at that time due to the horrendous amount of devastation during the war. There was no air service whatsoever to transport materials, supplies, food – all the basic human needs that were able to be fulfilled thanks to these air operations. So we essentially became an airline operation called the Military Air Transport Service.

European AIR TRANSPORT Service

SCHEDULE
ISSUE NO. 15
EFFECTIVE 1 OCTOBER 1946

EATS BOOKING OFFICES

- PARIS - 7 PLACE VENDÔME, PHONE: ANCOU 706, EXT: 46
- FRANKFURT - 9 TALUS-ANLAGE, PHONE: 3-2132
- NAPLES - PBL. BUILDING - PHONE: 2633
- ROME - CIAMPINO AIRFIELD, PHONE: 8141, EXT: 432
- MUNICH - 28 LUDWIGSTRASSE, PHONE: 6-244, 8-1410
- MUNICH - KUNSTLERHAUS, PHONE: 3321
- VIENNA - ALBAINE BLDG., 3 FRIEDRICH ALBERTSTRASSE, PHONE: ABLE 2698

EATS AIR TERMINALS (AIRDROME IN PARENTHESES)

- BERLIN (TEMPELHOF) - PHONE: 2327, 2742, 2746, 2718
- BREMEN (BREITENBURGER AIRPORT) - PHONE: 2103, 2708, 2336
- FRANKFURT (ESCHBORN) - PHONE: 3-2101, EXT: 399
- LONDON (BOVINGDON) - PHONE: BOVINGDON, EXT: 283
- MANNHEIM (SÜDBAHN SEITEN) - PHONE: 14, 47
- MILAN (Linate FOGLIANO) - PHONE: 1230
- MUNICH (RHEIN) - PHONE: RHEIN 370, 368
- NAPLES (CAPUCCHINO) - PHONE: 431
- MUNICH (FURTH) - PHONE: 2133
- PARMA (PROCA DI FALCO) - PHONE: 288
- PARIS (ORLY) - PHONE: ORLY AIRFIELD, EXT: 261, 347
- PISA (SAN GIUSTO) - PHONE: SAN GIUSTO AIRFIELD, EXT: 2
- ROME (CIAMPINO) - PHONE: 8141, EXT: 426, 428
- STUTTGART (ECHTERSDORF) - PHONE: 1034
- UDINE (CAMP FORTINO) - PHONE: 41, EXT: 4
- VIENNA (TULLN) - PHONE: TULLN AIR BASE, EXT: 432
- WIESBADEN (RESENHEIM) - PHONE: 262, EXT: 201, 192

NOTES

- ALL SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO INTERRUPTIONS AND CHANGES WITHOUT NOTICE.
- EATS NORTH AND WEST-BOUND FLIGHTS ARE EVEN NUMBERS AS FAR AS POSSIBLE.
- EATS SOUTH AND EAST-BOUND FLIGHTS ARE ODD NUMBERS AS FAR AS POSSIBLE.

HEADQUARTERS
WIESBADEN, GERMANY APO 633

BRIG. GEN. LUCAS V. BEAU
COMMANDING

<https://www.timetableimages.com/timages/eats.htm>

I basically flew 3 regular routes from Orly Field each week. The first route was (1) Orly to Bovingdon Air Base near London, (2) London to Eschborn Airfield near Frankfurt, and (3) Frankfurt to Tempelhof Airbase in West Berlin. From Tempelhof I would return to Orly.



First Route

The Eschborn Airfield was built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as a steel planking strip to land on and take off from. The material was called PSP, which stood for perforated steel planking and it was designed for rapid construction of temporary runways and landing strips. There was quite a bit of that for runways after the war that we flew on and off of.



PSP Airstrip in Italy 1944

The second route each week was from Orly to Vienna and back.



Second Route

The third trip was from Orly to Rome and Naples and back.



Third Route

Those were the basic three trips each week. Of course there were special flights in between those for special requirements that might arise from time to time.

The aircraft we flew for EATS were C-47s, the same planes that we had flown in top gun school so I and the others who joined me as pilots were very familiar with them. These twin-engine Boeing planes had seen a great deal of service during World War II and had now been reoutfitted to serve as makeshift air liners.

One of our major concerns flying EATS missions to the various European cities was the problem of weather. The weather in Europe was often overcast, unpredictable and subject to frequent changes, requiring us to fly by instruments. I often felt sorry for the weather officers who took part in our pre-flight briefings because they had to tell us what the weather would be on any given trip. And the equipment at hand at that time to give them accuracy in predicting the weather en route was very primitive compared to what we have today. As a result, the weather officer was often very nervous when he told us what he determined to be the weather we would encounter on those flights because he couldn't really be certain. I think they had quite a few sleepless nights.

In the later part of my assignment in Orly we learned that Ground-Controlled Approach (GCA) technology was being installed at Tempelhof to assist pilots in bad weather. GCA uses radar and it's still in use today throughout the world. As I recall, it was developed by the British and we weren't introduced to it as a major flying aid until we received this announcement at Orly.

On one of my flights in heavy weather going from Frankfurt into Berlin's Tempelhof airbase. We had heavy fog and a very low ceiling, probably around 200 feet at the most. Our normal approaches there had always been by the radio range system mentioned earlier. As I approached Tempelhof at altitude I was contacted by GCA crews on the ground over our radio in the cockpit. They asked me if I would like to try a GCA approach. Well I knew nothing about it but I responded, "Yes." The Tempelhof GCA at that time was manned by the British and our crews, with the British training our crews to operate the equipment from the ground.

The GCA officer in charge transmitted back to me in the cockpit to maintain a certain altitude, to make a left turn – or in the right terminology, to make a 90 degree turn to the left followed by a 90 degree turn to the right which would put me back on course. That was their method of identifying me on the radar screen to be sure they had the right blip. That's what identified my airplane on their scope. They then directed me to turn to a particular heading. What they were doing was taking over the flight and control of my airplane. Each time they gave me instructions I acknowledged that I had received them. They would instruct me to descend to a certain altitude, to turn to a particular heading, and each time I acknowledged that I'd received them. The blip on the radar screen then showed them I had followed the instructions.

Finally they advised I would be heading into the final approach and the instruction was that no further acknowledgment would be necessary. I was very nervous because I didn't know what was going on and I couldn't see a thing. We were still heavily engulfed in fog at an altitude of about 500 feet and heading into that final approach to the runway. They continued talking to me over the radio with specific instructions to make sure I was properly aligned with the runway and to be sure my altitude was where it needed to be during the descent. There was a constant stream of instructions such as turn left 2 degrees or turn right 5 degrees, increase your rate of descent. These were typical instructions from the GCA crews on the ground and I had to have the confidence to believe they could see what I couldn't see and to guide me correctly. They talked me all the way down to the runway until we broke out of that weather ceiling, not more than 200 feet off the ground. At that point we

could visually land the plane. Based on a number of conversations with the guys who flew with me at that time, I may have been the first pilot with EATS to experience a ground-controlled approach under severe weather conditions. It was quite a feeling to know that now apparently we had the capability to greatly minimize the risks we'd been encountering with earlier methods of navigation assistance.

So that's when I got my first taste of GCA and it was quite an experience. That technology was soon to become the mainstay of the Berlin Airlift.

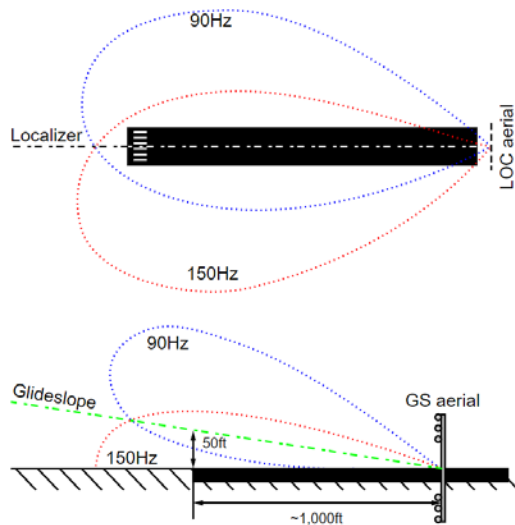
Following that we were to be using GCA at Tempelhof which as far as I can recall was the only airbase among all of the ones we flew to use GCA equipment. From then on we were to use this new technology for heavy- weather landings and even visual landings where we had clear skies and full visibility to give our American crews constant practice on controlling our landings using GCA. This led to some humorous incidents. On one of my first flights following my initial GCA experience I was flying into Berlin again and they asked if I'd like to make an approach using GCA and I responded, "Roger." Apparently the British had turned over the landing control to the American crew. I followed their instructions and this time I could see everything that was going on. I'll never forget that the ground crew brought me down alright – about 300 feet wide of the runway! Had that been a bad weather landing there would have been a terrible crash. So they still had a lot to learn about how to read the radar screen but they did learn it well. By the time of the Berlin Airlift in 1948, our GCA crews were very sharp and we constantly flew ground-controlled approaches.

Today GCA is commonplace but back then it was brand new. Ground controllers with ATC (Air Traffic Control) are under enormous pressure. When you think of the air traffic today and the huge numbers of aircraft within range of a given airport that they have to identify, control and instruct – that is one high-pressure job. Without a doubt they are responsible for the primary control of the safety of everyone in the air today. When you look at a radar screen today it is just one solid mass of blips.

Almost coincidental with my first experiences with GCA there was another landing system developed and adopted by the military. It was designated SCS-51. After our earlier experience in our adoption of the GCA program we began practicing landing under daylight conditions using the SCS-51. Today it's called ILS, Instrument Landing System and it is in constant use by all the commercial airlines and the military. Back then it was a brand new piece of technology.

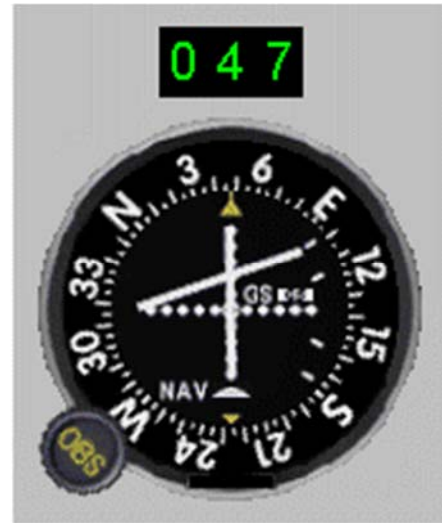
SCS-51 used **AN/MRN-1**, an instrument approach localizer used by the Army Air Force during and after World War II. It was standardized on 3 July 1942.

On the ground, the transmitter provides a signal to guide the **RC-103** (an airborne localizer receiver used to indicate a landing course) equipped aircraft to the centerline of a runway. The set radiates two intersecting field patterns. The shape of the radiated patterns is such that they intersect in a vertical plane called the "course", which can be oriented to intersect the ground in a line which coincides with the centerline of a landing runway.



On the aircraft there is an airborne localized receiver, the **RC-103-A**, which is used to indicate a landing course in conjunction with the AAF instrument approach system. Signals received from the transmitter located at one end of the runway to be used are fed into the cross-pointer indicator to indicate "on course", "fly right" or "fly left". Audio indication is also provided.

It worked pretty well but I was never as confident using it as I became with GCA once they became adept. Nevertheless, we had it as a backup. It was a pretty simple instrument on the panel in the cockpit. It was a round, glass-enclosed dial or instrument with two cross-hairs. One was for magnetic direction which we called azimuth (for lateral guidance) and the other was for altitude (for vertical guidance). You would align them together and follow them as they crossed together to a landing. If the needle deviated either way, either on altitude or direction, you could correct it. But it was a very sensitive instrument and with a slight deviation you could be off the runway by 50 or 100 feet. So you had to be dead on with it. Under turbulent conditions it was difficult to fly using that method but it was a good backup. And of course today it's highly refined and in constant use just like GCA. Those were the early days of those landing systems.

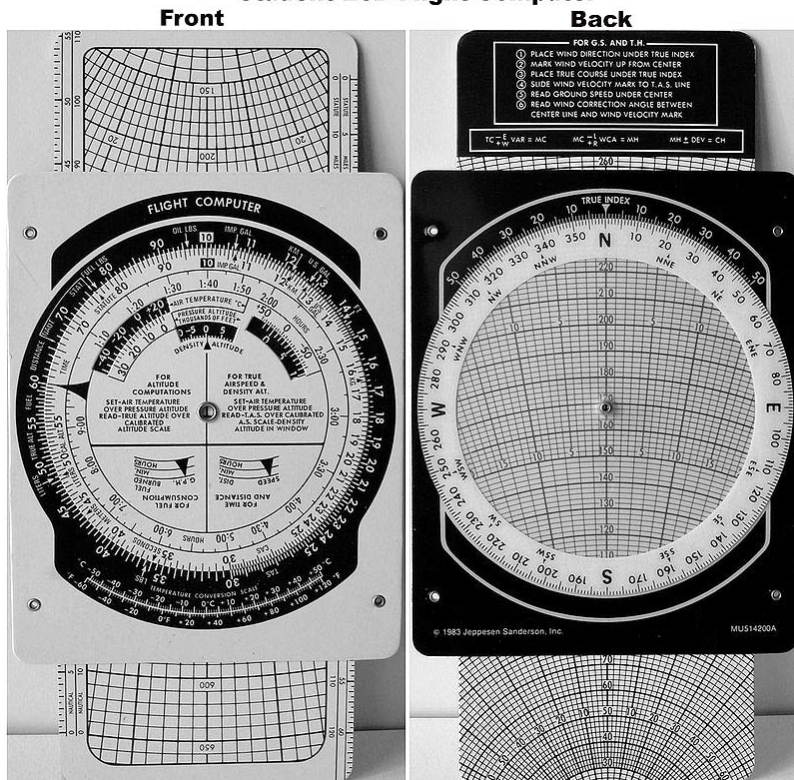


Aircraft above the glide path On the glide path
<http://www.navfltsm.addr.com/ils.htm>

Below the glide path

In addition to bad weather, another concern at that time was flight navigation. We had very limited navigational aids. As an example, GPS which we have today was something we couldn't even have conceived of at that time. We had nothing like that then. Computers may have been operational at various levels of government but in our work then in Europe I don't believe we had the benefit of computers and if we did what we had would be considered very primitive compared to what we have today. So we had a little calculator called an E6B. It was a circular slide rule that enabled us to plot a course based on what we saw on the charts and what we were given in the way of information on windspeeds and velocity at various altitudes. Using the E6B we were able to plot our courses and use them in-flight to correct them in-flight with a fairly good degree of accuracy.

Student E6B Flight Computer

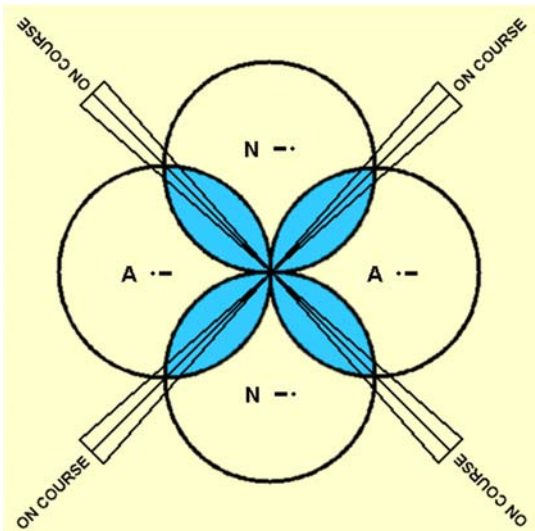


E6B Flight Computer

As primitive as they were compared to flight technology today, we were able to get along but they were limited in their capabilities to help us be sure that we were accurately following a given course direction. We also relied on what was called PIREPs. That's an acronym for "Pilot Reports." That meant information sent by radio to the various stations or locations for EATS operation by pilots who had completed certain runs. They would give their reports on what they encountered during the course of those missions.

We flew under weather conditions and also by visual conditions by radio signals. We did have certain radio beacons. We had various transmitters throughout Europe that we could tune into with our cockpit radios to give us a directional heading to home us into some signal, maybe near a city or maybe a beacon location that we could plot on the chart. But the mainstay of our navigational assistance was the *radio range*.

The radio range was a transmitting station located at an airport. It sent out two signals using Morse code letters. They were an "A" and an "N". The Morse code symbol in dots and dashes that you hear over the radio, the "A" was a dot and a dash. An "N" was a dash and a dot. When those two signals were transmitted so that they joined together, you got a solid tone. That tone became the leg to be followed into a landing field. It's hard to adequately explain how it all worked without drawing a diagram.



The four-course radio range. One antenna's figure-eight pattern transmits Morse-code "A," and the other antenna's figure-eight pattern transmits Morse-code "N." The "On-Course" signal develops where the two figure eight-patterns overlap (shaded) and the two Morse-code signals interleave to provide a constant tone.

<http://www.navfltsm.addr.com/ndb-nav-history.htm>

The way the range signals were transmitted, an "A" was sent out for one quadrant. The adjoining quadrant was an "N". The next adjoining piece of the quadrant was another "A", and the final quadrant was another "N". It was where the quadrants would overlap each other slightly that you would get the solid tone. Those tones enabled us to follow a solid signal directly over an airport landing strip. It was intriguing the way they developed the system and it worked. We became quite adept at flying radio ranges, landing under poor weather conditions like overcast skies, low ceilings and fog.

That was pretty much the extent of our navigational assistance and all in all it was quite successful with very few accidents that I can recall during my year and a half to two years flying for EATS.

During my time with EATS I loved what I was doing. It was a wonderful assignment for me to have. I think very often today about many of those flights. I had a very interesting flight to Rome on one of my weekly schedules out of Orly. The airfield there was called Ciampino. I used to love going to Rome and I might add that were some very attractive ladies there who graciously accepted us into their world during our leisure time there.



On one of my flights into Ciampino everything went normally and the weather was good. That flight took me from Orly field down through lower France to the Mediterranean coast, along the coast past Marseilles, past the islands of Malta and Elba, and on into Rome. We landed without incident. I had a new co-pilot riding with me. He was an experienced pilot but he was still gaining experience flying the C-47 as a co-pilot. We landed and were to pick up a number of people who were being transferred from Rome to Paris and then probably onto the states. So we had an RON there, meaning Remain Over Night. We spent the night in Rome and we always had fantastic accommodations wherever we went. If we RON'ed in any given city in Europe the military had taken over every luxury hotel so when we stayed overnight we stayed in these luxurious hotels and availed ourselves of all the various services.

The next morning we were due to take off at about 08:00. I don't remember my co-pilot's name but I called him Shorty because he was about 6'3" and I was 5'10". He was a nice, likeable guy. We went into briefing that morning at about 06:30, had a bite to eat and then proceeded to the air craft. Everything was on schedule. We had about eight passengers who came aboard. When we were carrying passengers we always briefed them on the flight just as the commercial airlines do now. I briefed them on our flight path and the weather conditions which were good.

We taxied out. We always had a run up before takeoff to check out the engines. Everything checked out fine. We were given clearance to the runway for takeoff. The C-47 with a load would normally leave the runway at about 80 miles an hour and become airborne. The plane had a lot of lift. We advanced the throttles and were at full throttle. About halfway down the runway something felt funny to me, something very unusual. The plane began rocking back and forth side to side. And not only

rocking. The plane fell back onto the runway because Shorty had erroneously raised the landing gear before we were airborne. We had a procedure upon takeoff. Once the throttles were in full position for takeoff, the co-pilot would tell the pilot to lock the throttle.

That quadrant of the throttle is shown in the center of the picture below. When you pushed the throttle forward position for takeoff there was a gauge telling you what the position was measured in manifold pressure. And beneath that throttle was a friction knob that you tightly turned to lock the throttle into position so you could ensure full takeoff power for the plane to become airborne. It was standard procedure. The other procedure upon becoming airborne was the signal to raise the gear. At 81 in. manifold pressure the co-pilot was to grab the landing gear lever and raise the wheels.



C-47 Instrument panel



<https://vintageaviation.fi/dc-3-cockpit-project/>

On this occasion Shorty had made a terrible mistake. Instead of locking the throttle, he raised the gear and we were not anywhere near adequate air speed. I could not get the plane off the ground. So down we went and it wiped out the landing gear. As we hit the ground the propellers flew off each engine, still spinning. One of them sliced through the fuselage into the cockpit and flew right behind my neck.

As air crash crews came rushing toward us I said to Shorty, "Get everybody off the plane." The big fear in a situation like that is fire from the hot engines. He got everyone out, then I got up and out of the plane and that was the end of that flight. It was a bad wreck and the plane was pretty beat up. Shorty and I were required to stay in Rome where they quickly assembled a panel of inquiry to investigate the accident to find out what happened. We attended it the following morning and explained what had happened. It was determined that the accident was due to pilot error on the part of Shorty and entered into his record. So my return flight from that interesting episode was as a passenger on another C-47 because my plane was ruined. I think that was the only accident that I had during my three years in Europe with a lot of flying. There were other events while I was there flying the various missions which I will report on as we progress.

I returned to Orly and life went back to normal until seven of us pilots happened to learn of a group in Paris called the French welcoming committee. It sounded interesting so we looked into it and what it consisted of was some rather socially high ladies who had daughters. They wanted to know if we wanted to have their daughters visit us for a social hour at the Butte Rouge to welcome us as eternal friends of Paris and France. Of course we accepted that invitation and decided we would get to work and prepare the appropriate reception to meet these young ladies at our mess hall.

The preparation required getting some large cooking tubs that the cooks used in the mess hall. We set them up on a table and decided to make a punch for the young ladies. We got out every conceivable bottle of liqueur. At that time we were each issued a monthly ration of liquor and we had our choice of the type. So we all had our rations stacked up in our quarters. We had champagne, anisette, cognac, sophisticated wines – you name it. We never even drank a lot of our rations, we just kept them. We got all those bottles together and proceeded to pour them into the tubs. In the kitchen they had big chunks of ice that the cooks chipped off for us.

The young ladies arrived on a bus at the appointed time that evening. We had everything ready, the ice chunks were in the punch. When the young ladies came in we noticed some of them were really nice looking, all about 18 or 19 up to 25, the perfect age. They were very gracious and came up and shook hands with us. Most of them spoke fairly good English. There was one in particular I really liked. She was dark haired. I've forgotten her name. It turned out she was not only one of the welcoming committee members, she was also secretary to our CO (Commanding Officer). I didn't know that until later, much later.

Unfortunately the young lady who was secretary to the colonel missed the bus to take her home that night. She needed a place to stay so I graciously asked her if she'd like to spend the night at my apartment. Of course she accepted. After that I never saw her again. I was very careful to avoid any – well, let me put it this way: if I saw the colonel at any time during my stay there, I would always immediately turn around and walk in the opposite direction. So much for the French welcoming committee. They were very, very nice.

I had an interesting flight one time from Orly to Frankfurt. Some of you may remember a very famous movie star, Paulette Goddard. She was a beautiful girl and in the 40s she was in a lot of movies in starring roles. I had an assignment to fly her and her entertainment group of 6 or 8 people. She was going from base to base entertaining the soldiers and officers at various locations throughout Europe. My assignment was to take her from Orly field to Frankfurt where they were going to perform for the American troops. She was a very nice young girl. She was very nice to me and said she enjoyed the flight. So that was an interesting experience.



Along with our flight assignments many of us had ground assignments as well. Once we had achieved a certain number of hours of flying in a given month we were grounded. There was a limit on how many hours we could fly each month to prevent having pilot fatigue. In our case the limit was 85 hours. Once we hit the limit we were grounded until the next month. Sometimes that would give me a week to 10 days on the ground. For example, if I'd had a long flight from Orly down to Rome and Naples, or from Orly to London, Frankfurt and Berlin and back, those racked up a lot of flight hours pretty quickly.

At West Point we had studied military law and practiced what we'd learned in various military units as an extension of our studies. We'd take turns acting as prosecutors, defense lawyers or investigating officers related to courts martial. I took on each of those roles several times. Our cases ranges from misdemeanors to murder trials.

In one of the first cases I was involved in after being posted to Europe, I was assigned to help prosecute a murder in Wiesbaden. The Nuremberg trials were taking place at that time. Before the trial concluded I was transferred to Orly so I didn't get to see it through to final judgment. The biggest, most involved case I handled as prosecutor was the rape of a German girl by an American GI. He was found guilty and sentenced to serve a number of years for his crime.

In addition to felony crimes we held summary courts martial to try misdemeanors. In a typical court martial several officers on a board acted as judges to determine guilt or innocence and to impose sentencing. One of the easiest cases we handled entailed an enlisted man from our squadron who had taken off with a jeep from the motor pool just to have fun. I defended him while the summary court martial investigating officer prepared a report. I was allowed to prepare my own report as well. In this case, it was clear that the man was guilty of the offense and I did what I could to minimize his punishment.



Ted as a young pilot



Chapter VII

Bremen, Munich and Tripoli

In due course I received orders for a new assignment to report to Bremen air base in northern Germany to continue as a pilot for EATS. I hated to leave Orly but at the same time, Bremen opened up new experiences and I was stationed there for another 6 months or so. I continued flying to the cities I had already been serving along with some new ones as well so it expanded my area of operation.

While I was in Bremen I bought a jeep from one of my cohorts who was going back to the states. It was in nice operating order and I paid \$750 for it. My quarters were in a beautiful old German home. It was still occupied by its owner, an older lady named Steffi. She had been ordered by the military to make her home available as quarters for four of us pilots that would be operating out of Bremen air base. You could tell from day one that she was not happy about that. She always struck me as very stoic and stern. I always had the feeling she was a Hitler sympathizer. She provided what she had to but she made it clear she didn't like it. Luckily we didn't have much contact with her. We each had our own room there and that remained our quarters during the assignment in Bremen.

I was given the ground assignment to be the officer's club officer. In other words, I was assigned to run the officer's club. I ran the club with a German by the name of Albert who had been appointed by the military to basically run the club as a civilian. While I was technically in command, he actually ran it and he did it very well. He was a German I really liked and we became very good friends. As a matter of fact, when I was later transferred from Bremen to Munich which was my next assignment, he broke down in tears. He really hated to see me go and cried like a baby.

I need to be careful about talking about some of the events that took place at the officer's club. That's classified information. But it became very nice and over time some of the guys were allowed to bring their wives and families over from the states. Originally they couldn't do that. They were given nice quarters to live in.

Albert used to visit a local theatre and when I was head of the officer's club sometimes I'd go with him. Part of my duties was bringing in entertainment for the local officers assigned to that unit in Bremen. That's how I met a dancing girl named Irene but that probably isn't appropriate to include here.

We had a very interesting event occur during my assignment in Bremen. While I was stationed there my primary duty was flying. The flights were very much the same as I had flown during my time at Orly. An interesting thing developed. This was around 1947. The very first jet fighter was developed for the air force called the P-80, the Lockheed Shooting Star. The letter "P" stood for pursuit. Later the letter was changed on all aircraft to "F" for fighter.



Lockheed P-80 Shooting Star

The P-80 was the first operational fighter jet aircraft for the U.S. One day in Bremen we were all excited to learn there would be three P-80s flying into our airfield. We couldn't wait to see those first three jets. When they landed we met the pilots and they showed us their aircraft. They were to be stationed there for 2 or 3 days and were practicing various types of maneuvers. The second or third day after their arrival they took off and we were fascinated to see them take off with a tremendous roar. We had never seen jets before.

Shortly thereafter we sadly learned that one of them had crashed. Several of the other guys and I were tasked with grabbing a jeep to go to the crash site and see if there was any hope that the pilot had survived. We drove out and found the crash site right away because smoke was still coming up. It must have gone into a dive almost nose first directly into the ground. Upon impact it caused a huge crater.

As soon as we got out of the jeep it was obvious there was no way the pilot could have survived. He had been totally consumed by the crash. We walked around the crater where the jet lay in bits in pieces. What we were looking for was any existing remains that we could collect and take back to the base. We did this using paper cups and I remember picking up teeth. The rest of the body had disintegrated in the heat of the explosion. So the teeth were the only thing we could bring back to be buried.

Apparently what had happened was that when a jet engine fails from a flameout there is a way to restart that engine but apparently the pilot wasn't able to do it and the plane went into its fatal dive. This was one of the few fatal events that occurred during our otherwise normal routines and daily flying in Bremen.

There was another disturbing incident involving a displaced person, called DPs. There were many of them throughout Europe, people who had lost their homes and families, wandering around with no place to live and no connections. One of them murdered a German and he was found guilty and sentenced to be executed by firing squad. Several of us were ordered to witness the execution. One morning a military vehicle with that poor soul in the back of it along with the firing squad arrived at the designated point at the end of the field perimeter and we witnessed his execution. I never knew the details of the murder he committed or what brought it about but apparently it was something

horrendous, otherwise I think the court would have been more lenient. It was not a pleasant experience for any of us because inwardly we all had hostile feelings toward the Germans, the German army and the German regime as a result of the war and we hated to see a non-German being killed for killing a German.

The assignment in Bremen continued until I received orders to report to Munich airbase where I was appointed flight instructor. This was to be my last assignment with EATS before the Berlin airlift. I can't recall why I was transferred. It might have been due to certain EATS requirements. I remained in Munich as an instructor for quite some time, training new pilots in fine tuning their instrument flying including taking off and landing techniques.

The Munich airbase was just north of the German Alps and I used to drive down there in my jeep. The scenery was beautiful with lots of charming little chalets dotting the landscape. This is the area where Hitler had his holiday home, Eagle's Nest. Munich was an interesting air base, circular in design just like Berlin's Tempelhof airfield. It was tricky to land there because high rise apartment buildings surrounded the outer edges of the airfield.



Tempelhof 1948

<http://www.ipernity.com/doc/26252/47259470>

I had an engine failure once while instructing a new pilot in Munich one night. It was a night training mission and we lost an engine on the final approach to landing. I had to shut it down and fly visually but everything worked out fine and there was no damage to the plane.

In spring of 1948 the air force re-opened an air base in Tripoli called Wheelus on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. Ten of us volunteered and were sent there during the time of occupation. Wheelus had been shut down after WWII and our job was to open it back up. The place was a shambles and we had to rebuild the base. I ultimately became squadron commander at Wheelus.

They'd added more personnel by then and the Colonel stationed there appointed me to the new position.



Wheelus Air Base, Libya. It was taken over by USAAF's Air Training Command in April of 1945. In June of 1948 it was transferred to the USAF Military Air Transportation Service (MATS).

One of my strongest memories of Wheelus and the surrounding area is how terrible it smelled. We'd go into town and there was camel dung everywhere, riddled with flies. Libyan kids couldn't wait for us to arrive so they could grab our watches, billfolds and sunglasses.

We experienced a number of desert storms while I was stationed there, some quite severe. They were called ghiblis and the outside temperature would reach 130 degrees.



Dust storm sweeping across Tripoli

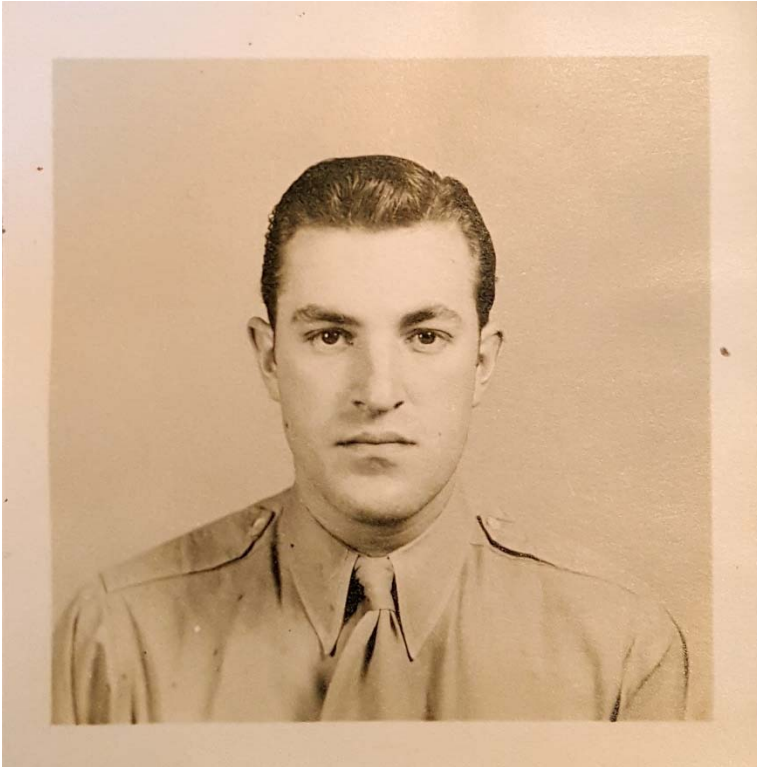
My flights from Tripoli were to Cairo, Ankara (the U.S. Air Base), Rome and Naples. One time I was sent to Algiers to pick up 6 or 7 French girls to work in the offices at Wheelus as civilian personnel. In addition I made two or three long trips back and forth to Frankfurt. On one trip I was very tired and running a high fever. I went to the flight surgeon's office upon arrival where the doctor produced a huge needle and bent me over for a penicillin shot.

Tripoli at this time was controlled by the British. They'd taken over a hotel as their quarters and had their wives there. They hosted a dance at the hotel one night and invited us to be their guests. They

introduced us to their wives and that led to some interesting incidents. The Brits got very upset and reported us to our commanding officer.

We then held a party at Wheelus which we prepared with great care. Just as we did at Butte Rouge, we mixed together a punch in a huge commercial cooking tub with every type of alcohol in it. Some of the British girls came over and bedlam ensued. After that we were forbidden from attending any British functions except those that were official military. Despite that, I became good friend with one of the Brits.

My time in Wheelus came to an end in late June of 1948 when I was ordered to report to Rhein-Main to participate in the early phase of the Berlin Airlift.



Ted in his glory days

Chapter VII

Berlin Airlift

After the war ended, the Allied nations – Great Britain, the U.S. and Russia – made for a tenuous union at best. The primary force holding the alliance together was our common enemy, Hitler. Not long after the war ended, the Western allies parted company with the Soviet Union and its leader, Joseph Stalin. The Soviets soon succeeded in dominating many states which their armies had liberated from the Nazis. Their control extended across Eastern Europe, taking over the governments in Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, East Germany, Poland, Romania and Yugoslavia. The Baltic countries—Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania—were made into republics. Even Finland was partly controlled by the Soviets.

Germany was divided into occupation zones: the American, French, and British zones in the west and a Soviet zone in the east. Within the Soviet zone lay Berlin, formerly Hitler's capital, also divided into four sectors, each administered by one of the wartime allies. The only guaranteed means of access to isolated Berlin was by air. The Soviet Union had granted each of the three Western Allies a 20-mile-wide air corridor leading from their respective occupation zones to the city; but no such arrangement governed travel by road or rail – that depended upon the continuing cooperation of Soviet authorities.

That cooperation came to a halt on June 24, 1948 when the Soviet Union closed all surface routes – the roads, waterways and railroads – into the western zone of Berlin. Citing "technical difficulties," the Soviets blockaded the city, hoping to force the United States, Great Britain, and France to abandon Berlin and thus sabotage currency reforms and the unification of the western zone of Germany.

The Allied response was neither retreat nor war, but a unique reply made possible only by aviation - an airlift. Two days after West Berlin was sealed off, the first transport plane of "Operation Vittles" landed with vital supplies. The Berlin airlift was supposed to be a short-term measure, but it settled in for the long haul as the Soviets refused to lift the blockade. For 18 months, American, British and French aircrews literally flew around-the-clock into the Tempelhof (American sector), Gatow (British sector) and Tegel (French sector) airfields in West Berlin bringing coal, food, medicine, and all of the other necessities of life to the 2 million inhabitants of war-ravaged West Berlin. Despite impossible odds, the Berlin Airlift succeeded in winning the first battle of the Cold War.

At the beginning of the operation, the planes delivered about 5,000 tons of supplies to West Berlin every day; by the end, those loads had increased to about 8,000 tons of supplies per day.

American and British air forces flew over Berlin more than 250,000 times, with the original plan being to lift 3,475 tons of supplies daily. By the spring of 1949, that number was often met twofold, with the peak daily delivery totaling 12,941 tons. American C-47 and C-54 transport airplanes together flew over 92,000,000 miles in the process, almost the distance from Earth to the Sun, carrying approximately 2.3 million tons of cargo in all over the course of the airlift.

Having initially concluded there was no way the airlift could work, the Soviets found its continued success an increasing embarrassment. On 12 May 1949, the USSR lifted the blockade of West Berlin due to economic issues in East Berlin.

At Rhein-Main I was to be a part of a massive air operation organized to save the livelihood of the people of Berlin. I was assigned to the 60th troop carrier group. It was a carryover from the designation it had during the war using C-47s. Initially that was the primary aircraft used for the lift. It had a low capacity of about 10,000 pounds. We would be flying day and night, carrying maximum loads of critical supplies into Berlin.

The Soviets had just initiated one of the first major international crises of the Cold War by blockading all ground transportation into Berlin under Western control, preventing the city from receiving all the supplies the population needed to survive. They also had control of some of the flyways into Berlin from bases the Americans and British had had during the war. For the allies that meant that the only remaining access to Berlin was by air via three air corridors: one from the north, one from the south, and a third from the west.



The three air corridors in and out of Berlin

I was already familiar with the designated air corridors beginning when I was first stationed in Orly. These corridors had been established by the three WWII allies (the U.S., Great Britain the Soviet Union) to permit us to fly through Russian territory. Both before and during the Berlin Airlift (26 June 1948 – 30 September 1949), we had to stay within our corridors on flights to Berlin. Each of the three corridors was 20 miles wide but in the air that's not a lot.

Russian fighter planes were patrolling the edges of those corridors and I had one come at me one time. One time I was flying to Berlin from Frankfurt on my first regular route and I must have drifted too far to the left of the corridor. I didn't even see the Russian fighter plane but he had probably been trailing me off in the distance. He must have thought I was making my way out of the corridor and he came right at me, banking his plane up close to mine. He didn't fire but he signaled to let me know I was getting close to the edge. If I hadn't moved over, I suppose he would have fired on me. During

the airlift, several of our planes were shot at by the Russians even though they were in their proper corridor. The Russians were really angry with us about the airlift.

My assignment was to fly my C-47 using the southern corridor from Rhein-Main into Berlin. The British were based in northern Germany near Hamburg and would be using the northern corridor, landing in Gatow Air Base just outside Berlin. Then the Americans and British both used the central corridor flying out of Berlin.

The other pilots and I flew on a 24-hour per day schedule: 8 hours in flight, 8 hours at rest, and then 8 hours in flight again. Each plane had a pilot, co-pilot, flight engineer and radio engineer. Upon landing in Rhein-Main from Tempelhof they would immediately send the ground crews in. They knew how to secure the loads, unloading and reloading. They were highly motivated because it was their own people who were dying.

On the ground we'd get a meal and a few hours' sleep. Then we'd get back up in a few hours to get ready for the next flight. We were motivated, too. It was a risky assignment but highly rewarding. Berlin had been terribly deprived due to the Russian blockade and we were to be the only source of livelihood for the citizens at this time. The supplies we flew included coal, wheat and other grains, milk and other non-perishable foods, medical supplies and clothing to enable the citizens' survival during the blockade. Even during the initial stages of the airlift, base flight operations were well organized and got even better over time as we became more experienced.



Berliners watching a C-54 land at Berlin Tempelhof Airport, 1948

The approach into Tempelhof was interesting. At twenty-five miles out GCA (Ground-Controlled Approach) would pick us up on their radar and assign us an altitude. Air traffic was building up to three and one-half minute intervals or more before we could land. We'd be stacked up at different

altitudes 500 feet apart. The bottom of the stack would land first. The way to make it work smoothly without chaotic disruption was to unload very rapidly so we could get back into the air to promptly return to Frankfurt. The loading and unloading was performed by the Germans – some military, some civilians. It took a lot of sharp guys in the air and on the ground to operate efficiently. Ground crew would bring us food when we got back from the 8-hour break and we'd eat in the air.

Of course there were incidents including some bad crashes. Tempelhof was a challenging airbase because it was surrounded by tall apartment buildings. A good friend of mine took off from there in his C-47 to go back to Rhein-Main and flew directly into one of the buildings. You'd need to take off at full RPM to safely clear the buildings. In this case there was a weather problem using GCA takeoff, probably pilot error. You can be looking at the instrument panel and experience temporary vertigo.

There were other incidents flying those legs. The Russians were always patrolling the paths, trying to catch us straying outside them. A couple of our planes were shot at but it didn't bring down the planes. It's amazing that fewer than 100 men were lost during that time with so many planes flying. After the war the German people erected a monument to pay tribute to those who had died participating in the airlift.



Looming over a small park on the Platz der Luftbrücke in Tempelhof, the Berlin Airlift Memorial (Luftbrückendenkmal) is dedicated to those who gave their lives to save the people of West Berlin during the Berlin Blockade. The three prongs represent the air corridors used to fly in supplies.

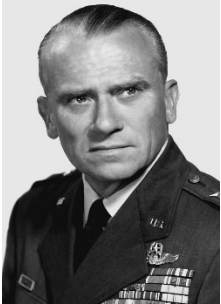
In the later stages of the airlift they began using larger aircraft that could hold great loads. The C-47 simply couldn't carry enough weight to sustain the huge quantities of supplies needed. An excellent book on the airlift called *Daring Young Men* by Richard Reeves only devoted half a page to the C-47s.

They pulled all of the C-54s from around the world to replace the C-47. As a result, I was ultimately no longer assigned to continue. My time there lasted only a few months. In total, only 3 members from my class participated in the airlift.

Chapter VIII

General's Aide

After the airlift I was reassigned back to Tripoli and shortly thereafter in 1948 I returned home to the United States. By then I had served 3 years in Europe and Africa. I was sent to Westover Field in Massachusetts, the headquarters operations of the Military Air transport Service known as MATS. There I served as an aide to General Archie J. Old, a job I hated. He disliked anyone from West Point and my main assignment was teaching his bratty eleven-year-old daughter, Adeline how to ride a horse.



Old enlisted as a private in the Texas National Guard on April 16, 1930.[2] He then attended aviation cadet training in the United States Army Air Corps. Appointed a flying cadet in February 1931, he completed his flying training at Brooks and Kelly Fields in Texas.

He flew 43 combat missions against Germany. On October 14, 1943, Old led the second raid on the Schweinfurt ball-bearing factories in the Fertile Myrtle III. Of 291 B-17s that reached the target, 60 were downed by flak or enemy fighters, for a loss rate of 20 percent. On June 21, 1944, Old led the second shuttle bombing run to Russia.

General Old was a brigadier general in command of military for the Atlantic division of MATS. There were eight bases under his command: Westover, Bermuda (McKinley Field), Azores, Port Leone in N. Africa, Tripoli, Ankara, Orly and the 8th in the British Isles. He had been a great combat pilot during the war flying B-17s.

I wasn't flying very often. We got special pay while flying, fifty percent more than for ground service. We were required to maintain a minimum of four hours of flight a month which was insufficient for military aircraft. With that little flight time pilots lose their feel for the plane but we were reduced due to military cutbacks. During this time we needed to fly daylight hours a certain length of time and by instruments a specific time period. On the ground we used a Link trainer which tilts just like a plane.



The Link Trainer, also known as the Blue Box and Pilot Trainer, was a flight simulator produced in the early 1930's. They became famous during WW II when they were used as a key pilot training aid by almost every combatant nation. More than 500,000 US pilots were trained on Link simulators.

To maintain proficiency in instrument flying we'd spend part of our time using Link and part flying at night. We all became nervous with so little flight time per month.

A year later in 1949 I left the service. All together I had flown 9 different aircraft including the PT19, AT-6, B-25, C-45, B-17, L-5, C-54 (with the general), C-47 and PT-13, a plane with two sets of wings used as primary trainer for naval and army air corps for an extended time period.



Designed in 1934 to meet a US Army specification for a new training airplane, the PT-13 Kaydet was the iconic American training aircraft of World War II

I would have liked to stay in the military but my father talked me into joining him in a business venture he had undertaken. I subsequently went down to Warner Robins Air Force Base where all of the military records were stored. I could have gotten into reserve status, not as a regular officer. I then received orders to report to Maxwell Field in Montgomery, Alabama to be processed. After spending a day doing that they sent me back home and told me I'd be receiving my orders but they never arrived. At Dad's request I had written my congressman telling him I wanted to be released from military service. That may have precluded me from getting my reserve status.

I married my first wife, Dorothy in late 1949 in Asheville, NC and my son Edward III ("Husky" to me, "Ted" to everyone else) was born in 1951 and my daughter Donna in 1952. While we lived in Asheville I used a civilian version of the PT-13 to obtain my private pilot's license. I was interested in becoming a commercial airline pilot but Dorothy was terrified I'd be involved in a plane crash so I pursued a career in business instead.

Sadly, that was the end of my flying days.



Ted at age 26 after ending his military service (and before he became a movie star)

Note: When Angie was a kid she believed her father actually was a movie star and felt bad for her friends because she knew they were jealous that he wasn't their father. By high school she figured out that probably wasn't true. Probably.

Edward F. "Ted" Deacon Jr.

September 12, 1922 – July 26, 2022



Edward F. (Ted) Deacon was born on September 12, 1922 in St. Louis, Missouri and died peacefully at home surrounded by his family on July 26, 2022, six weeks short of his 100th birthday. He graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1945 and was commissioned as an officer and pilot in the US Air Force during and after World War II. He was a B17 bomber pilot at the end of the war and was later stationed at various air bases in Germany, France and North Africa. Among other assignments throughout Europe he participated in the Berlin Airlift prior to his reassignment back in the US.

He resigned his commission in December 1949 to enter the business world and until 1991 held a number of executive positions with various manufacturers and distributors in the commercial flooring industry.

During his business career he was a past President of the Atlanta Floor Covering Association, National Sales Manager for the Commercial Carpet Corporation in New York, Vice President and Contract Division Manager of A.R.M. Industries in Philadelphia, President of the commercial division of Sequoyah Industries in Oklahoma, and finally Senior Vice President of the Blacknall Company in Atlanta at the time of his retirement in 1991.

He married his first wife, Dorothy in late 1949 in Asheville, NC. His son Edward III "Ted" was born in 1951 and his daughter Donna in 1952. After the marriage ended he married his second wife Lois and had three more children: daughters Angela born in 1954 and Gwynne in 1958, and son David in 1960. His last marriage was to Margaret "Micki" in 1971 and he became stepfather to her five children Suzanne, Robert, Dan, Mimi and Phillip. Upon his retirement, Ted and Micki moved to a beautiful Victorian home in historic Whitehaven, Maryland where they lived the last years of their lives.



Ted's and Micki's home in Whitehaven, extensively restored after purchase



Victorian homes on the Wicomico River, Whitehaven The Historic Whitehaven Hotel, built in 1815

Ted was remarkably talented in many ways including art, photography and music. Over his lifetime he produced a remarkable portfolio of landscape and wildlife photographs. Along with his talents as a photographer Ted was an accomplished artist, carving and painting beautiful shore birds for friends and family. Up until his last few days he was working on a beautiful cardinal that was ready to be painted, but he was never able to finish. And if that weren't enough, he played the piano beautifully despite not being able to read music and could play any piece by ear.

Many of the pieces of furniture in the family home were handmade by Ted in his workshop including cabinets, dressers and tables. But perhaps his greatest creative achievement was the 26-foot cabin cruiser he spent three years building in the garage. It was christened "The Rebel" and launched in Long Island Sound from a marina in Norwalk, Connecticut close to the family home in Bedford, New York. The Rebel had an all-mahogany cabin with polished brass fixtures and slept 5 people (and 1 boxer) comfortably. Other yacht owners frequently stopped by to admire the boat's beautiful workmanship.



The Rebel with Ted at the Helm

Ted loved animals and his garden was always filled with squirrels and wild birds visiting the numerous feeders he provided. Ted was especially devoted to his pet dogs. In his final days his rescue dog Gigi never left his side.



Red-bellied Woodpecker



One of Ted's Muppets



Gigi

During his lifetime he placed great emphasis on the importance of personal honor and always strove to live by these words from the West Point Cadet Prayer: "Make us to choose the harder right instead of the easier wrong, and never be content with a half-truth when the whole can be won." He was also strongly influenced and guided by this wording from the Reformed Presbyterian Church creed: "Life is a gift to be received with gratitude and a task to be pursued with courage."

Despite deteriorating knees, hips, hearing and eyesight, Ted never lost his zest for life and his mind remained sharp and fully engaged in current events. His final year presented some major health challenges including a bad fall resulting in a serious leg injury and 5 days of hospitalization in April due to an intestinal infection. At that stage the family began home hospice care and he recovered remarkably well. Special thanks to Ted's hospice nurse Nicole Moore and chaplain Joel Beiler, caregiver Christie Smith, neighbor Sandy Moore and his many wonderful friends in Whitehaven. With their help he remained vital until the last two weeks of July when he contracted Covid which turned to pneumonia.

Several months prior to his illness Ted told his son David that when the end came he'd like his kids to be there. His daughter Angela and her husband Aidan flew from California to Maryland, arriving on Monday, July 25th one day before he died. His daughter Gwynne was already there helping to take care of him while David had to return to work. On the 26th Ted's health was rapidly declining and we called David to join us. He arrived around 9:00 p.m. and the three of us stood by his bedside talking to him and reminiscing. Fifteen minutes later he took his last breath.

Up until his final illness Ted began every day enthusiastically pursuing his numerous projects and interests. His larger-than-life personality was best characterized by a friend who once said, "Ted should have had his own sitcom in the 50s." That summed him up perfectly. His death leaves a huge void in all of our lives.



Ted's wife Micki died in May of 2021 and his oldest daughter Donna died in February of this year. He is survived by his 4 children Edward "Ted" III, Angela (Aidan), Gwynne and David; 4 step children Suzanne, Dan, Mimi and Phillip; 14 grandchildren and his faithful dog pal Gigi.

Ted was buried on Monday, August 1, 2022 at Springhill Memory Gardens in Hebron, Maryland. His graveside service included military honors, a recitation of the West Point Cadet Prayer, and a recording of the West Point Glee Club signing the Alma Mater.

Hospice Chaplain Joel Beiler asked friends and family what word they would use to best describe Ted. Their answers included: charismatic, irreplaceable, over-achiever, gregarious, talented, perfectionist, amazing, intelligent, exceptional, teacher, and a man's man. (And also quite a ladies' man! 😊)

West Point Cadet Prayer

O God, our Father, Thou Searcher of Human hearts, help us to draw near to Thee in sincerity and truth. May our religion be filled with gladness and may our worship of Thee be natural.

Strengthen and increase our admiration for honest dealing and clean thinking, and suffer not our hatred of hypocrisy and pretense ever to diminish. Encourage us in our endeavor to live above the common level of life. Make us to choose the harder right instead of the easier wrong, and never to be content with a half-truth when the whole can be won.

Endow us with courage that is born of loyalty to all that is noble and worthy, that scorns to compromise with vice and injustice and knows no fear when truth and right are in jeopardy.

Guard us against flippancy and irreverence in the sacred things of life. Grant us new ties of friendship and new opportunities of service. Kindle our hearts in fellowship with those of a cheerful countenance, and soften our hearts with sympathy for those who sorrow and suffer.

Help us to maintain the honor of the Corps untarnished and unsullied and to show forth in our lives the ideals of West Point in doing our duty to Thee and to our Country.

All of which we ask in the name of the Great Friend and Master of all.

AMEN

West Point Alma Mater

Hail, Alma Mater dear,
To us be ever near.
Help us thy motto bear
Through all the years.
Let Duty be well performed.
Honor be e'er untarned
Country be ever armed.
West Point, by thee.

Guide us, thine own, aright
Teach us by day, by night,
To keep thine honor bright,
For thee to fight.

When we depart from thee,
Serving on land or sea,
May we stand loyal be,
West Point, to thee

And when our work is done,
Our course on earth is run,
May it be said, "Well done"
Be thou at peace."
E'er may that line of gray
Increase from day to day
Live, serve, and die, we pray,
West Point, for thee.

Composed by P.S. Reinecke, 1911

A Selection of Ted's Bird Carvings



Canada Goose



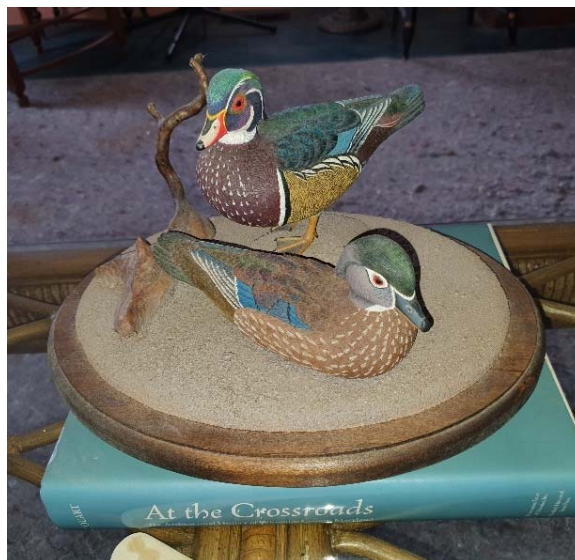
Chickadee



Drake

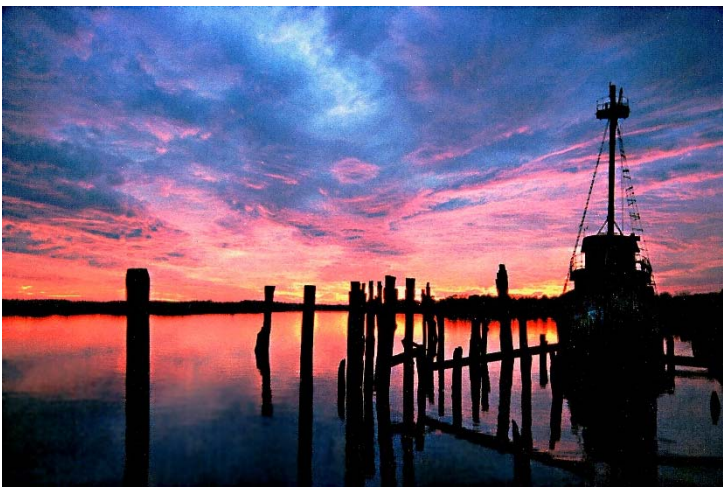


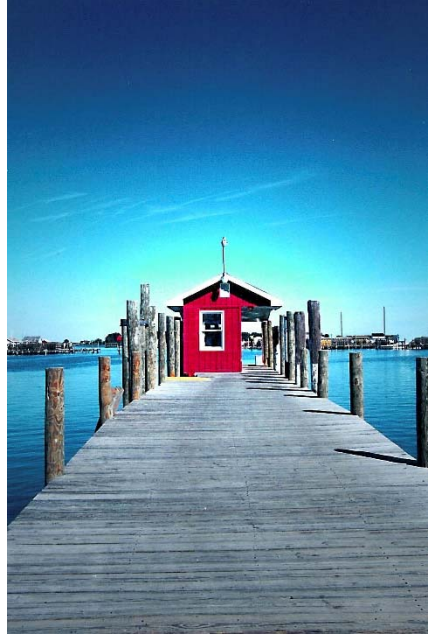
Heron



Wood Ducks

A Selection of Ted's Photography





<http://www.lenscapeart.com/>