A Brief Story of My Air Corp Experiences
WWII-1942 thru 1945
Harry Hughes

This is a brief outline of my Army Air Corps experiences; and as a ground crew member of the 307th bomb group, 13th A. A. F., in the Southwest Pacific, WWII.

The notes relate to accounts in the stories, Up the Slot and We'll Say Goodbye, in my collection; and from my personal experiences.

I think that it was 1940 when Congress passed the Draft Registration law. Every male of certain ages was required to register. Local voting facilities were designated as registration locations. In Pleasant Valley Township we registered in the idle Pleasant Hill schoolhouse and the Township Boards were the draft registration supervisors. A County Board then classified those as eligible, or not, to be drafted. Those physically limited, defense industry employees or head-of-family were given certain deferments. Others were called (I think) by drawing at random (lottery), depending on quotas required.

On December 7, 1941, at the farm and family home of my parents, Keith and Beulah Hughes, in western Saline County, we heard, on the radio, the report of "Pearl Harbor". We had little knowledge of it as a military base in Hawaii; but understood that it had suffered a major loss from the Japanese attack.

The next day President Roosevelt gave his speech to Congress declaring war on Japan and Germany. He spoke of "The Day of Infamy". Up till then, though prepared, the U. S. was holding hope that it could stay out of the war.

I had attended Kansas State at Manhattan taking an agricultural course for one and one-half years (3 semesters) and it was required that all men students take four semesters of Basic R. O. T. C. (Reserve Officers Training Corp). Classes included study of Military operations, maps, Military maneuvers, and Military policies and procedures. This was in 1939 and 1940 but I had no interpretation that the U. S. would be in the war. Another part of the training was "Close order drill" in which units marched and maneuvered by certain commands, in cadence. That is to the 1,2,3,4, 1,2,3,4 count. As I recall I had trouble doing "left turns" and "to the rear" commands in cadence and spent some time in the awkward squads.

The 307th was born on paper, January, 1942. I had not yet joined the Service. The group was activated, April, 1942.

After the Pearl Harbor attack I believed that it would be a short time before I was drafted. I decided to enlist in the Army Air Corp. (not having the least idea of possible duty assignments). I enlisted in July, 1942 with a recruiting Sergeant located in the old Salina City Hall at the S. W. corner of 5th and Ash streets.

I was told that I would be sent to Ft. Leavenworth soon with a small group of recruits.

We left Salina by train in the first week of August with one person carrying our enlistment papers. When we reached Kansas City, we went to a U. S. O. Center (a meeting center for soldiers between trains) and waited for a truck to take us to Ft. Leavenworth induction center about 30 miles away.

I don't remember details but I am sure we checked out bedding and foot lockers and I spent the first night of our experience on one of Uncle Sams bunk beds.

First combat crews of the 307th were organized at Ephrata, WA, Aug. 1942. I was inducted into the Service in Aug., 1942, the month of my 23rd birthday, at Fort Leavenworth, KS. This was eight months after "Pearl Harbor".

The week or two at Ft. Leavenworth was taken up with physical exams, knowledge exams, aptitude exams, clothing issue and finally "swearing in". We were beginning to learn of "falling in", forming in the street for roll call when a whistle or other signal was given. Yes, they had the gruffest Drill Sergeants to initiate us. Then there was the G. I. Haircut (I've kept mine all of these years). And there was army mess hall, and a movie theater for 25 cents.

Also, a most significant function was issuing each of us a serial number and two "dog tags", metal identification tags with our names and serial numbers stamped on to be attached to a string or chain and worn around our necks. If a casualty, one stayed with the body and the other was forwarded for official records. We were to have our serial numbers memorized if any Officer asked us to repeat. This caused it to be burned in our memory forever. Mine was 17058803. Today I can't remember my Social Security number without looking at the card.

The 307th combat crew training was in Sioux City, IA. Aug.-Sept., 1942. At the some time I was taken from Fort Leavenworth to Sheppard Field, Wichita Falls, TX for basic training. My family came for a weekend to visit me there.

Then in 1942, after completing my basic training at Sheppard Field I was actually given the job of drill instructor while waiting a month for my transfer to Lowry.

Learning that I was being assigned to bombsight maintenance training meant very little to me. I had very little insight into kinds of Military aircraft and had no knowledge of the role of the bombsight.

On our railroad trip from Sheppard Field to Lowry Field, we stopped in Pueblo for our evening meal at the Harvey House Restaurant located at the railroad station. I recalled my Mother had told of my Grandfather, Mart Smith working at Harvey Houses in the 1880's, earning a trip to CO. They were associated with the Santa Fe railroad. A movie, "Harvey Girls" gave them fame.

New B-24's were assigned to the 307th, with machine guns and Norden bombsights in Oct. 1942. I was beginning bombsight maintenance training at Lowry Field, Denver, CO. The B-24's were replacing the B17 Bombers.

At Lowry, our first training was about the theory of aerial bombing. We learned that the accuracy of bombing depended on the speed of the aircraft, its altitude, and types of bombs. We learned that the role of the bombardier was to factor all of these conditions into the bombsight so as to release the bombs at the proper time. The heart of the bombsight was a gyroscope that provided stability so that the plane could remain on course by automatic pilot.

We were not allowed to take away notes from the classroom (for barracks study). Then we were given practice on the maintenance of the bombsight. These classes were held in a solid concrete classroom and we were issued restricted passes.

The flight crews took off for Hawaii in Oct. 1942, while I continued training at Lowry Field. They were stationed for a while in Hawaii and made an initial raid on Wake Island in Dec., 1942.

I visited the Cliff and Greta Richner family (cousin of Dad) on Christmas Day, 1942. They lived in a rural area west of Denver and I rode a street car there. At another time, a couple of class friends and I took a train ride west from Denver, passing through Moffitt Tunnel to the Winter Park Ski area. We returned to Denver by bus, over Berthoud Pass and I recall the snow was piled to eye level on both sides of the road.

At Lowry, you could catch the street car at the main gate, and ride west on Colfax to Downtown Denver. (If you had a pass)

I had known of the Denver Western Livestock Show, much like the Kansas City American Royal Show. In January, on a day off, I rode street cars to the stockyards and visited the displays of livestock.

I was nearing completion of Lowry training in Feb., 1943 and two advance squadrons (307th and 424th) left from Hawaii for the S. W. Pacific (Espirito Santos, New Hebrides) and became active in the Guadalcanal Campaign in the Solomon Islands.

I was transferred to Jefferson Barracks, St. Louis, MO, for overseas training (Feb., 1943). I was given a week of home leave. At Denver, Dad had come by train for a visit thinking I might be shipped overseas from there.

Our overseas training at Jefferson Barracks was not near as intense as that of groups of combat troops (infantry and Marines). I do recall that we had gas mask practice where we went into a gas filled building (tear gas ?) with our masks on (and felt comfortable). Then they gave the instruction to remove them; and we headed for the door fast, coughing with eyes burning.

We also did practice with dummy hand grenades. By the numbers we grasped the grenade in the right hand, held down on the trigger lever. (2) pulled safety pin with left hand (keeping right hand on trigger lever). (3) step forward like throwing a ball and throwing the grenade and at the same time falling to the ground. Fortunately, we did not need the gas mask or hand grenades overseas.

While it is easy now, to account for my army time assignments and stations, at the time there was always the anticipation of the next move or location where I would be sent. When it was time for overseas shipment from Jefferson Barracks, the big question was: Are we being sent to the Pacific Theatre or the European Theatre? It was only as we saw our train heading west that we thought we were headed for the Pacific Theatre. Sometimes, I think that the assignments depended on your name in the alphabet or that an X number of troops were needed at particular time.

We left Jefferson Barracks, not knowing where we were going, but when I woke up the next morning, I realized that the train was going through Gypsum, Kansas. I looked across the area to see Coronado Heights and shortly we passed through Lindsborg, Kansas. I knew that it would be a while before I saw that view again. We were on the Missouri Pacific Railroad. At night we kept our window blinds closed. Our route took us to Pueblo, Colorado and west through the Royal Gorge. I did k. p. duty in a converted box car from Grand Junction, Colorado, to Salt Lake City, Utah.

It's worthy to note that most of the trains were still pulled by steam locomotives during the war; and were replaced by "Diesels" after the war.

I recall that, after crossing the Sierra's in early Spring on our trip from Jefferson Barracks, we dropped from the coolness of the mountains into the warm, moist weather of the Sacramento Valley. Camp Stoneman was an embarkation-debarkation center to and from overseas. When you left there you were on your way overseas. The process was a river boat ride down the Sacramento River to a dock in San Francisco where we immediately boarded ship, and with in a few hours, we were leaving San Francisco Bay and passing under the Golden Gate Bridge.

We were not told where we were going but the "rumors began to fly" that we were going to Hawaii. Our ship trip and week or so on Oahu included April and May. I did not see Pearl Harbor but did have leave to visit Honolulu and Waikiki Beach.

After several days aboard ship from San Francisco, word spread on deck that Diamond Head could be seen on the horizon. We docked at a location away from Pearl Harbor and were taken to Schofield Barracks, a prominent military facility. It was more like a college campus, permanent buildings, cafeteria and dining hall, sleeping dormitory and leisure facilities. There were signs on the pavement surrounding that it had been shelled during Pearl Harbor Day.

A heifer calf had been born to my 4-H Club dairy heifer in the 1930's. She became one of our milk cows. Her name was Pearl. In a letter, I asked how Golden Oak Fern's calf was doing. From that the family was to know that I was at "Pearl" Harbor. Wasn't that clever?

We spent a week or two on Oahu Island; and from Schofield we were transported across the island to a much more rustic camp. We traveled on a narrow gauge train in open flatcars with short sides. We traveled through many pineapple fields. I don't recall that we were told that we were with our permanent unit, but the information wouldn't have had meaning, anyhow.

We were given leave of a day to go to Honolulu, I went with three or four friends (possibly hut mates). We visited a pineapple processing and cannery plant. At Waikiki you could look up at Diamond Head. There was a "blackout" at night, all street lights were turned off and all windows were covered.

We were moved (you weren't really aware of who and how many involved) to another hillside camp on the other side of Diamond Head and looked down on the surf crashing ashore.

It occurs to me that in the service, you became conditioned that places, activities and fellow soldiers were "generic". You were at "a place", doing an "assigned activity" and were part of many "changing groups". It was the thing you did until they told you that you could go home.

I don't remember the details, but in a few days we were loaded on a ship to "who knows where?"

On our boat (ship) ride from Hawaii to the S. W. Pacific, we made a one-day stop at Pago Pago Harbor in the Samoan Islands. It was located at one of three islands that were large enough to be significant, and under the control of the U. S. I have learned since then, that the island including Pago Pago was only 54 square miles in size, about the size of two townships in Saline County.

The dock workers were brown skinned and wore sarongs. We were allowed to leave ship for a few hours, to walk around the border of the harbor.

Around the shore, we saw small open side homes with walking docks leading out into the water, they reached to their "bathrooms".

The Pacific map shows that the Samoans were about 2200 miles S. W. of Honolulu and maybe 1500 miles E. of the Hebrides, our destination. This route appeared to be South and East of the Pacific war zone.

This was in June, 1943. We crossed both the Equator and the International date line on that trip. As I recall there was some kind of Initiation Ceremony, during both events aboard ship.

This was known at the Southwest Pacific Theatre. After arriving, we, the ground crew took part in building a personnel campsite. I then knew I was a member of the 372nd Bomb Squadron. Lumber had been sent to build tent floors, dining hall and Officer quarters. The first war sounds I heard were chainsaws-they were used around the clock to saw foundation logs from coconut trees.

Two men (Tech. Sgt. James A Kelly, Philadelphia, and Sgt. Paul Jackson, Kentucky) made up the Bombsight and Auto Pilot Section as part of the Armament Department-having come with the squadron from its founding-so I was used many times thereafter to construct forward campsites. Thereafter they were known as the "old men" and we were known as the "new men". It seems, as I recall, that Capt. Logan was in charge of the Armament Dept.

In July, 1943, I was sent with our ground crews (371st and 372nd) to Guadalcanal to allow rest leave for the other two squadrons to return to Espirito. The airfields at Guadalcanal had been secured at that time. We were flown in one of the B-24's. After a month or so we were moved back to Esprito Santos, New Hebrides Islands.

Along the road between the personnel campsite and the flight line, on Esprito Island, was a military hospital. One day, as we were traveling to the flight line, a noticeable group that appeared to be visitors were walking from the hospital. I am certain that it was a group led by Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, wearing a military womens' uniform. Records show that she was visiting that military area at that time.

In Jan., 1944, I was sent with a forward crew to establish a camp at Munda Point, New Georgia Island. I think that time we flew in a C47 cargo plane. Our bombers and landing troops had secured the field previously held by the Japanese.

In April and May, 1944 we were transferred to Los Negros, Admiralty Islands. Our combat crews continued to fly missions to many parts of the area. All that time, the 307th received a Presidential Citation for it destruction of Japanese held Truk Island.

Of interest, to me, was that "Sabu, The Elephant Boy" was a combat gunner in our unit. To those unfamiliar, he was of East Indian heritage and had been in a movie in the 30's, by that name. I recall, one day seeing him climbing into a truck after returning from a mission, our Mother had taken us to see the movie in the 1930's.

Because of their long flight missions the 307th became known as "The Long Rangers". The four squadrons operated in pairs (371st and 372nd; 424th and 370th) and would leap frog each other from one base to another.

Overseas, we were issued Carbine Rifles but they were preserved with petroleum jelly to prevent rust; and it would have taken some time to get them ready for firing.

As the war continued, my family and the Salina and Saline County community were deeply involved. While I sent reassuring letters of my well being, I'm sure that my family lived every day thinking of the nature of war.

Rationing and price control laws affected all of home activity. Suppliers were not allowed to raise prices because of shortages. Farmers and others were affected by rationing of tires, gasoline, sugar, etc. Compliance was controlled by special county boards.

Salina and Saline County were directly related to the Military effort when Smoky Hill Air Base was constructed just southwest of Salina. I learned after our marriage that my wife, Leila had worked as a clerk for the Camp Phillips construction company after she attended Brown Mackie Business College in 1942. Camp Phillips, an infantry training camp was built in S. W. Saline County (see the book Camp Phillips, by Royal Oakes). Later a German Prisoner of War (P. O. W.) camp was established near Camp Phillips.

These facilities required many civilian employees, which brought a population boom to Salina; and many homeowners modified rooms and basements to accommodate Military families and civilian employees.

During my bunk time between assigned duties, I spent time reading Farm magazines that my family had sent to me. I kept a notebook of subjects read and it was full at the end of my overseas time. It has since disappeared but it served its purpose well. I also spent much time writing letters.

An important item of personal experience was the V letter. It was a means for cutting down on the requirement of shipping much paper mail home. The V letter was a blank form for writing letters and was postage-free. The letters were then copied on microfilm for shipping back to the states, where they were then photo copied for sending to families.

One time, I received a "care" package from my sister, Marie. It had a note on top that said "Things are not always what they seem". A small layer of popcorn was on top and the other items beneath. A friend said that he was interested in television after the war. My narrow mind thought that I would never see any of that.

We saw no established civilian settlements (other than some native villages) from June, 1943 to Sept., 1945 (2 years and 3 months), when we were taken to Manila for our return home. From Los Negros we were transferred to Wakde Island in Aug., 1944. This was to most noteworthy of our stations. It was an island 3 to 5 miles off the coast of New Guinea. I, again, was sent ahead to set up camp. The Island as "T" shaped with the top part as the landing field and flight line. The leg of the "T" was personnel campsite. It's dimensions were only a mile and one half both ways. Like most of our stations, it had previously been used by the Japanese before our combat troops and bombers destroyed them.

It previously had been (I think) a coconut grove but most trees had been destroyed. Bob Hope and his troop entertained us there and his remark was "It is great to be on this beautiful tree covered Island-one with its tops remaining."

I made contact with Bernard Walle, a cousin who was stationed at a Field Hospital on New Guinea. He visited me at Wakde by riding a landing barge that made regular trips from and to New Guinea.

I experienced no hardships, like those of the battle troops. In fact, I can say that I cannot recall that I had any bad experiences in the Service. I have said that the lives of we, the ground troops, servicing the B-24's for combat, was like civilians attached to the military service. But knowing the specific personal family backgrounds of my various associates, it can be assumed that their outlooks would have been varied. Things like army food, tent living, and other daily conditions would be the complaint of some, while I never found either that objectionable. Coming from family and farm life of the Depression and Drought of the 1930's, I considered that I was personally well provided for.

This was in strong contrast to the experience of the combat flight crews, Navy men caught in Ocean battles, and the many other foot soldiers who made disastrous beach landings in the Pacific.

I do not remember the exact times when I was given rating promotions but they would have been something like this: I remained a Private during the time in the States, before I was shipped overseas. I think the pay was $75 per month. I then think, I was given Private First Class when shipped overseas (one stripe). Early in 1944, sometime, I "was made" Corporal (2 stripes). Probably early in 1945 I was given a Sergeants rating (3 stripes). Then, at the time I was shipped home, I received a Staff Sergeants rating (3 stripes with chair rocker below). I think each promotion raised my monthly pay by about $10. At the end of my overseas time my pay was about $125 a month. I sent part of my pay home by money orders and Mom and Dad purchased about a half dozen beef cows for me.

As I recall we were paid in Dutch Guilders (their $ bills) as the Islands were property of the Dutch, including the coconut groves.

My few flights by B-24's or C47 cargo planes, while moving to new stations gave me the chance to view the Islands of various sizes. They appeared to be forest covered and were framed by coral reefs. This gave the water around the Islands a green color, while the water beyond was dark blue. They appeared miniature from the air as if placed on a table top display.

There was the concern about Malaria. We slept under mosquito netting using a hand spray to kill any mosquitoes inside. I think we took a pill called Atibrine to prevent the sickness. A special detail crew traveled by truck and sprayed an oil film on all standing water holes.

Although we experienced much rain, I did not experience a typhoon, hurricane or tsunami storm while overseas.

In Oct., 1944, General Douglas McArthur, Supreme Commander of the Pacific Theatre, had returned to the Philippines by landing at Leyte. We were transferred from Wakde Island in Nov., 1944 to Morotai Island, Halmaharc Group and remained there until the end of the war in Aug., 1945. It was our longest stay in the Pacific.

It was the only time I saw the edge of combat war. We had moved up to where the Japanese were making their last struggle; and our combat crews were hitting their primary sources of fuel, supplies and equipment.

They were making last desperate strikes on our airfield and fuel supplies. But on a couple of occasions they dropped bombs near our campsite, five miles away. In the summer of '45, they were making single plane night "nuisance" raids. They were nuisance if they didn't hit you.

I can recall one night, after the air raid siren and lights were out, we could see and hear him high above in the beam of a couple of search lights. By that time, I had my steel helmet on and was in the fox hole next to our tent.

Then within hearing distance, we could hear the "poom", "poom" of dropping bombs and there after could hear shrapnel falling through the tree tops. Our camp was not hit directly but an artillery placement along our road to the flight line was hit directly. A once in a million hit.

The planes were named "Washing Machine Charlie" because they had a certain surge to the sound of the engine.

In July and August 1945, I think we were anticipating a move to one of the Islands in the Philippines, when the atomic bombs were dropped. Word spread in camp with, probably, the same impact that Pearl Harbor was reported.

As the war progressed, there was little possibility that the enemy could gain much from the knowledge of the bombsight and our department shop was merely a wire fence enclosed structure. A functioning display of the bombsight is in the Military Aviation Museum at Pueblo, CO.

The "old men" were the first to get orders to be returned, to the states. These were based on Service Points; Time in Service, Time overseas and other. My orders came in September and a group of us were flown to an air base at Manila to wait for a ship to return us home. Our return home was, I think, non-stop to San Francisco.

Following the end of the war our planes and crews were used to bring our POW's from Japan to the Philippines.

I have said that I considered that I had not had any hardships, but recalling as I write this story I remember that I had said that if I weren't coming home, " I would have jumped overboard" from the ship bringing us. I was always, more or less sea sick, and as we went to the galley for our two meals a day, the stench of vomit and the oily smell of the ship didn't help. Trays would slide along the countertop as they were being filled, as the ship rocked in the waves. I sometimes took only an apple or an orange and got on deck above. I spent as much time on the deck as possible. Bunks below deck were built in tiers (4 or 5 high) and the only way you could get out was to roll.

I visited a doctor when I returned home and he said that I was on the edge of pneumonia.

The return trip home was almost like running a movie backwards. We passed under the Golden Gate Bridge to a dock where we transferred to a river boat taking us back up the Sacramento River to Stoneman. You weren't officially back in the States until Stoneman. The one thing I remember was that we were taken immediately to a mess hall (somelime after hours) and were given a full state-side feast. I have never been back to CA; and am startled when I retell myself that I traveled under the Golden Gate Bridge at one time.

I have no recollections of many details of my Service experiences. I don't recall whether we left Stoneman immediately after arriving to travel to Ft. Logan (Denver, CO) or if we were laid over for a day. Our return trip to CO was much the same route out and I don't remember if we were on a troop train or a regular passenger train.

At Ft. Logan we were moved quickly, I was thru the discharge process and I was able to call home about the time I was expected to arrive. I have recalled many times since that my family had not heard from me for 3 or 4 weeks and were naturally very anxious and yet for the week I was in the States, I had not contacted them (part of the concentration of being involved in my own process).

We were given railroad tickets home with travel money and I arrived at Salina in the afternoon. The family had checked the train schedules and were on hand. Probably the Brass Band got tired of waiting and had gone home. In reality I was in some what of a blur, but arriving home was an awesome experience.

One of the powerful side stories of the war was that of a pair of Grandparents, Ed and Ida Hughes, who had 8 grandsons and one grandson-in-law in the war. They were my Grandparents who had lived on a farm in N. W. Saline County for about 40 years. It was where we had all grown up attending family get-togethers and reunions in the 1920's and 1930's. During the war Grandmother was always asking members of the family, "Have you heard from _____?" Then in the spring of 1945, before the war's end, she passed away and did not get to see us return home. We all did, except Jack Yost, husband of Granddaughter Florence Walle Yost. As a Second Lt. He was killed during the Allied Invasion of Europe. He was buried overseas. Grandfather Ed passed away in 1950.

A year or two after the war, I received an offer to purchase two published history books. One, "We'll Say Goodbye" was about the 307th. The other was about the 13th Air Force. I had no interest, but my Mother ordered, anyway. Now, sixty years later, they have much meaning to me.

In 1985, I was told by my Salina friend, Larry Sams, who had been a gunner in the 307th, that there was a 307th Bomb Group Association that published newsletters and sponsored reunions. I became a member and have all of the reunion albums and newsletters from that time collected in 3 ring binders. I have never been able to attend any of the reunions.

A history book, Forgotten Fields, by Lou Thole, tells the story of abandoned training fields, and photos show concrete vaults, still standing, for the storage of the bombsight when not in use.

I understand that, following WWII, Lowry Field was used as a campus for the newly formed Air Force Academy until it could be built at Colorado Springs, CO. During a family visit to CO in about 1990 we saw a Bombsight on display at the Aviation Museum at Pueblo, CO.

My special wife, Lelia, and I wrote a short story about her brother, Howard Smith's experiences as a submarine crewman in the Pacific. It was based on his spoken accounts and copies of personal documents. Its title is A Navy Man From Kansas, and a copy is in my story collection.

During the war, my sister, Ida Mae started a scrapbook of photos and other items exchanged between me and my family. It included, not only photos from me but all those of home, family and farm. Articles were added after the war and a three-ring binder is now full of early 1940's memories.

After the war, I was able to complete the 2 ½ years at K-State; and the financial consideration had changed very much. The G. I. Bill provided for my tuition and supplies; and (I think) we were paid $75 per month for room and board. I finally graduated in 1949, 10 years after I started in 1939. See my K-State yearbooks, The Royal Purples-1940, 1947, and 1949.

When I returned to K-State in 1946, they gave me credit for the remaining semester of R. O. T. C. from my three years in the Air Corps!!

Much of the knowledge of the events of the war have been learned in the past fifty years from TV documentaries and newspaper stories. During the war, censorship kept much information from being told.

In recent years, I have prepared a short story of Glenn L Martin, who was in the forefront of developing aviation as a Military weapon. He had lived in Salina (1895-1905) as a teenager and attended school here. He had learned of the Wright Brothers and carried the dream of being part of the aviation frontier. He built his first airplane after his parents moved to CA and returned to Salina in 1911 to give a flying demonstration. He continued in the development of airplanes and founded the Martin Aviation Company in the 1930's, he developed flying boats making trips to Asia. In the war his company developed the B-26 medium bomber and his factory of 50,000 employees in Maryland produced 5000 of the "Mauraders". His name remains in the industry as Lockheed Martin.

He had visited Germany in the late 30's where Hitler willingly displayed his air force. Martin returned to report it but was ignored by Congress. The title of my story is Glenn L. Martin: His Salina Connections.

In 1993, I purchased a B-24 model kit from the Hobby Lobby store and assembled it.

In 1995, my grandson, Shane Ewing and I visited a B-24 and B-29 on display at the Salina Municipal Airport. They were on an exhibition tour sponsored by the Confederate Air Force, an aviation history organization from Midland, TX.

Bill Argyle, of Salina, a cousin of my Dad, was a pioneer pilot of Salina. He obtained a private pilot license, at age 19, in 1929 or 1930.

For a short time, in the 1930's, he managed the original Salina airport on East Crawford Street Road. And, at that time, sponsored an air show. As a teenager, I got to take a short ride in a Ford Tri-Moto airplane, one of the commercial airplanes of the 1930's.

That was my only airplane ride before the Army Air Corps. In 1997, I wrote a short story about his experiences, based on an album by his Mother, my Aunt Bertha Argyle. Its title is Bill Argyle: A Salina Aviation Pioneer.

I have not been a member of the VFW or The American Legion but have much appreciation for their promotion of veterans interests. I get inspiration while attending their ceremonies on Memorial Day and Veterans Day and attend as many as I can.

Today, documentaries are still being produced for television about WWII Battles, based on veterans' accounts of experiences in the Navy, Air Corp, Ground Troops and P. O. W.'s.

Now, sixty years later, some recollections may be dim or incorrect; while others may be as clear as if they happened yesterday.

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