

A P P E N D I X

Written on Dec. 7, 1942, a few miles from Oran, Algeria:

SUMMARY OF MY TRAVELS FROM NEW YORK HARBOR (9-5-42) TO ENGLAND  
AND THEN ALGERIA

Left New York harbor on board the "Queen Mary" at about 3:00 p.m., Sept. 5, 1942 (Saturday). Landed at Gourock, Scotland, (on the River Clyde) on the night of Sept. 11, 1942; immediately boarded blacked-out train. Left train on afternoon of Sept. 12 at Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, England. Went by truck three miles out of Bury to Rougham Air Base. Left Rougham on October 5, 1942 and went to RAF Horham Station about three miles from Eye, about 8 miles from Diss, 22 from Norwich, and 20 from Ipswich. (Some day after the war maybe I can locate myself!) (About the middle of October, 1942, 60 of us flew by C-47 transport to Warrington and drove "jeeps" back.) Left Horham on Tuesday night, Nov. 22, 1942 for Liverpool, by truck & train. Went on board the Derbyshire (troop transport) & sailed two days later. Went around Northern Ireland, then south. Dec. 5th we spent most of the day anchored off Gibraltar, then sailed for Algeria. I'm writing this on the evening of Dec. 7, 1942, lying in my pup tent in a field a few miles from Oran, Algeria (where we landed today).

MY "ITINERARY" AFTER LANDING IN AFRICA

Landed at Oran, Algeria, Monday, December 7, 1942.  
Caught train to Casablanca, Morocco, on Friday, Dec. 11, 1942.  
Arrived Casablanca, Sunday night, Dec. 13, 1942.  
Left Mediouna Air Base (Casablanca) on C-47, Thursday, Dec. 24, 1942.  
Spent Xmas Eve in hangar at Blida, Algeria. Landed at Youks Les Bain, Algeria, Friday, Dec. 25, 1942. (First bombing raid at Youks, Saturday, Dec. 26, 1942.)  
Moved by truck to Thelepte, Tunisia, Monday, Dec. 28, 1942.  
Moved by truck to Youks, Monday, February 15, 1943.  
Moved by truck to Canrobert, Algeria, Saturday, Feb. 20, 1943.  
Moved back to Thelepte, Saturday, April 10, 1943. (Most moved back, Mar. 30, 1943.)  
Moved to Souk el Arba, Tunisia, by British lorry (truck), Fri., Apr. 16, 1943.  
North African campaign ended Thursday, May 13, 1943.  
Went into Tunis, Friday, May 14, 1943.  
Moved to Grombalia (Soliman) in olive grove 20 - 25 miles from Tunis, Tuesday, June 1, 1943.  
Sicilian invasion started Saturday, July 10, 1943.  
Flew to Malta in C-47 on Thursday, July 22, 1943.  
Flew by C-47 to Comunali (Gela), Sicily, Thurs., Aug. 12, 1943.  
Moved by truck to Gerbini #10 (near Catania), Thurs., Aug. 19, 1943.  
Italian invasion started on Friday, Sept. 3, 1943.  
Italy surrendered on Wed., Sept. 8, 1943.  
Moved by truck & landing craft across Straits of Messina to Italy on Monday, Sept. 19, 1943.  
Got to new (temporary) base five miles from Taranto (Grottaglie), Friday, Sept. 24, 1943.

ITINERARY (continued):

Moved to Foggia (Vicenza) on Sunday, October 17, 1943.  
Moved by truck to Vesuvius, Thursday, January 13, 1944.  
The Group moved to Capodichino Airdrome (near Naples) while I was in hospital during the time that Vesuvius erupted, Mar. 22 - 25, 1944.  
Invasion of France, Tuesday, June 6, 1944.  
Flew to new base at Galeria (Rome), Monday, June 12, 1944.  
Moved by truck to Grosseto (Ombrone), Tues., June 27, 1944.  
Moved by truck to board LST for Corsica, Friday, July 7, 1944.  
Arrived at Corsica by LST on July 10, 1944, and reached base at Poretta, July 11, 1944.  
Invasion of Southern France, Aug. 15, 1944 (?).  
Flew to France, Thursday, Sept. 7, 1944.  
Flew back to Italy (Fallonica), Tuesday, Sept. 19, 1944.  
Moved by truck to Rosignano (Vada), Sunday, October 8, 1944.  
Moved to Grosseto, Wed., Dec. 6, 1944.  
Moved by truck to Pisa, Fri., Mar. 30, 1945.  
War ended in Europe, Wednesday, May 9, 1945--V-E Day.  
Moved to staging area near Pisa on Sunday, June 17, 1945.  
Boarded Liberty Ship "S.S. William Cushing" in Leghorn (Livorno) harbor, on Monday, June 25, 1945.  
Sailed for home on Tuesday, June 26, 1945.  
Landed in New York harbor on Thursday, July 12, 1945.

## ON BOARD THE QUEEN MARY

September 6, 1942:

This boat is really crowded. In fact, there's only one difference between us and sardines--sardines smell better.

I found early in the trip that there are two ways to get into your bunk--one of them doesn't scrape all the hide off your back.

At first I hated not being able to wash up often; but one morning, after finally fighting my way to the wash trough, I saw my face in the mirror. I decided that washing wasn't worth the lowering of morale that came from looking in the mirror.

There's such a variety of things to do that I can't decide what to do with myself. Shall I fight through to the rail and look at the water, or shall I crawl back into my bunk?

From my spot behind these liferafts I can see in almost any direction--if it's up.

One old sergeant in my outfit has finally been reduced to talking to himself. One of his favorite observations seems to be, "What I like about this boat is that it's not crowded."

One nice thing about our bunks--if you lie on your side, you won't stick over the edge and be in danger of being hit by equipment falling down from the bunks above. I didn't mind so much being hit in the head by that steel helmet and canteen full of water last night; but when that pair of dirty socks came down, my food almost came up. I guess that soldier had had his on as long as I have had mine.

Sept. 7, 1942, aboard the Queen Mary:

When someone asked M/Sgt. McMahon today why he didn't give his face a break by shaving it, he said, "Why should I do anything for my face? It's never done anything for me." If you could see his face, you'd know that he wasn't kidding.

Sept. 9, 1942, aboard the Queen Mary:

If you could have seen me tonight, my Love, you wouldn't have thought me a very romantic sight. The boat was rolling quite a bit while I was on guard over our Sqdn. safe, and I became rather miserable--finally up-chunking in the only thing available, my steel helmet.

Tuesday  
December 8, 1942

(Written near Oran,  
Algeria)

ABOARD THE BRITISH TROOPSHIP, "DERBYSHIRE"

When we sailed from Liverpool, England, on Nov. 24, 1942, on the "Derbyshire," we experienced the most crowded conditions it has been our lot to meet thus far in the war. Hammocks slung so close together they touched others on every side, were our bunks. Keeping clean was impossible, and at the present writing it has been nearly two weeks since I've had a bath. (We landed in Algeria on Dec. 7, 1942.)

Our boat was in a large convoy until we reached Gibraltar; then two destroyers, another troopship, and our own made the dash from the Rock to Algeria.

One night after leaving England we ran into a storm that tossed the boat around a good deal. It seemed that half the men were vomiting all night. (I was glad that I didn't.) A trail of "slime" led from our area to the deck--an unpleasant situation.

(Note added later: During the day we slung our hammocks up high so the tables below them could be used for eating and "sitting around" purposes. The food had to be carried from the ship's galley through the stinking latrine to the mess tables--an unappetizing experience.

One day in the Mediterranean a German submarine attempted to attack our little convoy, but the two destroyers scurried around, dropped depth charges, and forced the sub to surface, where it was captured. The rumor went around the ship that one torpedo went between our ship and the one behind us, although I didn't see it. At any rate, my evaluation of the British navy went up several points as a result of that experience.)

- - - - -

(Also written in Algeria on 12-8-42 about an event in England)

On the trip to Warrington (south of Liverpool) on Sunday, Oct. 18, 1942 (I believe), we were in rough weather, and the plane (C-47) was bumping around a lot. One of the boys got sick and was about to vomit when an old M/Sgt. asked him how he'd like a nice fat pork chop. That finished him off! A little pup (mascot of the plane) got sick and puked on one of the men asleep on the floor of the plane. That gave us a good laugh--perhaps a comment on the quality of our humor.

Tuesday, Dec. 8, 1942, in Algeria (near Tafar Aoui) about 24 kilometers from Oran:

It poured down rain last night, and even with our pup tents we got somewhat wet. Several fellows didn't even have tents, and they got soaked.

The ground is sticky mud today, and so much of it sticks to the shoes that everyone looks as if he had snowshoes on.

Natives are all over this temporary (I hope!) camp selling oranges and tangerines. I paid 50¢ for seven oranges, but they were nice, big navel oranges.

Most of the natives speak both French & Spanish, and I find that I can make some use of my college Spanish.

The little kids hang around, "sweating out" candy and food. One little boy stood and watched me eat hash out of a can today at dinner. His nose was running freely down to his lips. I stood it as long as I could, then gave him a piece of candy to "scram." (I couldn't finish the hash.)

After leaving the boat (Derbyshire) two days ago, we marched through a little village; then trucks picked us up and carried us through a large town out into the country to our present bivouac area. The town had very modern buildings and roads. We were much surprised. It was interesting to see people in Arab clothing and modern clothing walking through the streets. Out here where we're camped, the only people we see are natives (Arabs).

Thelepte, Tunisia  
Tuesday Afternoon  
January 20, 1943

Lessons from War

It's funny what little things it would take to bring me enjoyment after being away from the U.S. less than five months. I've learned appreciation of things I'd always taken for granted--now that I can't get them.

I'll never take a hot fudge sundae for granted again! And some good old chocolate candy!! (not that English stuff!). What I wouldn't give for a bar of Nestlé's almond and milk chocolate! When I get back, I'll never walk into a drug store without a feeling akin to reverence, or into a Kress's without thinking that here, indeed, repose the treasures of the world behind a candy counter.

I would hate to think that all this is just the first reaction to doing without the ordinary pleasures of life and that a week or two back home will see me resume the same complacent attitude of expecting and accepting these little luxuries as my natural right. (Lord, keep me appreciative!)

A soft bed and clean, white sheets, and a bath! How could I wait to mention a bath? And to think that I used to hate to bathe! What a prig I've been!

And, if I can hope for a bed again, may I humbly hope also for a wife to go with it? There was a time when I would have regarded the fact that I would have a wife as more or less a matter of course. But now I approach that desire fearfully and hopefully and with uncertainty. How dare I have the temerity to even hope for a soft bed and a soft, warm wife--and love!

Of this I'm sure--I'll never lack appreciation for life's ordinary little joys ever again. (And, Lord, make me stick to that!)

April 8, 1943  
Near Canrobert, Algeria

Men are dying--men of my outfit whom I know well--and I must stay here "policing" the area to win a blue ribbon.

Yesterday on a mission Capt. Sharpless's ship was shot down by M.E.'s. Capt. Sharpless & Roarke, a new gunner, were killed. Breining's body was not found in or around the plane; so we have the hope that he bailed out and is either a prisoner or is making his way back somehow.

Lt. Artz's plane was riddled by flak and E.A. Sheppard was hit twice, though not fatally. When starting to land, Lt. Artz couldn't get his wheels down (the hydraulic was shot out), and he ordered the gunners to hit the silk. Sheppard did and landed O.K. Stankiewicz preferred to chance a crash-landing. As it happened, Lt. Artz finally was able to pump his wheels down by hand and made a beautiful landing.

Lt. Smith went into a steep dive (420 mph!) to escape some M.E.'s, and Garrison and Kenneth Shepard thought he was crashing. They called on the inter-phone; but as Lt. Smith was trying to answer that everything was all right, the inter-phone went out. The two boys bailed out, but Shep's chute didn't open in time. He was a good kid. Elmer (Garrison) landed O.K., and I'm awfully glad. He's a swell fellow.

That's what's going on at Thelepte while we sit here doing nothing for the war effort but picking up paper in the area, in response to orders from on high. We may lose the war or at least lose a lot of our friends, but we'll have the cleanest area! That is extremely important just now, you see.

I'm doing Operations paper work here that I could do just as easily up there. Besides that I could load bombs up there if they needed men for that in a hurry (and five armament men have just been knocked off duty by FW-190's.) Poor Wenham got killed by the bombing. Gallahan was seriously wounded. I hope he makes out O.K. Sturgis was wounded in the leg, Statts on the scalp, and Laborde in the hand or finger. And here I am. (Of course, I can always do my bit to win the blue ribbon here!)

Don't misunderstand. I'm not peeved--I'm just mad as hell!!

(Note: Two days after the above out-pouring, I was moved back to Thelepte. But that eleven-day interval from the time most of the Sqdn. had moved back to Thelepte and the time I was allowed to--with all that was happening at Thelepte--was one of the most frustrating periods of the war for me.)

Monday, May 10, 1943, Souk el Arba, Tunisia

A train load of German prisoners came through town this morning. They were probably some of those which surrendered yesterday in the Bizerte area after one of our raids (30,000 of them surrendered).

Hank Pollock, our mess sergeant, who speaks German, went down to the train and talked with them. This is the dialogue (roughly) which was carried on between Hank and some of the Nazis:

German: "Where are we being taken?"

Hank: "I don't know--perhaps to Casablanca."

German: "You know that we hold Casablanca. You may beat us in Tunisia, but you'll never drive us out of Constantine or Casablanca."

Hank: "Casablanca is where we started our drive in North Africa, and we've taken all of it from there to Tunis. I landed at Casablanca myself several months ago."

German: "American propaganda! Nothing but American propaganda! But do you think we'll be taken to England or Canada?"

Hank: "I don't know. But why do you want to go to Canada?"

German: "Because we'll be safe there for the rest of the war."

Hank: "Well, wherever you go you'll have to work."

German (showing his arm muscles): "That's all right; we'll work."

Hank: "What do you think of our airplanes?"

German: "Oh, those Flying Fortresses (B-17's) and Bostons (A-20's) have done us terrible damage! Those Fortresses really carry a lot of bombs."

Hank: "What do you think about the war in Russia?"

German: "The Russians will collapse in three months."

Hank: "The Allies will be in Berlin before the year's out!"

German: "You're a jackass for even thinking such a thing!"

Hank: "The Russians are pushing you farther back all the time."

German: "Nothing but some more American propaganda."

. . . .and so on and on. . . .

D. Tolle  
(recorded from what  
Hank told me)

## T U N I S

May 14-16, 1943

On Friday, May 14, 1943, one of our pilots asked if I wanted to go to Tunis with him, as he was taking his gunners for a day off to see the sights and had room for three other people. Naturally I wanted to go. So the six of us started early in the morning in a command car.

Approaching Beja, a small town a few miles from Souk el Arba, from the top of a hill going down into a valley we saw one of the loveliest sights of the whole trip. Of course, the closer we got the less different it seemed from any other African town, but from the distance it presented a picturesque setting which might have been a scene from a Fitzpatrick Traveltalk. "Round-boy" Adams, one of the best-liked boys in the Squadron, is buried in the American Cemetery at Beja.

As we went through the innocent-looking village of Massicault, I thought of Capt. Willard who had a particular dislike for the place because of the heavy flak the Germans put into the air from there. That was where Capt. Gualtiere's plane was hit so badly that he had to crash-land near Le Kef, killing the British photographer riding in the rear with the RCAF gunner. The only man who wasn't wounded on that trip was the British bombardier-navigator riding in the most vulnerable spot on the plane--the glass nose.

The road on in to Tunis gave plentiful evidence of the terrific battles that had raged around the different hills the Germans had attempted to hold only a few days before. In fact, from the Medjez el Bab area on to Tunis, wrecked vehicles--German, Italian, British, and American--tanks (mostly American light tanks--10 or 15 tons) blasted to bits by artillery and by the 60-ton Mark VI of the Germans, tremendous piles of expended ammunition boxes and cans, bomb craters and shellholes--all of these mutely told a story of death. Hospital tents covering acres of land showed where the fortunate--and unfortunate--living lay. Silent, wooden crosses, some with the black cross of Germany, some painted white, some of bare, unpainted wood, told the story of those who had died for their ideals--or the lack of them. Row upon row of these quiet symbols of death forced their message upon all passers-by.

Farther on, barbed wire entanglements surrounded the thousands of captured Germans and Italians. Few guards were in evidence, but escape was not what these men wanted. Most of them--Italians and Germans--were glad they were through with fighting and that now they would be comparatively well fed and safe till the war is over.

All of the villages along the way showed destroyed or at least pock-marked buildings on all sides, giving evidence of the brutal power of our bombs. Bridges were often blown up; and hastily-built, temporary drive-ways over them have to serve till they can be more permanently replaced.

As soon as we reached Tunis and drove around to locate the center of town, we went on out to the airdrome (El Aouina) a few miles from the city proper. There we saw dozens of German and Italian planes destroyed by our bombs a few days before. The Nazi swastika looked rather forlorn on the dragging tails of planes that would never carry them again. Hundreds of postcards and letters which had never reached their intended Italian recipients were blowing about the landing ground, giving another of the many pathetic sides of war. I picked up some of these letters as souvenirs, but I felt rather guilty doing it.

(Trip to Tunis, continued:)

Back in town, we separated to wander about as we pleased till about four o'clock, when we met again where the command car was parked. There I was informed that the others, except one, had plans to be in Mateur for the night; so the choice for the other two of us was to either stay in Tunis or--stay in Tunis. We stayed in Tunis.

The Hotel Nacional on the Rue de Holland was the only place we could find rooms for the night, and we each got a room (50 francs each), because the other guy intended to have a companion (female) for the night. Thinking of Mary Alice, I couldn't talk myself into doing that (even in my delicate sexual condition); so I spent the night alone in a double bed with one blanket which was not air-tight. Did I say alone? Several assorted varieties of mosquitoes kept me from getting too lonesome.

(Incidentally, there were no lights, no water, and no food available at this hostelry which was managed (?) by a native in a sport coat and draped trousers.)

In the morning, my hotel-mate (who never had lured a woman into his room) and I went to the Twelfth Air Force Base and got a piece of bread and butter and a cup of synthetic coffee which served as breakfast. Then we roamed the streets until time to meet the others at 11:00 a.m. In our wanderings we saw some American nurses dressed in coveralls; so I went up to two of them and asked them to please speak to me in English. They did; and I was very much pleased to hear both of them speak with a good Georgia accent. We showed them where they could buy some postcards of Tunis, and then we parted because they had to catch their truck back to Mateur.

After haunting our agreed-upon meeting place for several hours, we decided that our transportation had forsaken us. By this time I was beginning to have visions of a sudden and complete reduction in rank upon my return to camp, and my feelings for one each 97th pilot were far from kindly. I had no desire whatsoever to start hitch-hiking back and get stranded in the middle of nowhere at night. So. . . we arranged for another night at the Hotel Nacional.

I met Junior on the street, and he, too, was lost (with Webber) from his mode of transportation (Hypo Joe, the Photo jeep). So we all got rooms at the Hotel Nacional. Then we began wandering in earnest about the streets of Tunis. Coming upon a particularly infeasible-looking section of the city, we started down one of the narrow, winding, ill-smelling alley-ways to see what sort of condition the people lived in. Just as we started in, we met two British soldiers staggering out, evidently in somewhat of a drunken condition. One of them asked us what day it was, and when we told him, he said, "My God! It took us four days to find our way out of there!" We went on with slightly less-eager feet.

Filth and stench and a mass of winding alleys met us on every hand; and as dusk began to settle upon us, we began our return trip back through the throngs of dirty but pretty little French, Italian, Arab, and mongrel children who clung to us with cries of "Bonbon! Bonbon! American camarade!" Having already given away all of our gum and candy, we could only answer, "Fini; fini." And so into fresh air and light again.

(Trip to Tunis, ended:)

While we were resting on cathedral steps, a British soldier came up and sold Junior an Italian automatic for 1000 francs, thereby making a neat profit of 1000 francs. But it will make a nice souvenir for after the war--even for \$20.

As we rounded a corner near our hotel, an old, distinguished-looking, well-dressed French gentleman saluted us, shook our respective hands and asked for a cigarette. He was given three or four, and he went into raptures--finally taking his leave with another handshake, a kiss on the left cheek of each of us, and a final salute.

We spent the night, arose, ate (?), and departed--all saying, "I'm glad I saw Tunis, but I'm coming back no more." We got a ride up to our very tents in a command car driven by an Ordnance T/Sgt. and a Captain, who were on their way back to Algiers.

Tunie, fini.

-----