

Days to Remember Ron Spencer B-24 Navigator

In everyone's life, there are certain days or events that stick in your mind even over a considerable period of time. I'm often amazed at my recall of certain events while others, even more recent, have been totally forgotten. Obviously, you tend to remember the more momentous or pleasurable things and forget the more mundane or unpleasant ones. A lot of things that occurred while in the service tend to fit into the momentous category and are remembered most vividly. I've often wondered how people that have a lifelong boring job stand it. I suppose then that vacations and other extracurricular activities take on the needed importance and become the remembered activities. Watching guys installing chrome trim on an automobile assembly line to me epitomizes the ultimate in boring jobs. I'd last about a week.

One particularly unforgettable day occurred at Selman Field, La. in March of 1944, the day of graduation from navigation school and commissioning as a second lieutenant. The big event took place in the base theater with two or three hundred graduates and an audience of relatives and friends. A couple of days before, we had all filled out preference sheets indicating our desire for assignments. There were a variety of slots all over the country as well as remaining at the school as instructors. The slots ran the gamut of sublime to ridiculous as you might expect. The sublime to me and quite a few others was Westover Field, Springfield, Mass., and was the #1 choice of a goodly number of graduates. In the ridiculous category, I and others would place Pyote, Texas, a station that sounded, and was, the end of the world. As some would say, if they decide to give the world an enema, Pyote, Texas would serve as the entry point. As I recall, it was a B-17 operational training unit. Westover was a B-24 training unit, I might add.

Anyhow, came graduation day, and we're all duly seated in the theater awaiting the festivities. The proverbial turd in the punch bowl came when some luminary arose and announced to the stunned audience that all bets were off, that the list of potential assignments was all screwed up and that they'd have to start from scratch on where we'd go. Pandemonium!! They then passed out paper and asked us to list our first, second and third (could have also had fourth) choices from a list they showed. They then collected all the slips of paper and dumped them all in a box, thoroughly mixing them up as I recall. They then began a tortuous drawing of names for each of the sites' drawing names until the quota for each site was filled. My recollection is that Westover was well down on the list, so we had to sweat out several loser assignments before they finally got to Westover, nirvana to many_ I sort of recall that there was a requirement for 40 or 50 at Westover with the drawing of names agonizingly slow. If there were 40 names, I was about number 37, almost having a heart attack by the time they got to me. Obviously, everyone had made plans since we were to get a leave before having to report. So, we all had train reservations, hotel reservations, etc. Worst of all, some had family members, girl friends, etc. who had come for the festivities and would return home or wherever after the ceremony. A lot of the visitors couldn't get in the theater and were standing around outside, waiting for their heroes to come out. The word of the catastrophe got outside somehow, so the whole crowd was upset.

Naturally, I was ecstatic about going to Westover, as were all the guys that got their first choice. I guess the Pyote, Texas quota was filled by all the losers who didn't get any of their choices since no one in their right mind would have picked that place. The whole scene was one of joy and despair, a sorry end for many who had looked forward to the big day. Worse still, was the fact that some places required that the ones assigned were to report immediately with no leave whatsoever!! Bad day at Black Rock for many!

One of the real losers was a poor soul from New York City by the name of Pete Matturo. One of my classmates, he was a truly outrageous character who used to regale us with wild tales of life on the lower east side of the city. The stories typically involved girls and wondrous things that they used to do with them. Pete was a rather sleazy little character with a terminal New York accent. He had a difficult time in school and was on the verge of washing out throughout the course .

Anyhow, Pete had selected Westover for its proximity to New York and had invited his girl, Bubbles (honest, that was her name), to come for his big day. He had train tickets, hotel reservations in the city and all kinds of plans for his leave. He had also regaled us with his carnal plans for the train trip to New York. I should point out that Bubbles was well named, being rather voluptuous and actually quite pretty. What she saw in Pete we couldn't fathom; Pete looking like one of the dead end kids and going about 130 lbs. soaking wet. We all thought that he might commit suicide when he found he'd drawn Pyote, Texas and no leave.

As I recall, we left for New York on the train the next day, complete with the somewhat grief stricken Bubbles. As you might expect, we had hardly left the station at Monroe, La., when several tried to move in on Bubbles. We had all told Pete that we'd take good care of her on the way home alone. Good care indeed! I think she tried to rebuff the troops as best she could, but it was a long trip for her in any case. Boys will be boys. The unhappy end of this saga was the death of Pete during the summer when his airplane was shot down. A short but colorful life though.

Another sidelight of the event was one Donald Parvin, otherwise known as Eager Beaver Parvin - one of the worst things you could call anyone in those days. He had been our flight leader with the dubious honor of marching us from place to place and being responsible for getting our class of 30 or 40 wherever we were supposed to be. A totally thankless job, but one which certain idiots sought because it gave them a feeling of power, I guess. He had been a pain in the ass throughout the whole program and had earned our undying disgust. In any case, he too had drawn Westover, but true to form and being the Eager Beaver that he was, had arrived at Westover a day early to supposedly impress his superiors. To our glee, we found out when the rest of us got there, that the army needed a navigator somewhere in Georgia, and had unceremoniously shipped his butt off immediately to Georgia. We were completely hysterical! The Eager Beaver got his due!

As a sequel to the story, we went to a 2nd Division reunion a few years back and got in a conversation with the wife of one of our group navigators. She asked if I knew Donald Parvin. When I said I did, she said she'd send me his address in Camden, N.J. Apparently they knew him from somewhere. In any case, I called him and got a very cool reception with some tale to the effect that he had a very bad experience back during the war and wanted to forget the whole thing. That being more or less that. The thing that baffled me was the fact that he was in our group, the 467th, which came as a big surprise to me. If I

knew that he was in our group, I'd totally forgotten it. I have a feeling that he might have gotten to England a couple of months before me and had been shot down before I got there. It could have explained his having had a bad experience. On the other hand, I recently noted that he was named as a new member of the 2nd Division Association, so he may have changed his mind about not wanting anything to do with recalling those days.

Another day that comes to mind, or more to the point, evening, occurred in the spring of 1944. I'm reminded of it every time we drive to New Hampshire and I see the signs to Lowell and Lawrence. On the night in question, we were briefed on a night practice bombing mission to Grenier Field in New Hampshire which I think is the current airport at Manchester. In any case, the target was briefed as a 100 ft. circle of red lights. We were to bomb with the usual 100 lb. blue practice bombs, filled with sand, but including a small amount of black powder to make a small explosion.

After dark, we and several other B-24s took off and headed for Grenier. When we arrived in the area, we couldn't see any circle of red lights. I was sure we were over the target area, but still no lights. As expected, Stan, the pilot, quickly concluded that I didn't know where I was. After a discussion, he decided he'd look for it himself and started wandering around, generally to the south, closer to Boston. All of a sudden, he spotted a tall radio tower between Lowell and Lawrence with the typical red lights up and down the tower. He said, there it is and told the bombardier to get ready to make a run. I told him in no uncertain terms that he was looking at a radio tower halfway between Lowell and Lawrence, a long way from Grenier Field. He allowed that I didn't know what I was talking about and again told the bombardier to make a run. At that point, I became somewhat irate, telling the bombardier he was about to bomb a radio station, trying to tell him where we really were. I guess at that point, Stan became less sure of himself and called off the bomb run. We then returned to Grenier, with still no sign of a circle of red lights. So, we headed back to Westover, Stan highly annoyed, and still doubtful of my navigation skills. Fortunately, after we landed, we found that Grenier had neglected to turn on the lights, so no one had bombed that night. Vindicated! As noted previously, every time we drive up Rte 495 and see the Lowell and Lawrence signs, I remember our nearly bombing the radio station.

I might add that our training activities at Westover became known as The Battle of New England. Between dropping practice bombs here and there as well as miscellaneous equipment, we made the press for our misdeeds. Someone aptly coined the phrase, Battle of New England. We thought it pretty funny ourselves. One incident was the dropping of a practice bomb in the front yard of the mayor of Ware, Mass. He was unfortunate enough to live near the bombing range at the Quabbin Reservoir. Someone dropped a little long, to the dismay of the mayor. We all caught a little flak over that one.

One more incident at Westover was the day I managed to shoot a hole in the right hand vertical fin,, resulting in one of the finer chewings of my career. I had shot a long burst out of the right hand waist gun, with a round going out the side of the gun barrel, ripping up the cooling jacket and tumbling through the vertical fin. In addition to the fin damage, I had ruined a gun barrel which they made me pay for. From that day on, the gun barrel hung from the ceiling in the ready room with a sign telling the world that on such and such a date, Lt. R. Spencer had fired an exceptionally long burst, the bullet exiting the gun through the side of the barrel, thence through the right hand vertical fin. For this offense, Lt. Spencer was fined the sum of \$23.49 to pay for the destroyed gun barrel.

Every day thereafter, I (and everyone else) was reminded of my transgression. My line thereafter was that not only do you have to fight the goddam war, but you have to pay for it as well.

Possibly the all time most memorable day was New Years Day, 1945; the action starting at two or three in the morning and continuing on till after midnight. Making for a very long day. It occurred during our tour with the 8th Air Force in England during the war. The target that day was a railroad bridge in Koblenz in support of our troops during the Battle of the Bulge which had begun on Dec. 16th. As I recall, the route in was over France, then turning east into Koblenz to bomb downwind as was our normal practice. Unfortunately, we had a very strong northerly wind which blew us south of our intended course, so much so that we ended up almost due south of the target. Thus, the bomb run was almost due north, directly into what we later determined to be a 120 mph wind out of the north. Almost unheard of to have a wind of that magnitude and direction at that altitude. Typically, winds at high altitude were out of the west or northwest at about 50 mph. When I didn't have a wind, I'd use 60 mph from about 300 degrees and would be in the ball park. Anyhow, we began our usual 25-30 mile bomb run, making a snappy 50 or 60 mph over the ground. From 22000 feet, we were for all practical purposes, standing still. Throw in some yaw as we slewed around in formation, and we at times appeared to be going backwards. Not exactly the text book procedure for bombing a fairly heavily defended target. The bomb run seemed to take forever, probably about a half hour. It was also a clear day so the haws fraus (our term for the flak gunners) had a good shot, actually many, at us. My recollection is that the flak seemed to go on forever. They got one of our lead airplanes and our squadron navigator, possibly others.

We finally dropped the bombs and turned northwest for home. The route home took us over the area of the Bulge. Being clear, we had a good view of whole scene, easily identified by countless brown circles in the white snow, the shell holes. remember calling out various items and places to the crew, when I saw some flashes. had just said something about seeing artillery flashes, when there was a horrendous crash, easily the loudest noise I ever heard in an airplane. Previously, even close flak could be felt from the concussion, but not heard over the noise of the engines and wind, So this one was really close. I quickly realized that despite the noise, we were still flying normally. I looked out each window and everything looked normal with all four engines turning. I climbed up on the ammunition chutes so that I could see out the astro dome in the ceiling, and again everything looked normal including the two pilots looking at me. I tried to call Stan and found that the intercom was dead. In short order, Bill Pehrson, the engineer, tapped me on the leg and handed me a note advising that the intercom was dead and to communicate with the pilot with notes passed between his feet on the rudder pedals right in front of me.

So we proceeded on toward the coast still in formation, but becoming concerned about our fuel, since we were heading almost into the high winds. I kept calculating ETAs for the coast and our base in England, while Pehrson kept trying to get accurate fuel readings with the lousy fuel gauging system. We kept sending notes back and forth trying to decide if we could make it home or would have to land somewhere on the continent. By the time we reached the coast, we'd decided to risk it and headed out over the North Sea. I finally concluded that we were cutting it too close and convinced Stan we'd better not continue. So, we turned around and headed back into Belgium, Stan advising over the radio that we had an emergency and were going to land on the continent. I plotted a course for a designated emergency field called Le Culot, south of Brussels. As we approached Brussels, we spotted a large airfield with several bombers in the landing

pattern. When Stan saw the other airplanes, he said something like, the hell with Le Culot, I'm following these guys. So we joined the others in the pattern and prepared to land. About this time, we realized that something was up since there were pyres of smoke all over the field. The visibility was poor, so we hadn't noticed it before. As we touched down we could see that the smoke was coming from burning airplanes all over the field. At the end of the runway, a jeep picked us up and led us to a corner of the field where the other bombers were parking. After we shut down, we all got out, wondering what the hell was going on_ I think there were about six of us parked together, three or four B-17s and two B-24s. We were all milling around wondering what was up, when a jeep roared up with a Sergeant yelling for us to get back in the airplanes. He was yelling something about they're coming back. We finally concluded that the Luftwaffe had visited the place and shot up a lot of airplanes. While we didn't think that getting back in the airplane in time for an air raid was a red hot idea, we nonetheless asked for volunteers, with Stan and I and three gunners climbing back aboard. Had to make a good example I guess. We fired up the APU to get power for the turrets, charged the guns and waited. A little apprehensively.. In a few minutes, another jeep roared up, this one with a Bird Colonel at the wheel. He was yelling too, but this time for us to get the hell out of the airplane. I seem to recall that he used the term stupid bastards several times. In any case, we promptly shut down everything and exited the airplane, much relieved. We then all stood around a nearby air raid shelter and waited to see what would happen next. Next, was the return of the colonel, telling us to leave before they came back again, nothing having happened for a half hour or so. I believe he announced that he was the airfield commander and that he didn't want anymore airplanes destroyed on his field. We all explained that the only reason we'd landed on his field in the first place is because we were almost out of fuel. When he finally realized that we were probably telling the truth, he said he'd get us all fuel as quickly as possible, but we'd have to leave as soon as we got it. I should probably digress and explain what the air raid was all about. As it turned out, it was really the last gasp of the Luftwaffe, with literally hundreds of German fighters attacking airfields throughout Belgium and probably northern France. It was intended to destroy the Allied Air Forces that had been supporting the Allied armies in the Battle of the Bulge. If I remember correctly, it was called Bodenplatte and was the largest effort put up by the Luftwaffe till the end of the war; the attack said to have been ordered by Hitler himself. I've heard that it achieved some success, with over 200 Allied aircraft destroyed, however with the loss of a like number of German aircraft and their pilots, which the Luftwaffe could ill afford. I have a book with a picture of the airfield showing the burning aircraft, one of which was one of our groups B-24s which had made a forced landing there at some time previously. At the time, the airfield was designated B-58 and is probably the main airport of Brussels today. I've landed there a couple of times since the war, but didn't recognize anything.

However, back to New Years Day. After dark, a fuel truck finally showed up and began refueling the B-17s which had arrived ahead of us. As per the colonel's orders, they all left as soon as they were refueled. Now being dark, we hadn't seen a return of the Luftwaffe, nor did we expect it. They then refueled the other B-24 and he took off. By the time we were fueled, it was probably nine o'clock or later and quite cold and damp. We had climbed up on the wing of our airplane and now found it thick with frost, a real problem for the B-24, having a high performance Davis wing airfoil that was unforgiving of ice and frost. In England, the ground crews always mopped the wing and tail with an alcohol solution right up to the time we left to get rid of the frost. Aptly named, it was called Killfrost.

About this time, our friend the colonel returned wanting to know what the hell we were still doing there. Stan said we were waiting for Killfrost, the colonel wanting to know what the hell was Killfrost. Stan then began a dissertation on the criticality of the Davis wing and why we couldn't take off with frost on the wing. As you might expect, it was all lost on the colonel who then ordered Stan to take off now! I remember at one point we were all up on the wing looking at the frost, with the colonel unimpressed that a little frost would have much or any effect on our ability to take off. Back on the ground, Stan took me aside and asked me what I thought. I said I wasn't too hot to fly back alone to England alone at night to be at the mercy of trigger happy British anti-aircraft gunners. In addition, I don't believe we had the correct codes if we were challenged. On his part, Stan was very concerned about the frost. He finally decided that he would assert his pilot's prerogative and refuse to take off if it might endanger his aircraft or the crew. The colonel wasn't much impressed with pilot's prerogatives and ordered Stan to take off now or else. We weren't sure what or else meant. But Stan stood his ground and said he wouldn't take off. There wasn't much the colonel could do except yell at us and threaten Stan repeatedly saying that if anything happened to the airplane it was Stan's ass. I think he repeated that statement five or six times, then climbed in his jeep and roared off.

As soon as he was out of sight, somebody said, let's go into Brussels. It might have been me. So Stan stuck a couple of the gunners with guard duty to protect the airplane, while the rest of us went looking for some transportation. Across the field, we found a truck driver who agreed to drive us into Brussels. Arriving in town, we looked for a hotel, having no idea of what was or wasn't available. We quickly found one and io and behold found that rooms were available. It amazes me even today. I think we all got individual rooms, or at least I did. Mine was beautiful, quite large with gold wallpaper and a large bed set on a dais. Very much uptown I thought. And wonder of wonders, it was also equipped with a bidet, a device with which I was not particularly familiar. I was dutifully impressed though.

We then all met in the lobby, then went out to strafe the Strasse as they say. I don't really recall eating but we probably got something in the hotel. Down the street a ways, we found an honest to god nightclub complete with band, entertainment, waiters in Tuxedos and the whole bit. The place was filled with the typical small tables you see or used to see in that type of place. Couples were dancing too as I recall. Half the patrons were civilians and the rest servicemen of every description. Most impressive was the fact that the troops had their rifles lying on the tables. We were pretty grungy looking in our dirty and unkempt flying clothes including the usual huge flying boots. I found the whole scene unbelievable and completely bizarre. Only in wartime! We all had English money which they were happy to accept. Finally, around midnight, we decided to call it a day and headed back to the hotel. After I climbed into the big bed, I thought back over the day's events, thinking that it had been quite a day.

All of a sudden, I heard the unmistakable sound of a V-1 buzz bomb. We'd heard them many times back in England. To me, they sounded just like an outboard motor, very distinctive. We'd learned early on that as long as you could hear the pulse jet engine, not to worry. You only became concerned when the engine stopped, since it then dove into the ground and exploded. As might be expected, about that point the engine quit. You then had a few seconds to hold your breath waiting to find out where it was going to land. Fortunately, this one wasn't very close, possibly a half mile or so away. At that point, I guess I fell asleep.

The next morning, we met in the lobby and had breakfast in what looked like the bar, complete with tiny tables. As I got up to leave, I managed to knock over the table with my huge boots, scattering dishes around and making me feel like an idiot. The waiter looked at me as if I was one. I felt that he was probably comparing me to his former customers, the Luftwaffe, who had probably comported themselves better than me. We then sat out front looking for a truck to take us back to the field. It was a nice morning and I recall being impressed with all the people in wooden shoes and riding bicycles.

We finally found a truck who agreed to take us to the airfield. The driver even stopped on the way out to let us buy some souvenirs and champagne at a little shop. I bought a pair of child's wooden shoes which I still have. When we got back to the airplane, we checked the frost and when clear, took off and flew uneventfully back to our base in England. There was a big ado when we got back to our parking area since the ground crew thought that we'd gone down. Apparently, no one heard our radio transmission advising that we were turning back. All they knew was that we never returned with the rest of the group. When we got back to the briefing room, we sat with the debriefing officer to tell him what had transpired. About that time, our Group C.O. appeared to find out where we'd been. He was very unhappy when he found that we'd spent the night in Brussels. Actually, I'm sure we didn't mention our night on the town only that we'd landed at the airport at Brussels. He wanted to know why we hadn't gone to the approved airport at Le Cu lot. We told him that we were almost completely out of fuel and didn't think we had enough to go much farther. He probably didn't believe us but there wasn't much he could do since we did bring his airplane back in more or less one piece. On that subject, we found after landing in Belgium that we had received a direct hit by what we believe was a five inch shell. It had entered the right rear bomb bay door and exited in the upper fuselage just behind the wing, passing through or more correctly removing the intercom box on the way through. The shell had then gone off directly above the airplane, explaining the loud crash that we'd heard. When it went off, it sprayed the airplane with shrapnel, somehow missing all the crew. After we got home the ground crew counted some 500 holes in the wing and fuselage. Fortunately, there were no longer any bombs in the bomb bay when the shell passed through. We'd seen the results of flak hitting and exploding the bombs in the airplane! One very large explosion. As the saying at the time went, spoil your whole day . Indeed. That then is my recollection of a very memorable day - New Years Day 1945.

One of the more memorable days in my not so illustrious career was the day of my first flight in primary pilot training. I had gone to pilot preflight training at Maxwell Field in Montgomery, Ala. with nine weeks of exhausting training, both physical and mental. I had done very well in the ground school portion of the program, a tribute to the quality of my schooling in Westfield, N.J. While I found the classes a snap, ending up with a class average of about 99%, many found the work difficult.

I also felt that I'd be good at flying since I'd read extensively about flying, even to the point of knowing how to operate the controls to perform various maneuvers. So approached my instruction with considerable optimism. Primary for me was at Camden, S.C. at the Southern Aviation School, a civilian school under contract to the Army Air Force. The school had civilian instructors and Army check pilots.

On the big day for my first lesson, I found that I and four others had been assigned to an instructor named Felmet something or other. A real southerner, his most outstanding feature was his height, being about five feet tall. We made an interesting pair. We walked

out to the airplane and he began the most rudimentary description of the machine, a Stearman PT-17 open cockpit biplane. Obviously, I acted as if I'd never seen an airplane before and hung on every word, not wanting to raise his expectations. After listening to what the fuselage, wing and control surfaces were for, we climbed aboard, he in the front cockpit and me in the rear. He could speak to me through the gosport, essentially a tube that he spoke into which was connected to my helmet. Thus, I could hear him but couldn't talk to him, other than trying to shout over the noise of the engine and wind.

The engine was then started after someone wound up the inertia starter and the instructor engaged it. We then taxied down the ramp from our parking spot, then out on the grass to the end of the field. The airport had no runways, just a big grass field and not even very level. I should note that this first flight was supposed to be more or less of a joyride, just a general orientation to give the green student an idea what flying was like and to point out a couple of outlying auxiliary fields. In short you weren't expected to know anything, at least on this first ride. I at least had flown on two occasions as a passenger, so knew what flying felt like. Many of the students had never flown at all.

At that point, Felmet opened the throttle and down the field we went, bouncing on the rough field as I recall. He then lifted it off and about ten feet up suddenly threw both hands up in the air and yelled that I had it. Consternation, since I really didn't know how to fly! I grabbed ahold of the stick and put my feet on the rudder pedals. Before we'd taken off, he'd explained that the procedure to leave the field after taking off was to climb to 300 feet and make a 90 degree turn to the left, then climb to 500 feet and make a 90 degree turn to the right. You were then out of the pattern and could proceed to wherever you wanted to go.

So, with great trepidation, I pulled back on the stick a little, climbing to 300 feet. Now the big test, a turn. From reading the book and not from anything Felmet had told me, I pushed a little with my left foot and pushed the stick a little to the left. These two actions should make the airplane make a turn to the left. Of course, I had no way of knowing how much I should push the rudder and the stick, so I made a rather sloppy turn, not exactly the textbook, coordinated variety. Felmet's reaction was to yell that I was skidding. Skidding, for God's sake, I wasn't supposed to know how to fly. I was really dumbfounded! Somewhat appalled, I then climbed up to 500 feet and gingerly tried another turn, this time to the right. My second effort wasn't much different than the first. Again, Felmet yelled that I was skidding. After we left the pattern, I continued to fly the airplane, trying as best I could to do what he was telling me to do. All directions were shouted with much annoyance with my amateurish response. I couldn't believe what was going on. I never thought that learning to fly was going to be anything like this.

We flew around like that for about three quarters of an hour with Felmet yelling almost continuously. We then returned to the field and at his directions entered the landing pattern- with me still flying. At this point, I was ready to believe anything, anything being that he was going to let me land the thing. After we got on the landing approach, we continued to settle lower until we were within probably 15 feet or so from the ground, at which point, he yelled that he had it, and made the landing. He then taxied back to the ramp and shut down. We climbed out and walked into the building that was used as the briefing room. As I remember it, I was speechless. He made no comment and was the epitome of decorum. till we parted for the day. After returning to the barracks after the flight, we all compared notes on our first experience. While all the others had had a pleasant ride with only a few tentative attempts to control the airplane, I had drawn

Felmet, the wild man. In subsequent flights, I found that it was the way he approached his job_ Actually, he became worse in later flights. In addition to screaming at me, he'd slam the stick from side to side banging my legs. On occasion, he'd stand up in the cockpit and pound his hands on the fuselage while cursing me and calling me everything under the sun.. At times, I was tempted to pop the stick and catapult him out of the airplane since he'd unfastened his seatbelt.

The strange thing was that when on the ground, he was a completely different person, very quiet, polite and friendly. Other instructors were critical of his teaching approach, saying that he was from the old school which called for humiliating the student and treating him like dirt. Fortunately, I only had him for three or four hours, then they switched instructors and I got someone a little more normal. But the first flight with Felmet was one I'll never forget.

In June of 1962, I made my first trip to Europe since 1945 to participate in a demonstration of the OV-1 Mohawk for the West German Army. After completion of the demonstration outside of Cologne, Waft Mattson, a Grumman Tech Rep stationed in Germany, and I decided to go to Belgium to see the Grand Prix of Belgium auto race at Spa in the Ardennes forest. Walt had come to Cologne to provide support for the demonstration.

So, on Saturday morning Walt and I headed for Belgium in his new Mkt Jaguar sedan, a great set of wheels indeed. It was gun metal gray with red leather upholstery and chrome wire wheels. I recall driving through AAachen, a memorable place to me. More than once I'd heard over the radio, reports of German fighters around AAachen. In the early afternoon we arrived in the town of Spa and began looking for the race course. I knew that the race was run on public roads near Spa but that was about it. We stopped and asked a couple of people where the race was, with no response.

At some point we were cruising through town when I heard a loud noise behind us. I looked around and saw a light green Grand Prix race car right behind us. Then, with a burst of acceleration, it whipped around us. I yelled to Watt to follow the car since we knew he knew where the race course was. He headed out of town, up a tree lined residential street behind several other cars, with Waft and I in hot pursuit. Then heard more noise, looked around, and saw a second green race car right behind us. Obviously, the second team car. At that point, the first car pulled into the left lane and took off up the street with us and the second car, quickly reaching 95 mph. I was ecstatic!! People walking along the sidewalk were waving and cheering. Grand Prix racing is really the be all, end all in Europe. You could never get away with anything like that in this country.

As expected, in short order we reached the course, easily identified by lots of people, signs and other race cars. We parked and walked around to see what practice for a Grand Prix looked like. All very colorful and exciting. After while, we decided we'd better head back to town and look for a place to stay. After riding around for a while, we found a small hotel a ways out of town that just happened to have a couple of rooms. We checked in and found that a U.S. movie company was staying in the hotel. Our reaction was that they were a bit obnoxious as Americans can be, and movie people even more so.

Later, we went out and had dinner. The town was really jumping with all the race fans all over the place. Later, we found a go kart track on the outskirts of town with a big crowd watching a number of the Grand Prix drivers wildly racing one another in go karts. A

really wild scene, with much cheering by the spectators. After watching that for a while, we decided we'd head for the race course which is as I'd said is on public roads. When we reached the course, we found a lot of others had the same idea. As expected, everyone was going like hell, quickly hitting 100 mph. The road was really wonderful, smooth as glass, well marked, with signs denoting the distance from the next curve and lots of sweeping curves and rises and falls, making for about the best road you could find. It should be noted that at that time and still today, Spa is the highest speed circuit of all Grand Prix courses. At that time, it was also the longest at over 9 miles. It's since been shortened, but is still over 4 miles in length. The course runs through the beautiful Ardennes forest, the site of the Battle of the Bulge during WW2. The Ardennes has to be seen to be appreciated. It looks like a tree farm, the trees being evergreens and probably 50 feet high. What I saw was very well groomed with neat fire lanes and straight edges, paralleling the roads. Really, nothing quite like it in this country. The Europeans, and particularly the Germans, pay much more attention to their forests than we do, clearing out fallen trees and underbrush. Thus, their forests have a manicured look that is truly unique.

As we roared around the circuit, we came up on a white MGA convertible with a young couple in it. Walt tried to pass, but had trouble since the MG driver was going 100 mph too and didn't want to let us by. We tailed them for a couple of miles till they turned into a bar of sorts by the side of the road. We followed them in and stopped when we saw that the MG was boiling with steam shooting out. We followed the couple into the bar and spent a pleasant hour or so, waiting for the MG to cool off. They were from Verviers, a town not far away. They both spoke excellent English as most educated Europeans do. After buying them a couple of drinks, we headed back to the hotel.

In the morning, we listened to the movie company carry on some more, had breakfast, then went into town. Walt had told me that unlike this country, you have to take whatever you wish to eat along with you. So we stopped at a store and bought what we felt would be a typical Belgian lunch, with French bread, cold meat, cheese, some kind of dessert and a huge bottle of red wine. So armed, we headed for the race course, having to park some distance away because of the crowd. When we got to the course, we decided to go for broke and bought seats in a small grandstand at Au Rouge, considered then and now as the most famous corner of the Spa circuit. It was a great place from which to watch the race. The big laugh came when we decided to eat something, breaking out our so-called typical Belgian picnic lunch. We handled the sandwiches OK, but had a big problem with the huge bottle of wine and no glasses. At that point, we noticed that while we wrestled with our lunch, almost everyone else was making do with hot dogs, hamburgers, cokes and the like. I could have shot Walt. As I recall, I'd managed to spill red wine all over me, much to the amusement of our fellow spectators.

It was a good race with Jim Clark winning as I recall. I got to see all the racing greats of that era. There was one accident but I don't believe it was fatal. Spa has always been considered a very dangerous circuit because of the high speeds achieved. It has always suffered from poor weather, often clear in one spot and raining in another.

After the race, we returned to the car, somewhat surprised to see everyone relieving themselves along the side of the parking area, with no one paying any attention. The U.S. it ain't! That evening we drove back to Walt's home in Zwingenburg, south of Darmstadt. The next day, we drove to Heidelberg to talk to people in the U.S. Army Europe Headquarters. This time we went in Walt's red MGA convertible with the top down. Walt

had good taste in wheels. Shortly thereafter, I returned home, completing my first return to Germany since WW2; the first of many trips all through the '60s.

The days discussed here actually occurred over a period of about six weeks in 1963 and involved my job as the Army marketing manager for Grumman. In 1956, the company won a competition to build a new, higher performance airplane for the U.S. Army and Marine Corps. While the Marines dropped out of the program early on, we built some 375 airplanes for the Army over a ten year period.

The OV-1 Mohawk was a controversial program from the start and was a continuing target of the U.S. Air Force who took the position that the Army should not have a fixed wing aircraft of its complexity and cost. For their part, the Army had had no experience with an airplane of its sophistication, either in its development, its support, its training and perhaps most importantly, its employment. In 1962, the Army used it briefly in its large summer maneuver, called Swift Strike Two. The results were so bad that there was a call in many areas to terminate the program. Mohawk advocates within the Army and certainly at Grumman, agreed that steps must be taken to try to correct the myriad problems that were plaguing the program.

In the early summer of 1963, the Army began planning for the new summer maneuver to be called Swift Strike Three. One day, Grumman was called to Washington to attend a big meeting in the Pentagon where we were all told that the fate of the Mohawk program was on the line. The airplane was to participate in the maneuver again, but if it didn't perform up to expectations, the program would be cancelled. A potential major catastrophe to a lot of people, but particularly those of us at Grumman. The Mohawk Program Office in the Army Materiel Command was given the responsibility to put together a complete program to ensure that the airplane would perform as advertised and that the program would be saved.

This action turned on a major effort to put together a comprehensive program to ensure that the airplane and its systems would be properly supported with adequate spare parts, support equipment and personnel. It was decided that a three week training program would be organized at Ft. Benning, Georgia and that all equipment and personnel required would be gathered there approximately a month before the start of the maneuver. So, we all went to work to organize the whole thing and collect the necessary equipment for shipment to Benning.

Two divisions were identified for the maneuver, the 101st Airborne Division and the 2nd Infantry Division, with their Aerial Surveillance and Target Acquisition (ASTA) platoons. We quickly found that neither of these organizations was particularly experienced with the operation or support of the Mohawk. We had also identified a lot of key industry people to participate in the training program and requested that they make themselves available at Ft. Benning.

So, we all gathered at Benning in June to begin the training program under the direction of a Col. Jay Vanderpool, a highly respected Army aviator. A Major Bob Shoemaker, another aviator was assigned as his deputy. As the prime contractor of the Mohawk, Grumman sort of headed up the contractor personnel, specifically, Bob Benito, the Grumman Program Manager with me as his unofficial deputy. After a few days, Bob had

to return home, so I became the prime contractor interface with Col. Vanderpool and Major Shoemaker.

In any case, we gradually pulled all the support aspects together, then turned to the training of the Mohawk personnel. We quickly realized that the pilots were very inexperienced. I had become familiar with the pilots assigned to the 3rd Armored Division in Germany and suggested they be drafted for the training program. No sooner said than done. In about three days, four of them showed up at Benning, highly annoyed when they spotted me and figured out who'd fingered them. We had also drafted a Grumman test pilot to help with the training, but had to send him home after a few days when he managed to alienate everyone with his criticism of everyone. The Colonel told us to get rid of him.

We also had a problem with a Lt. Col. Smith, Aviation Officer of the 101st Airborne Division. He took a dim view of the whole deal, complaining continuously about anything and everything for days. Finally, Col. Vanderpool blew up and blasted Col. Smith in front of all of us, telling him that he was sick and tired of his bellyaching about everything and to shut up from there on out. We were ecstatic.

Near the end of the three week training period, I was assigned as the advisor to the 101st Airborne, with another Grummie, advisor to the 2nd Infantry Division. At the completion, I flew to the 101st's home base in Kentucky where I met the local Grumman tech rep, one Lew Smith, an interesting character, about 6 foot five, up to 300 lbs. and a former race car driver and mechanic. After a week in Kentucky, Lew and I drove to So. Carolina together - a memorable trip. He consistently drove with his right hand and a container of some type of soft drink in his left. He also kept a large Styrofoam cooler on the back seat filled with ice and all kinds of soft drinks. He replenished the ice each morning.

The big exercise at the 101st's home base was the organization of all the transport loads. Being an airborne division, everything had to be moved by air. So each transport load had to be identified and prioritized. Our nemesis, Col. Smith was in the middle of this. He considered the Mohawk useless and didn't want to give it any priority as to its spare parts and support equipment. So it became a week long argument with him. On one day, he and I were in a large room with wall-to-wall large sheets of paper, each identifying the load for each airplane. A captain was responsible for maintaining all of the listings and making changes as required. While we were looking at the various lists, Col. Smith noticed that one of the earliest flights included a fire truck. He turned to the captain and in a somewhat snotty voice asked what the fire truck was for. The captain then began a dictionary description of a fire engine with a perfectly straight face. The colonel blew up, yelling something like- I know what a goddam fire truck is for Christ sake, what the hell's it doing on the first flight? The captain then explained that there would be no fire fighting equipment on the airfield on which they'd all be landing, thus it was necessary to take one there as soon as possible in the event of a landing accident. Naturally, I could hardly keep from laughing. All week long, the colonel made it clear that he didn't really need me hanging around in the background.

So the week finally ended and Lew and I took off for Greenville So. Carolina, to be ready for the airborne invasion of the recently-closed down Donaldson Air Force Base, outside of

Greenville. Our ride through the Great Smoky Mountains was exciting, Lew speeding around the twisty and up and down roads, all the time steering with just one hand.

The day after we arrived in Greenville was D-Day for the airborne invasion of Donaldson. So we piled into my rent car to go out and see what it would look like up close and personal as the saying goes. What we saw initially, was the dropping of equipment by parachute- tanks, trucks, jeeps, artillery and the like. We were probably closer to the drop zone than we should have been, but it was a spectacular thing to see with all the stuff coming down right in front of us under huge parachutes. Later on, the field had supposedly been captured, with C-130 transports starting to land with all the equipment organized back in Kentucky. The 130s were coming in like clockwork at extremely short intervals, the equipment unloaded, then they'd take off and return to Kentucky for another load. A really big operation.

The Mohawks came in a little later to a short landing strip somewhere else in Carolina. We went there to meet them, having some trouble finding where they were. Then, for the next two weeks, we followed the Mohawk platoon from one small strip to another, staying in any motel we could find in the area. I'd hang around the unit all day long and often into the evening watching what was going on and making suggestions to the pilots and crews. While most of the pilots were receptive to my inputs, good old Col. Smith largely ignored them. In order to be a little inconspicuous. I wore a khaki uniform and army boots, but with no insignia or rank. I still got saluted a lot since soldiers didn't know who I was, but the white hair convinced them that I was too old to be a private, so when in doubt....., salute.

All the time, it was very hot and very dusty--red dust. My pretty apple green Ford Galaxy sedan slowly turned red under the dust, with numerous scratches from driving across fields, through the woods, etc. It served as my Jeep. We contractor personnel typically hung out a little distance away from the Army area by mutual consent. One hot afternoon, a group of the contractor personnel were hanging out in the shade of some trees, all eating watermelon, a very sloppy thing to eat with no plates or eating utensils. I think we were slicing it on the hood of Lew Smith's car. All of a sudden, up walks a group of very senior Army personnel, headed by Lt. Gen Bob Williams, the head of Army Aviation in the Pentagon. We knew him as Rapid Robert. I'd met him in Washington, so stepped forward and welcomed him to Swift Strike Three. One of the guys offered him a slice of watermelon which he wisely refused. He then asked if this was the command post. I said something like Col. Smith would faint if he thought that our rag tag group was thought to be his command post, that the proper one was a couple of hundred yards down along the tree line. So Rapid Robert and his crew walked off down the field.

The whole thing came to an end near the conclusion of the maneuver about midnight. One of the pilots with whom I had become quite friendly had gone up on a radar mission. We were working on a scheme where he'd find something on his radar, then call by radio to another Mohawk also in the air to go and try to identify the item with its infrared equipment or with a photo. The good colonel didn't know what we were trying to do and started telling the first Mohawk pilot to do something different. He didn't appreciate the colonel's input and began arguing with him over the radio. As I recall, the colonel then chewed him out and told him to come back and land. All the time I'm standing there listening to the exchange. Suddenly, the colonel turned on me and told me to get out in

no uncertain terms, allowing that he'd had it with me interfering with his operation. A little understandable I guess.

At that point, I figured that the maneuver was almost over and that I'd done about as much as I could ---for better or worse. So I departed the scene, got in my car and returned to the flea bag hotel that I was staying at. The whole episode had taken place in Whidmire, So. Carolina, a place I'll never forget. The next day, I turned in the car, somewhat worse for wear and got an airplane for Fayetteville as I recall. Col. Love, another member of the Mohawk Program Office was coordinating all Mohawk activities from that location. He too felt that the maneuver was almost over, with it not worthwhile to press the issue at that point. I think I then returned to Washington to give a report on the whole thing to the Mohawk Program Manager, after which I finally returned home after being away for six weeks. A memorable summer indeed.

A sequel to the whole thing was the fact that sometime later, the aforementioned Col. Smith was reassigned to Washington and the Pentagon to become the Mohawk action officer in ACSFOR, part of the Dept. of Army Headquarters. It was ironic in that he had no use for the airplane when he was in the 101st. In addition, we almost became somewhat friendly after that. But I got him one night at a black tie function at the Shoreham hotel. We were all at a reception, my wife and a group of army personnel, when I spotted the colonel standing by himself. I went over and dragged him back to the group, then began a hilarious tale of how the colonel had thrown me out of the maneuver after putting up with me for several weeks, essentially painting him as the very professional airborne officer who'd had to put up with some dumb civilian trying to tell him how to do his job. Naturally, he was then forced to hotly defend me and explain that I was only trying to do my job and had spent a lousy summer trying to help the army at a critical time. I loved it!! I figured that I finally got even for the hard time he'd given all of us.

The event in question occurred in Sweden in 1964. This was another incident involving Lt. Col. Paul Mertz of the Mohawk Program Office in Washington, D.C. He had headed up a long term effort to sell the Mohawk surveillance system to various foreign countries. His crowning achievement in this regard was a month long tour in Europe in September of 1964 where his team visited a whole series of countries with a very comprehensive program of briefings and demonstrations. Our team of Army and industry people was supported by the Air Force with a large C-124 transport as well as a C-130 transport, both required to carry all the equipment we needed for our demonstrations.

The show started in Spain which I missed for some reason or other. I caught up with the group in Germany, then stayed with the tour through France, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden and Italy. Our usual approach was to provide a lengthy briefing which usually took the first day, then the second day was spent demonstrating all elements of the system_ Our major dog and pony show involved about 30 people including the crews of the Air Force transports. Finding hotel reservations at each location was a major undertaking as well as transportation of all of us not on board the transports. We'd typically spend three days at each location, the first just to get set up and organized at each site. Problems abounded each time, trying to find proper facilities, arranging attendance lists, refreshments and the myriad things involved in putting on a show of the magnitude of ours.

Prior to going to Europe, we'd developed a program which we called The Battle of Long Island. We created a fictitious war, then flew a number of missions with the OV1 B and OV-1 C airplanes to get imagery which we could use in our briefings. So each place we

went we briefed the audience on the Battle of Long Island and illustrated the whole thing with the appropriate radar, infra red and photographic imagery.

When we went to Sweden, we stayed in Stockholm, then drove to an Air Force base at a place called Neu Kjoping or something like that. We drove up the first day which was a Sunday. We met with a number of Swedish Air Force personnel who dropped a large bomb by announcing that they weren't interested in The Battle of Long Island, having come up with their own military problem. Our reaction was something like - Oh, sh!! They wanted us to find and identify various military equipment which they had deployed around Sweden in typical tactical situations. So here we were, a bunch of semi technical civilians, mostly marketing people, now having to become for real military intelligence types.

So, we showed up the second day and were given a briefing by the Swedes on the situation they'd set up and what they expected from us. Our team then caucused and decided that we'd first try a couple of radar missions in an effort to locate some of the moving targets, essentially a wide area surveillance system. As you might expect, there was a good deal of second guessing and uncertainty within our group. My recollection is that the first results weren't so hot. I also recall that we picked up a number of movers (moving targets) which we thought might be a group of tanks. When we plotted their position on a map, we found that they fell in the middle of a large lake. Someone suggested that they might be amphibious vehicles, in jest of course. Ultimately, we did find a convoy of tanks and trucks that were in fact the force that the Swedes had sent out, We then sent out Ov-1C infrared and camera equipped aircraft to try to identify what we'd seen with the radar. All this took time, so we weren't sure what we had for quite a long time with much arguing and sniping going on among we so-called experts. I'm not sure the Swedes were very impressed with our rather amateurish approach. However, we did finally find and identify what they'd deployed. Actually, they had put out a considerable amount of equipment, including tanks, trucks, jeeps and even airplanes which they'd hidden under trees and camouflage netting. Some of the airplanes had their engines running and others did not. They showed up in the infrared pictures, particularly those running, with a big hot plume very obvious behind the aircraft. The clincher though, was an obvious hot object next to one of the airplanes. We decided it was probably a motorcycle. The senior Swedish officer was ecstatic, since we'd detected his motorcycle on which he ridden out to check on the airplanes. He couldn't get over the fact that we'd even found his motorcycle.

So the Swedes were reasonably impressed with what our equipment could do, recognizing that we were mostly a bunch of peddlers out trying to sell some military equipment. The next day was supposed to be our demonstration of the airplane and its systems, some of which they'd already seen the previous day. Our problem was that they were impressed with what the electronic systems could do, but were totally unimpressed with the airplane itself. Not surprising, since Air Force people world wide think that anything subsonic these days is obsolete. Thus, our 250 mph Mohawk was considered pretty stone age and would be shot down the moment it appeared. Our pitch was that the radar-equipped OV-1 B flew in a standoff mode some distance away and often behind friendly lines, thus evading the enemy's antiaircraft defenses. The infrared-equipped OV-1 C on the other hand, had to be flown over or near the target, making it very vulnerable. Our answer was to use a pop-up technique, flying in the nap of the earth (the Army's term for flying at near zero altitude), then popping up to 500 feet or so to take the pictures, then diving back down to ground level again. Done very well with proper terrain, we really felt the technique would work well. Unfortunately, the pilot that demonstrated the technique that day, did a

lousy job, coming in at 1000 feet or more, then diving down to perhaps 500, then cruising across the very large airfield at about 500 feet. I could have probably shot him down myself since it seemed as if he was exposed forever. I'd become quite friendly with a Swedish Air Force major and was standing with him as the Mohawk made its pass. As the Mohawk cruised slowly across the field at 500 feet, the major made like a machine gun-da-da-da-da-da-dada-da-da-da, clearly making his point that the poor Mohawk would have been a dead duck at that speed and altitude. We both laughed, realizing that there was no way the airplane could have survived if flown that way.

As expected, the Swedes told us that they had no interest in the airplane but might be interested in the equipment installed in their own aircraft. Another problem occurred that night in the officer's club. Again on the subject of aircraft vulnerability, this time as related to the Hawk missile, an anti-aircraft missile sold to the Swedes and other countries. We had with us a U.S. Army major who was an artillery officer who was an expert on the Hawk missile, its capabilities and limitations. The Swede's position was that the Mohawk could never survive if the enemy had the Hawk missile or something similar. The major then proceeded to explain some of the shortcomings of the Hawk and how it could be beaten in order to survive. This didn't set well with the Swedes, they taking the position that the U.S. had sold them a lousy system in the Hawk. The whole episode erupted several months later in Washington when the Mohawk Program Office came on the carpet for divulging incorrect information to the Swedish Air Force and causing problems between the U.S. and the Swedish government. The Mohawk Program Office denied any knowledge whatsoever, and for good reason. Col. Mertz never heard the discussion. I did, and probably was the only one of the team that did. Naturally, I pleaded ignorance to the whole thing in order to protect the major. So, the whole thing died since no one knew anything. Even when the major was making his point to the Swedes, I thought that he was saying too much and was surprised at his candor. So I kept quiet and probably saved the major's career by doing so. A very nice guy with whom I'd become very friendly. Interestingly, he'd grown up with and was the best friend of Buzz Aldrin, the second man on the moon after Neil Armstrong.

My actions on one day, or more correctly evening, in the mid-sixties resulted in a problem that I had to live with literally for years. It occurred at Rhine Main Air Base outside of Frankfurt in Germany. We were involved in yet another Mohawk sales effort and had been giving briefings at various locations in Germany. On the evening in question, we were staying over night in the BOO at Rhine Main, with me sharing a room with Col. Gerry Davis of the Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence in the Pentagon. I was carrying a package of some 30 large glass slides which we had been using in our presentations. Three of the slides were classified confidential, being examples of radar imagery. While they were legally confidential, they were meaningless to almost anyone, being essentially black backgrounds with a few white dots, representing moving targets.

Gerry, at some point had contacted an old girl friend in the area and had invited over for the evening. He then suggested that he'd probably bring her up to the room for a while and would I be kind enough to clear out. I was concerned about leaving the classified material in my open briefcase with a stranger in the room. So I foolishly took the package of slides out of the briefcase and slid them under the bed, at least out of sight. By the time I'd returned later in the evening, I'd forgotten about placing them under the bed.

We had decided in the evening that we'd get an early start since we had a fairly early meeting in Stuttgart the next morning, a considerable drive from Frankfurt. As recall, I got up at 5:00 AM and had a little trouble rousing the Colonel who had gotten in rather late. We finally got underway in two cars and headed down the autobahn to Stuttgart. Around Heidelberg, we pulled into a rest stop for some reason or other. All of a sudden, I realized with horror that I'd forgotten the slides, leaving them under the bed. I immediately told Gerry who downplayed the whole thing. We agreed that when we got to Stuttgart that I'd call the BOQ at Rhine Main and ask them to pick up the slides and lock them up until we could get back and retrieve them.

In Stuttgart I finally connected with the desk at the BOQ and asked if they'd be so kind as to pick up the package I'd left and lock it up until I returned. The clerk then advised that a maid had already found the package and brought it to the lobby where it was taken into custody by the Military Police. Consternation!! The clerk then connected me with one of the MPs who advised that since the package contained classified material, it had been confiscated and would be turned over to the authorities in Frankfurt, noting the office that would receive the package. I told Gerry what I'd learned and asked his advice. His solution was to call another colonel friend in Frankfurt and tell him what had happened, then ask if he could get a hold of the slides and keep them until we returned. The colonel agreed to try.

A couple of days later, we returned to Frankfurt and went immediately to see the colonel. Consternation again!! This time we found that the MPs had not followed the rules and had sent the slides to another office and had written up the incident as some kind of felony which was completely beyond their authority. Gerry Davis then contacted the organization that had the slides in an effort to retrieve them. That office said that because of the seriousness of the offense, the case was being referred to the authorities in the U.S. Army Europe Headquarters in Heidelberg. Gerry then tried to stop the fiasco there but was told that because I was from the states and under jurisdiction of the Army there, that the case would be passed to the Pentagon for their action. Gerry then advised that since the problem involved intelligence information, it should be referred to his office in the Pentagon. USAREUR agreed to do this, so we felt that I was home free- finally. I should point out that we did retrieve the slides in Frankfurt which we needed for our presentations. However, my case file was now about an inch thick and that we couldn't get a hold of.

A few days later, we all returned home with Gerry to await the arrival of my file which he could then relegate to the burn basket where it belonged. But alas, a week or so later, Gerry called to advise that the Army had managed to screw things up once again, not sending the file to his office as agreed, but to some other office unaware of the whole thing. Naturally, all hell broke loose once again with my crime an issue with the authorities in the Pentagon.

Gerry then got together with the Mohawk Program Office and came up with a scheme to have the case referred to the Program Office since I had been traveling under their cognizance. Great idea! And it worked, with the Pentagon agreeing to refer the case to the Mohawk Program Office where I would then be prosecuted.

A few days later, Col. Nielsen, the Mohawk Program Manager, called me in my office in Bethpage to request my appearance in his office ASAP. So, I duly presented myself in his office at Bailey's Crossroads in Virginia a couple of days later. While stood at more or less

attention, Ed said something like, "Don't leave anymore Goddam slides under your bed for Crissake." Having then been officially reprimanded according to Army regulations, I proceeded to forget the whole incident. We were, however, amazed at the size of my case file, now about two inches thick and containing endorsements by about everyone in the Army. You'd have thought I'd passed info on the hydrogen bomb directly to the KGB!!

A couple of years later, I was sitting at my desk when the secretary announced that Harry Volz of Grumman Security was on the phone. Having had some recent dialogue with him on another subject, I answered without any concern. He then announced that someone or other wished to speak with me. Some guy then came on the phone announcing that he was from Navy Security in Washington and would I please come down to the security office to discuss a matter involving some classified slides. ! almost fainted!!! So, I went down to the Security Office to find out what had happened now. When I got there, ! was confronted by two guys and my thick case file that I thought had been destroyed a couple of years before.

My principal reaction at this point was one of anger; that the ridiculous situation had been carried to this length. I decided that offense would be the best defense. I also knew that one military service doesn't like to embarrass another. So I proceeded to question the Navy's authority in a matter that had been thoroughly investigated and action taken by the Army. I then dragged in the names of all kinds of high ranking Army officers that had been involved and now considered the matter closed. I said that if the Navy decided to reopen the case, that I was prepared to call a whole raft of Army Generals and Colonels as witnesses. They then left saying that I would be hearing more from them at some later date. I never did. As expected, they didn't care to get involved with the Army for the reason given and let the matter drop.

But my interest was in finding out how the Navy got in the act. It seems that after I was censured by the Mohawk Program Officer, he had left the job, leaving his deputy, a civilian by the name of John Groundwater in charge. A couple of years later, someone came upon my case file (which I thought had been destroyed) while cleaning out the files. Groundwater then sent the file to the Navy since Grumman was a Navy-cognizant facility. After the incident at Grumman, I confronted Groundwater, asking why the hell he'd done it, after Col. Nielsen had already resolved the issue. He waffled all over the place, claiming that he didn't realize the facts. I felt that he'd done it deliberately since I was a big buddy of Nielsens and he resented the relationship. While he was the deputy, no one paid that much attention to him, so I guess he felt that he was getting even.

So, while the military didn't bother me anymore, Harry Volz never let me forget it, mentioning the slides every time I saw him. He really got me by including the incident in a security movie the company made years later. The movie was a series of skits on what not to do in the field of security. Harry even called me down when it was completed for a private showing. Fortunately, they didn't use my name, but had a skit showing some guy hiding some classified papers under the bed. Harry and his cohorts in security roared. Even after I retired and spent time at Grumman as a consultant, Harry still needed me each time he saw me. If he were to run into me tomorrow morning, he'd ask me if I'd hidden any slides recently. He considered it one of the biggest jokes of his career in security at Grumman.

I have previously mentioned an incident that occurred during the trip of Lt Col. Mertz and his merry troop to Vietnam in 1965. As i recall, the trip lasted about three weeks. After

we had completed our activities in Vietnam, Mertz and I had planned to go to Thailand to talk to U.S. intelligence personnel operating there. In anticipation, I had obtained a visa for travel to Thailand in Washington. I should point out that Mertz and his group typically traveled on military orders which allowed us to use military aircraft, stay in military facilities, have access to PXs, etc. I always traveled as a GS-1 5, the civilian equivalent of a Full Colonel. Mertz did this deliberately since it qualified us as V.I.P.s, according us special treatment, sometimes very embarrassing to me. Like I had to be the first on an airplane and the first off, with the rest of the troops having to wait while his highness got on and off the airplane. V.I.P.s also had a separate lounge at military airports with other perks I've probably forgotten. I should also point out that Mertz, as a Lt. Col. didn't qualify as a V.I.P., thus with me as a V.I.P., he could travel with me as my guest and be accorded all the V.I.P. benefits. No dope Mertz.

In any case, came the day of departure from Vietnam, with all but Mertz and returning home. We had tried to get military air transportation from Saigon to Bangkok and had been unsuccessful for some reason. So we decided we'd take Pan Am and had made arrangements at the Pan Am office in Saigon. We had checked out of the Astor Hotel in Saigon and conned some military type to drive us out to Ton San Nhut, the very large Saigon airport.

Arriving at the airport, we each went to a different Vietnamese clerk at the Pan Am counter. I duly presented my tickets, made up in town and my visa for Thailand plus whatever else they required, usually some document or other to make the Vietnamese feel important. As I was leaving the counter, all dutifully processed, realized that something was very wrong with Mertz, who was making a very large scene with the clerk that was waiting on him. Walking over, Mertz allowed that the idiot clerk wouldn't process him since he had no visa for Thailand. Mertz kept telling the guy that as an American Colonel, he traveled on military orders and didn't need any goddam visa, that he'd been traveling as such for years and never required any goddam visa. At that point, the clerk went for higher authority, returning with an American. Mertz immediately telling him that the idiot clerk wouldn't let him on the airplane without a visa. The American then spoiled our day completely by announcing that the clerk was right, without a visa Mertz could not go to Thailand, 'at least on Pan Am. It seemed that the need for a visa was a Pan Am rule, not Thailand's. In other words, if we'd gone by military airplane, there would have been no problem. I should point out here that one of Mertz's pet peeves was Pan Am, never traveling on a Pan Am flight if at all possible, citing years of being screwed by that sorry carrier. When he found out that it was a Pan Am rule, he became almost apoplectic, allowing that they'd screwed him yet again. He then demanded to speak to the senior Pan Am official in Saigon and was finally connected to the individual by phone. Despite all kinds of threats, the manager was adamant that Col. Mertz was not about to go to Bangkok on Pan Am sans visa.

So Mertz finally gave up and said it looked like we'd have to cancel out our planned soiree to Bangkok, a big blow to Mertz who had been looking forward to the storied fleshpots of that fair city. Since our next planned stop had been Tokyo, thence Korea, we decided to take the next available flight to Tokyo, which turned out to be an Air France flight next day. At this point, the Pan Am manager allowed that our problem was partially their fault since they should have told us about the need for a visa when they'd issued our tickets in the office in Saigon. He became very helpful, particularly after Mertz laid on him his long history of foulups involving Pan Am. He told us to sit tight, he'd have his driver and car come out, pick us up and return us to the office in Saigon where they'd find us a room for

the night. This was a major problem since we'd given up our rooms at the Astor, and wartime Saigon was no place to find a room on short notice.

In due time, the manager's car arrived, a very tired looking '57 Plymouth, light blue with white plastic upholstery, complete with Vietnamese driver. When we got to the office in town, we found the manager and his girl busily trying to find us a room. They finally found one, a Vietnamese abortion, obviously not normally frequented by any but the locals. After being delivered there, we made our usual scene, but finally concluded it was probably this or sleep in the Pan Am office. Mertz was convinced we'd be murdered by the Viet Cong during the night. We settled on a price, very high for such a rat hole, dumped our stuff and went out to eat, wondering if our bags would still be there when we returned. In particular, the toilet facilities were indescribable, being essentially a large open area, in full view of anyone caring to look.

The room was fairly good size and with two beds. When we decided to retire, Mertz insisted on moving a large wardrobe of sorts over in front of the door, convinced that someone would try to do us bodily harm during the night. We finally awoke in the morning and got ready to meet the manager who had agreed to meet us and take us out to Ton San Nhut for our flight.

When we got down to the lobby, more problems!. Three exceedingly mean looking Vietnamese had now raised the agreed-upon price for the room to something ridiculous. Naturally, they suddenly couldn't speak English and just kept pointing to a number on a piece of paper. About this time, the manager showed up in the blue Plymouth and his driver. We told him what was up and he tried arguing with the three guys to no avail. I finally decided to try an old trick I'd seen in the movies and told Mertz and the manager to get in the car with the engine running and the left rear door open, and be ready to move--fast. I then went, back to the counter, took out the amount of money that we'd agreed to the night before, maneuvered myself so that i was closest to the door, made sure everything was set outside, threw the money on the counter and ran like hell the 30 feet or so to the door, dove in the back seat of the Plymouth which then burned rubber down the street. The three guys all ran after me but gave up as we went down the street. We were all hysterical, figuring we'd outsmarted the Viet Cong.

A sequel to the foregoing occurred on the Korean portion of the trip. After leaving Saigon, we flew to Tokyo on Air France and checked into a hotel used by the U.S. military. After a couple of days in Tokyo talking to U.S. military people, we flew to Kimpo air field in So. Korea on Air America, the CIA run airline. Air America had become infamous in Vietnam for their clandestine activities. At Grumman, we always referred to such activities as candlesteen. In Korea, we met with an Army major who was the C.O. of the Mohawk unit, located as I recall at an airfield designated as K-16.

Our activity in Korea was primarily aimed at figuring out how to solve their supply problems which were seriously compromising their ability to operate. We made up long lists of parts shortages and promised to try to correct the problems when we returned home. The major gave us a Cook's tour of the whole area in his Jeep, including a trip into Seoul, then a rather shabby looking place, quite unlike the city of skyscrapers that it is today. My overall impression was one of white dust, with everything apparently covered with it, even the trees and other vegetation. Even the main streets were dusty. Riding around in the Jeep, the major took us down some side streets, pulling up to a wooden gate in a wall, over which was a small sign, identifying it as The Green Door Hotel. Some

Rote!!! At that point, the major blew the horn a couple of times, after which an aging Korean woman opened the gate and we drove into a small courtyard. We then went into the building which we found was the in-town officer's club for the Mohawk unit and also a bonafide cathouse, complete with three or four young ladies lounging about. With one exception, they were the typical flat faced Korean women, very unattractive. The exception was a rather pretty girl, called Miss Moon by the major. What her background was I don't know, but she looked nothing like the others. The thing that cracked me up though was a TV set, playing if you will, an episode of Dobey Gillis, an early home grown sitcom. So, the major, Mertz and I sat watching the tube and drinking beer. I thought that no one at home would ever believe the scene. The major offered the services of the young ladies, but we declined, even Mertz. We didn't stay too long, then left to have dinner at a real officer's club somewhere or other, where Mertz and the major tried to get me to eat something called Kimche (probably misspelled) which is supposed to be a kind of rotted fish, with a terrible smell. I managed to hold them off, refusing even to try it.

A day or so later, we were to return to Tokyo, again by Air America. This time, the flight was in the evening. So we arrived at Kimpo to check in for the return trip. Here, my recollection is a bit fuzzy, but a problem arose, this time with me. What it was exactly, I can't remember, but the U.S. Air Force people said I couldn't go because of some technicality. A large argument then ensued, with Mertz saying the I was needed in Tokyo for a meeting next day and the Air Force saying no way. Mertz then got on the horn and started talking to people back in Japan at the airbase from which we had left and where we were to return to. It was called Tachikawa, or something like that. Mertz was finally able to con someone at Tachikawa to authorize the people at Kimpo to let me board the flight under their supervision, with the understanding that I'd be taken into custody when we landed in Japan. Mertz's' rationale was to get the hell out of Korea, then take our chances with the authorities in Japan.

So, we flew back to Tachikawa, landed and taxied up to the administration building. By this time, it was midnight or after with hardly anyone around. We let the handful of people on the flight get off and walk into the building without seeing anyone appear to question them. When nothing happened, we picked up our stuff, got off the airplane and headed for a parking lot, not even going into the building, all the time waiting for someone to call out to us. Nothing happened. So we found a taxi and left. Reflecting on it on the way to the hotel, we decided that while the Air Force guys at Kimpo were eager beavers, the ones at Tachikawa could care less and didn't even bother to follow up. Bureaucracy is a sometimes thing, often at the discretion of the individual involved. You were always fair game for some functionary who decided to impress you with his importance. You'd stand there helplessly while some klutz decided he was going to show you who was boss. His moment in the sun. They were often the bane of the traveler.

In March of 1967, my wife Dot and I traveled to Europe to attend the annual meeting of the European Branch of the AAAA (Army Aviation Association). I had attended by myself a couple of times before and thought Dot would enjoy it. The affair was held in Garmisch in the German Alps south of Munich. Garmisch could be called Germany's Aspen, Colorado. The symposium typically ran for five days and included meetings, lectures, dinners, luncheons, sightseeing and for many, great skiing on the Zugspitze, Germany's highest mountain.

So we packed up and took a TWA 707 from JFK in New York, to Munich in southern Germany. One of our fellow passengers was Gypsy Rose Lee, who was going to Germany

to visit her son who was in the Army there. We knew her son from the '50s when he and our son were attending a summer camp in Pennsylvania.

Once in Munich, we rented a nice 220 Mercedes and took off for Garmisch. Once there, we checked into the Gen. Patton Hotel, a German hotel which had been taken over by the U.S. Army as part of the Garmisch recreation area. For the next five days we participated in the various functions, one of which was a talk I gave in the theater on the OV-1 Mohawk that Grumman was building for the Army. We industry people had to sing for our supper, so to speak. Part of the entertainment was an excellent ice show at the Casa Carioca ice rink. We also took the cog railroad up to the hotel, perched high on the Zugspitze. It was right out of a James Bond movie with some dozen levels, the whole thing sort of plastered up against the side of the mountain up near the top. The cog railroad ended up in a tunnel inside the mountain as a sort of back door entrance to the hotel, actually the only entrance since the front of the mountain was almost a precipice. The hotel had restaurants, bars, rooms and open decks, all with spectacular views of the Alps. The open decks were wall-to-wall deck chairs and incredibly tanned vacationers. The whole scene was really something else. The Germans obviously are big on the outdoors and sunshine. Another place we visited was Oberammergau, not too far away; famous as the site of the passion play, held every ten years. The towns in the area are the story book variety, many painted with colorful scenes. The whole area must be seen to be appreciated.

At Garmisch, we were joined by two other Grumman couples, Gerry and Laura Girard from Washington, and Mike and Kathy Bouvier from Bad Godesberg. Mike ran the European office for Grumman. At one point, we were in a piano bar in the hotel on the Zugspitze, drinking and enjoying the view. I commented on what it would be like if there was an avalanche, with the whole thing sliding down the mountain— the piano, the bar, chairs, carpets, patrons, etc. Ironically, a year or so later it happened, with some people lost in the accident. It had seemed like a good joke at the time though. One other interesting place was the Alpenhof hotel in town. Painted yellow, it was a typical Tyrolean building and very interesting inside. It had a great bar and lounge in the basement with good music and a very gay crowd each night. The following year, Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton lived and hung out in the bar when he was making the movie, *Where Eagles Dare*. I was back there again in '69, and the bartender said the Burtons were something else, in the bar every night. They also showed me the suite of rooms they had when they were there.

We finally departed, heading back to Munich, on Sunday as I recall. In Munich, we checked into the Bayerschehof hotel, a very upmarket one, and went out for dinner at the Schwarzwaldter restaurant a block from the hotel. I should point out that I'd earmarked all the better hotels and restaurants that I'd visited on previous trips to show Dot the best time possible. I've also neglected to mention that we'd decided to make the trip a three week vacation after the program at Garmisch was over.

The next day, I turned in the Mercedes and rented a large Volkswagon 411, the Mercedes being too noisy with studded tires all around on the dry roads. Actually, they'd become against the law after a certain date since they damaged the roads. We then headed up the autobahn to Stuttgart, running into snow shortly after leaving Munich. At one point, it became really bad with very poor visibility in the driving snow. It didn't slow down the German drivers though, going like hell despite the bad visibility. We finally got to Stuttgart around noon and checked into the Zeppelin Hotel across from the main railroad

station. We went into the dining room to have lunch and to wait for the Girards who were coming in their own car. Shortly after sitting down, in the door walked Dennis Day of Jack Benny show fame. I was always amazed at how he retained his boyish appearance. However, up close and in person, he appeared quite wrinkled, probably looking his age.

When the Girards hadn't shown up after a reasonable length of time, we went ahead and ate. As we were about to leave the restaurant, in walked the Girards with a young German fellow plus a wild tale of problems they'd had out on the autobahn. Their rent car had died in the middle of the road in the snowstorm, with cars whistling by in the poor visibility. The German had stopped and got them off the road before someone rear-ended them. They then transferred their luggage to his car and he drove them into Stuttgart. Gerry called Avis and told them they could pick up their car somewhere between Munich and Stuttgart. Gerry was very irate. In the evening, we all went to the Adler restaurant, another excellent one around the corner from the hotel.

The next day, we headed for Heidelberg, a place I'd spent a lot of time at, being the home of the U.S. Army Europe headquarters. We checked into another great hotel, the Europascherhof, our usual stop in the past. I remember paying \$35 for the room, the equivalent of about \$400 today. Nothing but the best! It had gold wallpaper as I recall. Heidelberg is a university town and very picturesque. We went to a couple of famous drinking places frequented by the students for eons. One was named Seppi's. There were names carved into everything, probably back when dueling was the thing to do. Heidelberg also has a beautiful Schloss (castle) on a mountain that overlooks the town. It's spectacular at night being lit by floodlights and appearing to be floating in the air. We also went to another restaurant I'd frequented that specialized in Lowenbrau beer (Lion brew beer). Every time they opened a new keg, a big carved lion roared.

I might point out here that I took great pride at the time in knowing my way around Germany by car, particularly from Cologne in the north, south to Bonn, Bad Godesberg, Frankfurt and Heidelberg. We'd made the 100 mph trip up and down the autobahn many times. Also farther south to Stuttgart, Munich and Garmisch, but not as often. When I went to Germany with the president of Grumman in 1969, he couldn't get over roaring around back streets in German towns and ending up exactly where we were headed. How the hell do you know where you're going - was a common comment. Frankfurt in particular was almost like home.

From Heidelberg, we headed north to Frankfurt where we checked into the Frankfurterhof, another very nice hotel in downtown Frankfurt. Another regular stop in the past. For dinner, we went to our favorite restaurant, the Bruckenkeller, typical subterranean celler, down stone steps from the street level. Essentially a stone cave. It was complete with strolling musicians and quite good food. Primarily, it was known for its ambiance. The musicians asked for any song requests from our group. Dot asked for the Shadow of Your Smile, which they didn't know. But shortly a guy came running in with some sheet music he'd gone out and bought. So they did indeed play the requested number. We gave them a big tip. I believe we also stopped at Meier Gustal's, a working class beer hall near the railroad station. Much beer, singing, Umpah band, dancing and such. When we took Grumman's president there, he led the band and did the polka on the stage with some woman he grabbed from the audience. It's that kind of place.

After a day or so in Frankfurt, we headed for Bad Godesberg by way of the Rhine river, We drove all the way along the river seeing the many castles, the river traffic of barges,

passenger boats, endless vineyards, picturesque towns, etc. A really great experience. A highlight was stopping at a pretty little restaurant on a mountain overlooking Koblenz. I pointed out the target area that we had bombed on New Years Day, 1945. Fascinating to me. I showed Dot how we'd come up from the south into a 120 mph wind, making only 50 or 60 mph over the target, with much flak.

We then continued north along the river to Koenigswinter, a little town on the Rhine across from Bad Godesberg which you reached by a small car ferry. Going across on the ferry gave you a good feel for the extremely strong current in the Rhine, 7 or 8 mph I've been told. In Bad Godesberg, we checked in at the Dreeson Hotel on the river. The Dreeson was famous as the hotel of choice for Adolph Hitler when in that part of Germany. It seems that Herr Dreeson was an early Nazi party member and crony of Hitler. Dot was very impressed with its history, envisioning der Fuhrer sitting in the dining room by the window as she was. I had stayed there many times before, often using the coatroom across from the main desk. In reading the history of the negotiations between Hitler and Chamberlin prior to WW2, I read one episode involving a discussion between the two while standing next to the coatroom at the Dreeson. I found it fascinating.

We stayed in Bad Godesberg for about three days as I recall, Dot seeing the U.S. Embassy, the MAAG (the U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group), the Grumman office and the homes of the Bouviers and Bailly-Cowles, Marc being a consultant to Grumman. We went to a great dinner party at the Bouvier's on one evening at which I became completely bombed. The day after, we returned to Frankfurt in a hung over condition where we met with a Col. Wilhelm and his wife at the Rhine Main air base. We then drove up in the country northeast of Frankfurt to meet with one Alfred Glebe and wife, Alfred, a Porsche dealer who wanted to sell me a Porsche. Wilhelm and

drove in his red Porsche at high speed with the two women following well behind in the VW. After reaching Glebe's place, he loaned me an almost new Porsche which Wilhelm and I took out to scream around the countryside. Later we all had dinner with some wealthy gent from Frankfurt who was also a Mercedes dealer. A very interesting group, including a German doctor and his rather horny wife.

The next day we flew to Paris for two or three days, staying at a hotel recommended by Bailly-Cowle. So we spent the next couple of days doing the usual things vacationers do, i.e. take the bus tour of Paris with the taped spiel, take the boat tour of the Seine, go up in the Eiffel Tower, take in the show at the Lido, have dinner in Montmartre, shopping for perfume at Liz's, people watching on the Champs and on and on. Always interesting and a must for women of all ages. To continue my plan of going first class, I decided to get a guy with a nice new Mercedes cab to take us to the airport for the flight to London.. At that time I'd always flown in and out of Orly, so without any thought I said , Orly. Always being early for everything, we arrived at Orly with plenty of time to spare, to be told that our flight left from Le Bourget on the opposite side of Paris. A major catastrophe if we missed the flight, being Good Friday with everything full, flights, hotels, everything. I asked the driver if he could make it. He said he'd try but couldn't promise anything. To make a long story short, we barely made it, being the last ones on the airplane after a really hair raising ride all around Paris.

So we flew to Heathrow, then took a cab into London, staying I don't remember where. We'd decided to rent a car the next day and drive up to Norwich in East Anglia where I'd been stationed during WW2. The next morning we took a cab over to Hertz near Hyde

Park and rented a car. The agent gave me some directions to get through London and out to M-1 or whatever the highway was that went up north. To my chagrin, the directions took us right through Piccadilly Circus and the heart of London, on the wrong side of the street of course. After a couple of wrong turns, we finally found the highway and headed for Norwich. We arrived about lunchtime and found a restaurant. It turned out that the lady in the restaurant knew all about our former air base having attended parties there during the war.

We then drove out to Rackheath and started to see what was still there 22 years later. The runways were now gone with the large field again farmland. The control tower was still there, but was now part of an auto junkyard, complete with junkyard dog who chased me back to the car, The briefing room was still there, but was now filled with fertilizer, Rather appropriate I thought A lot of the small shops along the flightline were still there and in use by someone. We then drove over to the former living area to see what was left. The officer's mess was still there, but overgrown with weeds. The O-club was gone with just the concrete floor remaining. . Our huts were all gone and the whole area overgrown with small trees and brush. I tried driving around some of our old paths but only succeeded in scratching the car.

The air base had been built on Sir Edward Stracey's estate which had obviously been a beautiful place at one time. His large manor house was next to a very pretty lake with a bridge over one end. While the lake looked much the same, his house had deteriorated and was now an antique store. We went in and looked it over, but it was more of a junk shop than an antique store. Rather sad looking.

It's worthy of note that Dot and I revisited Rackheath in 1983 along with our son and his family. Some 16 years later, the whole place was even more overgrown. The mess hall was still there, but the club was now a forest of small trees. Not even any sign of the concrete floor. The control tower looked as dilapidated as before, but the briefing room was now part of a small industrial complex and had become a woodworking shop. My son and I spoke to a couple of men standing in the doorway, who immediately assumed I was just another old vet who had returned to see the place again. One, by the name of John Carlson, had been 14 years old when I was there and told us what it was like for a boy in a small country town to suddenly have thousands of Americans, over a hundred airplanes and round the clock activity in their backyard. He then, rather poignantly described what it was like when, one day, we all left. No more colorful airplanes, no more roaring engines, just stillness. All very sad to a 14 year old boy. I'm sure a lot of the older people were happy to see us go. On a more recent note, I've heard that a group is trying to restore the control tower and turn it into a small museum.

Back to the trip. We drove back to London without incident and somehow found our way back to Hyde Park and the street that Hertz was on. Unfortunately, it was one way and I couldn't turn even though I could see the Hertz sign and the entrance. No problem, I'll just turn down the next street, then turn left again and approach from the other direction. Wrong! When I tried to turn left the second time, I couldn't, and had to turn right since it was another one way street. It's now getting dark and I'm quickly getting farther away from Hertz. So now I did the usual, became angry, whistled around a corner, going to the right and came face-to-face with a London bus. Highly embarrassed, I had to back up and cross over to the left side. In short, I'd driven on the left side all day without any problem, but the minute emotion crept in, I reverted to what was natural. It does take great concentration, particularly when making turns, or even worse, negotiating the

numerous roundabouts, the Brits idea of a traffic circle. Ultimately, we did find our way back to the Hertz office.

The next day was Easter Sunday and we decided it would be cool to go to Westminster Abbey for Easter service. We did, and finally got in after a wait of sorts. They had a special mimeographed program which we retained for our memoirs. It was sort of a companion to our visit to St. Paul's Cathedral for Christmas Eve service in the '80s with our son and his family. Very delightful in both instances.

We finally returned home a day or two later after a very fine and memorable vacation, one that we'll never forget. It was a good example of a good rule for traveling. Always try to go with someone who's already been there and knows their way around. Obviously, a tour serves the purpose, but then you may be thrown in with a group of people you don't particularly care for. A trip with a couple of good friends and a tour guide would probably be the best of all worlds.

One of the many chores involved in marketing at Grumman, was to oversee the company's hospitality suites at trade shows and other public relations type activities. A classic example was that involved in the annual meetings of the Association of the U.S. Army and the Army Aviation Association, conducted in tandem in Washington each October. As the builder of the Army's OV 1 Mohawk, Grumman typically participated in these shows, always maintaining a hospitality suite. The AUSA show was the more formal, always terminating the three day event with a black tie dinner. The AAAA show was more informal which catered to the Army aviators, a somewhat more fun loving group, a little akin to the Navy's infamous tailhook annual convention in Las Vegas.

On one particularly memorable occasion, we had a suite in the Shorham Hotel, a block from The Sheraton Washington Hotel where the AUSA always held their convention. On the last night we reserved a very nice suite and had Harry Burns of Public Affairs come to Washington to serve as bartender and the dispenser of food. I recall checking the suite out in the afternoon and was impressed with how nice the place looked, very beautifully decorated, with gold predominating as to color.

Around 7:00 PM, the AAAA had a large reception and dinner, after which the troops began visiting the various hospitality suites, the contractors all vying for the most important and influential Army personnel. On this evening, we seemed to have a very popular suite, always filled with a rather loud and uninhibited crowd. Around midnight, Harry and I tried to close the operation down without much success. We finally decided to keep it open for another hour or so to avoid starting a riot.

The suite had a large living room, a bedroom and bath with all areas filled, including the bath. At some point, a drunk decided to use the john, sitting down with his pants and underwear around his ankles. At that point, he passed out, remaining in that position essentially for the rest of the evening. This didn't stop other guests from standing around the bath and sitting on the tub. Quite a sight.

Then a very drunk major and a colonel started an argument about something or other which looked like it might turn physical very quickly. A couple of other officers were trying to quiet them down and defuse the situation., without too much success. tried and was told to keep out of it. The major's wife was as drunk as he was and kept trying to talk to him about something. She finally gave up and wandered over to me, confiding that she

had to go to the john, the one in our suite being occupied by the aforementioned drunk with pants at half mast.

So, I steered her out of the suite into the hall, then down the hall to the elevator. Once in the elevator, we descended to the lobby. I then steered her out of the elevator and toward the ladies room, located about twenty feet or so to the right. I opened the door and nudged her inside, then withdrew to sit on a bench to await developments. In about ten minutes, she reappeared with a big smile on her face, obviously greatly relieved. She also wanted me to know that she considered me probably the finest gentleman she had ever known. She continued this theme all the way back to the suite. When we arrived, I noted that the major and colonel were still at it. The woman went up to the major and started telling him what a fine gentleman I was. His reaction was to glare at me, probably feeling that I'd somehow taken advantage of his very inebriated wife.

The story didn't end there. . The next morning at breakfast, the major spotted me, came over, and proceeded to berate me for not breaking up the battle between he and the colonel. Since it was Grumman's suite and I was in charge, then it was all my fault. Rather strange logic I thought. But when you're dealing with drunks, you have to expect the worst. I got so I hated hospitality suites.

I should mention that after I got up I went to take a look at the suite, wondering what it would look like in the light of day. I really wasn't prepared for the shambles. The floor was covered with paper, food, spilled drinks and god knows what else. The guests had managed to damage just about everything in sight. The contrast between the before and after was overwhelming. I don't know what it cost Grumman, but I'm sure it was substantial.

In the mid-eighties, the U.S. Air Force began an effort to procure a small business jet aircraft for use as an advanced trainer. We at Grumman began looking at the field of candidates and concluded that the Falcon 10, built by Dassault in France was probably the best of the lot. The Falcon was marketed in this country by The Falconjet Corporation based in Teterboro, N.J., an organization that we were very familiar with since the president was an old Grummanite, Frank Weiskel, as were some of their other personnel.

Grumman's man in Paris, Jacques Pous, was also interfacing with Dassault personnel in Paris at the time. Interestingly, Dassault wanted to pursue the Air Force program directly with Grumman and not via Falconjet who they felt should stick to commercial sales.

While we felt that the Falcon 10 was the best airplane for the trainer role, we also accepted the fact that it was the most expensive. In visits to Dassault and many discussions, we continued to stress the need to somehow get the cost down. Initial estimates indicated a probable cost of about \$4.5 million, while the Air Force hoped to procure a machine for about \$3.0 million. Since there was such a disparity, we were emphasizing what was known as Life Cycle Cost, which was the initial cost plus what it would cost to operate and maintain the machine over its useful life span. Being a better airplane, we showed a good life cycle cost, potentially better than a cheaper airplane to buy, but one that was costly to maintain over the long haul. While there was merit to our contention, it's un-provable initially since everyone predicted low life cycle costs.

We finally had to tell Dassault that they had a great airplane, loved by the Air Force, but just too expensive. In our interface with Dassault we had concluded that Grumman would

probably buy the majority of the airframe components from Dassault, ship them to New York and assemble the airplane here. Early on we had found that Dassault procured components of the airplane all over Europe and assembled them at their plant in Istre, in the south of France near Marseille. We had already visited the facility and become familiar with the final assembly of the airplane. The price of the airplane as quoted by Dassault was derived from the cost of the individual components as manufactured by the various subcontractors.

When we indicated that their airplane was just too costly, Dassault invited us to come to Europe and talk directly to the various subcontractors with the aim of getting them to cut their prices. They then made an offer that we really couldn't refuse. If we would come to Paris at our expense, they would pick up all costs while we were in Europe. So, we put together a team of four people, the program manager, Bill Fehrs, a cost estimator, Jim McDonough, a tool engineer, Art (forget his last name) and myself, representing marketing.

So, we advised Dassault of our acceptance and made all arrangements for the trip. A potential glitch occurred the day before we were to leave when John O'Brien, the Chairman of the Board, called me to ask about our upcoming boondoggle (his words). I then explained the details of the trip and that Dassault was assuming all costs. He thought that Dassault was a little foolish to do what they'd said and couldn't understand why they'd agree to do it. He then tried to discourage me from going noting that there had been a lot of terrorism lately in France and why did I want to risk going there at that time. I allowed that that issue did not concern me but would pass his concern on to the others. He then requested that I brief him on the results of the trip as soon as we returned which I obviously agreed to do.

So, the next day we departed JFK for our trip to Paris. There, we met our Paris rep, Jacques Pous who would accompany us on the trip. Following that, we met with Dassault officials to discuss our itinerary and our approach to the meeting with each subcontractor. Our plan was to start with a comprehensive briefing on the Air Force trainer program and why the Falcon 10 was the odds-on favorite with Air Force people that we'd talked to. I'd do the briefing and leave them with the impression that we could win the competition if we could get the price down to a more competitive figure, Our cost estimator would then discuss the cost of the subcontractor's product and what level of cut would be required in our view to become competitive. The tooling engineer would next provide his thoughts on how the manufacturing process might be improved to reduce costs. I should point out that we'd already concluded that the manufacture of the airplane was very inefficient and could easily be improved upon. Naturally, we had to be a little diplomatic so as not to imply that the ugly Americans thought that they didn't know how to build an airplane. Bill Fehrs would then explain our approach to the management of the program.

The arrangements that Dassault had made for the trip were really first class, starting with the transportation which consisted of our own Falcon 20 business jet, complete with crew which included a stewardess if you will. Our tour guide was a very knowledgeable Dassault engineer and another manufacturing type.

Our first stop was a Dassault facility in Paris that manufactured actuators, very sophisticated devices and key elements of the powered control systems. We then were driven out to LeBourget, the airfield where Lindbergh landed in 1927, to meet the crew and board the airplane that would carry us around Europe for the next week in fairly

luxurious comfort. Our first stop was Istre where we briefed the Dassault people on the presentation that we planned to give to the various subcontractors. I should point out that the Europeans place great stock in fancy business luncheons which typically took two hours or more. Dassault had their own very good private dining room, always including wines of different types.

Unfortunately, I've forgotten the name of the first of the subcontractors which was located not too far from Istre. We flew there and had a fairly short meeting, then boarding a chartered bus which took us to Pau in the foothills of the Pyrenees mountains. Pau was the home of the old French firm, Potez, which built military airplanes in WW1. The president was about the third generation of the Potez family, a very charming young guy who sent me Christmas cards for several years after our visit. After our usual briefing, Monsieur Potez and a couple of his people took us into town to a very nice restaurant for the obligatory lengthy lunch. I sat next to Potez and was treated to a very interesting history of the Potez company. He spoke English with virtually no accent and was one of the more charming people I've ever met. I hadn't mentioned, but their facility was probably the original plant and was located on an airfield that looked like every WW1 airdrome as seen in movies of that era. The whole scene was bucolic, the small facility located in the middle of farmland as far as you could see. We all said, "my God, we're back in 1917!"

That night, we stayed in a very nice hotel in Pau, after the usual big dinner. It was a little embarrassing, with the guy from Dassault picking up all the checks. But that was the deal. The next morning, I got up early and with another member of our group, walked around town and stopped for breakfast at a small shop that seemed to specialize in croissants of every description. After that, we walked to another part of town, with beautiful big hotels around a park with a spectacular view of the mountains. I decided that it was one of the more beautiful views I'd ever seen. It's worth mentioning that Pau was the home of a Grand Prix auto race before WW2. I'd often read about The Grand Prix of Pau.

The group then took our bus out to the airport where the Falcon and crew were waiting. From there, we flew to Madrid, took taxis into town, and checked into a very modern hotel. I think we ate lunch on the plane if memory serves me. For a change, we opted for a light supper, eating in a snack bar in the hotel. After supper, a couple of us decided to take a walking tour of Madrid, or at least part of it. I was impressed that the streets were very dirty with much trash lying around. The next day we were advised that there had been a parade of some sort which I guess accounted for all the paper. While there are probably some nice parts of Madrid, we didn't really see them.

The next morning we got a couple of taxis and drove out some distance to Casa, the company that manufactured the Falcon wing. Casa is a very modern aircraft company, building their own airplanes as well as parts of a lot of others. After our usual pitch, they gave us a tour of their very sophisticated facilities, the briefing done by the very knowledgeable General Manager. After the tour, we all went down the road to a restaurant that Casa uses to entertain visiting firemen. The lunch was one of the better ones, lasting about three hours and including about everything you can think of. I sat across from the host, the manager, who reminded me a lot of Carl Reiner and just as funny with jokes, anecdotes and a general history of the area, particularly during the Spanish Civil War. He told us that where we were sitting was in the front lines during the

war. As a history buff, I found the whole thing fascinating. I'll say these people really know how to entertain!

From the restaurant, the taxis took us to the airport for the next leg of our tour, this time a fairly long flight across the Mediterranean to Italy. We were to visit the Italian firm of Agusta in Brindisi on the Adriatic, far down the Italian boot. Approaching Brindisi, we found that the airport was closed for repairs, so we were diverted north to Bari. Again on the coast there was a lot of confusion after we landed with the customs and Immigration people which finally got straightened out. We were then told that Agusta was sending cars to drive us down the coast to Brindisi. In due time, three shiny Alfa Romeo sedans showed up and we all piled in. I sat in front with the driver, a stoic individual who had little or nothing to say. We headed down the Autostrada nose to tail at just under 100 mph which was the living end to me. Periodically, we could see the Adriatic off to our left. The land was mostly dedicated to farming, with olives and artichokes predominating I was told. My recollection is that the trip took a couple of hours or so. I thoroughly enjoyed it.

By the time we arrived in Brindisi, it was dark. After some riding around, we pulled up in front of a somewhat tacky hotel and checked in, concluding that the quality of our lodgings had gone downhill since Madrid. I think we ate in the Hotel but I'm not sure. After we ate, we wandered around the docks, the hotel being right on the water. Down the street we found a monument telling the world that this was the eastern terminus of the famed Appian Way. We were suitably impressed that we'd actually walked on a portion of the Appian Way. I remember sitting on a bench on the dock watching cars and people boarding a large ferry that would take them across the Adriatic, probably to Albania, or perhaps what is now Bosnia. I also recall that one of our party became slightly drunk in the hotel bar where we'd gone for a nightcap, becoming rather obnoxious and showing a side we'd never seen before. Sadly, a couple of years later, he suffered a major stroke and to my knowledge, never worked again.

The next morning, our Dassault host discovered that we'd gone to the wrong hotel by mistake the night before. We were a little ill when we found the place that we were to have stayed and where the reservations had been made. C'est la Vie, I guess. The Alfas then picked us up and drove us out to the Agusta factory, another very modern facility on the Brindisi airport where we would have landed had it not been closed for some kind of repair work. At Agusta, we were welcomed by the General Manager, another very charming and funny man. They must hand pick people for their charm I concluded. We gave the usual pitch, then were taken on the obligatory plant tour. The one thing that I remember most was their paint hangar, said to be the largest and best in Europe. The air cleaning and conditioning system was the most sophisticated I'd ever seen. There was a U.S. Air Force C-130 transport in the hangar when we were there, Agusta having a contract with the Air Force to overhaul these very large transports. Interestingly, they showed us a helicopter in the hangar that belonged to the Vatican and used by the Pope. I was impressed that it appeared rather shabby, faded paint, somewhat dirty, not exactly what you'd expect. Having seen our presidential fleet helicopters which are absolutely immaculate, I couldn't believe the condition of the Pope's machine. Well, I'd always heard that Italian Navy ships were filthy as compared with ours.

Then, we went to lunch, easily the most lavish affair that I've ever been exposed to. It was located in a rather dusty and unpretentious low building set amid the farms near the sea. We started with drinks outside under a kind of arbor. What I'll never forget were the green olives in a huge bowl. While they had other appetizers, I stuck with the olives,

eating God knows how many. Then we went into what I guess was a private dining area since we were the only ones there. The group was probably about 20, with me again sitting across from the manager. We then began the most unbelievable lunch that I've ever had with 14, count them, 14 courses. The manager explained everything, why we should try it, why they had it and anything else you could think of. They naturally had all the local produce plus lots of seafood because of the proximity of the sea. I specifically remember squid and octopus which the manager insisted we had to try. Somewhere about halfway through the meal, we had cognac which is the custom according to the Dassault manager. The restaurant manager was another charmer, wandering around and selling some of the odder fare such as the octopus. They all got quite a kick of us and our less adventurous palates. The whole affair lasted over three hours and is easily the most memorable lunch of my career. At the conclusion, the restaurant owner gave each of us a handmade pitcher which I have on the bookshelf in our den.

After profusely thanking the restaurant owner and the Dassault people, we piled again into the three Alfas and headed back to Ban. Once more at about 100 mph. Back in the airplane, we took off and headed back to Istre in France. I've neglected to mention that the little stewardess served drinks and snacks on each of the flights. Since the Falcon is a relatively small airplane with low headroom, they use small girls, typically about five feet tall. She and the two pilots were extremely pleasant throughout the trip. Actually, the airplane and crew didn't belong to Dassault, but had been rented from a company that specializes in leasing.

We arrived back in Istre in the evening and stayed at a hotel near the Dassault plant. We spent the next day at the plant, talking to the Dassault people and looking at the final assembly lines of the various Falcon airplanes being assembled there. Then, later in the day, we flew back to Le Bourget outside Paris, bidding goodbye and thanking the crew for a enjoyable week.

We spent the next day back with Dassault officials going over the week's events and explaining how we'd recalculate the cost of the airplane in an effort to reduce it as much as possible. We finally left saying we'd give it our best shot and thanking them for the effort that they'd put forth on our behalf. Sometime later when I had to call the head guy and tell him that we'd been unable to achieve a significant cost reduction and therefore would terminate our effort, I felt very badly. He was very much the gentleman though and thanked Grumman for the effort that we had made, It's noteworthy that they didn't seek another U.S. partner to team with. I guess we convinced them that their machine was just too expensive for the role. Ultimately, the Air Force settled for a Japanese airplane that was being marketed by Beech Aircraft.

After returning home, we dutifully briefed the Board Chairman on our trip, promising to terminate our effort if we could not get the cost down. And that's what we did. I don't think he could ever understand why Dassault had gone to the expense that they did.

The 1960s were a very turbulent time for just about everyone. I tend to remember those years as a very interesting time involving much travel within the U.S., Europe and the Far East. In late 1958, I became involved with the Army's OV-1 aircraft program, first as an engineer to lay out the various production versions of the machine, next as the assistant project engineer and finally as a marketer for the aircraft.

I had become increasingly involved with the customer in Washington, particularly after the Army established a program office across from Washington National Airport under Col. Jack Koletty. He was succeeded by Col. Howie Schutz. An early member of the project office was a Major Paul Mertz, a Signal Corps officer, formerly assigned to the Electronics Command at Ft. Monmouth, N.J. Major Mertz was a very bright and aggressive officer. He was a bachelor with a penchant for travel. He once confided his secret for business travel which involved becoming very knowledgeable of various electrical and electronic equipments, then offering to visit the users to discuss any problems which might arise. (and usually do). He would even solicit requests for his help at interesting locations around the world.

He didn't change his act when he joined the Mohawk Program Office, quickly finding it necessary to visit the limited number of users of the airplane at that time. Paul was a very outspoken individual who didn't spare anyone when he had something to say. I tangled with him early on, actually my second encounter. I had met him and a few days later called the office and reached Mertz. He tore into me for something or other and said something about preventing me from having any interface with his office. A little unsettling since it was part of my job to interface with that office on a regular basis. Fortunately, we quickly developed a very good relationship. The down side was that he only wanted to deal with me and didn't want to work with anyone else.

In the spring of 1962 Paul decided to visit the various Army units in Germany who were then operating the Mohawk. Someone decided that while he was knowledgeable of the aircraft's electronic systems, he knew little of the airframe. Accordingly, a Grumman test pilot, John Norris, was sent along to cover any questions that arose on the aircraft. A worse choice couldn't have been made, since Norris was as hardnosed as Mertz if not more so. I had gone to Germany in June of '62 and met the two of them in Heidelberg at the conclusion of their tour. As soon as I entered the room, Mertz pulled me aside and blasted John and his actions during their tour. Shortly after, Norris got me aside and blasted Mertz. They never had a kind word for one another thereafter.

It was probably this trip that was the genesis of The Mertz Marauders. The name obviously deserving of an explanation. As stated previously, Mertz's real interest was travel. In addition, he was somewhat of a gourmet and loved the good life. He had found that if you involved contractors, they were usually quite willing and able to entertain the customer. Thus traveling with a contractor, or better still, contractors, was a great way to eat and drink well at the contractor's expense.

My reason for being in Germany in June was to attend a demonstration of the Mohawk for the West German Army. Mertz obviously picked up on this and began to figure how to capitalize on the possibility of a foreign sales program. Thus, by the end of the year, Mertz and some of the Mohawk contractors had gotten together to plan on a comprehensive marketing program. I was obviously involved as were a number of contractor's, not surprisingly those supplying the various electronic systems and in Paul's area of interest. Some of the charter members were Dave Benson of Motorola, who supplied the radar, Stu Dance and Dan Chaffee of HRB Singer, manufacturer of the infrared system, George Pugsley, the Ryan navigation system, John Giatrellis, the data link system, Ken (forget his last name) of Fairchild camera and Henry Massingham, a civilian engineer at Ft. Monmouth. Additional people joined the group from time to time. At the onset, someone dubbed the group, The Mertz Marauders. And the name stuck.

The routine for our European trips became somewhat standardized. After some initial planning in Washington, we'd meet at JFK in New York at the TWA terminal. Always TWA. I should add that we typically traveled on military orders which had a number of advantages. The airfare was less, we had access to military commissaries and BOQs. Those like me, were given our orders at JFK which I then had to use to get a ticket, sometimes a lengthy process to the point that I might miss the flight. Since we were on military orders, we were restricted to using a U.S. flag airline, i.e., TWA or Pan Am. Mertz hated Pan Am, so we almost always flew on TWA.

Typically, we took off at 7:00 P.M. and flew to London, arriving around 7:00A.M. We then continued on to Frankfurt, our destination. On our first trip in early '63, we checked into an Army BOQ in Frankfurt and spent the next few days working on a major presentation to be given first to the West German Army and then for the French Army. Dinner each evening was usually a question of who was going to get stuck with the check. I tried every ruse I could think of not to be the stuckee more than once or twice. That first trip also included two military pilots that we brought over from the states. Maj. Jim Barkley, an Army pilot, and Lt. Bob Brace, a Navy pilot who had done a lot of the armament testing on the Mohawk. They were to fly two Mohawks that we'd borrowed from the U.S. Army Europe. This aspect turned into a major situation when we managed to lose one of the airplanes at a small airfield outside of Paris, where it had sat for a month with a 24 hour a day French Army guard. We never heard the end of it.

While we had stayed at the BOQ on the first trip, we normally opted for nice hotels. Mertz always managed to obtain a piece of paper stating that government accommodations weren't available, thus we had to use a hotel. As I had said, he was a master on how to travel first class in the military. He was also an authority on good restaurants, knowing the best places to eat no matter where we went.

At one time, I could recite the dates of all the trips we made, but have pretty much forgotten them by now. But we were typically over there four or five times a year.

Then, on some occasions I would go on my own, usually to attend the annual meeting of the Army Aviation Association held each year in Garmisch in the German Alps. On those occasions, I'd usually visit all the Mohawk units in Europe before coming home.

Most of the Marauder's activities were in Heidelberg, Frankfurt and Bad Godesberg. As I said previously, we'd leave JFK in the evening and end up in Frankfurt in the late morning. We'd then check into the Europa Hotel, a very nice one. After lunch we'd go over to U.S. Army Europe Headquarters and have meetings with sundry people, usually related to supply problems the various Mohawk units were having. By this time I was usually falling asleep since I could never sleep very well on the airplane going over. Then Mertz would set up a dinner with some of the Army people which would go on till the late late hours. I was usually out on my feet by the time I finally got to bed.

After our obligatory meetings at USAREUR Hdqs, we'd usually head for Hanau, outside of Frankfurt to meet with the Mohawk unit which was based there. It was known as Fliegerhorst Kaserne and had been a Luftwaffe base in WW2. We bombed it on December 11, 1944. We considered this unit the best one in Europe and used them to give demonstrations when needed. While at Hanau, we'd stay in Frankfurt at the Franker Hof, a very upmarket hotel.

From there we'd head for Bad Godesberg, south of Bonn, which was the location of the U.S. Embassy and the home of the Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG), the organization that interfaced with the German military. We spent a lot of time at the MAAG. In Bad Godesberg, we stayed at either the Dreeson or the Park Hotels. The Dreeson was right on the Rhine and was famous for the place that Hitler stayed when he was in that part of Germany. Dreeson was an early Nazi Party member so Hitler liked to patronize his hotel. Another, small hotel in town was the Park, a place we stayed if we couldn't get into the Dreeson. Bad Godesberg had a world class restaurant called the Adler which had wonderful food.

Grumman also had an agent living in Bonn who represented us with the German government. Douggie was an Englishman who was married to Mary, a German lady who was said to have been an ardent Nazi, and I can believe it. She had a rather lovely daughter, Christa, who apparently was used as bait for their business relationships with the German government. Douggie had a big home in Bonn and a chauffeur-driven Mercedes. I was suitably impressed. For a long time we kept Douggie a secret from Mertz since he thought he was running the foreign sales show in Europe. We did finally get them together, whereupon Mertz promptly fell in love with Christa.

Grumman also had first a Paris office, then an office in Bad Godesberg, most of the time manned by Michel Bouvier, whose distinction was that he was Jackie Kennedy's cousin. Mertz and Bouvier fortunately got along, with Miche making sure that Mertz feel that he was running the show. I had to be a first class diplomat to get all of these elephants to work together, the fourth elephant being my boss back in N.Y. who at times thought that he was running the show. It may be why I have white hair today.

In any case, we were constantly coming up with reasons why we had to return to Europe for one reason or another. I probably should point out that a our primary focus in selling the Mohawk to foreign buyers was Germany, having a military organization patterned after our own. Also, they tended to have the most money. Our second priority was France, but we knew the Germany was the key.

But in the Fall of 1964, we decided to put on a major sales tour, wherein we would hit all of the countries in Europe once we'd put the big show together. The tour began in September and lasted over four weeks. It began in Spain, then Germany, France, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden and ended in Italy. We had a `really big shew' as Ed Sullivan would say. We had three Mohawks and all sorts of ground support equipment plus ground stations for the electronic sensors, photo processing vans, imagery interpretation vans and other ancillary equipment, all carried around in two Air Force cargo airplanes, i.e. a C-124 and a C-130. As I recall, the transport crews added about 30 to the Mertz Marauders plus some mechanics swiped from the Army. The logistics for this operation was unbelievable. A marketing guy from Motorola had the unhappy task of trying to find lodgings for our small army at each location, plus transportation for the Marauders. He spent most of the time on the phone to airlines, car rental agencies and hotels. Unfortunately, Mertz was never happy with the arrangements and chewed out poor Harry at every opportunity. But somehow, we got through the whole thing. I'll be telling tales about that soiree until I die. I finally ended up in a hotel in Venice where we were spending the weekend. The home office somehow found me there and told me that if I didn't come home right away, I was fired. But first, I was supposed to meet my boss in Bad Godesberg. When I told Mertz that I was wanted back in N.Y., he told me that I couldn't leave, that I was under military orders to him and if I did leave he'd have me

arrested as being AWOLI! I told him, "God damn it Paul, you can't arrest me, I'm not in the God damn Army".

He finally relented after I dreamed up some story about something back in N.Y. that required my being there. I then got a flight to Cologne and drove to Bad Godesberg to meet my boss. The next day while driving around Bad Godesberg with my boss, we pass Mertz in another car who had decided to come to Bad Godesberg for some reason or other. So for the next day or to I had to hide and ride around in the car all slumped down so he couldn't see me if we passed. Ridiculous!!!

Then the next year in the Fall of '65, Mertz decided it was time to take the Marauders to Vietnam to help out there. So, a half dozen or so of us flew to San Francisco, then drove to Travis Air Force Base where we got a Government contract flight to Saigon along with about 200 G.I.s. As usual, I traveled on military orders as a GS-15, equivalent to a Bird Colonel. As such, I was classified as a VIP which meant that I was accorded certain privileges which embarrassed the hell out of me. At the military airports we had to wait in the VIP lounge apart from the other swine passengers. When they called the flight, I had to get on first to have my choice of seats. When we landed, they all had to wait till his highness deplaned. This all happened at Travis, in Hawaii, in the Phillipines and at Ton San Nuit in Vietnam. All this with the G.I.s snarling away in the background. As a Lt. Col., Mertz wasn't a VIP, but could come with me as my guest. No dope Mertz. In Saigon, we stayed in the Astor Hotel, a real fleabag. The Mohawk unit was located a Vung Tau, perhaps 50 miles south of Saigon on the South China Sea. We scrounged any type of transport we could find from DeHavilland Caribous to DeHavilland Beavers to Huey helicopters, traveling back and forth several times. After finishing in Vietnam, Mertz and I flew to Tokyo, stayed there a couple of days then flew to Korea to inspect the Mohawk operation there for a couple more days. Then back to Tokyo then ultimately home, the whole trip three weeks or so. It was probably on the way home that We stopped at Ft. Lewis, Wash, to meet with a new Mohawk unit being formed there. I think we spent several days there, raining every day. We were told that it had rained steadily for 23 days!

I returned to Vietnam again in 1966, this time on my own and not with the Marauders. That time I stayed about three weeks and visited several new Mohawk units that had arrived during the past year.

About that time, we were back in Europe again, still trying to nail down a sale to Germany. But ultimately we were foiled by the U.S. Air Force getting together with the Luftwaffe to kill the sale. The U.S. Air Force had fought the Army's procurement of the Mohawk bitterly, not wanting to see the Army start to build another Army Air Force with high performance aircraft. Helicopters were OK, but no fixed wing aircraft.

So the U.S. Air Force, as advisors to the Luftwaffe convinced them to kill any procurement of the airplane by the German Army. And since all aircraft had to be procured through the Luftwaffe, the Army lost the baffle. So that was pretty much the end of the foreign sales effort and the heyday of the Mertz Marauders. But it was really something while it lasted.

The Company Airplane(s)

One of the more interesting aspects of working for Grumman was access to the company's airplanes for travel both inside and outside the company. For travel from Bethpage to and from Calverton or other short trips, we originally could use one of two Grumman Duck amphibians. Later on, the company used Beech Barons, small twin engine aircraft carrying five or six people.

However, most of our company travel was to and from Washington. Grumman was different from most of the other large aircraft companies, particularly those on the west coast. Those companies maintained large offices in Washington that provided the day-to-day interface with government personnel in Washington. Grumman, on the other hand, was only an hour or so away, so that it was more cost effective to maintain a smaller Washington office, then let the home personnel provide the interface. Thus, it made sense to set up a company airline to provide at least a portion of the transportation.

In the early days back in the '50s, we had two Douglas DC-3 twin engine transports, a mainstay of the airlines in the '30s and used extensively by the military in WW2..A good, reliable airplane, it was pretty bush as far as amenities were concerned with no cabin pressurization or air-conditioning. It was murder in the summer since it had to fly at low altitude where it was hot and the air turbulent. The term, Vomit Comet, was commonly applied to this type of airplane. The trip home to Bethpage in the summer was hell; the airplane like a furnace, having sat baking in the sun in hot, humid Washington all day. Often, after we got in, we'd strip off jackets, shirts, ties and sometimes more in an effort to get comfortable. We'd also leave the entrance door partially open till we started to make the takeoff run to get a little air circulation. Once in the air we bounced along in the typical turbulence on a hot summer day.

Then the company developed the new Gulfstream turboprop transport in the late '50s. Obviously, a giant step over the DC-3. It was pressurized, thus able to fly at higher altitude with a commensurate smoother ride. Also much faster, quieter and perhaps best of all, air-conditioned. We waited impatiently for the time that the company would place one or more airplanes on the Washington run (as we called it). This occurred around 1960, if I remember correctly. We all cheered when the Gulfstream service began.

The airplane left Bethpage at 7:30 A.M. and arrived in D.C. around 8:45 or so. The return was at 4:00 P.M., arriving back in Bethpage by 5:30. The crew consisted of the two pilots and a crew chief, who doubled as a flight attendant, serving coffee and buns of some sort in the morning and cokes or something similar in the afternoon.

The thing that made the company airplane unique though, were the shenanigans that usually went on. Typically, there were regulars who almost never missed a flight. I might add that the normal schedule was Tuesdays and Thursdays. At one time I think they threw in Wednesdays, but then started a Wednesday flight to Dayton, Ohio when the company began courting the Air Force. Some of the repartee that went on should have been recorded. Tom Kane, a regular, was for all intents and purposes a stand up comedian. The dialogue between he and people like Tom Guarino, another sharpster, was not to be believed. For the most part, the crew chief/flight attendants were polite and the epitome of decorum. However, since they knew everyone and were Grummies like everyone else, they could trade zingers with the best if thought appropriate. A classic example was Bill Richards, an old time plane captain, who wasn't intimidated by anyone. On one memorable flight, this time to the Grumman plant in Stuart, Florida, the passenger list consisted of former chief test pilot and senior V.P. Corky Meyer, a couple of

others and myself. Bill and Corky had worked together for years in Corky's test pilot days, so all discussions were decidedly irreverent. On the return trip, Bill had picked up some frozen dinners in Stuart. After a few drinks (the bar was only opened on long trips and if the senior corporate officer approved), Bill brought out the food. As I recall, Corky didn't particularly care for Bill's selection of the entree, suggesting what Bill could do with his choice. Bill allowed that was all he GD well had and if Corwin Henry didn't like it he could GD well starve for all of him. The entree issue finally resolved, Bill then appeared with a large pie, quickly referred to as the F-ing pie. The ensuing discussion centered about what could be done with the F-ing pie. I wondered what a stranger would think of the exchange between the flight attendant and a senior vice president. Not exactly United Air Lines ! But it was all in fun and everyone loved it.

The flights to Washington terminated at Washington National Airport's Page Aircraft terminal, where all the private aircraft operated out of. It was an interesting place since you'd often see celebrities coming and going. Not uncommon were instances where companies were entertaining congressional types, off on a boondoggle somewhere, usually accompanied by their golf clubs. Over the years, I saw many famous people; Sammy Davis, Jr. and Henry Ford II, two that I recall. I often wondered what the airplane crew did all day while we were off doing our thing. Now and then I'd see them wandering around over in the District.

Typically, the passengers went to the Pentagon and the Navy complex of buildings near the airport. When I was working the Army, I had to go a distance out to Bailey's Crossroads to visit The Mohawk Program Office. In the early days, they were right across the street from the airport. Much more convenient.. Most of the taxis at the airport were down at the main terminal, a half mile or so from Page. Thus taxis were often few when we were looking for them. There was usually a hassle trying to figure who was going where and who'd get the first taxi. If four or five were going to our D.C. office or the Pentagon, then everyone had the slowest hands in the west, trying to get someone else to pay the fare. Another game. Some guys developed a reputation for never paying the fare or picking up a lunch tab. Now and then, some guys would sit at the table forever, trying to get a particular tab evader to finally give in and pick up the check.

The down side of having a regular company airplane trip to D.C. was that some just regularly scheduled them self on the manifest with no plans for what they'd do that day. The typical drill was to go to the D.C. office, then get on the phone and try to line up some appointments, especially a lunch date. Some just concentrated on the lunch date, not bothering with anything else. That way, they could have a big fancy, company-paid lunch. If they couldn't line up anyone, then two or more would go out and have their own business discussion lunch. Frowned upon in later years.

Augie DeFlorio

One of the more unforgettable characters at Grumman was a fellow who worked for the Field Service Dept. by the name of Augie DeFlorio. In reality, Augie was an actor who just happened to be working for an aircraft company. I was first exposed to Augie about 1960 at a dinner to celebrate the completion of the Navy Preliminary Evaluation (NPE) of the new OV-1 Mohawk airplane. The dinner was held at Mickey's Steak House just off The Northern State Pkwy on Willis Ave. The attendees numbered more than 100, made up of Grumman, Navy and Army personnel. The senior Grumman representative was Jim Zusi.

The Navy 'Target' at the dinner was Pete Puraskis, a Marine captain who was the officer in charge of the NPE.

As a marketing representative for the Mohawk, I arrived at Mickey's early to make certain that everything was in order. While I was walking around checking everything, I noticed a waiter wandering around, who then approached me and said something almost unintelligible in what sounded like a strong Italian accent. He was telling me that he'd only been in the U.S. for a couple of weeks and was staying with a relative. Because of the big crowd that evening, Mickey needed additional help and he'd been hired to help out. I accepted his story at face value and wished him well as a new arrival.

Then, the guests began to arrive and I didn't see the waiter till a little later. The first part of the evening was a cocktail party with all kinds of outstanding hors d'oeuvres including an enormous bowl of shrimp which I visited on several occasions. On one, who was there spearing shrimp but the aforementioned waiter. Rather surprised, I suggested as diplomatically as I could, that he shouldn't be eating the guest's shrimp. Then he wandered off.

At some point, we all sat down to dinner and I didn't see anymore of the waiter until later. The dining room was in the shape of an EI, so if you sat in one leg of the EI, you couldn't see what was going on in the other leg. The dinner was the typical rather noisy affair with good food and much camaraderie. As the dinner was drawing to a close, Jim Zusi stepped up to a microphone at the intersection of the two legs of the EI, tapped for quiet and said something to the effect that he was sorry to report that Mickey wanted to apologize for the actions of one of his waiters. Jim then went on to explain to those that were sitting near me that a waiter who had been hired to fill in and had been fed drinks by some of the guests, had gotten drunk and become very obnoxious, spilling water all over, especially on Capt. Puraskis who had become rather incensed. The waiter had unfortunately been egged on by some of the guests and had become a little carried away. An example being his taking a full pitcher of water and walking the length of the table pouring water on everyone and everything.

In any case, Jim allowed that they'd been in the kitchen trying to sober up the waiter who now was very remorseful and wished to come out and apologize to all the guests. Jim's words were said very seriously and softly, to the point that the audience had become very quiet, listening intently. At that point, someone led a very dejected and unkempt waiter to the microphone. He was soaking wet and covered with sauce, gravy and I don't know what else. His hair was disheveled and he looked completely miserable. To a rapt and rather embarrassed audience, Angelo (as he was called) started in in a very low voice and in very poor English to apologize for his actions, embarrassing both Mickey and himself. He then said that he'd just arrived in this country and had already made a fool of himself. He said something to the effect that he was especially embarrassed since he loved airplanes and was proud to have been with all these airplane people that night. You could now hear a pin drop in the room. Then Angelo made some comment to the effect that he'd been in the Italian Air Force during WW2. This caused an immediate snicker from the audience, in part a release of tension, I expect. The audience's reaction seemed to give Angelo a little confidence to the point that he added a few comments about the Italian's performance during the war. This brought much laughter from all of us. With increasing confidence, he then began to make a number of funny comments about the exploits of the Italian Air Force.

About then I began to smell a rat, so wasn't surprised when he suddenly straightened up and in perfect English introduced himself as Augie DeFlorio of Grumman' Service Dept. who had come to provide a little entertainment. Everyone wildly applauded and cheered except Puraskis, who as the target for the evening wasn't amused. Thus went my first introduction to Augie, but hardly my last.

Over the years, we used Augie for many occasions. I quickly learned that Augie played a number of roles, the waiter for one, but more often as an Italian Air Force General. In fact, he advertised himself as The General. Although I never saw him do it, I understand that he also did a woman who would play up to the Target for the evening, ultimately accusing the Target of molesting her, the poor guy protesting his innocence. Typically, Augie would clobber the guy with her/his handbag.

On another occasion, he was said to have been invited to the Kings Point Academy to review the cadets. Apparently, he did such a good job that the people who'd brought him told him to stick with the ruse, afraid that the authorities might not appreciate the little game. So, Augie came, and left, as The General.

I only saw him bomb once. In this case, we'd brought him to D.C. to do his thing at a cocktail party as a part of the annual meeting of the AAAA, the Army Aircraft Assoc. Unfortunately, the crowd wouldn't shut up and we finally had to tell him to cool it. Never try to give a talk at a big cocktail party after it once gets going. People just won't listen.

One of Augie's better performances was when he went to Norfolk, Va. to do his thing at one of their so-called Dining Ins, a periodic formalized function common in the Navy. My son, Bart, the Public Affairs officer at the time, knew of Augie and asked if we might provide his services for the upcoming function. So, Augie proceeded to Norfolk to meet with Bart and plan for his role in the event. He stayed with Bart, and between them, cooked up the scenario that they would use. They decided that rather than use the more typical Italian General, they would introduce him as so and so, the head of Agusta, or one of the Italian aircraft companies. Bart then gave him thumbnail sketches of some of the dinner attendees, particularly the other foreign nationals who would be attending. In deference to the sensibilities of the Italian naval officer, they decided to tell him about the gag. Also, I might add, was the C.O. of the Air Station, obviously a wise move. No one else knew who Augie really was.

Came the big night, with everyone showing up in their finest. As usual, the festivities began with the obligatory cocktail party, with Augie mingling and being introduced as Senor Garibaldi, or whatever name he was using. By the end of the cocktail hour, most of the attendees were aware of the funny Italian gentleman. At the appropriate time during the dinner, Augie was introduced as the Italian aircraft executive who was in the area on business and had graciously accepted an invitation to address the august group. As usual, Augie began playing it straight, sucking everyone in to the sham, then throwing out a zinger here and there, usually at the expense of one of the guests. Naturally, being largely a young, fun loving group, the audience ate it up. Augie's act almost always worked since his approach was believable. When the audience begins to laugh at his comments, it seems to encourage him to make more and usually more outrageous statements.. He did it so well that he seemed completely legit. Then, just about the time that you began to wonder, he would switch to perfect English and Augie DeFlorio.

Augie was a big success at the Dining In, everyone agreeing that he made it the best they'd had. Grumman supported Augie's activities since he provided excellent PR at minimal cost. When not performing as The General, Augie had a regular job in the service department.

After retiring, Augie, not surprisingly, made The General act his full time job. When I last heard of him, he was living in upstate New York and advertising his talents to all. Somehow, it seems that an Italian accent just naturally cracks people up and can be used in all sorts of situations Augie has parlayed his talent into a whole career of entertaining people.

I almost forgot to mention one of Augie's tricks as a waiter. He'd wander around the room during a cocktail party with two small bowls, one with shrimp and the other filled with cocktail sauce. Usually by this time he appeared a little drunk, rather disheveled and usually with cocktail sauce smeared all over his white jacket. He'd walk up to the victim, hold up the bowl of shrimp and after the victim took one, would hold up the bowl of cocktail sauce. As the victim sought to dip the shrimp, Augie would turn as if looking somewhere else, then raise the bowl of sauce, immersing the victim's shrimp as well as his fingers and in some cases his whole hand. Augie was then all apologies, then seeking to help clean off the victim and making even more of a mess. It never failed to create an uproar. At the retirement party for Col. Nielsen, the Mohawk program manager, Augie went after Bart House, a not too popular Dept. of Army civilian that Nielsen had been courting. After Augie got House, Nielsen came over to me in a rage telling me that I had to do something, that the fool waiter had gotten sauce all over House. At the appropriate time we introduced the waiter as Augie of Grumman's service dept. House wasn't particularly amused, but everyone else, including Nielsen, thought it was hysterical. As a sidelight, House thereafter came to work for Grumman at the behest of Tom Cheatham, another Dept. of Army civilian who had also come to work for Grumman. Significantly, neither House nor Cheatham lasted very long and left after a short time.

Benson place

When I was born in 1920, my mother, father and sister, Elvia, were living in an apartment on Elm St. in downtown Westfield, N.J. A year or so later, my father began the construction of a house on Benson Place, a mile or so north of the center of town. Benson place was essentially the northern limit of the built-up part of town. Beyond the street were fields and woods which stretched for a mile or two to Gallows Hill road which roughly paralleled Benson Place.

Our house was located on the south side of the street, one of six at that time. There was one house directly across the street owned by a Canadian, Riley Castleman, who also owned a large tract of land behind his house and extending a quarter mile or so along Benson Place. East of Castleman's property was the home of Mrs. Brewer, said to date back to the 1700s. West of Castleman's property and two or three hundred yards from our place was another old farmhouse, the home of the Ganzels, with a large barn out back.

I can actually remember the first time I saw the new house. For whatever reason, I was impressed with the newel post at the foot of the stairs and ran over to put my arms around it. I never forgot my first meeting with the newel post! Since I was very young, the house on Benson Place was really out in the country to me. The fields seemed to

stretch on forever. The woods in the northeast corner were a veritable forest.. Later on , I found that there had been a .horse race track a mile or so behind Ganzel's farmhouse. Largely overgrown, the shape of the track was still discernible. There had obviously been a road into the track from Benson Place which was gone, but rows of trees on either side were still there and quite large.

At an early time, the barn behind Ganzel's farmhouse became infamous when Bud Duffy, the boy next door, fell while climbing in the barn and was killed. I went into the barn on several occasions and remember it well. It had been abandoned for some time and ultimately was tom down. The Ganzels moved away at some point, at which time the house was moved about 500 feet to a new location on Salter Place which ran into Benson Place just past our house; then becoming the very charming home of the Beckers.

Mr. Castleman across the street was very fascinating to me. He was much into sports and had been the captain of the Toronto Maple Leafs hockey team , probably around 1910. I was in the New York Athletic Club years later and found a picture of the team on the wall, in full regalia, with Riley in the center as captain. When I knew him, he was divorced, his former wife living in Jersey City with their son Donald, who was my age. Like most divorced fathers, he did everything he could to dote on his son, who he only saw about one weekend a month. He created a playground in the backyard with swings, rings, a seesaw and fancy slide which produced a ride of about 40 feet on a small wheeled cart. . Mr. Castleman also had a large shed in which he kept a Ford tractor and all kinds of farm tools. There was also a smaller shed which housed additional tools.. Fortunately, it was right next to a large cherry tree which enabled us to climb up the tree and get on the roof from which vantage we could fend off attacks from other neighborhood kids. Despite the fact that Donald wasn't there aloe, Mr. Castleman let us use all of the facilities any time we wanted- which was almost all the time About a quarter of a mile behind the house on the western side of the property was a pond, the scene of all kinds of activities that only a pond can provide. I loved it. the northeastern corner of the property was heavily wooded with predominately birch trees, aptly referred to as the birch bark woods. The boy scouts had built a small lodge in one corner and a number of paths meandered through the woods. To me , it was really magical, something like Sherwood Forest. Walking through it when I was very young was kind of scary, but exciting. Walking all the way back to Gallows Hill Road was a real adventure, as was walking to the old racetrack.

Somewhat later, Mr. Castleman created another pond behind the shed and brought in some ducks. He enclosed the whole thing in a wire fence, I guess to try to keep the ducks from getting away. Unfortunately, Our Eskimo dog, Moose, got in one day and killed most of the ducks. All hell to pay. In the '30s, Mr. Castleman created an archery range in the field behind the playground. For a time, we all became very interested in archery, using all of Mr. Castleman's equipment. .In addition to his extensive property on Benson Place, Mr. Castleman also had a cabin at Lake Hopatcong in northern New Jersey. We also spent a good deal of time there, both in the winter and summer. He had a beautiful Thistle sailboat as well as a canoe and rowboat. For the winter, he had two ice boats, one very nice large one that he built in his basement and a small one that he would let Donald and I sail alone. He also had a skate sail that I often used. In short, Mr. Castleman provided a great deal of enjoyment as I was growing up. In retrospect, he was a very unselfish person who was happy to have young people around as company for his son during his periodic visits.

In the late '20s, some developer put in a street across from us and about 300 feet west of our place. Named Harding Place, it was always referred to as The New Street. The developer then built about a dozen Spanish style stucco houses, known henceforth as The Spanish Houses. All the children that moved in were typically referred to as the New Street Kids.. About the same time or perhaps a little before, another contractor built three brick houses across the street between Castleman's and Harding Street. The house next to Castleman's was soon occupied by the Prey family and later MacKinley Kantor, the writer. The Beacherers moved in next to the Preys with a boy, Frank, my age and a girl, Betty, my sister's age. . Then another family moved in on the corner, the Browsers. They brought four kids, Billy about my age and three younger girls, Barbara, Betty and Dorothy. The families on the New Street had about ten kids. Somehow, the Benson Place kids and the New Street kids soon became arch enemies with stones becoming the weapon of choice I became quite accurate with my stone throwing, better than the New Street Kids. We became very adept at avoiding the stones, but you had to be very alert. I lost sight of one once and got it in my forehead. I still have the scar.

A year or so after moving into our house, my father built another one next door between ours and the Duffy`s which was soon occupied by the Barr family, with a daughter, Harriet, my sister's age. There were no children in the three houses to our left, all being older people.

Shortly after building the house on The New Street, the developer dug two more holes for foundations around the corner on Benson, but must have gone broke since the houses were never built, with the two big holes remaining for many years.

They soon filled with water and became yet another playground for us, with frogs, tadpoles and other aquatic life to interest us. They probably represented a hazard to small children and would have had to be filled in or fenced in today. But we didn't know any better and played around them happily for years with no problems to my knowledge.

Then there was the brook. The property behind our house dropped away to a brook about 100 feet behind the house. While there were normally only a few inches of water in it, there could be several feet after very heavy rains. Thus the water level was typically about five feet below the surrounding ground. Obviously, another place to play. As I got older, the thing to do was to run and jump over the brook, a jump of eight or ten feet in some places. Probably about 1930, the town decided to replace the brook with a large storm sewer, the pipes they put in being about five feet in diameter. As you might imagine it was quite a project with heavy equipment in our backyard for weeks at a time. As it was being done, the pipes became another playground, enabling us to walk or run hundreds of feet in the pipe. My last recollection was that it ended in the brook a half mile or so down the road in Garwood. After the work was completed, the town, leveled and seeded the area over the pipe, making the property more useful.

The street behind us was Chestnut Street which intersected Benson Place a couple of blocks east of our house. This formed a small, block long park with a Civil War cannon in the center, a very large cannon with a bore of about six inches. I was intrigued with the cannon and played on it often. It was very fat and must have weighed a ton or more. Where Salter Place intersected Benson Place just west of our house was another another triangular shaped park which we often used to play ball.

All in all, Benson Place was a great place in which to grow up. There were all kinds of very interesting places in which to play and a number of children about my age to play with. A combination that was hard to beat. As we all grew older, Mr. Castleman's property again provided an ideal facility for playing football. Every child should have a neighbor like Mr. Castleman with hundreds of acres of undeveloped property and the will to let all the kids use it.



Page last revised

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