

the bullets were quite brittle they frequently broke off in the gun barrel. We would dismount the gun and poke a ramrod through the barrel to clear it. Since time was always short, to give all the students a turn, I would simply lean out the waist window and poke the ramrod in the gun muzzle while the gun was in place. One day while hanging out the window my identification bracelet fell off. It was a heavy silver bracelet, which my Mother gave me. My wrist felt naked for a while.

Nuevo Laredo was across the border. It was a dirty little border town but was a favorite place to buy a steak and guacamole dinner. Later seeing how meat was handled hanging outside small shops I was glad I did not know too much.

In June, I volunteered to go overseas again if I could fly on an A-26 Attack bomber. This was a bigger version of the A-20. They had one on the field and I became familiar with the armament. No go.

In July I got a 3 day pass and decided to go to Monterey, Mexico about 150 miles south of the Rio Grande. Another fellow from a different squadron was going so we went together. The bus was a typical Mexican bus with an assortment of passengers not all people. Monterey was a pretty city and we had a pleasant vacation. On the first day we saw a couple of American ladies but did not get acquainted until the last day. They were schoolteachers from Ft. Worth. At any rate we arranged to meet them in their hotel lobby about an hour before our bus left. When it was time to leave our farewell hugs took a little too long. The taxi got to the bus station after the bus had left. No problem he said. I know how the bus goes so I will catch it. A few dollars later we returned to town and found another bus parked in front of a hotel. He was leaving in about 45 minutes so we bought tickets and got on with our bags. There was no point in sitting there wasting time on our only visit to Monterey so we took a little stroll. My buddy got back before I did and I found him waiting but the bus and my bag was gone. Being intrepid souls we soon located a train station where a train was leaving at 10:00 PM. By this time I was flat broke so my friend loaned me money for a ticket. We started to board the train and I had lost my ticket. I considered trying to slip aboard but didn't so my friend left without me.

Next morning at 5:00 AM I was back at the original bus station and on my way home. Sure enough a gorgeous 17 year old Mexican girl was my seatmate. She was going to visit her grandmother in San Antonio. Her English was little better than my Spanish but I was too beat to care whether we talked or not.

My best friend, D H Harris, was in the Navy, having enlisted at 17 while in high school. When I heard he was getting married I managed a three-day pass and headed for Muskogee. After traveling all day and night and half the next day I arrived in time for the wedding. My parents had come also and that afternoon we returned to Oklahoma City. Next morning I headed back to Laredo. That night I caught a ride with a truck going to the base in Laredo. All the highways were two lane. As we entered an S-curve under a railroad underpass the lights went out. Not knowing whether the driver had a good look at the road ahead, I opened the door and prepared to jump if we left the road. That was preferable to the oil drums stacked two high on the trailer crashing into the cab. Fortunately we stopped OK and fixed the lights.

My wildest ride ever was with a Staff Sergeant from Ft. Worth. He took passengers to pay for his trip in his 1941 DeSoto coupe. The war time speed limit was 35 MPH but the driver averaged over 80. From Ft. Worth I hitchhiked home as usual. On the return trip we stopped at a red light in Hillsboro. A young lady stopped along side. When the light turned green the race was on. It continued for 100 miles. We made almost impossible passes, just squeezing back in to miss oncoming traffic. Each time she stayed glued



Ed Lamb, 2nd from left bottom row

to our back bumper. The Good Lord must have been watching over me once again.

There was always a poker game going in the Day Room. One of the guys was a professional gambler in civilian life. He always won. Each month a week or so after payday he would rake in a pot and buy cokes for everyone. That meant he had reached his \$1000 goal. That compared to my pay with flying status of \$144. One night I was visiting another squadron and came across a crap game. It was my lucky night. I returned to my barracks with crumpled dollar bills in every pocket of my flight suit. I emptied it on my bunk. There was \$900. Next day I opened a bank account in town. No point in giving it back.

In July we began training on B-29s. They were interesting. We made several flights with fellow instructors acting as students so we could work out the best training procedures. The war ended before we could train actual students. VJ day was almost a nonevent. Someone filled six balloons with natural gas and tied a strip of toilet paper to each one and then lit the paper. When the flame reached the balloon there was a small explosion. It wasn't much of a fireworks display. Everyone listened to the radio but there was no celebration.

With the war over and flights suspended it was time to look after old Ed. Knowing how the Army Air Corps hated a vacuum I went over to the parachute packing building. This was staffed with civilians. They let me practice packing parachutes. More than that I got assigned there so I could account for my time, it also led to the only two dates I had while in Laredo - to the movies on base.

After the war, a point system was set up for discharges. It was based on time in service and time in combat. I was fairly high on the list so one day I was sent to Amarillo, Texas for discharge. On Saturday October 25, 1945, about 4:00 PM, I was free again. My grandfather was living with a son in Amherst, Texas. Since we were very close I decided to see him before heading home. That night I was catching a ride from Lubbock towards Amherst. In my only other time there, I recalled that the highway ran down Main Street. The driver had never heard of the place but I knew we would go through it. Well about 10:00 PM, I stopped at a diner in Muleshoe to get directions. It turned out that I was 20 miles past Amherst, which was 2 miles off the highway. Someone was heading back east and offered to take me back. At 11:30 PM I got out on Main Street in Amherst - not a person in sight not even any lights on. About then a man walked out of the shadows. He asked if I was Ed Lamb. He was the Marshal and was expecting me.

Monday morning my aunt drove me into Littlefield to a clothing store. I walked out a civilian with new shoes, slacks, shirts, two sport coats, and a gaudy tie called "Paint Swish." The next day I went home.