The War Years

Life during 1939 was pretty good. It had been ten years since the stock market crash of 1929. The Great Depression was winding down, although we could use a good war to stimulate the economy to growth. War is always good for that. Little did Carl know how much that would affect his life thanks to men named Hitler, Mussolini and Tojo. He had a pretty good job going at Medart Manufacturing as a draftsman. Then the letter came. The salutation every young man of the era found to suddenly change his life, found its way to Carl's eyes; "Greetings," it said. The draft board had found him.

Following his advice-filled journey with his father to the St. Louis fire station where he was to meet up with other young men, he found himself on a truck that would haul the men to Union Station. There, they took a train to Jefferson Barracks in south St. Louis area for induction on 27 June 1941.

Since the United States in June of 1941 was not directly involved with the troubles in Western Europe, the mood was jovial and fun. The men were looking forwards to a year of military service. Wonderment as to what was in store pervaded them. Once at JB, they spent about a month changing from civilian to military life. Haircuts, uniforms, physicals, and inoculations… lots of inoculations! Soon it was assignment time. Various groups of men received the word as to their military destination. The Navy, the Marines, and Carl's group received the word; "Infantry." ***(Photo 5)*** He was assigned to the 6th Infantry Division, 42nd Regiment. This didn't seem to be too bad of an assignment. He knew that his basic training would keep him fairly close to home at Fort Leonard Wood in south central Missouri.

"Fort Lost In The Woods" to which it was sometimes referred, was a mixture of impressions. The unpaved streets were muddy, the barracks were large, open, comfortable places, and the food was good. Basic training would take about nine weeks. In addition to normal soldiering duties, Carl became a runner for the company commander. He also became the company bugler. Duty as the bugler included rising the troops with reveille every morning, and to bed with taps at night.

Routine military training was the goal of Fort. However, the 6th Infantry Division would undergo some different training, though. Because of this training, they would eventually receive the nickname, "The Sight-Seeing Sixes." The military is good about sending men every which way, and this tour proved it. The goal was to expand on the routine, to prepare for the non-routine. The group first went to the Tennessee Mountains for mountain maneuvers. They then went to Muroc, California for desert maneuvers. Next the group traveled to Louisiana for jungle training. In Louisiana, on the Red River, the Army Engineers had constructed a pontoon bridge. This is a type of rapidly built bridge of floating pontoons with a road surface on top, for a fast moving army to cross rivers quickly and efficiently. At some point however, a military truck carrying military medical records was crossing this bridge. Suddenly, the bridge failed and the truck and its contents went for an unauthorized swim. All the records aboard were lost. This included Carl's file, which had record of his inoculations. With no records, he would

have been unable to travel overseas, so he had to retake all of them. This caused the development of his lifelong anxiety of needles.

It was while the group was in Tennessee doing mountain maneuvers, that Carl had met a man, Major Freewald, who would cause him to make another life altering decision. It was the Major who inspired Carl into joining the "G-2" intelligence group. The foundation of its mission was spelled out in its training; "How many? What direction? How are they armed?" This training would come into play in several ways later in Carl's life and careers.

Each training mission of the "Sight-Seeing Sixes" lasted about a month or so with a return to Fort Leonard Wood to clean up, repair or replace equipment, and rest a bit before the next deployment. Carl had joined up with an Army artillery group of basketball players, having had played in high school. The team had a game scheduled in St. Louis against the Bethlehem Church at 25th and Salsbury. They loaded up in cars and made the trip in on Saturday, December 6th. The next day on Sunday, December 7th, 1941, the team was far ahead in points against the church team by half time. They Army team thought it was a trick by the other team to throw them off. The word came out that, "…Pearl Harbor was just attacked; you guys are going to war." It wasn't believed immediately. Eventually, the Army team realized it was true and loaded up in Roy Fluehardt's Chrysler Airflow car, the first car to employ aerodynamics in its body design, for the return trip. There was not much talking during the ride along what was then the "Mother Highway," Route 66, now known as Interstate 44, until they reached a part of the road known as Devil's Elbow Hill. Roy yelled that the brakes were out, and began trying to slow the car using the emergency brake. When the car slowed, the rest of the men jumped out and tried to help slow the car down by holding on.

Back at the Fort, training continued, but there was now a difference. Previously, things were relaxed and laid back. Now there was a new intensity. The United States was going to war. Carl had some more training to finish in jungle warfare. It was during this time that he made a decision, that there must be an easier way to fight this war. He applied for transfer to the Army Air Corps, the group that would eventually become the U.S. Air Force. He tested and awaited the results. It was now around March of 1942 and he was scheduled to ship out in two more days, when he got a call to the orderly room. The paper thrown before him had the words, "Report within five days to March Field, Riverside, California for induction into the Army Air Corps." ***(Photo 6)***

The last Carl saw of his old division, the "Sight-Seeing Sixes," they shipped out to Bremmerton, Washington for deployment to action. He arrived at March Field for indoctrination and classes on flight related subjects such as radios, maps and navigation, and weapons and bombs.

This branch of the military was a whole new game. The Air Corps was run differently than he was used to in the Army. It took him a while to adjust, to the tune of having to perform around 35 "walking tours." This was a form of military justice, administered to those who do not conform to the military way. These tours involved marching the

grounds for fifty minutes, arms at your side, in little half steps at what was called an "adjutant's pace." One example of the precipitators of these 'tours,' came from uniform inspection. The inspector would stand in front of Carl and start at the bottom, noting every little detail. "Mr. Runge's shoes lack luster. Moving up, I see no semblance of a crease in Mr. Runge's trousers. Mr. Runge's belt buckle is atrocious. I see remnants of breakfast on Mr. Runge's tie. Mr. Runge forgot to put a razor in his shaver this morning. Mr. Runge needs a haircut. Mr. Runge has grease showing through his cap. Seven demerits." When an airman received seven demerits, he gained a walking tour.

Another time, he received a walking tour when he and a buddy had received a fried chicken dinner and were sitting on a lawn eating, when he noticed the very shiny shoes of Captain Burdett standing beside him. This doesn't sound like a grave violation, however, the Captain reminded the men they were still in quarantine. Another tour, another lesson in military justice.

Another shift in military direction was about to happen. All this seemingly useless and futile justice didn't sit right. Carl wrote a letter of resignation to Captain Burdett and delivered it to him. The captain told him to leave the letter in his in-basket. After not hearing anything for a couple of weeks, Carl checked with the captain. He told him it was in process. Five weeks later, Carl met with the captain to find out what the status was. The captain "dug" through his box and "found" the letter, "lost" in his pile. Burdett discussed the situation with Carl, now that time had passed, and his anger had subsided. It turns out the captain had a plan. Carl's irritation with the military was only with the walking tours. Burdett had noticed that Carl was still listed as a "1301," which was the designation for the G-2 Intelligence rating he held. After discussing the rating, Carl recanted and asked for the letter back. "I'm happy to hear that." the captain said. The letter was torn up.

The men in the military are required to march in parades often. Their position in the parade march was sometimes dictated by points achieved during inspections. Carl had the job of carrying the flag as a pivot man on the corner of the group. Once, during a parade for dignitaries, there was a rather loud amount of applause and noise from the band. The command was given to make a right turn by calling "column right!" Carl missed the direction and instead of following the group right, he went left. Once he noticed he was no longer in the parade, he had to double time it back past the reviewing stand holding a lot of high ranking military brass, and one particular U.S. Senator by the name of Harry S Truman.

It wasn't long after that, Carl found himself on the way to Pullman, Washington to Washington State College and more training on intelligence, prisoner interrogation techniques and so forth.

The next assignment was flight school in Santa Maria, California. This section didn't go very well. Carl caused damage to the wings of two Stearman biplanes while ground looping them; a kind of "spin out" on landing where the aircraft pivots on one wheel and the wing tip. His instructor, Mr. Helm, told him he would be washed out of flying status.

Carl was sent back to March Field for reassignment. Next stop; Harlingen, in south Texas. He would still find himself in the air, but in a different role than pilot. Here, he received more training on aircraft electrical systems, gunnery, bombs and bomb hanging. Carl had been assigned to fly on a large, 4-engine bomber called the B-24 Liberator. ***(Photo 7)***

While in Texas, he saw a sign advertising for a lifeguard at a swimming pool. Since he had training and experience in this, it proved a great opportunity. He met with the Entertainment Officer, Melvin J. Mullansen, and received the job. The pool was a large one requiring six lifeguards. The job suited Carl well, he enjoyed the work, who wouldn't?! ***(Photos 8 & 9)*** As time came close for graduation, Mullansen was very satisfied with Carl's work and asked him if he liked the job enough to stay over for another class. Carl agreed and Mullansen pulled his name. That happened again for the next class. He remained at the job for three classes, a decision that he believes may have saved his life. Most of the aircrew classes at that point were being assigned to the European theater of operations to engage the Germans. Few groups were being sent to the South Pacific to fight the Japanese. One of every three bombers was lost in Europe.

It was now early in 1943; Carl started playing music with a military band, touring the area helping to sell war bonds. He played bass and some saxophone with the band. The band's singer, Vic Hamilton, discovered the magic of really hot, south Texas peppers. Back home, peppers were milder than in the South. Vic didn't realize this until he saw a plate of them at dinner one evening, grabbed one and popped it in his mouth before the others could stop him. He chewed… suddenly stopping as the fiery pepper showed him the meaning of hot. It left his face tortured and his vocal cords paralyzed and unable to perform. Later on, in a sad note, Vic was killed in the crash of his plane which struck a large pile of chat; gravel used to construct runways.

During the war years, he had been classified as a military intelligence "G-2" agent while still in the infantry. He had been sent to Holliburg, Maryland for six weeks training. There, they taught them the basics of recognizing behavior changes, interview techniques, hiding in surroundings and other undercover training. During this training, Carl told the military he'd been fooling around with playing some music. ***(Photo 23)*** They decided to improve upon this talent and put him into a program where the military kept track of companies with military contracts to be certain secrets were kept secret.

What the military did was to place a band consisting of these musically trained agents into night clubs frequented by employees of military contractors. The band would play a set, and then set out into the crowd to mingle with the audience. They would listen to conversations taking place. What they listened for, were scraps of information relating to military projects that needed to be kept under wraps for national security. If too many bits of information were overheard, enough that could be pieced together, the CIC agents would tap the person on the shoulder and excuse themselves to pass by. Other agents watching this would whisk away the person tapped for interrogation regarding security.

Following his time in Texas, Carl found himself in Kerns, Utah, near Salt Lake City for crew assignment and preparation for overseas deployment. He needed to have a cavity in a molar fixed. He went to the base hospital and the dentist prepared the tooth for filling. With the open hole in a tooth, the moisture in it must be dried before filling it. A new nurse by the name of Marilyn Tanner was told by the doctor to dry the tooth. Instead of using a cotton swab, she used the air hose. The pain of the cold air on the exposed inner tooth and nerve was like a shot in the head. Carl's reaction involved knees pulling up to the chest and sending the instruments flying and breaking the spit bowl, an old dentistry way of ridding one's mouth of spit and blood during dental work instead of modern suction methods. After a bawling out by the doctor, the nurse was so upset, she offered to fix Carl dinner that night at her home. It turns out that nurse Tanner was the daughter of the Base Commander, Colonel Tanner! They all had a good laugh.

Mid-1943 found Carl at Lowrie Field, the base in Denver, Colorado for some final work on gunnery and dropping bombs from flying aircraft. It was there he married Dolores Piel, a girl from back home at Zion Lutheran.

They lived in Denver a few months until shipping out to March Field in Riverside, California for overseas departure. They had to make one final checkout flight to test readiness, flight operations, navigation and bombing ability. A 14 hour flight from March Field took them to Bremmerton, Washington to photo bomb the docks. Then to Las Vegas, Nevada to photo bomb the main street. Next to Omaha, Nebraska to "attack" the stock yards. The next leg was to hit some fisheries in Louisiana. Finally, to "destroy" the Hoover Dam on the Colorado River. Then back to March Field. They had left early in the morning and returned well after dark. A fog had rolled in and was obscuring the ground. The pilot of the B-24 Liberator lined up on the runway lights. Carl was watching the landing out of the window, when the crew noticed trees flashing by the windows. A quick application of power to the engines and a sharp climb caused the plane to narrowly miss a building. In the fog, the plane had lined up on the street lights on the main street of Camp Hahn, adjacent to March Field. They circled around and flew to a safe landing in the desert at Murock. They returned to March Field the following day. Following the near disaster, the tops of the streetlights were painted black to avoid a future disaster.

Next stop; the South Pacific. Their departure was to be from Seattle, Washington by boat to Oahu, Hawaii and Hickam Field. There, his crew picked up his aircraft they would use during their tour, the "Royal Flush." It was the custom of the era for flight crews to name individual aircraft, and paint logos on the sides near the front of the airplane. This was known as "nose art" and some of it was quite interesting. The Royal Flush was a depiction of Donald Duck flushing a toilet with likenesses of Hitler and Tojo's heads sticking out.

The crew spent a month at Kauai, Hawaii for some checkout flights with the new aircraft and some survival training. The men were awoken at 2 o'clock AM and driven to the docks. There, they boarded a PT boat and were issued inflatable "mae west" life jackets. They were driven out to sea, circling to disorient them. Then, one by one, over the side

they jumped at five second intervals. A tug on the inflator and the life jackets inflated. There were also two inflatable rafts thrown into the water as the PT boat sped away into the dark tropical night. Bobbing in the Pacific in total darkness causes the mind to work harder than it should at imagining what horrible, man-eating sea creatures were swimming just below your feet, waiting to have a meal! The men gathered and found the rafts, inflating them. Climbing in, they found survival supplies in the rafts like a compass, charts, food and morphine injectors. The morphine was commonly placed in military machines in the era for pain control during injuries. Because of the potential for abuse, it is more rigidly controlled nowadays. The goal was simple; Survive and get home. A similar type of survival training exercise took place from the back of a truck in the jungles of Hawaii.

It was the middle of 1945. The war was dragging on. It was now time to get down to the military business in the western Pacific.

The ultimate destination for the crew of the "Royal Flush" was a small island in the South Pacific Ocean called Okinawa. This flight was a long one. Each leg of the flight which hopped from each spec of a tiny island in the vast ocean to another was at least 1000 to 1200 miles. "That's a lot of water," reminisces Carl. The route went from Kauai in Hawaii to Canton in the Phoenix Islands, to Tarawa in the Gilbert Islands. From Tarawa they flew to Los Negros, to Biak, New Guinea. From Biak, they made a short jaunt north to a small island in the archipelago known as the West Caroline Islands. They returned to Biak to continue the journey to Okinawa. From Biak, they flew to Clark Field in the Philippines. The crew spent some time there, until eventually flying on to their ultimate assignment in Okinawa.

Once the war ended, they made a return trip to Hawaii via a more northerly route from Okinawa, to Guam in the Mariana Islands, to the Kawajein Atoll in the Marshall Islands, to Johnston Island, and on to Oahu, Hawaii. Once they made Hawaii, they prepared for the long flight back to the continental states, in the neighborhood of sixteen hours flight time.

One day while flying near Biak on a mailrun, the radioman overheard a mayday distress call from a C-46 cargo plane having engine trouble. They were worried they may have to ditch in the ocean before reaching the island landing strip. After some quick calculations and triangulations, the flight engineer discovered they were only a few minutes from the stricken aircraft. The Royal Flush located the cargo plane, and reassured its crew that if they had to go in the water, they would drop life rafts to them. The pilots of the cargo plane managed to nurse it back to Biak without having to ditch.

Another time while in the western Pacific, the Liberator was making an approach to Guam for a landing. Everything was going well; they made the downwind, turned onto final. The gear and flaps were down. Just as they were touching down, the aircraft resounded with a loud clatter of impacts. The pilots gunned the throttles, roaring back into the sky, shouting they were "…under heavy ground fire…" No sooner had they lifted off, than the air traffic controller came over the radio, "Fox 1-7-7-3 get back in the

pattern!" It turns out that what the flyers thought was gunfire striking the plane was actually chat gravel on the runway being kicked up by the wheels and sounded like bullets.

The crew ended up only serving only several months in Okinawa. They arrived during the middle of 1945. As we all are so very aware, the war ended on August 6 that year with the atomic bomb being dropped on Japan. However, while in Okinawa, they performed their regular military mission until sent home in October.

They flew several missions but never fired their guns in combat against enemy fighters. Japanese Zeros were seen several times, but, they always held their distance from the bristling bombers. Several bursts of machine gun fire were made as warning shots, but they were just too far to be effective.

While the crew was stationed there, they had many memorable moments. For example, the crew went into town one day and obtained what they thought was going to be a great treat. They got some sweet potatoes and were going to roast them on an open fire for a feast. While they were cooking the potatoes, a sergeant came by, asked them what they were doing. When they explained the plan, the sergeant kicked all of the potatoes from the fire and stepped on them. The men were quite puzzled until the sergeant, who had been on the island for a much longer time and knew all the idiosyncracies of survival, explained in not too uncertain terms, that if they ate those potatoes, "…they would be carrying their balls home in a wheelbarrow." Apparently, the spuds harbored a disease that can cause a problematic swelling of one's testicles, called "elephantitus."

As in every military operation, there are always ways to get things you need. In this case, the Seabees were the men to know. They could get things in short supply. They always seemed to have everything. Carl recalls being mobbed by his crew upon returning with six bottles of Coca Cola.

For entertainment, there was a truck that would drive around to the various military bases and, when opened up fully, housed a movie theater. One evening while watching a movie, they heard some close by small arms fire… the unmistakable sound of a Colt 45 Model 1911 semiautomatic pistol. Rushing to investigate, they found the dead body of a Japanese soldier with his pockets and mouth full of sugar. Apparently, he had been left behind when the U.S. forces occupied the island. He was stealing supplies from the base and refused to stop when discovered. That was quite a pricey sweet tooth he had.

The men tried their best to make due with the limited luxuries. They spent time playing ball games, trying to out do each other's lies, reminiscing about home, about what they would do after the war and watching the periodic military shows. The food was pretty good as Carl recalls. Large mess tents would server all the men. He even liked the infamous C-rations issued by the military for field operations. He especially liked the beef stew and chicken noodle, the high energy biscuits and even the Spam. The weather was not bad. Not too hot, a nice breeze from the ocean kept it tolerable.

During their stay on Okinawa sometime after Hiroshima was bombed, a large typhoon came through wreaking havoc. Large ships were thrown up on shore. Carl recalls living for two days under a communications trailer that had been wired down to the ground with cables. It was also the first time he drank coffee that had been offered up by the Red Cross. The coffee must not have been very good, because to this day he won't drink it. The bomber crew flew rescue missions out over the water in the days following the typhoon, dropping life rafts to victims in the water.

Carl recalls during their stay in the islands, listening to the Armed Forces Radio Network. They played popular music, read news from back home and of the war effort. It was a very comforting thing to have so far from home. One day the announcer went crazy with shouts of "It's over!… It's over!! … We can all go home!" This, following the atomic bombing of Japan.

Then it was over. They spent a little more time in the Western Pacific, and then began the long journey home. As they flew each leg on route to Hawaii, each stop they made the Military Police would gather the crews together and ask them if anyone had any contraband. This was to prevent unauthorized souvenirs being taken home by the soldiers. Carl just happened to have acquired two brand new Colt .45 semi automatic pistols, still wrapped in their oily, protective cosmoliene fabric. Through the numerous opportunities during stops on the way back to Hawaii, the MP's would ask them again, each threat becoming more serious. Still, he continued to hold them. When they were ready to depart from Hickam Field in Oahu for the continental states, the MP's offered one more time for anyone to turn in any contraband, with the strongest urging yet. "Things will be really tough on you from now on if you get caught with anything." they said. The pressure and threat was too great… he reconsidered and turned in the weapons.

After the sixteen hour flight back to the states, they were rounded up when they landed and herded to a waiting area. After waiting about an hour, a man came by in a jeep and said the inspector would still be another twenty minutes or so. He also offered that if anyone had anything they'd like to ship home, he had boxes and would take care of that for them. Carl had some of his personal effects that he sent home, flight suits, flight jackets, a pair of Japanese binoculars, packed and taken by the man in the jeep. It just so happened that none of those items shipped home were inspected. He could have easily shipped his .45's with the other items, with Uncle Sam being none the wiser. However, who knew?! One of the most interesting souvenirs he has is the Medium Altitude Flight Jacket from his tour in the Western Pacific. It is of olive drab cotton fabric, lined for warmth and has a mouton wool collar dyed brown. The back of the jacket is stenciled with his name, and the names of all the islands they were on during the tour of duty.

Following mustering out of the Army Air Corps with an honorable discharge at Mather Field near Sacramento California, the military had given Carl his final paycheck in the amount of $307.12, $99.90 of which was earmarked for travel expenses. Instead of riding the train home, he chose to hitch hike back to St. Louis and keep the money. In 1945, three hundred dollars was a lot of money!

For such a short period of time in a long life, the detail and clarity with which Carl recalls this era is amazing. The war and all its events must have made a significant impact on him. He readily recalls some sixty years after the fact during this interview, the names of his crew members; the names rolling off like they just had lunch the day before. ***(Photo 10)*** Clair Giboney, pilot, Les Hanson, copilot, Thomas Glenn, navigator, Ovie Brussard, radioman, Chuck Bisbee, flight engineer, Bill Harrell, bombardier, Tom Pritchard, waist gunner, Sam Cartner, tail gunner, and of course Carl W. Runge, armorer and nose gunner.

Lastly, he recalled 4' 11" Paul J. Phillips, a short man required to fit into the tiny ball turret that hangs under the aircraft. P.J. experienced a thrilling landing one day. The ball turret was hydraulically raised and lowered with the gunner inside. During one mission, the hydraulic system failed and he couldn't be raised back into the belly of the bomber. He had to ride out the landing inside the turret. If everything went well, it wouldn't be a problem as there is at least a foot of clearance between the runway the extended ball. Everything did go well. He survived the incident, and went on to become a successful veterinarian.

Actually, there was another crew member who flew with the men in the tropics. However, this member was not an authorized military passenger. They had adopted a squirrel monkey they named "Junebug," and took him along on the flights. ***(Photo 11)*** The monkey would huddle for warmth inside the jacket of the flight engineer, Chuck Bisbee. The first flights were tough on the monkey. No one could explain to him how to relieve the pressure in his inner ear upon ascension to altitude. The expanding air caused the monkey pain and he would scream loudly. They solved the problem by teaching the monkey to chew gum. The mastication worked to vent the pressure in the inner ear. It was a funny site watching that monkey frantically chew gum while in flight.

While in Okinawa, there was a small native boy who took a liking to Carl. He cried out for Carl to, "…adopt me! …adopt me!" The boy told Carl he wanted to come back to the United States and become a doctor. He gathered scraps of material and had his mother make a baseball cap for Carl, with "St. Louis" written on it. Upon his departure for home, the boy wrote a small poem to Carl in a book. He recalls the poem clearly;

> With every cup of tea, remember me.
> Drink it hot, forget me not.

Apparently, the poem did its job.

"That's the last time I'll fly." Carl recalled saying to himself as he walked away from the air force base in CA. The last flight from Hickam Field in Hawaii to Mather Field in California was an arduous 16 hour flight. Because Carl had a previous year's military experience in the infantry, he was able to muster out before the rest of his crew. Catching a ride home on another B-24 flight would prove very memorable. At takeoff on 11 November, 1945 the sky was marginally acceptable for flight having had to wait three days for weather clearance. Without the sophisticated weather equipment we take for granted today, what lay ahead for the flight crew was unknown. At 11,000 feet above the

water, all seemed well as they turned eastward. A couple of hours into the flight, the ceiling had dropped the bomber to about 9,000 feet above the water. A few more hours flight time had further pushed the airplane to 7,000 feet. Once the plane had reached the "PONR" (Point Of No Return) at eight hours into the flight, they were down to 5,000 feet. Within several more hours, the crew found themselves 3,000 feet above the Pacific Ocean. At this point, with the weather further deteriorating, the pilot decided the best option was to climb the big plane above the storm and clouds where the air would be clear and safe for flight.

There is a concern here though. In regular, flat and level flight, the four large engines have their fuel/air mixture set for optimal efficiency. However, during a climb to higher altitude, fuel is expended at three times the normal rate. A B-24 Liberator holds about 16 hours worth of fuel normally, without any auxiliary tanks. As the pilot flew the plane up through the storm, the aircraft was severely buffeted and was struck several times by lightning. The plane took almost one and a half hours to climb above the storm into the clear. Many prayers were said by the flight crew, including one member Carl recalls, Amadeo Tozzi, who constantly was praying the rosary. Suddenly, the B-24 cleared the tops of the clouds and was in the clear. They could see the Californian coastline. They had been in the air, lashed to the bulkheads of the bomber for nearly 16 hours. Considering that a B-24 normally carries enough fuel for 16 hours flying--considerably reduced by the high-flow required for climbing the plane--can you imagine the elation in the belly of that airplane? It was difficult for Carl to put this feeling into words. You will have to rely on your own imagination. This flight was enough to end his flying career.

On 29 November, 1945 Armorer-Gunner Sergeant Carl W. Runge, serial number 37076115 completed the mustering out process from the Army Air Corps, and began hitchhiking back to St. Louis. As it turns out, his first ride was as memorable a one as his last flight. He quickly caught a ride just outside Mather Field from a seemingly nice fellow. However, the driver's skill left a lot to be desired. He would pass cars at high speed, barely leaving enough clearance to avoid a collision as he cut back into his lane. General reckless driving offered Carl a vivid comparison to the flight home from Hawaii. He did survive the drive for about 20 miles. Carl opted out of further endangerment by telling the driver he that he needed to go and get some items he'd left at a friend's home. The driver offered to drive Carl to go back and get the items since it was only about 20 miles from where they were. Still not realizing the point of why Carl was wanting to exit the vehicle, the driver was told that after thinking about it, he decided he would stay in California for a while since it might be a very long time before he was able to return. The driver obliged by letting him out, none the wiser for the truth.

Eventually he hitchhiked catching 3-4 rides and ended up in Kansas City. There, Carl decided to take an old Greyhound bus the rest of the way as it was late at night. Arriving in St. Louis, home again! "Lucky." That was how Carl chose to summarize his five years in the military. But, it was good to be home. Hans, Carl's father, choose to give praise to the Lord for returning his son. Recalling the irony of his father's words

regarding "…a year in the military will do you some good…" Carl realized how much truth there was, only five times the lesson.

November 1945 found Carl out of the military and back home, safe and sound, and very enriched for his invested time serving our country. His wife of the time, Delores Piel was living with her parents in St. Louis and that is where he went to live. ***(Photo 12)*** By taking advantage of the GI Bill, Carl enrolled at St. Louis University for the spring 1946 semester and took some general studies courses until financial pressure at home ended this path after only one semester. Employment became necessary.

Carl's brother, Clem, had taken a job at Emerson Electric and called him to say they could use another guy on the line. The job entailed picking up a cover plate, a brass hammer and 4 self-threading screws to cover the bottom of a motor. Within an hour he had a stack of motors stacked around him, while people down the line were screaming for them. They were stacked on the table and floor. The pressure of the repetitive actions was too great. An angrily thrown hammer after 3 hours effectively ended his assembly line career. To this day, he has in his possession, a little revenge on Emerson Electric. He has a check issued by Emerson Electric for one penny, meant as a refund for an employee tax. He never cashed the check, therefore keeping their books out of balance for nearly 60 years. Revenge is sweet! ***(Photo 13)***

With no particular career path in mind, Carl decided to go work for a savings and loan association as a collection manager. He worked at several institutions for the next seven years in the capacity of finances. Here is a chronology of those places of employment for this era in Carl's post-war career path: ***(Photo 14)***

April 1946 to December 1946	St. Louis Administration Center, St. Louis, MO
January 1947 to June 1947	Ohio Finance Company, St. Louis, MO
June 1947 to February 1948	General Finance Company, St. Louis, MO
February 1948 to April 1950	Merchants Loan and Finance, St. Louis, MO
June 1950 to September 1951	St. Louis Jewelry Company, St. Louis, MO
September 1951 to November 1952	Missouri Illinois Tractor, St. Louis, MO
November 1952 to October 1953	Witte Hardware, St. Louis, MO