

THE EXCITEMENT OF FLYING
AND DRIVING - BY BOB KING



I KNOW THE GOOD LORD HAS
LOOKED AFTER ME, ALL MY LIFE,
BUT PARTICULARLY SO DURING
THE FOLLOWING SEVEN EVENTS:

THE 1ST EVENT, ABOUT 1965.

I WAS SERVING AS AN AIRCRAFT
MAINTENANCE OFFICER IN KITZENGEN
GERMANY, AND DOING A LOT OF TEST
FLYING AIRCRAFT IN THE LOCAL AREA,
BUT NOT DOING LONG DISTANCE FLYING.

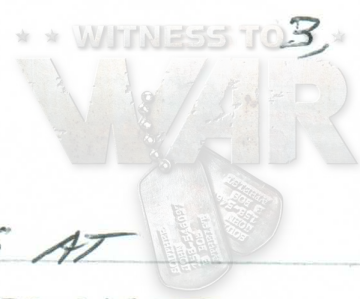
MY UNIT COMMANDER SAID ONE DAY
THAT I NEEDED SOME LONG DISTANCE
FLYING SO HE WANTED ME AND
ANOTHER PILOT TO FLY THREE
MEN (WHO WERE SOLDIERS OF THE MONTH)
TO COPENHAGEN DENMARK FOR THREE
DAYS. WE FLEW A de HAVILAND BEAVER,
A U-6. WE WERE READY TO FLY BACK
TO KITZENGEN, GERMANY WHEN
THE COPENHAGEN CONTROL TOWER
SAID HE COULD NOT RELEASE US FOR
TAKEOFF BECAUSE OUR RADIO WAS
CUTTING OUT. AFTER ABOUT THIRTY
MINUTES OUR RADIO WAS OK, AND WE
TOOK OFF. WE WERE SOON FLYING
IN THE CLOUDS, ON INSTRUMENTS.



WE WERE IN THE ADIZ,
(AIR DEFENSE ZONE) BETWEEN
GERMANY AND RUSSIA, WE
STARTED TO PICK UP ICE ON THE
AIRCRAFT, AND SOON AFTER THAT,
THE ICE BROKE THE ANTENNA
THAT WE WERE NAVIGATING ON.
I RADIOED THE RHINE-MAIN CONTROL
TOWER AND TOLD HIM THAT THE
ANTENNA HAD BROKEN. HE TOLD
US TO TURN 90° TO THE RIGHT (THE WEST),
SO THAT WE WOULDN'T FLY INTO
RUSSIA,

BECAUSE OF BEING DELAYED IN
TAKING OFF FROM COPENHAGEN,
AND THE CHANGE IN THE DIRECTION
AND LENGTH OF OUR FLIGHT, WE
BECAME CONCERNED THAT WE
MIGHT NOT HAVE ENOUGH FUEL
TO GET TO THE AIRFIELD THAT
THEY WERE DIRECTING US TO.

I TOLD THE CREW TO PUT ON
THEIR PARACHUTES, IN CASE WE
HAD TO JUMP. WE WERE STILL
IN THE CLOUDS AND THE WEATHER
WAS BAD. THE RHINE-MAIN CONTROL
TOWER TOLD US TO START DESCENDING
OUR AIRCRAFT, AND WE DID SO.



WE BROKE OUT OF THE CLOUDS AT ABOUT 300 FEET HIGH, AND STRAIGHT AHEAD WAS THE AIRFIELD THAT THEY WERE DIRECTING US TO. WE MADE A SAFE LANDING, AND ALL IS WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

A OLD FRIEND OF MINE FLEW INTO THE AIRFIELD IN A TWIN ENGINE, L-23 AIRCRAFT AND FLEW US ALL BACK TO OUR BASE IN KITZINGEN, GERMANY. THE NEXT DAY, THE WEATHER WAS MUCH BETTER, SO WE FLEW BACK TO WHERE WE LEFT OUR DISABLED U-6, AND FLEW IT BACK TO KITZINGEN.

THE 2ND EVENT, ON MY FIRST TOUR OF VIETNAM IN 1966.

I WAS FLYING A UH-1 HUEY HELICOPTER, AND WAS PULLING AN ARMY PATROL OUT OF THE JUNGLE. I NO SOONER RETURNED THE PATROL TO THE MOUNTAIN RIDGE WHERE THEIR UNIT WAS, WHEN I HEARD A RADIO CALL FROM ANOTHER HELICOPTER IN OUR UNIT. HE SAID THAT HE

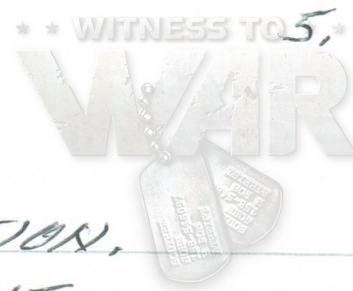


WAS PULLING HIS PATROL OUT OF THE JUNGLE, WHEN THEY TOOK SOME GUNFIRE HITS FROM THE ENEMY, AND THE PILOT WAS WOUNDED. HE WAS TAKING OFF TO THE FIELD HOSPITAL WITH THE PILOT, AND HE HAD LEFT FIVE MEN FROM HIS PATROL IN THE JUNGLE. HE ASKED IF ANY AIRCRAFT COULD PICK UP THE FIVE MEN,

I RADIOED HIM AND SAID THAT MY AIRCRAFT WAS EMPTY, (EXCEPT FOR THE CREW OF FOUR), AND THAT I WAS ABOUT FIVE MILES AWAY AND WE WOULD PICK UP THE FIVE MEN THAT HE WAS LEAVING BEHIND.

WHEN WE GOT TO THE FIVE MEN, THERE WAS A LOT OF SHOOTING GOING ON, BUT WE GOT THEM OUT OK, OR SO WE THOUGHT. WE FLEW THE FIVE SOLDIERS TO THEIR UNIT ON A MOUNTAIN RIDGELINE.

THREE OF THE SOLDIERS CAME FORWARD IN OUR AIRCRAFT AND THANKED US, FOR GETTING THEM



OUT OF A BAD SITUATION,
WE FLEW OUT FROM THE
UNIT AND HAD HARDLY BEEN
AIRBORNE, WHEN WE STARTED
HAVING A LOT OF AIRCRAFT
PROBLEMS. UNKNOWN TO US
AT THE TIME, ONE ROUND HAD
HIT THE AIRCRAFT AND CUT
(NICKED) BOTH A HYDRAULIC LINE
AND A FUEL LINE,

WE KNEW THAT WITH THE
HYDRAULICS OUT, THAT WE
WOULD HAVE TO MAKE A RUN-
NING LANDING AT ABOUT
35 MILES AN HOUR SPEED ON THE
SKIDS OF THE AIRCRAFT (WE HAD NO WHEELS).

WE KNEW WE NEEDED A RUNWAY
BUT WE WERE OVER MOUNTAINS
AND JUNGLE, AND LOOSING FUEL,
SO WE HEADED FOR A SANDBAR
IN A RIVER BED. IT TOOK BOTH
THE PILOT AND I (I WAS THE AIRCRAFT
COMMANDER) TOGETHER TO PUSH
THE AIRCRAFT INTO A DECENT,
BUT WE DID SO, AND MADE A
SAFE LANDING ON A SANDBAR.
I IMMEDIATELY SENT MY TWO
AIRCRAFT MACHINE GUNNERS OUT



INTO POSITIONS WHERE THEY COULD WATCH FOR ANY ENEMY ACTIVITY. WITHIN ABOUT 30 MINUTES WE HAD AN AIRCRAFT FLYING OVER US, AND WITHIN AN HOUR A CHINOOK HELICOPTER PICKED UP OUR UH-1 AND TOOK IT BACK TO OUR UNIT. WE (OUR CREW) WERE PICKED UP BY ANOTHER UH-1.

THAT NIGHT OUR UNIT COMMANDER CALLED ME IN, AND SHOWED ME ON A MAP WHERE WE WENT DOWN ON THE RIVER BED AND WHERE A NORTH VIETNESE BATTALION WAS JUST NORTH OF US.

OF COURSE THE GOOD LORD WAS WITH ME AGAIN, BECAUSE, IF THE ENEMY BATTALION CAME AT US, I WOULD NOT BE WRITING THIS.

THE THIRD EVENT - THANKSGIVING DAY 1966.

THE UNIT COMMANDER ASKED ME TO FLY A UH-1 WHERE THE BEACH SAND HAD ERODED THE ENGINES TURBIN BLADES TO THE POINT THE AIRCRAFT WAS WEAK AND COULDN'T CARRY A HEAVY LOAD. I WOULD HAVE A CREW OF



FOUR, A BATTALION COMMANDER, AND A SERGEANT MAJOR ABOARD, A LIGHT LOAD FOR A HUEY. DURING THE MORNING A PLATOON OF 50 SOLDIERS STARTED ON A MISSION TO GO UP A MOUNTAIN, AND TO RETRIEVE SOME CLASSIFIED EQUIPMENT FROM AN AIRFORCE O-1 AIRCRAFT THAT HAD CRASHED IN THE JUNGLE NEAR THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN.

DURING THE DAY WE DROPPED BURLAP BAGS OF RATIONS OUT OF THE AIRCRAFT, TO THE TROOPS AND GAVE THEM A VECTOR (DIRECTIONS) TO THE CRASHED, O-1 AIRCRAFT.

BEING THANKSGIVING DAY, WE ALSO PICKED UP, THEN DELIVERED, A GOOD THANKSGIVING MEAL TO THE REMAINING TROOPS FROM THE BATTALION, THAT WERE IN A FIELD AT THE BASE OF THE MOUNTAIN. WE ATE WITH THESE TROOPS.

WE COULD NOT GET THE TROOPS OFF THE MOUNTAIN BEFORE DARK, SO THEY MOVED TO A SMALL CLEARING ON THE BACKSIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN WHERE WE COULD DROP THEM SOME MORE RATIONS. IT WAS ABOUT 11 PM AS WE APPROACHED THE TROOPS TO DROP THE RATIONS. WE WERE SHOT AT



AND I DON'T KNOW FOR SURE THAT WE WERE HIT, BUT, THE ENGINE LOST SIGNIFICANT POWER AND WE COULD NOT MAINTAIN FLIGHT, I ALERTED THE CREW AND PASSENGERS THAT WE WERE GOING IN, AND WE KNEW THE MOUNTAIN WAS TOO STEEP FOR US TO LAND, THE MAIN ROTOR BLADE HIT THE MOUNTAIN AND OUR AIRCRAFT TURNED UPSIDE DOWN, THAT ENDED OUR FLYING OF 11 HRS AND 45 MINUTES THAT DAY/NIGHT.

WE SPENT THE NIGHT ON THE MOUNTAIN. THE BATTALION COMMANDER WAS NOT TOO HAPPY AS HE SAID THIS WAS THE THIRD TIME THAT HE HAD CRASHED IN A HUEY. WE DID NOT GET OFF THE MOUNTAIN UNTILL LATE AFTERNOON THE NEXT DAY. BY THEN WE HAD CLEARED OUT A PLACE WHERE ONE HELICOPTER AT A TIME COULD LAND UNTILL THEY GOT THE 56 OF US OUT OF THERE, THE WEATHER WAS BAD AND IT TOOK SOME TIME TO GET US ALL OUT, OUR AIRCRAFT WAS DESTROYED. AFTER GOING DOWN TWO DAYS IN A ROW, AND FLYING 140 HRS THAT MONTH, I GOT A DAY OFF.





THE FOURTH EVENT - 1966, VIETNAM

ONE EVENING THE UNIT COMMANDER ASKED ME TO FLY TWO MEN OF OUR UNIT, WHO WERE SCHEDULED TO ROTATE HOME, TO OUR HOME BASE. OUR HOME BASE WAS ABOUT 30 MILES TO THE SOUTH OF US AT AN AIR FORCE BASE. AS WE APPROACHED THE AIR FORCE BASE AT NIGHT, WHAT LOOKED LIKE BASKET BALLS ON FIRE, STARTED TO COME UP AT US. I KNEW THAT THIS WAS NOT THE SMALL ARMS FIRE THAT WE HAD GROWN ACCUSTOMED TO. SO WE TURNED OFF ALL OUR AIRCRAFT LIGHTS, AND MADE A 180° TURN AND A FAST DESCENT. I CALLED THE AIR FORCE TOWER AND ADVISED THEM OF THE HEAVY ENEMY FIRE THAT WE HAD RECEIVED, SO THAT OTHER AIRCRAFT COULD AVOID IT, OR, RETURN FIRE ON IT. WE MADE IT SAFELY TO OUR HOME BASE AT THE AIRFIELD, WITH OUR LIGHTS OUT AND WE DIDN'T TAKE ANY HITS.

AGAIN, ALLS WELL THAT ENDS WELL,

IN THIS FIRST YEAR IN VIETNAM, WE LOST 10 OF OUR 32 HELICOPTERS DO TO BEING SHOT OR CRASHING, BUT WE DIDN'T HAVE ANYONE KILLED,



THE FIFTH EVENT - CLOSE TO THE
END OF MY SECOND TRIP TO VIETNAM,
AND WHILE I WAS THE COMMANDER OF
A O-1, BIRD DOG RECONNAISSANCE
AIRPLANE COMPANY, WITH 25 BIRD DOGS,
AND ONE U-6 deHAVILAND BEAVER,
LIKE I FLEW IN GERMANY.

ONE DAY AN ARMY, TWIN ENGINE,
MOHAWK AIRCRAFT WAS FLYING ALONG
THE COAST IN OUR AREA OF RESPON-
SIBILITY. THEY TOOK SEVERAL HITS OF
ENEMY FIRE, AND BOTH PILOTS EJECTED
FROM THE AIRCRAFT AND PARACHUTED
TO THE GROUND. KNOWING THE AREA
WELL, I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THEY
WERE CAPTURED, SOON AFTER THEY
LANDED. THE SOUTH VIETNESE
ARMY FOUND THE EJECTION SEATS
AND PARACHUTES THE NEXT DAY, BUT
COULD NOT FIND THE MEN.

THE ARMY, AIRFORCE, AND
NAVY WORKED TOGETHER FOR
THREE DAYS AND NIGHTS, TO FIND
THE PILOTS, TO NO AVAIL. THE
AIRFORCE FLEW A C-47 GOONNY
BIRD. AT NIGHT THEY FLEW WITH
A LARGE SEARCH LIGHT ON THE
GROUND. O-1 BIRD DOGS FROM MY



COMPANY, FLEW TWO HOUR SHIFTS, DAY AND NIGHT, LOOKING FOR THE MISSING PILOTS, AT NIGHT THEY FLEW JUST BEHIND THE SEARCHLIGHT OF THE C-47 GOONNY BIRD, WATCHING THE GROUND. THE NAVY HAD A RIVER PATROL BOAT PATROLING THE RIVER AND CANALS, DURING THE DAY. THE NAVY ALSO KEPT A DESTROYER JUST OFF THE COAST DAY AND NIGHT, FOR THREE DAYS.

ONE NIGHT I TOOK A TWO HOUR SHIFT, FLYING BEHIND THE AIR FORCE SPOT LIGHT THAT WAS SWEEPING THE GROUND. I HAD AN ENLISTED MAN IN THE BACK SEAT OF MY AIRCRAFT, WHO HAD TWO WEEKS LEFT BEFORE GOING HOME. I HAD ABOUT THREE WEEKS LEFT BEFORE GOING HOME,

TOWARD THE END OF MY TWO HOUR SHIFT, ONE OF MY PILOTS RADIOED ME, AND SAID THAT HE WAS ABOUT 15 MINUTES AWAY FROM MY POSITION, AND HE WOULD RELIEVE ME. MINUTES LATER, MY ENGINE QUIT. I IMMEDIATELY TURNED TOWARDS THE NAVY DESTROYER BECAUSE I WAS DETERMINED NOT TO



GO DOWN ON THE LAND AND JOIN THE MISSING PILOTS. I PUT OUT A "MAYDAY" CALL THAT MY ENGINE HAD FAILED, AND THEN STARTED RESTART PROCEDURES. THE MAN IN MY BACK SEAT WAS NERVOUS. WHEN I SWITCHED TO MY OTHER FUEL TANK - I GOT A RESTART. I COULDN'T UNDERSTAND WHY THE ENGINE QUIT WHEN THE FIRST FUEL TANK SHOWED THAT $\frac{1}{4}$ OF THE FUEL IN THAT TANK WAS STILL AVAILABLE. MY REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT WAS CLOSE, SO I RADIOED HIM TO ESCORT ME TO THE NEAREST AIRFIELD, AND HE DID. WHEN WE LANDED, I IMMEDIATELY GOT UP AND CHECKED THE FIRST WING FUEL TANK AND IT WAS BONE DRY. THE FUEL GAGE STILL INDICATED THAT THE TANK WAS $\frac{1}{4}$ FULL - THE GAGE HAD SIMPLY FAILED. AS COMMANDER I FLEW THIS PARTICULAR AIRCRAFT ALMOST EVERY DAY, FOR SEVEN MONTHS, WITH NO PROBLEMS. AGAIN THE GOOD LORD WAS STILL LOOKING AFTER ME.

I LOST FOUR AIRCRAFT IN SEVEN MONTHS, PINED PURPLE HEARTS ON FOUR OF MY MEN, BUT DIDN'T LOOSE A MAN.



THE 6TH EVENT 1977 - STILL IN THE ARMY BUT BACK HOME, AND STATIONED AT FORT McPHERSON.

I CAR POOLED WITH AN ARMY FRIEND FROM OUR HOMES TO FORT McPHERSON, EACH WORK DAY.

IT WAS MY TURN TO DRIVE ONE DAY (AND PICK UP MY FRIEND). OVANDA HAD A NIGHTMARE, THE NIGHT BEFORE, THAT I HAD BEEN IN A CAR ACCIDENT AND KILLED. SHE DID NOT TELL ME ABOUT HER NIGHTMARE, BUT SHE DID SAY THAT SHE WAS NOT GOING ANYWHERE THAT DAY, AND SHE SUGGESTED THAT I TAKE OUR NEW BUICK ELECTRA, RATHER THAN MY SMALL PINTO CAR. I SURE AM GLAD THAT I TOOK THE BUICK. AS I STARTED TO EXIT A ROAD FROM OUR SUBDIVISION, TO PICK UP MY FRIEND, I SAW A CAR WITH DULL LIGHTS, JUST COMING OVER THE HILL TO MY LEFT. I STARTED TO PUT THE BUICK INTO REVERSE, BUT IT WAS TOO LATE, THE CAR COMING OVER THE HILL WAS DOING AT LEAST 60 MPH IN A 35 OR 40 SPEED ZONE. HE HAD BEEN IN AN ACCIDENT,



THE DAY BEFORE, AND ONE OF HIS HEADLIGHTS WAS BROKEN OUT AND HIS WINDSHIELD WAS BADLY BROKEN, BEFORE HE HIT OUR BUICK. HE HAD PLENTY OF ROOM TO GO A LITTLE TO THE LEFT AND MISS ME, BUT HE DIDN'T. I WAS ONLY ABOUT THREE FEET INTO THE FIRST LANE OF THE TWO LANE ROAD, AND THE OTHER LANE WAS EMPTY. THERE WAS ALSO A LARGE FIELD TO HIS LEFT, AND THAT WAS EMPTY, BUT HE STILL HIT ME HARD, SPUN ME AROUND, AND OUR BUICK WENT INTO A TELEPHONE POLE.

I WAS VERY LUCKY TO BE IN A BIG HEAVY CAR, AND I ONLY RECEIVED A SCRATCH ON MY LEFT ELBOW. MY FRIEND THAT I WAS TO PICK UP, CALLED OUR HOUSE AND ASKED OVANDA IF I HAD LEFT TO PICK HIM UP, AND OF COURSE SHE SAID YES. HE HAD HEARD THE NOISE OF OUR CRASH, SO HE CAME TO SEE ME. OVANDA ALSO CAME TO LOOK FOR ME. THE CAR THAT HIT ME WAS TOTALED. OF COURSE IT HAD SOME DAMAGE FROM THE DAY BEFORE.



HE SAID HE WAS DRIVING 60MPH BECAUSE HE WAS LATE FOR WORK,

THE POLICE, MY FRIEND, AND OVANDA CAME. THE POLICEMAN TOLD OVANDA, "YOUR LUCKY THAT YOUR HUSBAND WASN'T DRIVING YOUR PINTO, BECAUSE IF HE WAS DRIVING IT, HE PROBABLY WOULD HAVE BEEN KILLED."

OVANDA'S DREAM THE NIGHT BEFORE, ABOUT ME BEING IN ACCIDENT, AND TELLING ME TO TAKE THE BUICK. PROBABLY DID SAVE MY LIFE. THE BUICK ONLY HAD ABOUT \$1500 DOLLARS DAMAGE.

AGAIN THE GOOD LORD AND
OVANDA TOOK CARE OF ME,



THE 7TH EVENT - THE ONLY ONE. AFTER I RETIRED FROM THE ARMY, WE LIVED IN SAVANNAH.

I WAS COMING HOME ONE DAY, DRIVING MY BUICK REGAL, I HAD JUST GONE ABOUT ONE MILE OFF I-95 ONTO A GOOD FOUR LANE ROAD, WITH CONCRETE DIVIDER IN THE MIDDLE. IT HAD JUST RAINED AND MY TIRES WERE SOMEWHAT WORN WHEN SUDDENLY I WENT INTO A 360° SPIN. HAFT WAY THROUGH THE SPIN MY CAR WAS FACING SEVERAL CARS COMING TOWARDS ME, AND I FELT THAT I WAS IN DEEP TROUBLE. I COMPLETED THE 360° SPIN HOWEVER, AND MY CAR HIT THE CONCRETE DIVIDER, AND STOPPED. I TURNED AROUND AND SAW THAT THE CARS COMING TOWARDS ME WERE STILL FAR ENOUGH AWAY, FOR ME TO DRIVE OFF THE ROAD TO MY RIGHT. I TURNED THE ENGINE OFF, GOT OUT OF THE CAR, LOOKED AROUND AND FOUND THE LEFT REAR FENDER BENT A LITTLE. I DROVE HOME, FOR THE 7TH TIME, AT LEAST, OUR LORD WAS STILL WATCHING OUT FOR ME.



FINAL NOTES

MOST OF US LIVE AWHILE,
BUT ALL OF US DIE SOONER OR
LATER,

WHEN I DIE, I WILL HAVE
ABSOLUTELY NO REGRETS.

I HAVE HAD A FULL LIFE, WITH
A WONDERFUL WIFE, TWO GREAT
CHILDREN, AND FIVE OUTSTANDING
GRANDCHILDREN.

I HAVE ENJOYED TRAVELING IN
28 COUNTRIES, - BUT THIS IS
INSIGNIFICANT, COMPARED TO
THE FINE FAMILY THAT WE HAVE
ENJOYED.

SOME, WHO MAY READ WHAT I
HAVE WRITTEN, MAY THINK THAT
I WAS TRULY LUCKY, BUT
I DISAGREE. I HAVE NEVER
BEEN A STRONG BELIEVER IN
LUCK.

I BELIEVE THAT OUR GOOD LORD
LET ME LIVE SAFELY AND
LONGER, FOR A PURPOSE,

SINCERELY,
BOB