

Curriculum Vitae...

Robert Lee Scott, Jr., B/Gen., USAF (Ret.)

Born: April 12, 1908; Grew up in Macon, GA. Graduated from Lanier High School, 1928. The summer between junior/senior year took a job as Deck Boy aboard a Black Diamond Line freighter--sailed half-way around the world.

Life long ambition to fly. At age 12, flew homebuilt glider off the roof of a three story house to crash land amid spikes of the Cherokee rose--state flower of Georgia. Finally learned the best way to fly and keep flying was as a regular Army pilot--the path led to West Point. But as no political appointment seemed possible, enlisted in the US Army as private, F Company, 22nd Infantry, Fort McPherson, GA. Won Presidential Appointment to West Point in 1928.

Upon graduation from West Point in 1932, used the summer to sail to Europe. Bought a motorcycle in France, and toured across Europe and Asia--turning around at Mt. Ararat. Assigned to US Army Flying Center--Randolph Field, Texas. Won wings October 17, 1933--and has remained a dedicated fighter pilot ever since.

Flew airmail--the "Hell Stretch" from Newark, NJ to Cleveland, OH--when President Roosevelt cancelled commercial contracts in 1934. First tour of duty in pursuit aviation in Panama, 78th squadron, Albrook Field. Became flying instructor after that; advanced from Lieutenant to Lt. Colonel in year during expansion program prior to WW II.

Told bare-faced lie to escape Training Command after Pearl Harbor (wanted to fly combat, but considered "too old" at 33!). Said that he had flown many hours in B-17, Flying Fortress, when he had actually never been in one. Nevertheless, volunteered for ultra-secret Task Force Aquila--mission: to bomb Tokyo. But staging bases in China having fallen, mission was scrubbed. Ended up flying the "Hump" in Gooney Birds (C-47s) loaded with drums of aviation gasoline. Met General Chennault and the Flying Tigers. Flew with them as a guest, and on July 4, 1942 fate smiled--as he was assigned best job in the war for him--first commander of the 23rd Fighter Group of China Air Task Force under Chennault. Unit was activated with remnants of American Volunteer Group (Flying Tigers).

As combat leader, flew many missions, becoming ace. Awarded three Silver Stars, three Distinguished Flying Crosses, five air medals. Credited with 22 "kills"..enemy aircraft shot down.

January 1943 ordered back to USA to make PR speeches to war plant personnel. Wrote best seller, "God Is My Co-Pilot", and served as technical advisor to Warner Brothers movie based on the book in Hollywood. (Dennis Morgan played Scott. World Premiere at Grand Theatre, Macon, Georgia, 1944.) Then back to China with P-51s.

After the war, served in Pentagon on task force to win autonomy for the Air Force from the Army. Commanded first Jet Fighter School at Williams Field, AZ, 1947-49. Then to USAFE to command 36th Fighter Wing at Furstenfeldbruck, Germany, 1950-53. 1954 graduated from National War College in Washington. Promoted to Brig. General as Director of Information, USAF, under Secretary Harold Talbott.

Retired as Brigadier General 1957. Walked the entire length of the Great Wall of China at age 72 (over 2,000 miles from Jiayuguan to Shanhaiquan on the Yellow Sea). At age 76 with special permission of Gen. Gabriel, Chief of Staff, USAF, flew over 20 hours (solo) in an F-16, July 19, 1984. Became more active as speaker and author of a dozen books--most recent, THE DAY I OWNED THE SKY!, published March, 1988 by Bantam. Currently as Chairman of the Heritage of Eagles Campaign to help build the Museum of Aviation at Robins AFB, Georgia--actually "coming back home" to Middle Georgia. 1989

SCOTT, ROBERT

WWII flying ace served Luke

Former commander penned more than 15 books

ANNIE BOON
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Legendary fighter ace and best-selling author Retired Brig. Gen. Robert L. Scott Jr. died Monday at age 97.

Scott was known for his 1943 best-seller "God Is My Co-Pilot," which was made into a movie. He also wrote more than 15 other books.

He was commander of Luke Air Force Base from 1956-1957. He initially came to Arizona in 1947 as commander of the first jet fighter school at Williams Air Force Base.

The man described as an "ace" and a "maverick" lived

in Sun City for 16 years before moving to Warner Robins, Ga., in 1987. In Georgia, he served as chairman for the Heritage of Eagles campaign, which supports the Museum of Aviation at Robins Air Force Base. Scott's death was announced by Paul Hibbitts, museum director.

Jane Freeman of Sun City, founder of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society, chronicled Scott's life since his move to Sun City. She recalled his sense of humor and passion for the Air Force and said working with the Museum of Aviation gave him

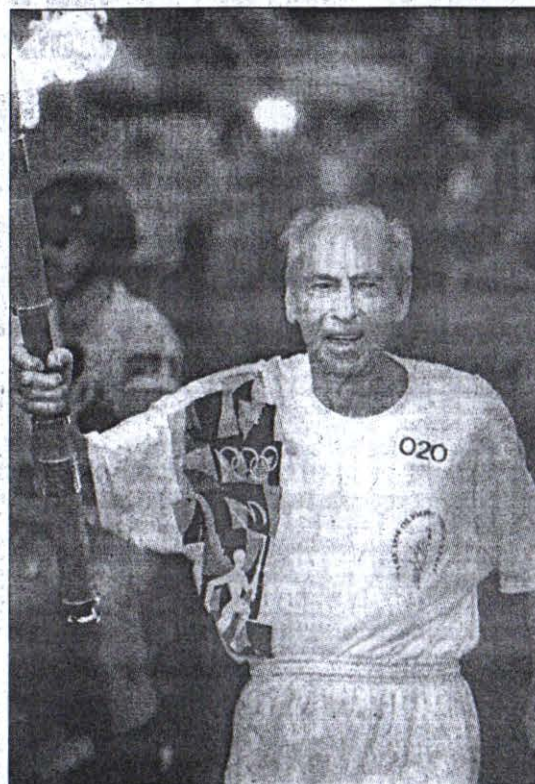
renewed energy.

"He was a really good friend of mine. I'm going to miss him," Freeman said Wednesday. "He was a great storyteller. He led a quiet life ... but he was very hyper. He had a good sense of humor."

Scott, a Georgia native, gained nationwide attention during World War II as a fighter ace and combat leader in the China-Burma-India theater. He was awarded three silver stars, three Distinguished Flying Crosses and five air medals. He also worked with Gen. Claire Chennault's Flying Tigers, a volunteer force of pilots who fought in China.

Scott told the Daily

See MAVERICK, A5



Retired Brig. Gen. Robert L. Scott, author of "God Is My Co-Pilot" carries the torch in Warner Robins, Ga., on its way to Atlanta for the 1996 Summer Olympics.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/COURTESY OF MUSEUM OF AVIATION

MAVERICK: Adventures continued after career

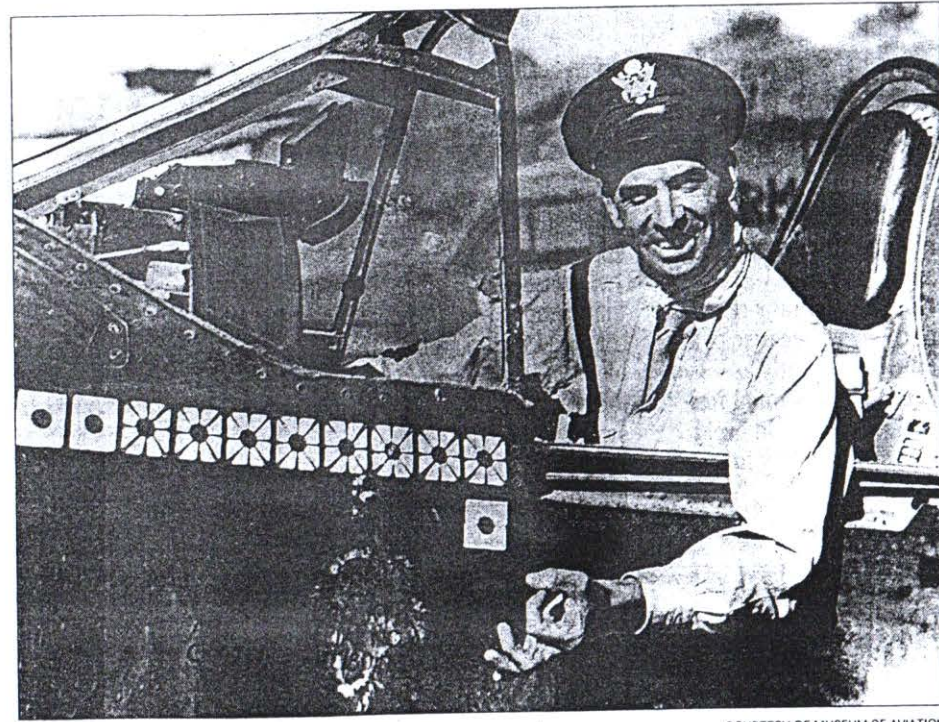
From A1

News-Sun in 1988 that "God Is My Co-Pilot," based on his experiences as a fighter pilot, was finished in three days on a cylinder recorder. He said one of his other books published in 1988, "The Day I Owned the Sky," was written in his Sun City home.

"I'm more proud of this than any other book I've written because it was done with a 79-year-old brain," Scott told the Daily News-Sun in 1988.

His adventures didn't end as he got older. At age 76, Scott succeeded in walking the length of the Great Wall of China. He carried the Olympic torch in 1996 and flew an F-15 fighter jet on his 88th birthday, as well as a B-1 bomber when he turned 89, Hibbitts said.

Annie Boon may be reached at 876-2532 or aboone@aztrib.com.



COURTESY OF MUSEUM OF AVIATION

Col. Robert L. Scott Jr. was a combat leader in the China-Burma-India theater during WW II.

WWII flying ace Robert L. Scott, 97

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WARNER ROBINS, Ga. —
+ Retired Brig. Gen. Robert L. Scott, the World War II flying ace who told of his exploits in his book *God Is My Co-Pilot*, died Monday. He was 97.

The Georgia-born Scott rose to nationwide prominence during World War II as a fighter ace in the China-Burma-India Theater, then with his bestselling 1943 book, made into a 1945 movie starring Dennis Morgan as Scott.

His other books include *The Day I Owned the Sky* and *Flying Tiger: Chennault of China*.

Scott, who retired from the Air Force, won three Distinguished Flying Crosses, two Silver Stars and five Air

Medals before he was called home to travel the country giving speeches for the war effort.

He shot down 22 enemy planes with his P-40 Warhawk, though he recalled some were listed as "probable" kills.

"You had to have two witnesses in the formation, or you needed a gun camera to take a picture," he once said. "Only we didn't have gun cameras in China. I actually had 22 aerial victims, but I only had proof of 13."

He worked with the Flying Tigers, Gen. Claire Chennault's famed volunteer force of pilots who fought in China, but he was not one of its original members in mid-1941.

At 33, Scott was considered

too old for combat and was still at a training job in California when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and the United States entered the war in December of that year.

After he got a call to serve in combat, he was assigned to a mission to bomb Tokyo from China. When that plan was scrubbed, he flew gasoline and ammunition to the Flying Tigers over Japanese-held territory. When the Tigers were formally incorporated into the Army as the 23rd Fighter Group of the China Air Task Force, Scott was asked to be its commander.

In the years just after the war, Scott was one of the proponents of making the Air Force into a separate service.

Report of co-author elicits explanation from 'Co-pilot' writer

By EVELYN BARBER
Editorial page editor

An obituary in the Daily News-Sun June 11 — and in other newspapers nationwide — under Deaths Elsewhere caught the eye of Sun Citian Bill Lewis, who wrote to an old friend, author Robert L. Scott Jr., about it. Lewis alerted Jane Freeman, as well, to this rather puzzling death notice.

The obituary, reporting the death of Anthony A. Mueller Sr., 77, of Florence, Ky., came to us via The Associated Press wire service. The article said Mueller had been a member of the World War II Flying Tigers and co-author of "God Is My Co-pilot."

Now Jane, and I'm sure a lot of other Sun Citians, know that Scott wrote the book, no co-author mentioned. In a letter last week, Scott recalled how the book came about:

"Co-pilot never was actually written, except to be rendered into a manuscript by Mr. Scribner's secretary. I mean by this I had only three days, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday," he wrote.

"There was the 'sermon' (Scott had preached) in St. Paul's Cathedral in Buffalo, N.Y., on Sunday. Dean Austin Pardue, pastor, took me to New York City by train that night to meet his publisher, Charlie Scribner, on Monday — to whom I expanded on the 'sermon' for four hours. Thus, I had Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday to 'write' the book."

Scott had to be in Phoenix to take command of Luke AFB (then Luke Field) on Friday. When "poor old Mr. Scribner threw up his hands" at that, Scott suggested a Dictaphone. Scribner sent a case of cylinders to Scott at the Waldorf and he filled 75 of them in 72 hours "with my thick Georgia accent."

"Oh, I wasn't lucky enough to have any so-called 'co-author' on that half-century old book," wrote Scott. But he concluded, after "I mulled it all over this hot and muggy weekend and though I had no normal co-author, there gradually came the realization that maybe I did have one. ... My co-pilot — God Himself."

Scott, at 81, enjoys a rare privilege. He flies an F-15 each year on his birthday. Old friends can write to him at Heritage of Eagles, P.O. Box 2469, Warner Robins, Ga. 31099.

"God Is My Co-pilot" is considered one of the greatest inspirational books ever written. You can check it out at either of Sun City's libraries.

Double takes



Author shares the 'Sky' with public

By P. ATWOOD WILLIAMS

Total editor

THE DAY I OWNED THE SKY. By Robert Lee Scott Jr. (Brig. Gen. USAF, Ret.), Bantam Books. 232 pages. \$17.95.

SUN CITY — The publisher changed retired USAF Brig. Gen. Robert Lee Scott Jr.'s proposed title from "The Maverick General" to "The Day I Owned the Sky," and cut the text from 450 pages to 232.

But the essence of the boy who tried unsuccessfully to fly from the rooftop of a stately Macon, Ga., home — and the man who flew over (and walked on top of) the Great Wall of China and in the footsteps of Marco Polo — is there.

And as readers, we can all own a piece of Scott's sky, just as we may have experienced India, Europe, Annapurna and Kon Tiki through the pens of Rudyard Kipling, Richard Halliburton, Sir Edmund Hillary and Thor Heyerdahl.

"I'm more proud of this than any other book I've written because it was done with a 79-year-old brain," said Scott in a phone interview from the campaign office of the Museum of Aviation at Robins Air Force Base, Warner Robins, Ga.

His first book, "God Is My Co-Pilot," was done in three days in 1943 on a cylinder recorder. But Scott wrote "Sky" in his Sun City kitchen, standing at the cutting board and writing longhand before going to his Mac Plus computer with 20 megabytes.

"As backup, of course, I used floppy disks," he said.

In 1985, The News-Sun published three episodes of "Co-Pilot" in which Scott had an adventure with a watermelon bomb raid on an agricultural inspection station. In an interview at that time he discussed "God Is My Co-Pilot," "Damned to Glory" (about P-40 aircraft), "Runaway to the Sun," "Between the Elephant's Eyes," "Samburu," "Flying Tiger: Chenault of China," "Look of the Eagle," "A Tiger in the Sky," his self-published "God Is Still My Co-Pilot," "Boring a Hole in the Sky," and "Return to the Great Wall," which appeared as a Reader's Digest condensed book.

Scott lived in Sun City from 1973 to 1987. He describes his home as directly under the Luke Air Force flight path.

He says he has been fascinated with planes since he was four years old. And he chose to take his Boy Scout merit badge with his version of the Wright Brothers plane instead of a model and recalls seeing in Billy Mitchell in a PW-9.

In "Sky," Scott shares his frustrations at being too old for training and too young for command and tells how he lied to get into the air group flying support for the Chinese during World War II.

Review

There is no holding back on feelings of guilt over choosing to fly or sit out the war as a teacher-trainer. Scott's respect for Gen. Claire Chennault — who was in charge of American pilots — and details of his life and combat while based in a Nine Dragon Cave near Guilin, China, fill in gaps of a war never known by some and almost forgotten by others. Some of the details were first described in "God Is My Co-Pilot".

It was fees for sale of the movie rights and film consultation for "Co-Pilot" that earned

Scott his first home in the South where he left his wife and daughter for the second time to return to China.

Later, in "Sky," he explains how after retirement he made 80 speeches in 90 days to help pay for an expensive apartment in Phoenix.

Scott has the ability to vividly describe the joys of flight over parts of the world which many of us have only heard about before. He shares his fulfillment of a boyhood dream to follow the Silk Route of Marco Polo and walk on the Great Wall of China — the serpent he had cherished as a kid when seen in the National Geographic

and later flown over in his Flying Tiger fighter plane.

"I'm not a writer, but I'm a storyteller," Scott said in 1985.

That is true. Scott has written an exciting story of his China re-visited and many of the offbeat things he has done in his military career.

"The Day I Owned the Sky" would make a terrific novel, but the fact that it is true, and that it has been shared by a raconteur par excellence, make it even better.

The reading public can be happy that instead of just one book, which, Scott says, everyone has in him," Scott had plenty of books.

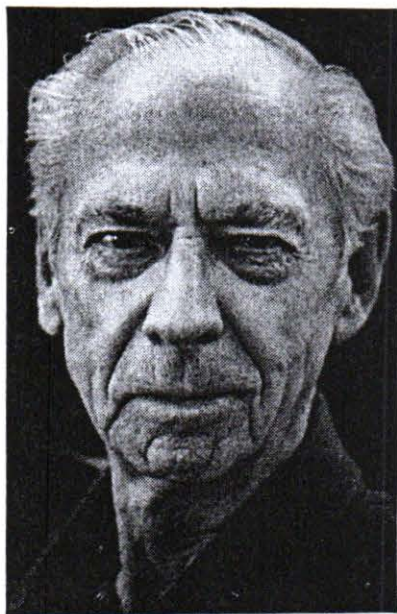
OVER



Photo courtesy Army Air Corps

FLYING ACE — Piloting a P-40K Warhawk in 1943, Robert L. Scott Jr. — then a colonel with the Army Air Corps — did a public relations tour at various

U.S. air bases. One of the stops included Luke Field (now Luke Air Force Base), where Chinese pilots were being trained in P-40s.



News-Sun file photo

AIRBOURNE AUTHOR — Retired Brig. Gen. Robert Lee Scott Jr. continues his saga of wartime experiences in his latest book, "The Day I Owned the Sky."

Scott to autograph books

PHOENIX — Brig. Gen. Robert L. Scott Jr. will make two appearances in the Valley this weekend to promote his autobiography, "The Day I Owned the Sky."

He'll be the luncheon speaker Saturday at the Arizona Press Women's annual meeting at the Airport Holiday Inn, 3737 E. Van Buren. He will speak to members, workshop participants and high school communication contest winners at 12:15 p.m.

Hardback copies of his autobiography (\$17.95) and the paperback version of his first book, "God Is My Co-Pilot" (\$5) will be on sale.

Profits from the sale of the books will be donated to Heritage of Eagles Museum of Aviation at Robins Air Force Base in Georgia, where Scott is campaign chairman.

Other Arizona authors who will be at the autograph tables are Sun City Wester Jeanne Maxant Blanchet, Valley residents Pat Meyers and speaker Terri Fields and Tucsonian Sandal English.

Those wishing to attend the \$12.50 luncheon should make reservations by Thursday to Gerry Paul, 8315 Devonshire Ave. Scottsdale, Ariz. 85251. Phone: 946-7778.

At 2 p.m. Sunday, Scott will talk about his autobiography at the Sun City Library, Bell Recreation Center, 16828 99th Ave.

He will also autograph copies, which will sell for \$15. He will donate the profits to the library.

Pilot-author still 'lucky' at 80 years

By Betty Latty

Gazette correspondent

Fighter pilot. Decorated air combat ace. Maverick. Best-selling author ("God Is My Co-Pilot," 14 other books.) Air Force base commander (Luke AFB.) World traveler (Great Wall of China, on foot.) Husband, father and grandfather — and former Sun City resident (16 years.)

Brig. Gen. Robert Lee Scott (USAF Retired) is all of the above.

But when asked how he would describe himself, one word zinged along the telephone lines with only a split-second's hesitation: "Lucky!"

"Yes, lucky. I have been the most fortunate person you know of. I met the right girl, had the finest wife, the finest daughter — and I belong to that maybe-one-third of the population which gets to do what it wants to do."

Scott, who turned 80 on April 12, "we partied for three days," reported his secretary, Sharon Aiken) at Robins Air Force Base, Ga., added, "here I am, at 80, in a new job that gives me opportunity to help educate young people, with my 15th book just published and another on the drawing board. Sure, I'm lucky."

The general left Sun City last year to become chairman and money-raiser for the Heritage of Eagles Campaign, which supports the Museum of Aviation at Robins AFB.

He had expected 40 people for his birthday celebration, and 400 showed up. "Well, I don't like being 80, but that party was a wonderful way to start it off."

"Scotty," as he is known to even his grandchildren, will return to the Valley of the Sun in mid-month, for a lecture and book promotion visit. On May 14, he will be guest speaker at the 12:15 p.m. luncheon meeting of Arizona Press Women at Holiday Inn Airport East, 4300 E. Washington St., Phoenix.

The next day, he will be in Sun City for a 2 p.m. autograph party and reception at the Sun City Library, Bell Recreation Center branch.

His newest book, "The Day I Owned the Sky," has just been published by Bantam Books.

The general, who was commander of Luke AFB in 1956-57,

See ■ Scott, Page C

■ Scott

lived in Sun City for 16 years before leaving for a new career and residence in Warner Robins, Ga. "My sister in Tucson, and brother in California, think I am crazy to leave Arizona to start a new job at my age, but I'm happy to have the challenge," he said.

In a way, he has taken himself, complete with southern accent, back home. He was born in Waynesboro, Ga., and grew up in Macon. Even then, he was going places. His first flight attempt, at age 12, ended in a crash landing after take-off from a three-story house. Before graduation from high school in 1928, he sailed about half the world as a deck hand on a freighter. He vowed then that someday, he'd get to the Great Wall of China.

His latest book was written — in longhand — while he lived in Sun City. The book was another challenge. It was a means of coping with bouts of depression, following retirement and the death of his wife.

"I went to Scripps Clinic in La Jolla and the psychiatrist told me there was nothing wrong with me. He said, you've written 14 books.

Go home and write the 15th."

The newest book's title comes from the time when Scott, then a brash lieutenant (he was a West Point grad in 1932) stationed in Long Island, N.Y., was courting his future wife, who lived in Georgia. The suitor pressed his case by personally flying his love letters: "I'd fly down to Georgia, drop off my letters into the field's mail receptacles with the request they be delivered to Miss Catherine Green."

"That lovely young lady had three special beaux, including a fraternity president and all of them good-looking."

The general chuckled. "But I won, because I had better transportation."

Then, he added, after making the mail drop to his sweetheart, he pulled up into the air and "I felt like I owned the sky."

His talk during the May 14 luncheon will include anecdotes about his visit to Taipei last fall, when he attended a reunion of the 14th Air Force Association with members of the 23rd Fighter Group, which he commanded under Gen. Clair Chennault of 'Flying Tiger' fame. He also will

discuss some of his adventures while traversing the Great Wall of China, mostly in disguise, and on foot, when he was 76 years old.

Scott, who in World War II, flew as a combat leader, was awarded three silver stars, three Distinguished Flying Crosses, and five air medals. In 1943, he was ordered back to the states to make promotional speeches on behalf of the war effort, and wrote his best-selling "God Is My Co-Pilot," which later was made into a movie. After more flying in China, he was assigned to the Pentagon to help win autonomy for the Air Force.

He came to Arizona in 1947 as commander of the first jet fighter school at Williams AFB. His final assignment was as Luke AFB commander.

There are more books ahead for him, said the general. The next likely will be a novel, and won't be written in longhand. "I'm having so much fun with my word processor, writing is enjoyable. I was really afraid of computers, but I'm not any more."

Scott also is thinking of building a house in Georgia. "I plan for it to have two bedrooms and two baths

upstairs. Some people don't like stairs, but I like to look down and get a view."

Those projects will fall between the extensive speaking tour he plans through the summer, including a June 1 visit to the Air Force Academy in Colorado, where he will swear in new officers.

"All this effort is good for me," he said. "I don't have time for depression."

"I figure we are here on this earth for a purpose. If we run out of purposes, we are just occupying space and shouldn't be here."

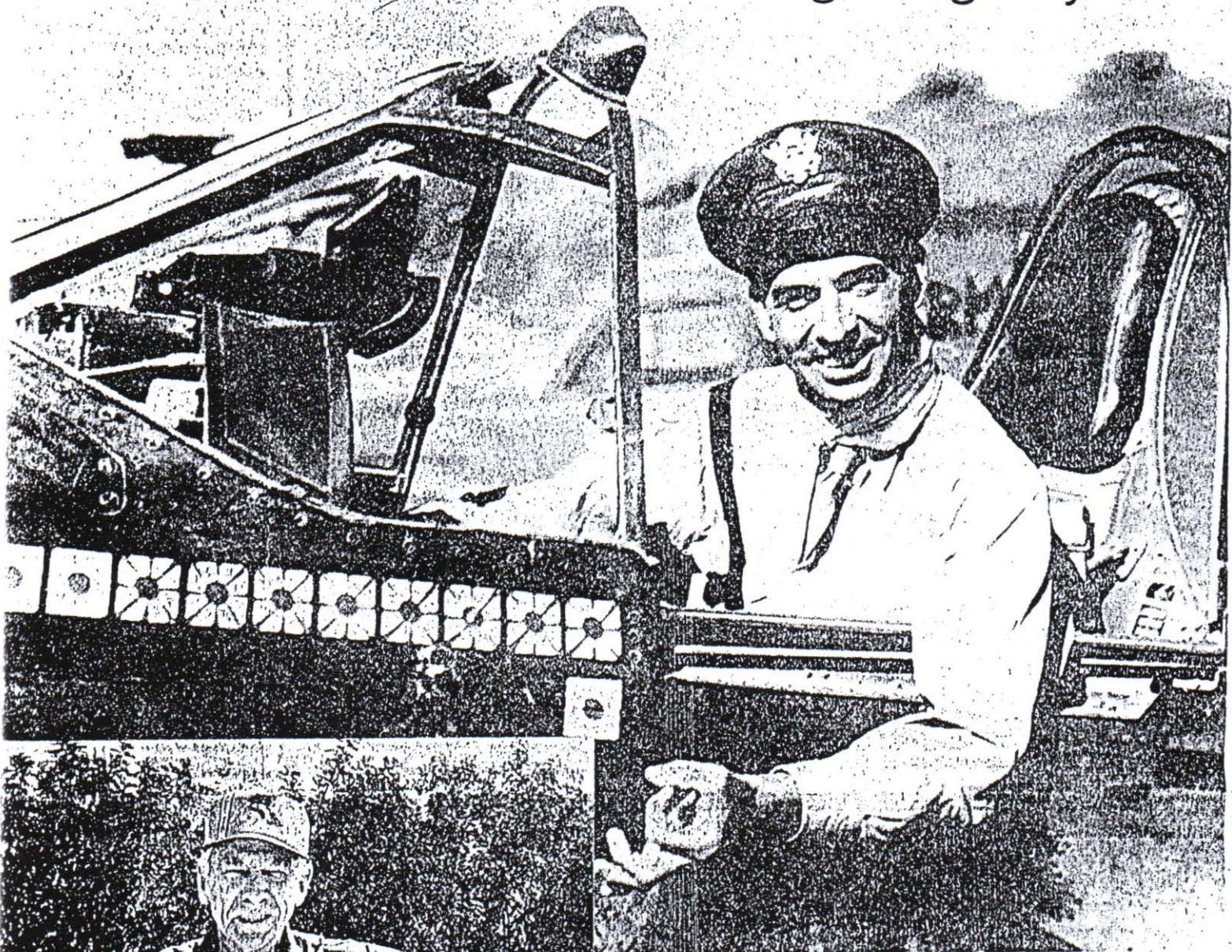
■
Scott will speak May 14 at the 12:15 p.m. luncheon sponsored by Arizona Press Women during its state conference at Holiday Inn Airport East, 4300 E. Washington St., Phoenix. The cost is \$12.50 per person. Reservation information is available by calling 246-8292 or 588-5771.

In Sun City on May 15, Scott will autograph copies of his new book during a 2 p.m. reception at the Sun City Library, Bell Recreation Center branch, 99th Avenue and Bell Road. Proceeds from book sales at the reception will benefit the library. Information is available by calling 974-2569.

From Page A

God is my co-pilot'

Sun Citian relives Pacific fighting days



By RICK GONZALEZ

The year is 1942 and the second world war is raging on.

The skies over Burma are cloudy. The faint purr of airplane engines can be heard.

Slowly, the purr grows louder, finally erupting into a roar. Suddenly, a plane breaks through the clouds and into sight! Then another plane, and another.

Eventually, a total of 27 planes appear, all flying in single-file formation — Japanese fighter planes, on their way to complete their mission: Attack and destroy any and all American troops in the area.

Urgent coded message received: Japanese fighters on their way to attack!

Instantly, 18 American fighter pilots take their fighter "ships" to the skies. Within 10 minutes they have reached 20,000 feet and are now above the Japanese fighter plane caravan.

The Japanese pilot leader looks up toward the sun. He thinks he sees something, but he's not sure. He strains to see what's there.

In one quick moment, his worst fear is realized: He is looking directly at an American fighter plane. He knows he is a sitting duck.

He turns away from the American planes and drops his bombs to make his plane lighter in the hope of escaping the enemy. The other 26 planes do the same. However, as they turn they leave their planes exposed to the enemy, with no guns to protect.

See ACE/page 6

the pursuit men," says Life magazine, "was their ace pilot." He has a thick Southern accent and a thick mustache. When he is angry, he is

Photo by Bret McKeand

OFF WE GO ... Flying ace Brig. Gen. Robert Scott poses beside a life-sized portrait of himself taken during his famed flying days. Pictured top, Scott, during World War II, was one of the U.S. Air Force's most successful fighter pilots. Now retired and living in Sun City, he is the author of 15 books.

SCOTT,
ROBERT

emselves.

One by one, the Americans shoot down all 27 Japanese fighters. In the end, only two American fighters are lost in the battle. The remaining 16 victorious American fighters head back home to await their next battle in the sky.

Although the story may sound like a scripted scene from one of countless World War II movies, it was a real scene, a real battle. And it is told by Air Force Brig. Gen. Robert L. Scott, the American fighter pilot who led the victorious fighters in combat, and who now lives here in Sun City.

Scott, 78, author of numerous books, including the famed "God Is My Co-Pilot," always knew he would fly someday, as did his father.

"When I was four years old, my mother knew I was going to be a pilot," he says, "and I always prayed I'd be a fighter pilot."

As a child he used to idolize such flying legends as Capt. Eddie Rickenbacker and Germany's Red Baron. "It didn't matter what country they were from," he says. They were great fighter pilots and that's all that mattered.

Scott's fascination with flying began during his childhood days in Macon, Ga. As a young boy, he joined the Boy Scouts and by the age of 17 he had accumulated more merit badges than any other scout in the south.

Even as a Boy Scout he put his flying fascination to work. One day in point is when he was attempting to attain one particular merit badge.

In order to receive the badge, he had to build a model plane, and, by using a remote control, fly the plane a certain distance. While other Scouts were putting together small model planes, Scott was building a full-sized replica of the Wright brothers' plane, which turned out to be a glider plane.

When it came time to fly it, however, things didn't go so well and the young pilot-to-be ended up crash landing his masterpiece in a rose bush.

"That was the first and only crash landing I ever made," Scott says. With nothing injured, except maybe his spirit, Scott was allowed to tear apart the glider.

As the years went by, Scott's interest in flying soared. He attended West Point Military Academy and graduated in 1932. After graduation he transferred to the Air Corps and earned his pilot wings.

Later, in 1934, Scott began flying mail to various cities when the army took over the task from civilian airlines. Scott points out that flying mail was very hazardous at that time because pilots were unfamiliar with the routes and adverse weather conditions often made flying difficult.

In 1934, Scott began his pursuit plane training in Panama, and then switched to the Boeing P-12. If given the chance, he would do anything, anytime. As a result, he was dubbed "the time hog" by his buddies.

Randolph Field in Texas was Scott's next stop, where he served as a flight instructor. From there he went on to California to command the largest flying school in the United States — Cal-Aero Academy.

It was around this time that Scott encountered what could have been a major setback in his military career. He was told, that at 28 years old, he was too old to be a fighter pilot. The cut-off age had recently been changed to 28.

Scott was not, however, ready to accept the new ruling without a struggle. His whole life he had wanted to be a fighter pilot and had trained to be one. He was determined to achieve his dream.

See ACE/page 7

of a lifetime.

Failing to receive help from congressmen and senators, he resorted to telling a fabrication. When asked if he had ever flown a B-17 Flying Fortress, Scott said yes, even though he had never done so. By doing this, his fighter pilot career was kept alive.

Later, in Burma, Scott met and became friends with Gen. Claire Chennault. He also flew with the infamous Flying Tigers. Although he was never an official member of the group, he flew many "guest missions" with them.

Eventually, Scott was sent into battle and put his fighter training to use. In World War II, fighter pilots fought face to face in their planes. In an aerial battle, Scott says, "I got so close to the enemy's plane that I could practically see his instrument panel."

"I lost a lot of wingmen during the war," Scott says. "I feel especially bad about that because I know the enemy was shooting at me. However, they shot a little off and killed my wingmen instead."

By being victorious in aerial combat, Scott became a member of the American Fighter Aces Association. In order to become a member, a pilot must accumulate at least five "kills," meaning that he must shoot down at least five enemy aircraft.

In all, Scott had 13 confirmed victories and nine "probables" during the war. The nine "probables" were later confirmed, bringing Scott's total to 22 "kills."

Only two other men have more "kills" than Scott. World War I fighting ace Rickenbacker and World War II veteran and Paradise Valley resident Joe Foss, both with 26 "kills."

If you ask Robert Scott what special quality is needed in order to be a successful fighter pilot, he is quick to answer. "Desire," he says. "We (fighter pilots) all have the same abilities. The person who kills the enemy first is the one who sees him first."

"There are two types of fighter pilots. One type will go into battle with a hesitant attitude. This type of pilot, when it comes time for an aerial battle, will think to himself: Wait a minute, I have a family back home. Do I want to take a chance and be killed, or should I pull out?"

"This type of pilot will be killed in combat because of his hesitation," says Scott.

"The other type of fighter pilot will go into battle with the intention of knocking out as many enemy planes as possible. This pilot will not think twice about whether he should fight or not. This type of pilot will live to talk about the war."

Scott says "panic, tentativeness and indecision kills fighter pilots."

In the years since the war, Scott has written 14 books and is currently in the process of getting his 15th book published. His first book, "God Is My Co-Pilot," sold millions of copies and was on the best seller list for two years.

The book, which Scott wrote in just three days, was later made into a major motion picture, on which he served as technical advisor.

Traveling all over the world has been one of many highlights in Scott's life. One outstanding major highlight occurred in 1982 when, at the age of 72, he walked the entire Great Wall of China. The event was so memorable that "Readers Digest" even did a feature story on the Sun City resident.

Content with the quiet solitude offered him in Sun City, Scott still enjoys reminiscing about his fighting days over the Pacific.

Never one to quit chasing dreams or to allow his age to interfere with accomplishments, Scott still pursues his activities with the same zest and enthusiasm as when he was younger. And it appears there are still a great deal more activities he would like to conquer.

Ag station 'bombing' produces bumper crop

Last in a series

This is the conclusion of an adventure involving Col. Robert L. Scott, a Sun Citian who was stationed at Williams Air Force Base in Chandler 37 years ago.

The adventure is one of the chapters in Scott's unpublished book "The Maverick General." Scott and two others have just returned from a revenge mission: the bombing of the agricultural inspection station at Blythe, Calif., with 2,000 pounds of watermelons.

By ROBERT L. SCOTT Jr.

The three of us were still laughing when we landed at Willie (Williams Field), but no one explained why we were so merry. The crew chief had helped load the melons, and since crew chiefs always know everything their planes do, he laughed, too.

During the next year I didn't dare go through the Blythe checkpoint, heeding the axiom "leave well enough alone."

But not a word had reached me of the watermelon incident, and one day while in uniform, I dared drive up to the target checkpoint.

I had made one of my carefully itemized lists, to save time for us both, covering every piece of agricultural contraband I could think of. But I wasn't surprised when the inspector courteously requested that I open my trunk.

After a careful look among my baggage he seemed to notice for the first time that I was in an Air Force uniform.



"Colonel, one of your boys certainly worked us over—just about this time last year," he said pointing to the north of the Ag station.

I hadn't even dared to look that direction, and when I did I almost gasped. There was the verdant growth of the best stand of watermelon vines I had ever seen! Maybe an acre or two up the river (the center of impact) and 200 feet from where we stood was filled with healthy

melon vines vying with one another for space.

A few seemed to be heading for the ag station. Two of the most adventurous, maybe the most virile, had managed to climb the supports of a large wooden sign reading: "WELCOME TO CALIFORNIA." Only the "TO" was missing because of a gaping hole.

It was all I could do to keep a straight, impassive face and maintain my composure. But

suddenly the cold dread of exposure came over me. Perhaps the state authorities had remained quiet intentionally—no publicity in the press. Now the car, with the license plate they had been waiting for, had finally driven into their clutches. They had been biding their time, but now they had me.

But I calmed my fears by ceasing to dwell on the improbable and shook my head as I admired the verdant growth.

"It all reminds me of a beautiful lawn. What on earth is it? Did you plant it?" I remarked as casually as I could while smothering my laughter.

"Colonel, you are looking at the goddamdest melon crop I ever saw. And I was raised here in Blythe where they grow them. Why there are ripe watermelons out there. And I never will forget the airplane that delivered them—or more or less planted the seeds. Like I say, it was last year just about this time."

He took me by the elbow over

to where I could see the top of the big sign.

"See that sign with the big gaping hole between the two words? You won't believe this, but the biggest watermelon I ever saw made that hole. Went through there, tumbling. Funny thing is, when a load of fragile melons hits the ground, they don't all bust and splatter like I used to think they did when I dropped one off my dad's wagon as a kid." He paused.

"Well, that one bounced—ricocheted would be a better description—right off the ground, turning over and over and made that hole," he said shaking his head in disbelief.

I just stood there shaking my head at his story and still admiring the acres of vines with my insides quivering from wanting to laugh so much. Then I asked the inevitable.

"Did you get the number of the airplane?"

"Hell, Colonel. Number? Hell's fire, that guy was flying so

fast—flying so low, we ain't even decided yet what kind of plane it was! In fact, we don't even know if it was one of ours!"

Taking one last look at my lush melon crop, I thanked him and climbed back into my hot car and continued on into Blythe for gasoline. While the service station man was filling my tank and checking the oil, I was down on my knees with my tire gauge pretending to be checking the pressure. But I was laughing so hysterically there were tears in my eyes. I surely couldn't have read the numbers, anyway.

Just a few months ago, at age 77, I drove through that Blythe ag inspection point again. Their procedures have not changed in all these 37 years, but I am accustomed to it by now.

I looked expectantly at the target of revenge, but all is hidden by a large reddish-brown building that looks like a warehouse. As I drove into Blythe, I wondered what happened to all my melon vines.

Ag station at Blythe gets its fill of melons

Second in a series

Excerpts from a chapter of "The Maverick General" by Robert L. Scott Jr.

The action takes place 37 years ago when Colonel Scott was stationed at Williams Air Force Base, Chandler.

The colonel has loaded the bomb bay of an A-26 Invader attack bomber with 2,000 pounds of watermelon culls for a revenge mission.

By ROBERT L. SCOTT JR.

It's always a thrill even in the jet age to open wide the throttles on two loud Pratt and Whitney R-2800 engines and feel the eager pull of thousands of horses applied to great club propellers 12 feet in diameter.

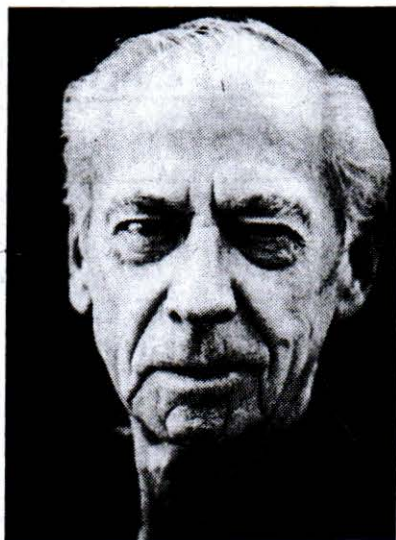
Their force plastered me back against my seat and we—Maj. Neil Johnson of Montana and Capt. Carl Hardy from Arkansas and I—flew low from the very first.

The Invader was made to hug the ground, weave among the contours of the hills and valleys to be underneath enemy radar. Our scampering, exuberant shadow reminded me of an eagle, swooping after its prey.

But I pulled up soon after takeoff and passed over Phoenix and suburbs at good altitude, breaching no FAA regulations. By the time we reached Wickenburg though, I was already letting down for Aguila and Hope, staying well north of the Los Angeles highway. Over Quartzsite we were right on the deck, too low to even see our shadow, and I had to raise a wing-tip now and then to avoid a tall saguaro. We were down where the Douglas A-26 was born to fly!

There's a low line of mountains that top out west of Quartzsite, and as we crossed the ridge, still hugging the terrain like a falcon, there was our target just across the slivery strand of the Colorado. The nose was already down and co-pilot Johnson passed the word "Target in sight" for bombardier Hardy to get ready.

I noted in our slanting dive we



ROBERT L. SCOTT JR.

were indicating 400 knots, aiming just north of the ag station at the empty desert. Out of the corner of my eye I could see the altimeter resting on zero, a fact verified by the tops of the saguaros passing our wingtips.

When the east bank of the river was almost underneath I realized I had been counting out loud as I sighted our target.

"One thousand and one—one thousand and two!" It was the same old cadence I had used to drop the honeydews for my dive-bombing practice in the trainer and to deliver bright orange message bags with letters to my wife Kitty Rix in Fort Valley.

"Open the doors!" I yelled as Arizona ran out.

Neil nudged Carl's shoulder with his foot and at no more than 10-foot altitude that 2,000 pounds of melons was hurled in their short parabolic trajectory at California—off to the side of the Ag station, so as not to risk life or limb of any living thing except the desert. But they had to be close enough to get across my message of "Yes, we have watermelons, Mr. Inspector!"

"Right on target. I never saw such a splash!" cried Neil.

I had to depend on him because I was focused on straight ahead as our 400-knot speed ate up the ground, which was only a blur beneath the Invader. Bank-

ing at near zero altitude, carefully turning northwest to avoid passing over any of Blythe, I felt the bomb bay doors close and we were streamlined again, but still so low I saw no shadow.

Thus we detoured Blythe where we might be identified and passed far north of the airport on top of the mesa, three miles west of town.

Only then did I climb and take up a heading for Burbank soon identifying Chuckwalla Road and Desert Center. By then we were at 5,000 feet and speeding on sedately for those fighter plane parts waiting for us at Lockheed Plant.

With that duty performed we returned to Willie by way of Yuma—far south of Blythe where our revenge melon bomb mission had had been right on its target.

NEXT: Waiting for recriminations.

Ag station draw's maverick general's

Robert L. Scott Jr. is author of 11 books, some of which have been printed also in German, Spanish and French.

They include: "God Is My Co-Pilot," "Damned to Glory," "Runway to the Sun," "Between the Elephant's Eyes," "Samburu," "Flying Tiger—Chenault of China," "Look of the Eagle," "A Tiger in the Sky," "God Is Still My Co-pilot," "Boring a Hole in the Sky" and "Return to the Great Wall."

The 23 chapters of his next book, "The Maverick General," have been completed and are at a publisher. General Scott has permitted the Daily News-Sun to publish an abridged version of one chapter of the autobiographical work.

In "Incident at Blythe," then-Colonel Scott is stationed at Williams Field in Chandler 37 years ago. Among his duties was flying to Burbank to bring back parts for his wing of fighter trainers.

At age 40 and a "full-bird colonel," he commits "a most juvenile and irresponsible act," as he describes it. He has only admitted it publicly once, at a surgeons' meeting at Luke Air Force Base, from which he retired to Sun City about a year ago.

INCIDENT AT BLYTHE

By ROBERT L. SCOTT JR.

There are agricultural inspection facilities on both sides of the stateline between Arizona and California. They are necessary because terribly destructive insects and scale diseases can be easily transported across state lines by automobile.

But during my first year at Willie (Williams Field) nothing I did could anticipate the zealous ag inspector's questions on the California side as I visited family and friends over there. Inspections became a hassle. Perhaps it was because I was a fighter pilot and always in a hurry. Whatever, I made a point to never have any agricultural contraband in my car: no citrus, no growing plants, no fresh fruit.

Yet, each time I stopped my vehicle as the sign said, the inspector replied to my negative "No sir" replies with something new.

"Do you have any cotton?"

But even as I was again saying "No sir," came:

"Sir, will you please open your trunk."

And of course I complied while wondering, "What in the world would I be doing hauling cotton in my car?"



"Sir, Do you have any watermelons?"

Finally I resorted to making a typewritten list before I left home. I read it to the inspector as I said, "Good morning," and before he could ask his own courteous question. This way I could save us both time and bother.

"Do you have any watermelons?"

"How in the heck could I hide a watermelon in my baggage?" I wondered. An apple or piece of citrus might be hidden or forgotten, or an orange, but the inspector never looked inside my lone piece of baggage in the trunk.

"No, sir—no watermelons."

"Please open your trunk, sir."

As I complied once again the germ of an idea was planted in this 40-year-old fighter-pilot's brain.

My relatively cool car heated up as I stood there in the desert sun answering questions in sight of Blythe. The inspector insisted on opening wide both the trunk and the car in that heat.

"They must be just doing their jobs," I reasoned. That is why I had typed my list. Perhaps the state regulations insisted they ask the ques-

tions routinely and then no man

answer, required them to make the

But as I submitted to the inevita

day I kept thinking about watermel

One day at Willie Field I sig

attack bomber, and that clinched it.

invaluable on procurement missio

supplies were needed in a hurry to

of jet trainers from being rendered

Commission on account of Parts

books listed the plane as the Dougl

number 723, but its more glamor

The Invader.

Put into action near the end of

the plane was designed to be heavy

going in low and fast armed w

machine guns in the nose. Her bo

hold a ton. And The Invader had be

every ounce—all the armor and a

gone and it was light as a feathe

powerful Pratt and Whitney R-280

best in the radial category which

club-props at fantastic rpms.

She would fly like a bat out of he

with throttles wide open, you could

read 375 knots and even more v

slightly depressed. What I had in mi

that nose slightly depressed and

running at full bore.

I would invade California at t

near Blythe with the bomb bay fill

melons. I would not aim at the sta

the side toward the open desert

endanger life or limb or real estate.

My cargo was growing some

Phoenix and I would use rejects, or c

large or too small or even sunburne

was about 2,000 pounds of what

inspector had asked me about.

I set out to buy our muniti

operations officer of the 352nd T

Maj. Neil Johnson of Montana, an

greatest pilots I ever knew. We fou

near Glendale and filled two six-by-s

2,000 pounds which were off-load

Invader's bomb bay without attract

tion.

With the maw of the A-26 full, y

to invade California. Our other crew

one of my golf partners, Capt. Car

Arkansas.

NEXT: In Wednesday's News

away!"

HE'S NO AUTHOR - HE'S A STORY TELLER

DAILY NEWS SUN
VIEW SECTION
FRIDAY, OCT. 10, 1985

By P. ATWOOD WILLIAMS
Staff Writer

"I'm not a writer, but I'm a storyteller. My grandfather in Aiken, South Carolina was a storyteller ... if it doesn't interest me, I can't expect it to interest anyone," said the author of 11 books with the 12th ready now for a publisher.

Air Force Gen. Robert L. Scott, Jr.'s books have also been published in German, French and Spanish, which could add to the title count.

But Scott isn't counting. He's writing. He stands at his sink at the meat cuttingboard with a yellow legal pad and writes his story in longhand before going to his IBM type-

writer to apply his four-finger technique.

It wasn't always so.

He dictated his first book in three days in 1943, but Charles Scribner's secretaries couldn't understand his southern accent. Then a colonel, Scott was bored with the U.S. tour for his commanders and hoped to use the book to get himself and more airplanes back in action in China. He determinedly applied two fingers to the task of typing his first China adventures and finished it in just a few days.

"Scribner didn't like the title, and we got a bad review in the N.Y. Herald Tribune in 1943, but very soon *God Is My*

Co-Pilot was a best seller and Scribner called me to say, 'You did not let your publisher down,'" Scott recalled.

Today a first edition of that book is worth at least \$100. And at a recent military reunion in Montgomery, Ala., a judge asked Scott to autograph a 42-year old copy of the book he had stolen as a young man from the public library, later paying the fine to keep the book.

The P-40 aircraft was the main character of Scott's next book, *Damned to Glory*, in 1944. An old P-40 talks to a little P-40, and Scott uses "doggeral verse" in the meter used by Kipling to introduce each chapter about the plane "damned by the politicians, but flown to glory by pilots," he wrote.

The next year Scribners asked him for a book for boys ages 12-15 and what resulted was *Runaway to the Sun*, a book about men he had taught to fly and became Air Force heroes.

"Teaching others to fly is probably my greatest contribution in life," Scott reminisced.

An African elephant became the hero of his next book. At age 15 Scott learned about Samburu when he jumped ship on which he had been a deck boy in the Merchant Marines. In Nairobi a white hunter whom he knew from his Boy Scout days took him to "see the elephants—the Samburu Herd."

Scott discovered the exist-



Greeting the Chinese with open arms as he sits astride a camel, Gen. Robert L. Scott Jr. rides along the Great Wall of China in 1980.

ence of the herd again in 1951 when, while stationed near Munich, he flew weekly 1,200 miles to Tripoli to supervise the men in his command.

The next year, after spending hours in a museum studying an elephant skull and practicing the trajectory necessary to kill an elephant with a broom rifle, he was ready for the hunt.

For 30 days Scott hunted with a big game gunsmith, but left his party to track Samburu beginning in the northern swamp where the young are born each year.

"I had agreed to pay only \$5,000 for the hunt instead of the usual \$10,000 and was going to write a book on my safari. The ivory from the kill would make up the payment," explained Scott.

Samburu charged the party out of 12-foot elephant grass, and also destroyed the camp, but when the big moment came, Scott fired over his head.

"I had welched on my promise, but the professional Hunters Association of East Africa made me a member because I didn't kill him, and I wrote *Between the Elephant's Eyes* anyway, followed by *Samburu*, a book for boys.

His sixth book, *Flying Tiger: Chenault of China*, was published by Doubleday.

Next came a novel, *Look of the Eagle*, the title of which he got from his storyteller grandpa, who tailored his tales to each person and counseled Scott to "look at a person's eyes."

"If he's looking over the horizon, he has desire to accomplish something—the look of the eagle," his grandpa said.

Around 1956 he wrote an original paperback, *A Tiger in the Sky*, an anthology of military events, published by Ballantine Books.

Scott next tackled *God Is Still My Co-pilot*, the "toughest book I had written." He was 59 years old and "fighting mad" at the government's policies, vis-a-vis the "no win" war in Vietnam.

He raised money to get the book published by the now-defunct Augury Press in Phoenix, not far from Luke AFB, where he was serving his last command.

During his years as an author, he said, religious groups have objected to the relegation of God as "co-pilot." Once when some nuns took him to task over this, he taxied his

single-seated plane up and showed them the cockpit.

His next effort was *Boring a Hole in the Sky* (the Air Force term for "just putting in time,"), his attempt to blow the whistle on the Pentagon who had looked the other way at the waste of manpower. It was "written better, edited better and published better," said Scott. Although published by Random House, it was "permitted to die" without ever being pushed, he explained.

In 1980, he walked the Great Wall of China, whose image he had cut from a National Geographic magazine 38 years earlier.

He described in his book how he traversed 1,296 miles on the rammed earth or masonry wall on 72-year-old feet and rode between sections of the wall on camel, truck, bus, oxcart, jeep, boat and train. In April, 1983 Reader's Digest condensed it as *Return to the Great Wall* over which he had made shadows with his plane's wings in World War II.

Scott will discuss this trip and book when he speaks to a Sun City book review group at 1:30 p.m. Oct. 17 in the Arizona Room at Fairway Rec Center.

"I have my subject ready in my mind and never write my speeches," said Scott, who readily admits he needs a writing project to keep him mentally fit these days.

He has finished 23 chapters of his next book *The Maverick General*, a title given him by one of his friends. The book recounts the "times I was fired, and the times I should have been fired and wasn't," he smiled.

"My vocabulary has increased because I have looked up so many words," said the man who claims he is "not a writer" and did poorly in English, grammar and math in high school.

Scott says he also reads his text aloud ... the storyteller influence, no doubt.

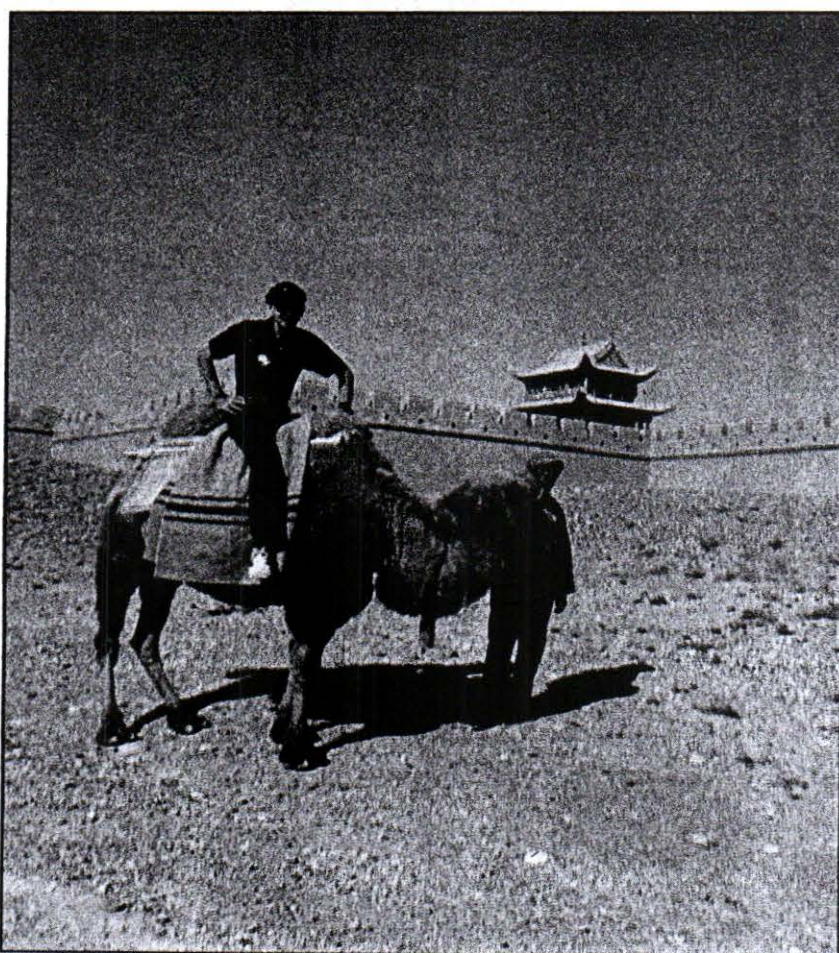
Currently he is negotiating with Random House and hopes they will edit and publish the text it took him six months to write. He looks forward to autograph parties all over the country and making publicity appearances.

The last chapter of his "love story between a pilot and a hundred fighters" is titled *The Ultimate Falcon*. In it he compares the first fighter plane he fought in which cost \$10,000 with the last one flown at age 76, made of titanium and costing \$19.4 million.

THE MAN WHO WALKED ACROSS CHINA

The incredible journey of Robert Scott,
author of *God is my Co-Pilot*

by Horace S. Mazet



'My trip to the great Chinese wall was one of great elation and bitter disappointment," said Gen. Robert L. Scott, Jr., USAF (Ret.) as we sat in his living room in Sun City not long ago. "I had long planned to walk the length of the Great Wall from its western end to the Yellow Sea, and now I was ready to begin. But there was no wall in this far

western, mountainous part of China!"

"No wall?"

"No—it had disintegrated in the long centuries, being made of mud. I would have to travel by bus to reach Khotan and join a camel caravan across the 900 miles of arid Taklamakan desert on what used to be the Emperor's Road. It has been called the Silk Road only for the last 180 years. Sand, sand and sand everywhere."

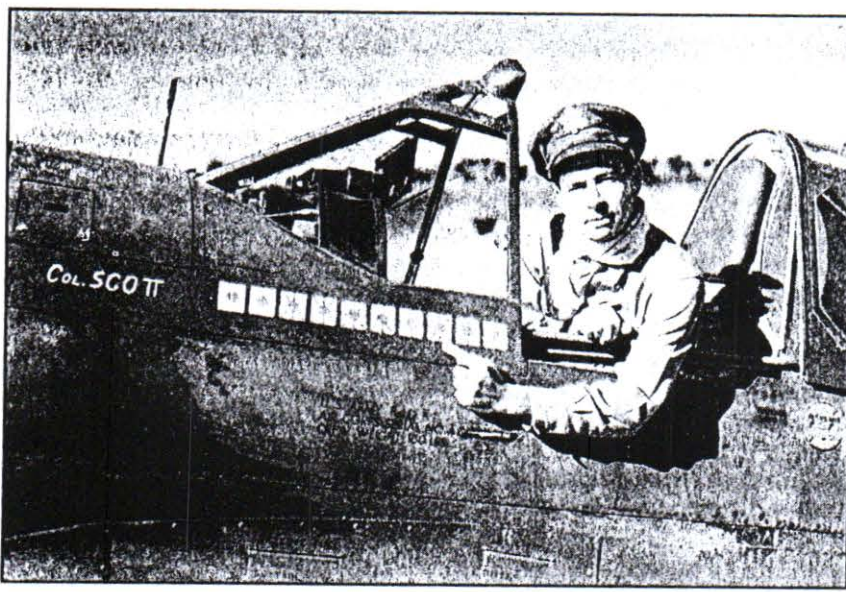
Scott thought a minute, recalled the latest disappointment in

OVER

Horace S. Mazet is a freelance writer who lives in Carmel, California.

7 JAN-FEB 1985

Az. Republic



Robert Scott in China, 1942

his 38-year dream to walk the length of the Great Chinese Wall. During World War II he had blazed a victorious trail across Chinese skies as a one-man air force and then was ordered to take command of the 23rd Fighter Group by that great tactician, Gen. Claire Chennault. During this phase of his flying he noted the shadow of his fighter plane's wings skipping across the Great Wall and resolved some day to return and walk its length. That no one had ever done such a feat did not deter him.

Anyhow," Scott continued, "when I tried to join a camel caravan, none was available. So I caught a ride on an army truck. It was a long, dusty, hot, interminable ride. We hit a sand storm that was worse than any I have ever seen in Arizona; it moved sand into drifts. And where drifts existed it moved them elsewhere. A few signs painted white on rocks had long ago been obliterated by flying sand. We had to drive without lights on. We lost half a day because of the storm, although we drove day and night, self-contained.

"I really didn't mind the heat. Maybe I was just so thrilled to be crossing the Taklamakan that I didn't notice the heat and dirt. I was finally on my way to the Emperor Wu Ti's wall, half flattened through the centuries."

"You finally found it?"

"Yes, I had found the ruins of

Wu Ti's wall nearby, situated where the Silk Road forks, in the most western part of the province of Gan Su. But let me tell you about Dunhuang and the Caves of the Thousand Buddhas. A tiny oasis is hidden between two famous mountains rising near Dunhuang: Mt. Can Wei and Mt. Ming Sha. All around lies a desert. But at this oasis, invisible until one is on top of it, are the Dunhuang Caves of the Thousand Buddhas, very ancient, discovered at the beginning of this century. They had been filled with blowing sand. From a geological point of view the position of the caves is quite vulnerable; any wind rising blows along the face of the cliffs straight into the caves where the statues and paintings are open to the weather. And now the entire site has been declared an historic monument. I went in. There are almost 2,000 statues, all Buddha, all sizes, some 100 feet high!"

"You took a picture of some of them?"

"You are not supposed to. But I am sure there are many more than the 2,000 Buddhas there, some not yet excavated. They were carved by merchants, to insure safe passage for their caravans."

Through services of a guide, Chang Jin, Scott was able to rent a car and driver to take him at last to Emperor Wu's wall. Here he was deeply disappointed again, for the wall was in such a state of bad repair that only parts

Robert Scott

were five or six feet high. The remainder had been demolished by time. A single fortress area had been restored, however, and close inspection of this site partly compensated.

And now it was the camel train. Chang Jin arranged for 11 Bactrian camels next morning, each with a driver. The General had his caravan at last, and soon the entourage moved out along the rammed wall toward Jin Yu Guan and the West Tower of Wan Li Chang Cheng (The Great Wall) which meanders over mountains and valleys 1,700 miles eastward to the end of his ambitious journey. The fabulous masonry wall has its western beginning at Jia Yu Guan and Scott was elated. Whenever the caravan halted for photographs, Scotty would mount the wall, then run along it until reaching a gap, as happy as if he owned a part of it. His dream was coming true at last.

Meals consisted of melons, tea and the remnants of cookies purchased at a shop in Dunhuang. After four days the wall had disappeared. Chang Jin knew it had been destroyed during the centuries, so he produced (magically) a car and the camel train was dismissed with protestations of friendship and warm thanks.

Driver, guide and Scott followed the map and, where they found remnants of the wall, the General would jump out and walk until the wall vanished again. Where he could, Scotty rubbed his hands along the brick, sentimentally, thinking of the aeons that had passed, and at times removed a fragment from the rubble for presents to youngsters in America who had requested them. Ex-Eagle Scout Robert Scott did not forget his friends.

"I was extremely happy to leave Jia Yu Guan," said Scott, reminiscing in his home in Phoenix. "This town marks the western end of the wall. If I was ever to reach the eastern end, I would have to hurry. My travel permit would expire unless I followed my star to the Yellow Sea."

He had planned his great trek for several years, written more than 200 letters and received only three which were promising. Then he faced the requirement that no one could enter China unless he was a member of an official tour. Seeing no difficulty in abandoning the tour when it came within range of the Great Wall, Scott remained on pins and needles, but was unable to quit the group; every morning roll call determined all hands were

present. And as a foreigner with blue eyes he would be unable to hide successfully.

In desperation he finally applied to the consulate in Peking and there met with some success. The way was made open, and he obtained a travel permit allowing him to travel. By plane, train, jeep, bus, on foot and car, he reached the far end of the wall, and began his ambitious journey to end before his permit expired. As he was 72 years old he did not feel that he could wait until diplomatic channels eased visitors to the

After four days, the wall had disappeared.

interior in future years. Scotty waits for no chance turn of fate—he is energetic, impatient and determined.

In his Arizona home he continually ran from one room to another, showing me various maps hung on the walls, with red lines indicating the see-saw trips back and forth until he was able to quit the official tour. Then he dumped a bag of shards on the coffee table. They were the souvenir stones he had brought back with him, to the puzzlement of the Customs authorities; these pieces of the Great Wall were for his Boy Scout friends. When I had admired them dutifully, he replaced them in the sack and ran back to another room.

Rangy, lean, nervous and at his fighting weight of 146, Scott moved about his house as if he were pursued by some Chinese devil, running each time to produce some bit of evidence that he had achieved his goal, his greatest adventure in peace time. When he sat it was on the floor, but he did not remain still very long. I thought his running suit and shoes were very appropriate.

"Mazie," he said, using my nickname, "I run about 10,000 meters three times a week. But lately I have been trying speed walking; it is just as good. I did not jog, I ran. Now my doctor tells me that this new exercise is just as beneficial for me. If I could only be hungry at supper time! I never eat lunch because then I wouldn't eat any supper, even though I cook it myself on my Chinese wok, which I lugged back from China. The doctors say I have "reactive depres-

sion"—who knows what that is? I think it's just sitting around this place. I am anxious to be going again, perhaps back to China."

This is the old Scotty I knew back in 1939-40 when we were instructing Air Corps Cadets in how to fly the sky. Lieut. Scott, at that time, always kept moving about, and on several occasions I discovered him dive-bombing one of our landing circles after hours, his ammunition being a lap-load of melons or cabbages. He was not idly having fun. He was practicing for the war to come, and never let an opportunity pass. Later on, at night above the overcast, I heard him sighting in on a certain mountain, then carefully letting down through the clouds to a safe landing (blind flying) in a trainer lacking proper instruments for such a feat. He used an air speed indicator, an altimeter, and a compass. He was preparing for his future role as the man who wrote *God is my Co-Pilot* from his activities in Chinese skies. And it was no mean best-seller; it is still in print after more than 40 years!

Between his two China visits he lost no time in driving ahead. His wife, now deceased, once told me, "I have never heard him say, 'It can't be done.' I don't think he knows the meaning of frustration. The only thing I have ever been jealous of was a P-12 pursuit plane in Panama when Scotty flew all the time during one month to represent his squadron in a competition." And his squadron took the trophy. By the time Scott retired from the Air Force he had acquired a total of 33,000 hours (second highest of any USAF pilot). Obviously he throws himself into any activity that appeals to his energetic personality.

In 1976 and 1977 the retired general left the USA and traveled on foot through the Karakoram Range of the Himalayas from Hunza to the Pass of Tagdumbash in 19 days. He watched the Red Chinese and the Soviets build a black-topped road 18 feet wide from remotest Afghanistan to China—which was prohibited. He saw it all from peaks far above the workers, and threw stones into forbidden territory.

"I enjoyed the company of my Hunzakut guide," he told me, "although I never learned much of his language. He kept saying to me '*Cho khon, hiyak khon.*' And that means: never offend a yak, much less a rajah. I believe I successfully passed the test."

Scott made a report to the Pentagon of his scouting through the hinterland, but

if any action resulted he never heard of it. His long walk of 340 miles, mostly uphill along Marco Polo's road was tempting enough to write a book about, but he had no climax, no ending. So a book lay dormant.

"I have to find a finish to my book," he told me in 1979. "And I have an idea: come with me. We will walk a thousand miles from Wu Wei along as much of the Great Wall as we can cover, to Peking. Here I think I can end my story. I am going even if I have to slip in from a regulation tourist group."

Lack of time and many obstacles prevented me from accompanying Scotty on his unprecedented adventure to my regret. His wife said once that she was "living with a stick of dynamite." I would have found it exhilarating to go.

Now Scott was in high gear and for several days reveled in walking portions of the Great Wall as he had seen it during WW II. At intervals he found ruins instead of a proper wall, yet he continued knocking off a regulation four miles an hour, now and then chiseling his name in Chinese characters, using a screwdriver and a rock for tools. He muttered "Kilroy was here" as he did so, eyeing the character for Scott which so closely resembles a running man.

His food consisted of oatmeal and some cookies, and melons which he obtained from farmers along the route, plus tea which he heated on small wood fires from scarce greasewood type branches of desert plants. All farmers giving him melons refused payment of any kind except perhaps color postcards, or one of his remaining copies of *Arizona Highways* brought from home on an impulse.

But he was in his element now, and before him stretched the happy conclusion of his dream if all went well. He would pass through FuKu, then across the Yellow River by ferry and on to Datong, each day bringing more joy and each evening calm repose in his sleeping bag on the Great Wall—otherwise known as Wanlichangchen, the long rampart of 10,000 li. (A "li" is one third of an English mile.)

It was bad news, perhaps disaster, at Datong. When Scotty slipped from official sight to begin his long trek, he had left a railroad train without permission, bound not to lose the opportunity within grasp. Now the Chinese Secret Police, who had been looking for him for the past nine days, took him into custody.

Please turn to page 20

Robert Scott

Continued from page 7

Constant prying into his whereabouts during the past half month, the police obviously considered him some sort of spy on a mission in their country, possibly connected with the CIA. And he had confessed to wandering along the edges of their nuclear test centers. What for?

A week of this trying experience brought Scott to the edge of patience, but he remembered that he had carved his progress with a screwdriver at certain places along the Great Wall, and suggested they could be verified. Each one, luckily, checked out and his story of wanting to walk the entire length of the wall was partially believed. The general was freed, but felt he would like to ride by train to Pekin. He had, however, come all this way to walk, and walk he would to the extent that the wall still existed to its eastern end in the Yellow Sea.

The police were not entirely convinced, and assigned a Mr. Li to accompany him, a personally conducted tour across mountains and near towns for 250 miles. During those nine days Mr. Li—whom Scott now called General Lee—proved to have a sense of humor, and walked with him on the wall, rode with him across gaps where the wall no longer remained, ate and slept in the same ruins, sharing shelter against the rains.

"When I first met Mr. Li—whom I promptly classified in my own mind as a former soldier because of his bearing—I considered him a typical inscrutable Chinese. He was to me ageless. He could outwalk me with packs on our backs and I was 72 and pretty sure I can walk as if I were 35 or 40. Mr. Li could have been 45 or 50. I figured he knew plenty about the Pre-Cultural Revolution. But he really was the essence of the human being you would like to have as that mythical companion on some desert island.

"At first," he continued, "I wondered if he understood my jokes and banter. He not only understood the punch lines and innuendos but was way ahead of me. I told him about Kilroy—who-was-here everywhere, and also, doling out my cookie crumbs, often said 'That's how the cookie crumbs,' He was, in short, the greatest personality I met on the whole wonderful journey, helpful, considerate, and—later—indispensable."

Day after day and night after night they concentrated on traveling the ancient rampart. Walking stretched into miles, and Scott suspected General Lee had at first been skeptical that an American could traverse the distances he claimed he had already covered. Soon he was convinced, and a warm respect developed between the two men.

Without this guide Scott might never have achieved his purpose. "When General Lee finally guided me to Ky-Pei-K'ou he left me with a letter granting permission to walk the final terminal of the wall. And when he left me with jeep and driver, he waved and called back, 'That's the way the cookie crumbs!'

"Once my back pack was replenished by the friendly commandant at the tower fortress of Ky-Pei-K'ou I knew for sure that I had proven to the Security Police that I was not a CIA spy. Then, as you go another 130 or 145 miles eastward from this center, you come to the end of the Great Wall at Shanhaikwan. Each day I would expect to find the ocean at the end of my rainbow, and finally there it was! The effect on my morale was indescribable!

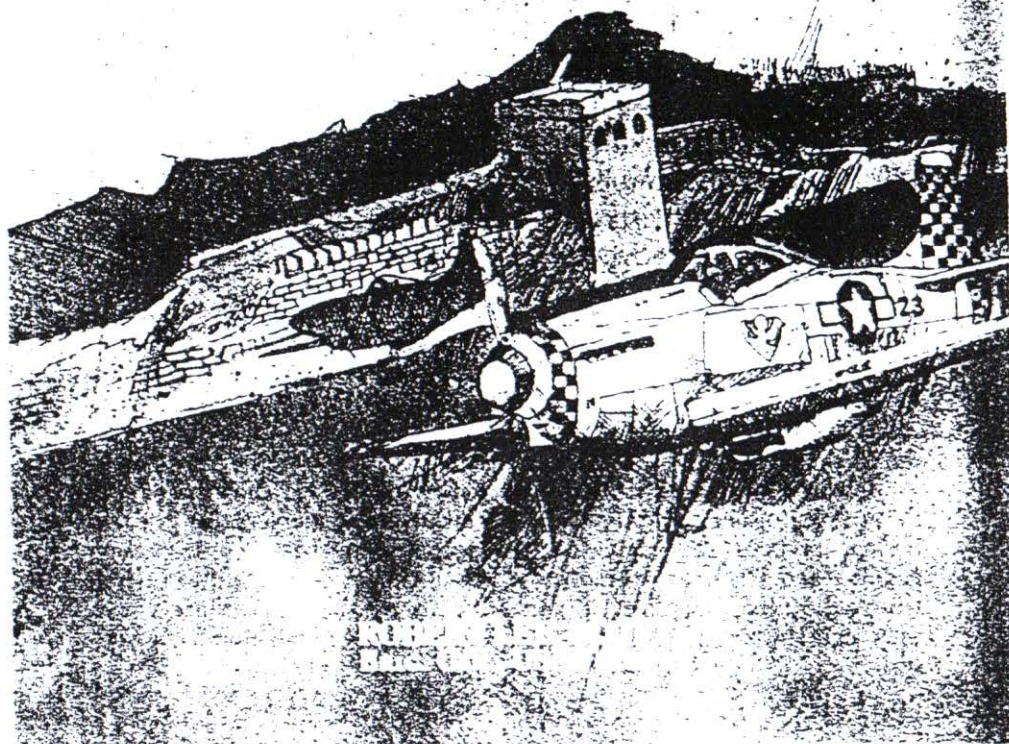
"I had experienced the worst of sensations and the best. My low points were not the obstacles trying to obtain permission to enter this country, not seeing the Great Wall in the west mere rammed earth in complete disintegration, not leaving the train at Yin-Chuan and walking for 190 miles with hardly any wall to see, all the way to the Yellow River—it was being detained by the police and fear of being taken in disgrace back to Pekin.

"And of course the crowning high point was the moment when I stood on Old Dragon Head at Shanhaikwan where the wall ends, waved my cap and ran down into the sea, clothes and all!" He had an ending for his book!

□

Note: Scott's walk covered 1,296 miles measured by Seikoelectronic pedometer, mostly uphill, in 63 days. His entire travels in China totaled 30,960 miles during the four months—by air, train, bus, ox cart, camel, jeep, truck and once in a boat—and some of it was repeating the official tour route with his own walking exploit. Such a walk had never before been accomplished.

TO WALK THE GREAT WALL



TO WALK THE GREAT WALL



ROBERT LEE SCOTT, JR.

As a boy of 14, Robert Lee Scott, Jr., took his first flight in a home-made glider and landed in a tree. By the next year he had helped build a real plane and was learning to fly. In the 1930s, as a lieutenant in the Army Air Corps, he began amassing the flight experience that would eventually bring him the leadership of the 23rd Fighter Group in China after Pearl Harbor, and the distinction of being one of America's first aces against the Japanese.

But in a lifetime of adventure and danger there was one dream always denied him—to see the Great Wall of China from end to end, and to walk as much of it as he could. By the time of the Nixon opening to China, Scott was in his 60s, easing into retirement. But his magnificent obsession did not die—even when new obstacles were placed in his way. Here, in a tale with more twists and turns than the Great Wall itself, is the account of an adventure that only dreamers can achieve.

WE HAD JUST LANDED AT Kai Tak airport in Hong Kong. All around me in the Boeing 747 was the tour group that I was traveling with on the first leg of our trip into China. For the most part they were elderly people—and I had to remind myself that I, too, was old. It was 1980, and I was 72.

As the door of the airplane opened, I was one of the first off. I stood scanning the skies above Victoria Peak. Up there, nearly 38 years earlier, I had led seven Curtiss P-40s down from 18,000 feet to strafe the Japanese who then occupied Hong Kong. There in that vault of sky I had almost died; and there I had taken, without realizing it, the first

steps in the long journey that had brought me back today.

Our target had been a Japanese naval force that was supposed to be in the waters near Hong Kong. My mission as flight commander of the P-40s was to escort ten B-25 medium bombers. But in those early days of World War II we had learned to live with one constant problem: we were outnumbered.

Shortly after noon I picked up our Initial Point—the place where the bombing run began. The bombers commenced their run, but there was no target. It had sailed away.

Released from the guardian mission, I dived straight for the Peninsula Hotel at the tip of Kowloon. I had been told Japanese generals lived there in the penthouses. As I pulled up from the strafing pass, I looked down at an airfield below. Enemy fighters were struggling to become airborne—Zero after Zero hurtling down the runway. Out of habit, I looked in the other direction. Another formation was approaching from the west. I called my own flight group, warning them, and then dived on a Japanese plane just taking off and shot it down.

As I pulled up, my climb slowed, and something struck my plane from astern. My back was protected by a thick sheet of armor steel, but the blow was so hard that I blacked out for a moment. When I came to, my climb had turned into a stall and I was falling. That alone saved my life, taking me out of the Zeros' line of fire. But blood was pouring

down my head from dozens of bits of glass buried in my scalp. There was a gaping hole in the armored windshield that I could have stuck my head through. I reached down, groping for my lost helmet and oxygen mask, blindly feeling around the cockpit floor. There was blood over everything. Actually, I was not that badly wounded, but a little blood—especially if it is yours—goes a long way.

I began to take stock. The throttle was back. No wonder I had lost so much altitude. I shoved the lever forward, and the engine responded. Flying as low as possible, I headed for our base at Guilin, China. All the way I probed at places in my back. The way it felt, whatever had hit me had come right through the armor plate.

The field at Guilin lay in a small valley between two ranges of fantastically shaped mountains, green in hue, unique to the area. My landing was no problem, but I was late. Doc Fred Manget was waiting, and with him was the biggest Chinese I ever saw, Manget's male nurse. He lifted me out of my bloody cockpit as if I were a baby, and carried me at a lope to a cave in the mountains.

We didn't have a hospital, just this cave, which doubled as our ready room, operations room, plotting room and dispensary. The giant laid me face-down on a bamboo chaise longue, and Doc Manget went to work under the flickering light of a tiny lamp. Beyond us,

centuries-old stalactites glistened in the gloom.

There wasn't any anesthetic, or whiskey, to deaden the pain. Doc Manget asked the big Chinese to talk to me and to hold my hand. The wound wasn't too bad, Doc said, just a huge bruise where the 20-mm. Japanese shell had hit the armor-plated seat-back. But part of the seat itself had shattered, driving shards of metal into my backside.

One by one, Doc Manget began to dig them out, placing each one in my hand. And all the time the Chinese kept talking: "Colonel, sir, you fly *feiji* (airplane), shoot guns, work radio, fight barbarian. You do all those things *alone*?" I nodded, although I wasn't really listening.

Doc Manget pulled the last fragment from my back—there were 17 in all—and gave it to me. "He's wrong about that you know," he said. "You're never up there alone. If you were, you wouldn't have come back alive today."

He painted my wounds with something that burned—good for me, he said—then slapped me lightly on the shoulder and told me to get up. I looked off into the blackness of that cave, seeming to see little flashes of light, like lighted letters, among the stalactites. I closed my eyes, but I still saw the lights, and they spelled words for me. I knew they were the greatest title any writer could ever have, if he had a story to suit his life. And I

knew if I lived to go back home and write a book I was going to call it *God Is My Co-Pilot*.

Larcenous Act

I DID LIVE to write that book, and it became a best-seller and a movie. By 1945, after two more tours of duty in China, I had returned to Washington, "flying" a desk. Later on I commanded a base in West Germany, then took up duties in Arizona and finally retired. The years raced past, until May 1978, soon after I turned 70, when time again stopped abruptly, just as it had that day over Hong Kong.

Although I lived close to Luke Air Force Base in Arizona, where there was a military hospital, I always went east for my annual physical. The Pentagon was compiling records on once-active pilots. Thus I had to return to the same flight surgeon, James DeLoach, who had his practice in Aiken, S.C.

In two decades, every examination had been so routine that Dr. DeLoach had taken to joking how "disgustingly" healthy I was. But this year was different. My blood pressure seemed to be fine; no change there. But after the doctor scrutinized my chest X ray, I knew something was wrong. More pictures were ordered, though I didn't learn anything for three days. Then DeLoach directed my attention to an illuminated X ray. "Look at that indefinite line. It's the top of your right kidney. Notice how sharp the curve of the other kidney is. But the

1983

TO WALK THE GREAT WALL

right one is hazy. That worries me."

In the next ten days I got a second opinion and a third and fourth. The verdict was in, and soon I had signed the release form authorizing the removal of my right kidney if cancerous. I didn't fool myself. Any operation at my age was dangerous, and this was major surgery. Moreover, I was not innocent when it came to cancer. Seven years earlier my wife of 36 years, Catharine Rix Green—Kitty Rix to her friends—had died of cancer of the liver. One night in 1971 she had been doubled over by a pain in her side. Fifty-two days later she died in my arms.

On May 10, I was trundled along sterile corridors toward the operating room. My muscles seemed slower and less coordinated than I ever remembered them. Then there was a voice. "Bob," Dr. DeLoach asked, "do you feel sleepy yet? Pick your favorite number, and start counting backward."

I began with 23, my lucky charm. Everything outstanding that had ever happened to me had been connected with that number. Boy Scout Troop 23 in my youth; the date I had met Kitty Rix; the combat group I had fought with in China, the 23rd Fighter Group. And then there was the year 1923...

I WAS 15 that year, an Eagle Scout determined to earn every merit badge available. One day I visited a doctor's office to take an examina-

tion for yet another badge. In the waiting room, I picked up the February issue of the *National Geographic*, and as I opened it a long, folded-out section fell like an accordion from its pages. It was a panorama of the Great Wall of China.

The unfolded picture implanted forever in my mind a mile or two of the Great Wall and a few of its lookout towers, standing there like giant chessmen. In the distance, the Wall wound off across the hills like a great gray dragon.

By the time I was told that the doctor would see me, there was larceny in my heart. I was a Boy Scout with the exalted rank of Eagle, and I knew every one of the 12 Scout laws by heart. But something greater had come into my life. Coldbloodedly I took out the photograph of the Great Wall. My conscience made me leave the magazine for the next reader, but I could not resist the picture.

Though I didn't realize it immediately, there was born in me an obsession to see the Great Wall with my own eyes. Someday I had to find that structure, feel its stones. More than that, I had to find both ends of what the Chinese call Wanli Changcheng, the Long Rampart of Ten Thousand Li. And when I had—no matter how far apart the ends were—I must see all that was in between.

Hedgehopping Over History

DURING MY TOURS OF DUTY in China I managed to catch glimpses

155

FEATURE CONDENSATION

April

of the Great Wall, even though those parts I saw were in Japanese-held territory. Usually these glimpses were from high altitude, and often the sight was disappointing. Much of the Great Wall is not made of those great gray blocks that show up so prominently in tourist photographs. Long stretches, especially in western China, are composed only of rammed earth that has been heavily eroded over the centuries, sometimes disappearing altogether.

One day on my third tour I received orders to lead a fighter escort of P-51 Mustangs for a bomber group flying out of Chengdu. Their target was a Japanese steel mill just across the Yalu River from what is now North Korea. After the mission, my eight Mustangs had to make a long, slanting descent southwest to refuel at Xi'an before going to our base at Kunming. En route we flew almost 100 miles over a triangular peninsula sticking southward into the Yellow Sea, and roughly another 100 miles over the sea itself.

Suddenly I caught myself altering course from southwest to west, until we were heading on a course toward Beijing. Hell, what was the matter with me? We couldn't fly over that city, for Japanese ack-ack would surely be waiting. Yet no matter how I tried to make corrections, by the time I'd check my compass, there I was, angling west.

As we reached the bumpier lower altitude, I began to pick out

156

beaches and piers on shore. Directly in front of the nose of my Mustang was a geographical point that dominated the horizon. By now we were barely skimming the surface of the Yellow Sea, and looking at the map strapped to my thigh, I identified the promontory. It was Old Dragon Head, the spot where the east end of the Great Wall runs into the sea. Oh, I won't claim that I didn't know the Great Wall would be right there in front of me. But I like to think that some higher power—far more than accident—guided me to that point of China's east coast.

We flashed over a tower in the batting of an eye, the roar of our engines reverberating off the masonry. Ahead, the ruins of the Great Wall angled off across some fields and then began to climb the slope of the coastal range—and we sped after them. Climbing to the crest—some 1500 feet high—I saw miles and miles of the type of Great Wall that I had pictured in my mind for almost as long as I could remember. My excitement at a peak, I settled down to stalk the Great Wall of my dreams. Whatever subconscious pull had brought me here, I simply accepted it. My only excuse, if I needed one, was that I felt an undeniable urge to press on. As we topped each crest, there lay more and more of the Wall, beckoning me on.

The Wall took us about 100 miles north of Beijing, safe from enemy eyes and ears. But don't

mistake me. Had the first emperor of China, Qin Shihuangdi,* built the Great Wall down the main street of Beijing, I would have followed it, ack-ack notwithstanding.

It was 450 miles to the Yellow River, and I had the Great Wall to follow like a highway. It reminded me of an aged, gray-blue dragon, only in reality those millions of dragon scales were huge stones and bricks that had stood the test of centuries. My fighter plane seemed somehow to have got into the same restless mood with which I bubbled, as we hedgehopped over history, barely clearing the lookout towers. The shadow below appeared to be as much mine as the airplane's as it investigated each undulation along the mountainous terrain. Every time it topped a ridge, it seemed to shout in jubilation with me, before diving again into the green valleys. Enthralled, I caught myself forgetting completely that I was there with my men in the midst of a war and far behind enemy lines. Had not my dreams been answered?

I swallowed hard because there was a lump in my throat, and heard myself say, "Thank you, Lord, for guiding me here. *But please, oh please, may I return someday and walk down there where my shadow walks?*"

STILL GROGGY from the anesthesia, I heard someone whispering in my

*See "China's Great Wall of Wonder," Reader's Digest, July '82.

ear. "Bob, are you awake? Can you hear me?"

I did my best to reply, but talking was like lifting a great weight. "I'm here, doctor—wide awake."

I felt the doctor's grip on my wrist, sliding down to my hand, and he carefully pressed something small, cold and sharp into my palm. For a moment I was taken back to that eerie cave in Guilin when Doc Manget had pressed the metal shards into my hand—for the object was much the same.

"There's your cancer, Bob," the doctor said. "That's all there was. They must never have found that piece of metal when you were wounded in China."

Then I know I laughed.

"Nature grew a cyst around it," the doctor went on. "Then a shroud formed that filled with fluid, hence the shadow on the X ray. That's all it was; no cancer."

So it wasn't too late, after all. I still had the chance to walk where my shadow had walked.

A Plan Forms

I SPENT TWO impatient days in the intensive-care unit. But soon I had my feet on the floor and could take a few steps. Then I convinced the doctors that they needed that ICU bed for another patient and got back to my room.

Free at last from the catheter in my heart, the I.V. in each arm, I looked around at the bathroom door, the two beds in the room. I got up and paced the distance from

my bed to the bathroom, then seven steps to the corner by the window, a 90-degree turn to the next corner, around both beds and back to where I had started. It came to 100 feet almost exactly, so all I had to do was cover the route 52 times to make a mile. I began at once, walking at first, until I increased my stride to a lope, around and around the room.

I had always known that where I wanted to go in China, no one could go as a tourist. Much of it was rugged, isolated country. Therefore, I would have to walk some of the distance with a pack on my back. Having always possessed good health, I struggled to maintain it throughout the years of my retirement. For the past five years I had been running—not jogging—between three and six miles every other day. The days in between I attended a body-building course, working out with barbells, doing push-ups and sit-ups. At home I added the necessary equipment so that I could continue the exercises in my spare time.

This was the routine I went back to in Arizona. In between, I began to write letters and to study the Chinese language. My first letter went to the Chinese embassy in Washington, D.C., and after that I kept up a constant barrage, explaining to officials from the ambassador on down not only where I wished to go, but about my war years in China.

As 1979 passed into 1980, I had

made no headway. Out of the dozen or so letters I had written, all I had to show were two short replies. In essence they informed me that my requests had been transmitted to Beijing. I was being given the brushoff, so I decided to pull out all stops. I would present my case to every U.S. Senator and Representative I knew. If that didn't work, I'd try the White House.

After Richard Nixon had cracked the door into the People's Republic of China, tourism had opened up. But while a tour took the visitor behind the Bamboo Curtain, he was more or less a prisoner of the "package," able to visit a limited number of places, mostly along the coastal plain. No tour offered the opportunity to visit the far-western areas where the Great Wall began. Moreover, any foreigner who wanted to travel in China was assumed to require luxury accommodations. The Chinese had not yet constructed such hotels, except in the east.

But that wasn't what I desired at all. I had already assembled, packed and repacked my soft duffel bag. It could be carried by its handle as a suitcase, or slung on my back as a knapsack. Into it went extra jogging shoes, clothes, food, maps, camera, a compass, a cooking pot, a cup and sleeping gear. In all it weighed 70 pounds, which I could easily carry myself, and which prepared me for board and room anywhere along the China Wall.

Meticulously I passed this infor-

Fighter-plane pilot kept eyes on the target

Retired general relates career at Sun City Library

By Jack West
The Arizona Republic

Retired Brig. Gen. Robert Lee Scott Jr. made his career choice early.

"I knew when I was a little boy, 4 years old, my mother said, that I was going to be a soldier," said Scott, author of the book *God Is My Co-Pilot*, and a dozen other books, including his latest, *The Day I Owned the Sky*.

"And I was going to fly, and I not only was going to fly, but I was going to fly fighter planes.

"So, I set out with that goal."

Scott, a former Sun City resident,

told an audience at the Sun City Library on Oct. 3 that he finally reached his goal. But it wasn't easy.

He had the training before World War II started, being a so-so student at West Point.

"I graduated sixth from the bottom of my class," Scott said. "But, I didn't do that because I was especially dumb. I was saving my eyes for flying."

His goal was still clear.

"I made up my mind that I was not only going to be a fighter pilot, but that I was going to be the greatest fighter pilot in the world, because you have to think that to be anything."

Stationed in Panama, he practiced shooting machine guns at birds and sharks.

"I became as good a machine gunner as there was in this world," he

said.

But, when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, Scott said, "Nobody said, 'Scott, where are you? The greatest fighter pilot in the world?'"

He wanted to fly fighters in combat, but was assigned as commander of a training squadron until he was asked one day if he had ever flown a B-17 bomber.

Scott said yes, based on the 1,042 hours he had flown in the aircraft.

"I was taught at home not to lie," Scott said. "The Boy Scouts taught me not to lie. At West Point, they'd have thrown me out, if I'd lied. But, I lied to get to combat."

Fortunately, the B-17 was easy to fly, and Scott made his way across the Pacific, where he did become a combat fighter pilot. A member of the Flying Tigers, he flew P-40s against

the Japanese.

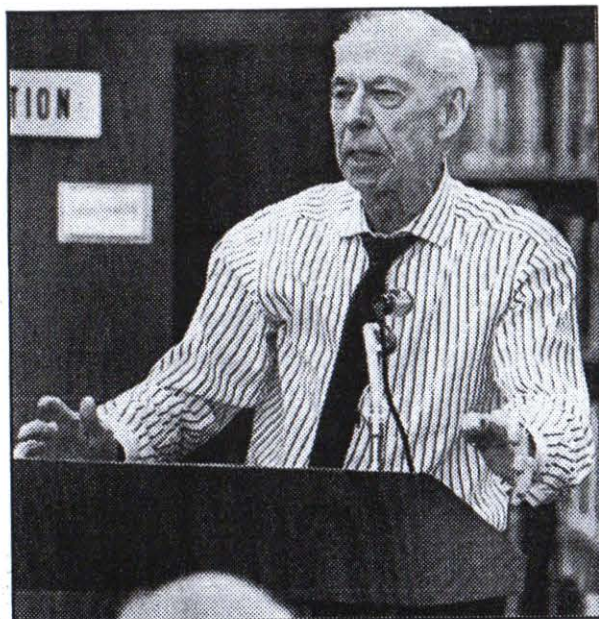
Scott is 80 years old, now, but even age hasn't grounded him.

After walking the Great Wall of China, largely on a diet of oatmeal cookies that he baked himself, he recently managed to get permission to fly the Air Force F-15 and F-16 fighter planes.

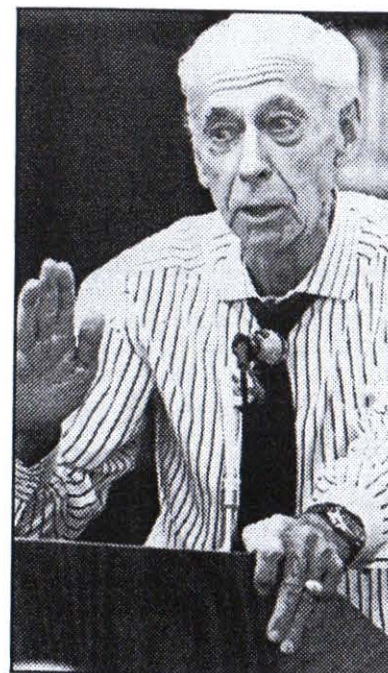
Scott said he has retired, and retired, and retired again.

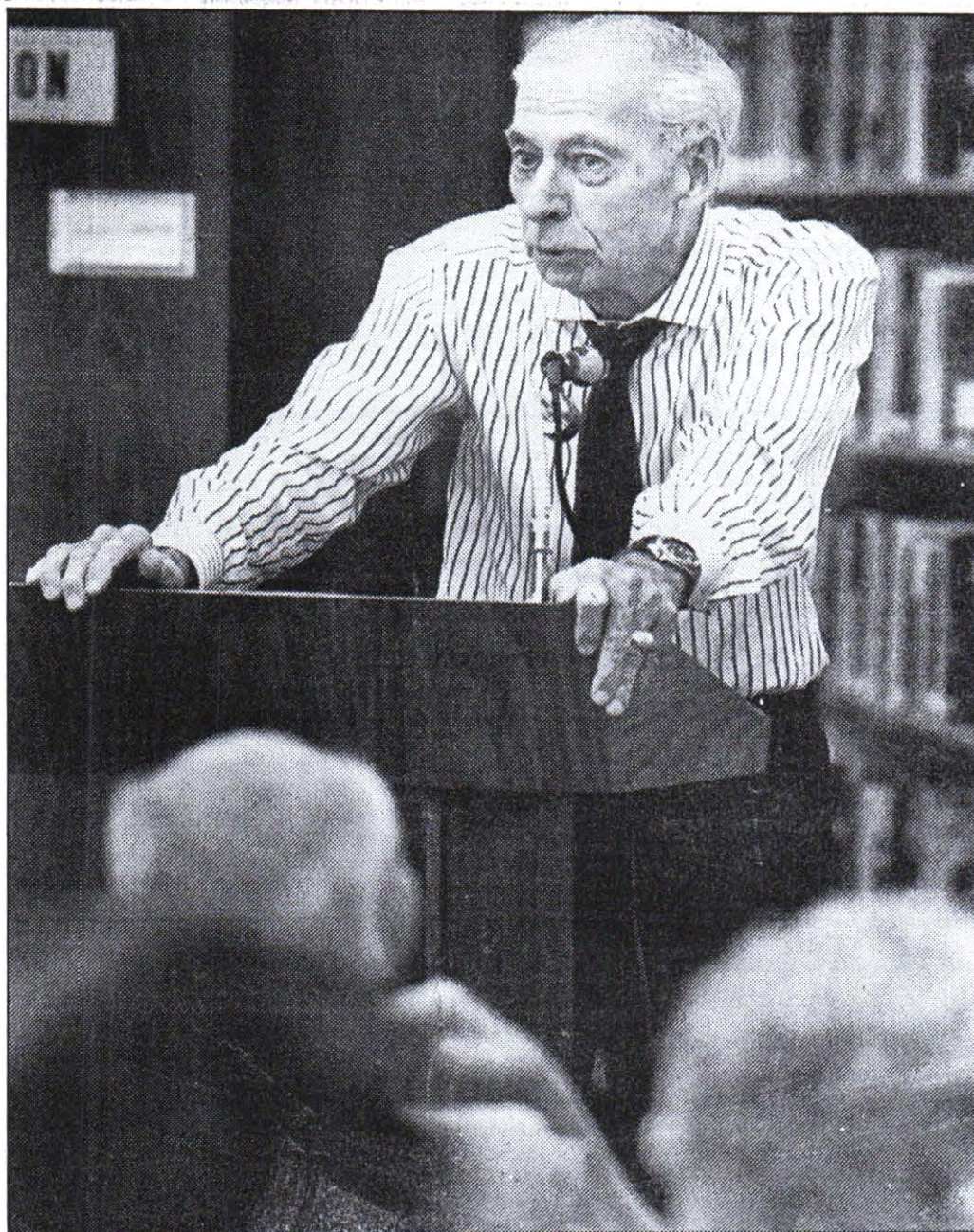
Now, he said he is working full time, promoting the Heritage of Eagles campaign, a non-profit organization that is working to develop an aircraft museum at the gateway of Robins Air Force Base, Warner Robins, Ga., into a world-class teaching Museum of Flight.

For information, write the Museum of Aviation at Robins Air Force Base Inc., or call 912-929-7261.



Brig. Gen. Robert Lee Scott Jr., entertains an audience at a Sun City library. His first book, *God Is My Co-Pilot*, has been in print since 1943.





Suzanne Starr/The Arizona Republic

1983

TO WALK THE GREAT WALL

mation along to the authorities in China. In fact, in 18 months I wrote some 200 letters and accomplished nothing. Until the Chinese had their own Holiday Inns, it seemed I was just going to have to wait.

One night I awakened with a start. I had been dreaming of the Great Wall, and the idea had got through that the most important point was to enter China any way I could. Once there, I would simply disappear from the tour and go my own way, dressed as much like a Chinese as possible.

By 9 a.m. I was on my way to the nearest travel agency. There, I was shown a package called the Explorer's Tour, quite different from any I had investigated before. For 30 days it would take me virtually all over China, including the boondocks in the west.

This was the first tour of its type offered, and had long ago been filled. But a cancellation had come in the day before. I purchased it and was assigned a number on the tour—23. And that is how I came to be in Hong Kong on a July day in 1980. If I couldn't find a way to escape the tour in 30 days, I didn't deserve to find one.

Frustration

WE ENTERED the country by train through Guangzhou (Canton), for a night and day of sightseeing, then boarded our aircraft, an Ilyushin turboprop, and headed northwest across the vast body of China. Our destination was Xi'an, one of my old

refueling stops. In 1974, well-diggers had unearthed a great archeological treasure there: a terra-cotta army of 7500 soldiers and horses about 2200 years old, standing guard over the tomb of the first emperor of China.* The faces of warriors and horses alike haunted me, for each expression was different.

Our next stop—for fuel—was at Lanzhou, 300 miles away. We were headed for Urumqi, another 1000 miles northwest. Along the way we would fly over the Wall for some 400 miles, including the westernmost fortress with the famous Gate of Heroes at a city called Jiayuguan. This was my objective—for from there I hoped to follow the Wall all the way back the 1700-odd miles to the Yellow Sea and the Old Dragon Head promontory that I had flown over so many years before. I had hoped for a glimpse of it from the plane, but unfortunately it was a night flight.

Urumqi was my initial point of attack to see if I could escape the tour group. This was the most westward extent of the Explorer's Tour, and I hoped to set out on my own, evade all the pagodas, temples and communes, and find the Great Wall instead. We had five days in Urumqi, ample time to experiment.

There was a railroad that ran southeast to Jiayuguan, over 500 miles away. My plan was to dress as

*See "The Emperor's Terra-Cotta Army," Reader's Digest, May '80.

(Continued on page 211)

TO WALK THE GREAT WALL

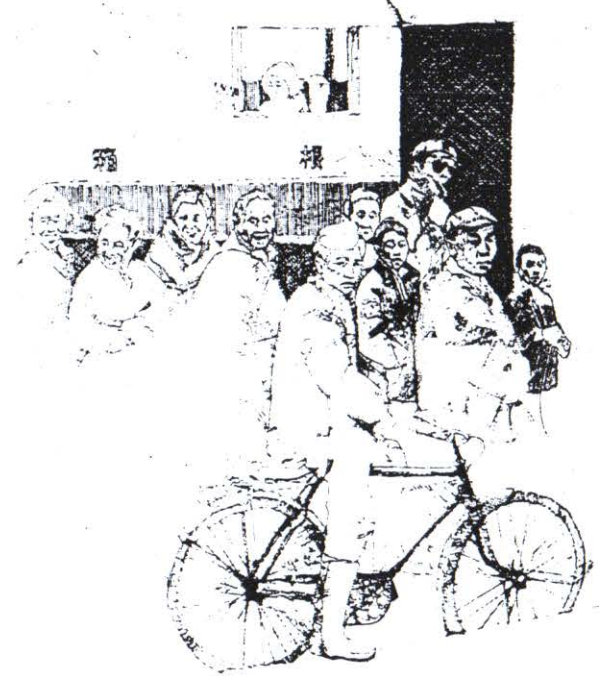
(Continued from page 159)

much like a native as possible—exchange to blue denim, head to foot, with my round eyes hidden behind dark glasses; go to the railroad station and purchase a ticket. I had even considered acting as though I could not talk and passing a message written in Chinese to the clerk.

Such a simple escape proved impossible. Had I been born a Chinese within the People's Republic of China, I would still have failed. No one who lived in Urumqi could purchase a ticket or use any kind of transportation—to go anywhere—unless he had a travel permit, and that came from the government. A foreigner was no different.

For three of the five days we were in Urumqi I begged off from the tours, pretending to have developed an upper-respiratory infection. No sooner would the tour leave than I would be disguised in my blue denim and on my way to the railroad station, pack on my back, no camera in sight, no round eyes showing. My only consolation in failing was that I was learning a modus operandi for the future.

The wonders of Urumqi exhausted, and my escape foiled, we flew back to Lanzhou, passing once more over the fort at Jiayuguan.



But clouds had moved in. It was as though a play was being acted out for me—only a curtain was drawn across the scenes I most wanted to see.

That evening in Lanzhou, our tour leader seemed to take pity on me. I had explained to her that a section of the Great Wall lay only 70 miles north of the city. If I could rent a car, I could easily drive to see

it. She arranged a meeting the next day with the mayor of Lanzhou and a provincial official. But no matter how often I pointed to the red line that I had traced along the path of the Wall on my map, the verdict was the same.

As the interpreter explained: "Comrade say he understand all you tell him. But Great Wall broken down. Nobody want to see broken-down Wall."

I knew I was making a nuisance of myself with my infernal obsession, so I thanked them and went along with the group to see the giant panda sleeping at the zoo.

HUANG HE is the Yellow River. It comes down from the mountains of Qinghai Province near Tibet right through Lanzhou, then turns slightly and flows northward for 400 miles to Inner Mongolia, then east, and finally south, creating a 1000-mile horseshoe-shaped loop known as the Great Bend. Our itinerary, by train this time, was to follow the river northward on our way to Inner Mongolia. Seventy miles out of Lanzhou—at the exact place I had wanted to drive to—we would pass through a gap in the Wall, and then, turning slightly to the east, would follow it for another 100 miles or so before turning north again and passing through the Wall once more at a city called Yinchuan. Somewhere in this part of the trip I surely would see *something*.

But no. As we neared the first

gap, I had my camera ready, but saw nothing. Then, as we turned right and eastward, I went from one side of the train to the other, seeing nothing that resembled the Wall. I was still searching the horizon when the train puffed into Yinchuan, 200 miles north of Lanzhou, and stopped.

I ran off the train with my camera, found a signal tower and climbed up the metal ladder—with the train crew watching me in alarm. At this point on our northerly journey we would leave the Wall behind, for it continued eastward across the Ordos, as the region inside the Great Bend is known. The Wall had to be out there, but I never saw a sign of it.

I put my camera away then, and we journeyed on to Inner Mongolia, where we spent three nights sleeping in a yurt, the Mongolian habitation of felt cloth, shaped like an igloo. Then it was on to Datong for a few days; then by train to Taiyuan; then a flight to Beijing and the end of the trip. That day in 1944 when I had led my squadron of P-51s over the Wall, it was at Datong that I finally turned back toward our refueling location. I knew that the masonry wall continued that far, and a little beyond, before becoming the rammed-earth Wall. So as we departed for Datong, I got my camera ready.

We made the trip at night.

There was one last chance. From a post office in Inner Mongolia, I had sent a telegram to U.S. Ambas-

sador Leonard Woodcock in Beijing. The embassy already had a dossier on me, for I had bombarded them with mail. I informed the ambassador that I had made entry into the People's Republic of China and would arrive in Beijing on August 21. I respectfully requested that authority be obtained from officials of the PRC for me to separate myself from the tour group and be granted a personal travel permit to follow the Wall from Jiayuguan to Old Dragon Head near Shanhaiguan. We boarded the train to Taiyuan. Always optimistic, I kept saying to myself, "By now perhaps the ambassador has my message."

"Is Your Life an Express Train?"

THERE IS A SECTION of the Wall about 40 miles north of Beijing at Badaling. This is the "tourist" Wall, and it is beautiful. It has been totally restored, and made to look as it once was. It is part of a chain of inner walls distinct from the older exterior Wall, which, in its snaking path across China, runs approximately 60 miles farther north. However, Badaling is what every tourist sees and what is shown in every photograph, and I was excited to see it. I explored all three miles that have been repaired, jogging along the walkway atop the structure. Later I walked 12 miles of the unrestored section, until finally the Wall itself disappeared in ruins.

Back in Beijing, the Chinese had relented. I got my visa and a travel permit that gave me more than I

had expected. Instead of going out to the western gate at Jiayuguan, some 1000 miles by air from Beijing, I was going to visit the city of Kashi (Kashgar), 2100 miles away in the farthest-western region of China. From there I would work my way east, to the western gate, and follow the Wall on to the Yellow Sea.

It may seem crazy to add that many more miles to a trip that was already long. But going out to Kashi had a lot to do with my fascination with the Great Wall. When I attended West Point, I had wanted to write my thesis about the Wall. To my dismay, it was not an approved subject. Forced to choose another topic, I picked the travels of Marco Polo. This meant I had to start the thesis with Venice, but eventually, as Marco Polo moved eastward to the Silk Road in western China, I could write about the Wall, for the Silk Road followed the Wall all the way from Dunhuang through the Gansu Corridor to near Lanzhou.

Thus was an interest in the Silk Road kindled. In fact, after I graduated from West Point in 1932, I sailed for France, bought a motorcycle in Cherbourg and headed for Venice. From there—Marco Polo's starting point—I drove on, finally coming to Mt. Ararat in eastern Turkey, along the border of Iran.

At different times during my later career, I endeavored to push on with portions of the Marco Polo route. I made it across Iran and

finally climbed the high mountains along the Afghanistan-Pakistan-China border. In 1976 I actually crossed the Chinese border, although I had no visa, and spent a few days in Kashi, on the Silk Road. I reported to the authorities, who examined my papers and sent me back to Pakistan. At least I had made it that far.

So, by journeying to Kashi and making my way east, I would finally complete the Marco Polo trail.

Of course, all of this gallivanting about had not pleased Kitty Rix, whom I had married in 1934 in the chapel at West Point. Added to these trips were the long years I was away in China and Burma during World War II. Moreover, a lot of my service after the war had been in public relations for the Air Force, and that had taken me on extended speaking tours all over the world.

Because we were apart so often, we wrote hundreds of letters to each other. We even wrote when we were home together. It was like talking to each other, only better, she said, because the letters could be read again when we were apart. I remember my final speaking trip before Kitty Rix was stricken with cancer. She had followed me to the car, and as she kissed me, she handed me a letter. "Don't open it until tonight," she said.

On that trip I made something like 75 speeches in 90 nights in 40 states. Every night when I got back

to my motel room, I drew a red line through that city on the itinerary. And then—it was almost a ritual—I read her letter again:

Scotty dearest,

Well do I know it is your nature to be caught in these crusades. I only wish you were half as bent on being here with us. Have you ever dared say to yourself, now I will live this life, I am happy because those around me are happy? Is your life an express train and you a passenger, forever going, whizzing, hurrying? Are you impatient at all stops?

The hearts that beat for you, those who love you, you shall never find again. The days now here briefly shall be gone. Why not just stop once, sit down, and not be forever just passing through?

All my love, your Kitty Rix

That was her last letter to me. I have read it many times.

Prayers to the Thousand Buddhas

WITH TRAVEL PERMIT and visa in hand, I flew back to Urumqi for the second time. There, the young woman representing China International Travel Service (CITS) told me I would have to continue by bus. There was no plane available to make the two-hour trip over the Tian Shan mountains.

The bus trip took all day and much of the night. It was one of those trips that become almost interminable—but just before I gave up, we drove into a dusty cluster of mud houses and I saw a sign that read "Kashi."

I awoke in my hotel room in

mid-afternoon. Outside the one small window I observed a new world. Four years before on my first, unauthorized visit it had been winter. The snow then had hidden the dirt as well as the roads and streets. Now Kashi looked like the desert city it has always been, but grown-up, with mines and factories producing smoke and dust and smog, all captured in a cul-de-sac, at the foot of some of the highest mountains in the world.

Though Chinese trading ships had been active in the Persian Gulf in the ninth century, trade had been mainly dependent on camel trails across Central Asia. The road went from one oasis to the next, crossed many small kingdoms, and passed through Kashi. Even now, the streets of the city were thronged. Camels vied with trucks, buses and streams of bicycles.

After two days of sightseeing I was on my way again. A bus would take me on to Hetian (Khotan), a major silk center. It was 330 miles, dusty all the way, as we followed a crooked track across high desert. Hetian was the end of the line for buses and all other types of scheduled travel, so the next leg of my itinerary was surely the most taxing of all. I had to travel the Silk Road along the foot of the Kunlun Mountains eastward for more than 900 miles. How was I to do it?

What was in the back of my mind had been there a long time. In that picture of the Great Wall I

had found in the 1923 *National Geographic*, a Chinese boy—about my age—was leading a small caravan of Bactrian camels. Each time I saw a few camels along the Silk Road I wondered how it would be, all these centuries after Marco Polo's journey, to join one of those groups and go with it across the desert to the western gate at Jiayuguan.

Of course, that proved impossible. "With the building of the asphalt road," I was told, "truck caravans took over from camels." Oh, there were still a few die-hards among camel drivers. But the trip would require more time than my travel permit allowed.

Instead I joined a truck caravan of ten vehicles, each loaded with two tons of silk, on their way to the railroad at Jiayuguan. We drove for five days almost nonstop, making about 200 miles each 24 hours. My map was relatively large, one of the best available, but out there in the desert were many voids.

On the fifth day we reached the Caves of the Thousand Buddhas, 12 miles outside the walled city of Dunhuang. A section of the Wall extended this far, going beyond Jiayuguan. It was not the "Great" Wall, but rather rammed earth, now much eroded, built by the Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty, who reigned from 141 to 87 B.C.

I noticed a flag waving in front of a building, and the convoy commander explained that it was the guest house for visitors to the

Caves of the Thousand Buddhas. While I was at the desk, inquiring about a room, I noticed a CITS guide whom I had met a month before in Lanzhou. He recognized me, and before I knew it he had arranged a visit to the caves; normally permits were issued only to archeologists.

Outside of Dunhuang stands a sheer cliff, over a mile long, pockmarked with some 500 caves. The caves contain more than 2000 Buddhist statues and brilliant wall and ceiling paintings. An archeologist working there on restoration told me this tale, translated by my guide, Chang Jin:

For hundreds of years every camel train either originated in Dunhuang or stopped there for water and supplies. A rich merchant would buy a thousand camels, hire hundreds of drivers to tend them, load them with costly silks for the terrible trek. Then for eight years after his investment departed Dunhuang, the merchant would hear nothing.

Weighing all the uncertainties of the times, the merchant would see his treasure off, then engage a sculptor and commission him to create a Buddha. But why make such a thing out in the open, to be at the mercy of the elements? The Buddha had to be protected; and that was how the hundreds of caves came to be chiseled into the cliff.

The statues, some of them more than 100 feet tall, were formed

from clay and then painted. Before these figures the merchants offered prayers for the safe return of their caravans.

I added my own prayers for the completion of *my* journey.

After the caves, Chang Jin, a driver and I followed the Wall into Jiayuguan. Here at the far-western terminus, Emperor Wu's structure had all but disappeared. In a few places there still stood an irregular mound of sun-dried mud, and every now and then we found a lookout tower. Evidence showed they had been two or three stories high, but as a rule they were all near disintegration.

Chang Jin noticed my disappointment, but told me to take heart. The next morning he would take me to the fortress, which had been restored. Close by was a village where camel drivers and their animals lived. Chang Jin would see to arranging a caravan for me. I went to sleep that night rehearsing my old dream. In my heart, I knew I wasn't going to be content with a single camel. I was going to lease or rent—or whatever you did out there with camels—enough two-hump Bactrians to make the same kind of picture as the panorama that I had filched from that 1923 magazine.

Camel Train

THE FORTRESS MARKS the beginning of the Ming Wall, as it is called, to distinguish it from Em-

peror Wu's Wall. Built about 1370, the fort has been of strategic importance ever since.

True to his promise, my guide took me to see it the next morning. And sure enough, my camels were standing by—11 Bactrians, each with a driver. I had my own camel train at last.

At the fort I was introduced to a middle-aged man in blue dungarees and a Mao jacket. He wore no insignia, but I assumed that he was a high officer in the People's Liberation Army. He seemed to know a good deal about me and my service in China during World War II. Going into a room in the fort, he brought back a blue Chinese army cap with a short bill, and a large plastic red star affixed to its front. He offered the cap to me and said something in Chinese that meant: "I make you an hon-

orary member of the People's Liberation Army."

I took off my American baseball cap and put on his gift, which was to come in handy in the days ahead.

The first day we remained in the vicinity of the fort, taking photographs of me riding the lead camel, the other ten behind me in a single file, with the ramparts of the Great Wall as background.

Soon I found myself learning about camels and their cantankerous idiosyncrasies. My education began with the girl driver at the camel's head ordering the animal to kneel, or "couch," when I wanted to mount. As I approached and indicated my intention, she would tug down on the rope leading to the ring in the camel's nose, at the same time calling out a command in Chinese. Whatever her words meant, the camel didn't like them,



TO WALK THE GREAT WALL

because immediately thereafter he raised his head as high as his neck would stretch, looked at the sky—as though to call on Allah—and uttered the most bloodcurdling cry I have ever heard. The noise carried a mile or more, and at times all the other camels joined in.

Finally, reluctantly giving in, my camel would lower his head, begin to break forward at the knees, gaze intently at each rock in the desert, then pitch forward as though to fall on his face. Following that, his rear legs folded and that part of his anatomy dropped to the ground, and my steed was couched. I could then step into place between the humps and feel like the meanest person there ever was, because I had caused all that complaining.

That turned out to be only half the problem, for a similar procedure had to be followed for the dismount. As the day wore on, and dismount followed mount—and each time I almost pitched over the camel's head to the desert floor—I realized I was praying for a ladder.

At last I gave up. Instead of asking the driver to couch the camel, I just slid off and broke all the tradition that I suppose has surrounded camel trains, for these thousands of years.

By the middle of the afternoon, I also figured out a way to mount. All the drivers looked at me in astonishment the first time I did it. I had the girl driver hold the camel's head while I took a running start from some 15 or 20 feet away. Then

I leaped and caught the tops of the two humps, one in each hand, pulled up and swung my right leg over the rear hump. And there I was, not only having good exercise, but sitting firmly in the natural saddle between those cushioned camel's-hair humps.

There developed fringe benefits I hadn't thought about. Not one time after I stopped making the camel couch did he throw back his head and wail at the sky. Where before he had gone out of his way to turn his head a full 180 degrees, look me loathingly in the eye, bare his big yellow teeth, drool as he chewed his cud and try to spit in my face, he now seemed to accept me as a friend. In the days ahead, I even began to stroke his neck, and never once did he bite me.

That first day was the shake-down cruise; the real thing began the next day. Our course was right alongside the yellow earth of the Great Wall, which had weathered brick-hard in the sun and rain of the centuries. It had also eroded away to no more than five or six feet wide in places, and perhaps 15 feet in height.

Although mildly disappointed at the condition of the Wall, I was still thrilled to be moving along it, rubbing my hands on its sides every now and then. When we stopped for photographs, I would slide off my camel, climb to the top of the Wall and walk or run along it.

Soon we began to reach gaps. At
(Continued on page 223)

TO WALK THE GREAT WALL

first they were short ones—up ahead the Wall would continue. But that night when we came to our first oasis, the Wall ended dramatically. Early the next morning, after cold melons and strong tea, we were off again. But we did not find the Wall until darkness.

On the fourth day we followed the Wall for about 35 miles. Then again it ended. The lead camel driver showed me on the map that, except for a few isolated humps of

rammed earth, little more remained of the Wall all the way to a point north of Lanzhou. It seemed a good place to let my camel drivers go home.

Chang Jin arranged a car, and we proceeded. Our method was to drive along the asphalt highway until we reached a point where the map indicated there was a section of the Wall still standing somewhere to the north of us. Then we would search for a northward road,

COMING NEXT MONTH IN READER'S DIGEST

HOME TO HENNING

Many young black men went Up North to do good, and some returned to show off their small triumphs. But only one came back and created a legend. An exclusive preview of Alex Haley's first book since *Roots*.

A STONE'S THROW FROM LIFE

Entombed in a freezing wilderness dungeon, the hiker knew that he would have to save himself. But the odds were fearfully long. **Drama in Real Life.**

PAUL NEWMAN: SUPERSTAR, SUPERGUY

The face—the eyes so blue, the countenance so strong but vulnerable—makes women's knees go wobbly. Yet there is far more to "Old Skinny Legs" than just sex appeal. Condensed from *Time*.

BRAVING THE SEAS FOR SCALLOPS

Life at sea may have changed since the days of whaling off Nantucket. But it is still a harsh world where men take great risks in search of daily bread. Condensed from *New York Times Magazine*.

Watch for these and more than 30 other articles and features, selected and condensed from the best of current reading.

often no more than dusty track, and wend our way up to the area. When we found a bit of the Wall, I would walk in both directions as far as I could. Sometimes it was a mile, sometimes five. As always, I rubbed my hands along the surface, delighted to be where I was. Sometimes I departed with a small rock as a souvenir.

On the fourth day Chang Jin and I came to the railroad tracks that I had ridden into Inner Mongolia. Lanzhou was south of us, the Wall, north. We turned onto a hazardous trail no better than a logging road. After several miles, we came to the gap I had passed through earlier, when I had dashed from one side of the train to the other in a vain attempt to take a photograph. It

was easy to see why I hadn't spotted the Wall—the gap was five miles wide.

It was already late afternoon, but there was exploring to do. The driver found a trail along the Wall, and Chang Jin and I climbed to the top to walk and run along it. Looking down, I saw the Yellow River, curving eastward, then veering north on its 1000-mile journey that formed the Great Bend. The Wall zigzagged as it made its turn northward with the river, but up ahead I could see that it straightened out, continuing to follow the riverbank to the horizon. One last time I caressed the rough surface of the Great Wall; then we headed for Lanzhou.

Already I was making plans for

the morrow, wondering which was the best way to rejoin the Wall where I'd been compelled to leave off. Perhaps I could start out with another car, go through the gap and, following the railroad—where again I had failed to see the Wall—continue on to Yinchuan, a second gap, where I had climbed the signal tower. From there the train went north, the Wall east across the Ordos. In a car I could follow it.

Incognito

MY PLAN went awry at sunrise. When I came down to breakfast, the dining room was wall-to-wall with tourists. I knew before CITS reached me with the news that there was no chance of a car for one

lone foreigner. All automobiles were in use.

A new plan formed. I asked CITS to obtain a railroad ticket for me to Beijing, with a stop in Datong. Both of these cities showed on my travel permit, and there was no problem in getting permission. The *real* problem was that this was the same route I had taken with the Explorer's Tour a month ago, and had been unable to see a trace of the Wall. But I now knew a few things about how Chinese trains worked.

The ticket was forthcoming the next day, and in my hotel room I carefully packed my blue knapsack-suitcase. I put on a bright-colored "tourist" shirt and my baseball cap. Carrying my bag like a suitcase, I went to the railroad station. I



**When you move make
sure Reader's Digest
moves with you!**

To Change Your Address

Please write us **BEFORE**
you move, 60 days in advance
if you can.

MAIL TO READER'S DIGEST
DEPT. CHADO
PLEASANTVILLE, N.Y. 10570

GUARANTEE: You may
cancel your subscription at
any time and receive a prompt
refund of money paid for copies
not previously addressed. (Your
subscription will expire with the
monthly issue identified above
your name on the address label
of this magazine.)

1. In this space, attach an OLD address label (or, if you don't have a label,
give us your old address).

NAME _____

STREET _____

APT. # _____ CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

2. And in this space please print your NEW address. DATE OF MOVE _____

NAME _____

STREET _____

APT. # _____ CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

SPREAD THE WORD WITH REPRINTS

READERS frequently tell us how gratifying it is to pass along copies of especially interesting or useful articles to friends, church congregations, volunteer groups, employees, nursing homes, schools, etc. Reprints available from the April 1983 issue:

How to Weather Marital Storms	page 49
Investor-Owned Hospitals: Rx for Success	page 82
Seven Steps to Better Thinking	page 108
Secret Joys of Solitude	page 128
10 Car Noises You Shouldn't Ignore	page 141
Terror in Northern Ireland: The American Connection	page 163
We Can Solve the Transportation Puzzle	page 184
You've Come the <u>Wrong</u> Way, Baby!	page 203

Prices: 10 for \$3; 25 for \$6; 50 for \$9; 100 for \$15; 500 for
\$35; 1000 for \$48.

Postage and handling charges included in orders of 1000 or less.
Write: Reprint Editor, Reader's Digest, Box 25, Pleasantville, N.Y. 10570.

looked like any of the other foreign travelers thronging the concourse. Camera conspicuously hanging from my neck, I showed the young woman attendant my ticket. This was standard operating procedure. Then, when the traveler had boarded the train and entered his compartment, the same woman would appear and collect the ticket as well as his travel permit, and thus he was a prisoner of the train until he reached his destination.

I scurried onto the train to my compartment, locked the door and pulled the shades. From my bag I extracted blue dungarees, Mao jacket and Chinese army hat. I changed hastily into these garments, thrust my gray hair deep into the cap, put on my dark glass-

es, slung my bag over my back and raced into the corridor. No one had come for my papers.

Despite the fact that China is a People's Republic, the "people" do not ride in the same sections with foreigners. Chinese travelers are given more rudimentary accommodations, often with hard seats or no seats at all, at the end of the train. I raced through several tourist cars until I reached this section. There I sat on the floor, knees up and head down.

Slowly the car filled with Chinese men, women and children, dressed much as I was and carrying similar bundles. The train jerked into motion. I pulled my blue cap down a bit more.

And there I sat for 200 miles,

1983

undetected. Barely 20 miles south of my destination at Yinchuan, as I raised my head and glanced around, a security policeman in a white uniform passed through the car. I tensed for a moment and could feel my heart beating beneath the Mao jacket. He went into the next car. When he came back, he spoke to a child and then went on.

It was near midnight when I felt the train beginning to reduce speed for the stop ahead. By the time a crowd of passengers had gathered their belongings, I was ready for the real test—and walked off the train, keeping as many people around me as possible. In the station I saw another white-uniformed policeman and edged to the far side of my group, but he didn't stop anyone or ask for identification. No bus or other transportation was standing by; all my companions continued to walk east—I could tell by the stars. Clearly they knew exactly where they were going. I did my best to walk with the same confidence.

I hadn't looked at my map all day on the train; that would have been a complete giveaway. But long before this day I had familiarized myself with Yinchuan and its environs. The railroad station was about six miles west of the town, and we walked there in two hours. All I did was stay right in the midst of the largest group, not talking. And that way, I reached a hotel. I went up to the desk as though I had had a reservation for months. I was

227

Pollen can trigger a Bronchial-Asthma Attack!



Primatene® Mist restores free breathing in as fast as 15 seconds.



Pollen from grass, trees and weeds can trigger a bronchial asthma attack. Be prepared with

Primatene Mist. It's the fastest type relief known for occasional attacks. It restores free breathing in as fast as 15 seconds.

And to keep breathing freely for hours use Primatene Tablets, with the asthma reliever doctors prescribe most.



Use as directed.

If you're incontinent, this coupon brings help: Sears Disposable Briefs and free Home Health Care Specialog.

Feel more comfortable and secure thanks to the highly absorbent, odor-controlling polymer called Super-Sorber™, found in Sears Disposable Briefs.

And in our new Home Health Care Specialog you'll find everything from bath safety aids to beds to clothing. It's sure to make your life a little easier.

TAKE ANOTHER LOOK.

Sears

CATALOG

©Sears, Roebuck and Co., 1983

Sears disposable incontinent briefs are one size fits all with peel back tabs at waist for adjustable sizing.

Please send me _____ package/s of 10 (8 NF 1120)

at \$6.99 each = \$ _____

Add .75¢ per package for shipping and handling, and State and local taxes = \$ _____ total.

Check here ☐ for Sears free Home Health Care Catalog (39 NF 7308).

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

☐ Enclosed is a check or money order.

☐ Please charge on my Sears charge card # _____

Send coupon to the nearest Sears Catalog Merchandise Distribution Center below or call your local Sears Catalog Department to order.

Atlanta, GA 30395 Chicago, IL 60607 Dallas, TX 75295

Los Angeles, CA 90051 Philadelphia, PA 19132

holding my travel permit and passport and had removed my hat and sunglasses. The sleepy clerk asked me a question in Chinese—apparently whether I was a member of the “tour.” My luck was holding. A foreign tour had just arrived at the hotel. I nodded my head, and he handed me a room key.

The next morning, over a breakfast of rice cakes and tea, I met a member of the tour group. He was Japanese. In a mixture of pidgin English and Japanese, we talked about the itinerary of his group. To my delight they were traveling from Yinchuan to Yulin, along the route of the Great Wall. I had been prepared to start out walking. But there was no use spending time walking unless it was absolutely the only way. The distance to Yulin was 270 miles, and from experience I suspected that for at least half that distance the Wall would be in ruins. Moreover, because of illness in the group, there were a few vacant seats on my new friend's bus.

So it was that I joined a Japanese tour group when they left Yinchuan two days later. Aboard the bus I got my map out, and there was much spirited comment as we passed it back and forth. Frequently we stopped, lined up in front of the weathered ruins, and all of us took pictures. Mostly the Wall was badly eroded, but my obsession seemed to be contagious.

We reached Yulin in the mid-afternoon, and the Japanese took me to a hotel. As they drove south

in a cloud of dust, it seemed that from every window of the bus two or three arms were waving.

Spy!

I SET OUT the next morning, keeping close to the Great Wall and as far from the highway as possible. But the Wall refused to accompany me far. At a good military cadence of 128 steps a minute, I was making four m.p.h., and the Wall lasted only two. When it was gone, I moved closer to the highway. A few trucks went by, but little else. The Ordos is dusty, desolate country, with only a few villages, some no more than a cluster of mud huts.

The few times I saw ruins of the Wall—no matter how ruined—I veered off and followed them. This procedure continued all that first day out of Yulin, until the ruins reached a small river. The sun was just setting.

About a quarter of a mile away I saw smoke rising from a hut. Leaving my backpack behind, I walked toward a two-room house, apparently made from the same yellowish earth as the Wall. A man stood out front drawing well water. His house was surrounded by a few crops, chickens and pigs, fenced in by a belt-high mud barrier. With friendly hand-waving, I approached and said in Chinese, “Melon, please.” I had already eaten these melons all across China and knew they were sufficient to keep me going.

My Chinese, delivered with an

American Southern accent, apparently meant little to the man, but I gestured toward the melons growing in his garden and waved some Chinese money to indicate that I would pay. By now several curious children had appeared. I took some hard candy from my pocket, indicating that it was for the children. But the man would accept nothing from me. He stooped and cut a melon from the stem, handing it to me. With copious thanks in Chinese I retreated to my “camp.”

I got water from the river, built a fire with a few pieces of wood, much like our western greasewood which burns very well. Over that I placed my pan of water and boiled some tea. That and slices of melon made my supper. Afterward I reached into my pack for a bag of oatmeal and chocolate-chip cookies, baked to my own formula back in Arizona—and that was dessert. Then I took out my ground cloth, rolled up in it and fell asleep.

In the morning, I breakfasted on cookies and another slice of melon and set out. There were few traces of the Wall that day, but I was content to be following its path. About sunset I came to another house, and followed much the same procedure, dining on melons and cookies. The third and fourth day passed in the same way. There was no Wall to speak of, and I began to wonder what I was doing all alone out here in the middle of nowhere.

Late on the fourth day I reached the small town of Fugu. I had

covered about 125 miles on foot and that, added to the distance I traveled with the Japanese tour group, had brought me across the area framed by the Big Bend of the Yellow River. I had reached the Huang He again. There was no bridge; I crossed the river on an old ferry, propelled by pulling on a rope in the water.

Three more days I walked eastward before I reached another town—and still no sign of the Wall. In olden days the Wall served as an east-west barrier against enemies to the north, but other sections of wall were built between feudal states, and many of these ran north and south. My map indicated that up ahead

I would come to one such section that formed part of an extensive inner wall repaired early in the Ming dynasty (A.D. 1368–1644). I made it by noon on the fourth day after leaving the Yellow River. I could not simply pass it by. I left the road, which went through a gap in the Wall, and made a grateful inspection. My spirits were rising every minute. This was the real Great Wall made of masonry, 25 feet high and nearly as wide. So excited did I feel that I took my knife from my



pack and, using a rock for a hammer, chiseled my name in Chinese into the Wall, plus the year "1980."

That afternoon I reached the town of Shuoxian. There was a double-track railway here, going north to Datong, the next city listed on my travel permit. At first I thought I would simply board the train and arrive in Datong as if all was in order. Unfortunately Shuoxian was *not* on my travel permit; in fact this was an entirely different railroad from the one I was supposed to be on. I'd never be able to answer the question "How did you reach Shuoxian?" I decided not to tempt fate.

Instead, I was able to rent a car and driver without arousing suspicion, and the next day drove 40 miles north to the Great Wall at Yaozishang, a point I'd flown over during the war. I was back on the main line of the masonry Wall. There were equally spaced lookout towers, in nearly as good repair as the restored Wall north of Beijing. In the best-preserved of the towers, just beyond Yaozishang, I once again could not resist crudely chiseling my name in Chinese into one of the blue-gray stones.

The remainder of the day was spent relishing the view as I walked along the top of the Wall taking numerous photographs. We reached Datong that night. With practically 3000 miles of China behind me—the last 200 or more walked—I was ready for the luxu-

ry of a bath and a day's rest, maybe two. I turned my papers in to CITS. By the third day, fully rested and raring to go on, I checked in with CITS. Just as I entered the office I heard the interpreter say my name a time or two on the telephone. That brought me to attention. A visitor, dressed in that white uniform of the police, was waiting for me. Right then began my worst days in China, which were to stretch on for nearly a week.

I admitted to the interpreter that I had changed my appearance as soon as I boarded the train at Lanzhou, telling him how innocent it was—I just wanted to see the Great Wall. Later, I traced my route on my ever-present map. To my surprise, the security officer began measuring distances on his own map. Then I remembered. That critical area on the map probably was the Chinese ballistic-missile range, only a few hundred miles from Yinchuan, where I had disappeared from the train.

The internal security of the People's Republic of China was not concerned with some tourist who had left a train without permission. It was investigating a spy!

Kilroy Was Here

IN THE NEXT DAYS I almost never stopped answering questions. I explained how I had reached Yinchuan, how it had been the second time I was a passenger on that train to Inner Mongolia, and how I had left the train because the Great

Wall went east at that point. It took a while for the interpreter to understand my story, and then translate for the security officer.

Later I learned that phone calls had been made to the hotels in Yinchuan, Yulin and Shuoxian. At that last town, where I had rented a car to take me on to Datong, the driver was questioned.

My map interested the security officer. On it I had marked a red "X" at several places. I explained that at each such spot I had chiseled my name into the stone of the Wall. North of Beijing, on the restored Wall, I had seen Chinese graffiti all along the balustrades, so I hoped that my inquisitors understood this custom.

The very next morning I was awakened early. I thought I was finally being arrested. The interpreter asked me to accompany the security officer and himself in a khaki-colored vehicle of the People's Liberation Army. I was given no idea where we were going.

Surprisingly, both my companions acted relaxed and pleasant, even the one in the white uniform. I was seated up front with him, and he was following my map westward out of Datong, on the same highway I had traveled a week before, coming in. A few inches ahead on the map was a place in which I had drawn a red "X," to mark the well-preserved lookout tower where I had inscribed my name. We seemed to be heading for that spot.

My mind turned to that custom

of American soldiers during World War II, writing "Kilroy Was Here" on walls. With a sense of desperation I began to explain the origin of those famous graffiti. Given the language difficulty, I had little hope that this curiously American anecdote would translate into Chinese. But the interpreter did his best.

At noon, we reached the lookout tower and followed the Wall to the point where I had chiseled my name and the year. The security officer studied the inscription. Then he turned and shook my hand, saying in English, "Kilroy Was Here!" And he laughed.

We set out in the army vehicle again, but not directly for Datong. Twice more on the return trip we turned off the highway to examine a portion of the Wall marked on my map by a red "X." But all the time the officer was chattering to the interpreter, who explained that he was pointing out other sights in China that I must not fail to see.

Darkness caught us before we were back in Datong, but the first thing we did was to go to CITS, where all my documents were returned.

A Walk With "General Lee"

THE SECURITY OFFICER WAS waiting for me next morning, and after a warm greeting, he introduced me to another Chinese dressed almost as I was in blue denim. The man, called Mr. Li, was no civilian. I had been a soldier for 50 years, too long to be fooled by another soldier. His name was pronounced Lee, like my

middle name, and I began to think of him as "General Lee." His looks were deceptive; he sometimes appeared to be in his 30s, sometimes as old as I, although he had not a strand of gray in his hair.

My bag was put in the back of a Chinese jeep and Mr. Li took a place beside it, while I sat up front with the driver. I had no idea where I was going, probably back to Beijing under Mr. Li's watchful eye. But instead of heading east toward the capital, we went north. With a sigh of relief, I took out my worn map. Mr. Li leaned forward and spoke to me for the first time. His English was surprisingly good.

"General, I now become your guide. You want to see Great Wall, you see Great Wall. People's Republic of China want you to." He pointed to my map. "We go ahead 35 kilometers. Meet Changcheng here."

The blue-gray line of the Wall came into sight and grew larger by the minute. Soon we were at 4000 feet, and Mr. Li pointed out the mountains ahead, with the Wall running right along their sides. They reached to over 7000 feet, he said. Soon the jeep could go no farther.

"From this point, we are on our own," Mr. Li announced.

We unloaded the baggage, and I noticed that Mr. Li had brought along a backpack similar to mine. I suspected that he was there to find out if this crazy American really *could* walk the Wall. My first test

was in mountain climbing. Though the highest altitude we reached was just about 6000 feet, it might as well have been three times that, considering the terrain. With my guide in front, setting the pace, we walked the top of the Great Wall. But the walkway in places had succumbed to erosion, forming a mass of disintegrating masonry. When we reached such a spot we climbed down, found a goat or cattle path around the rubble, and then climbed back up.

At sunset we reached a lookout tower that was in good condition. Mr. Li dropped his pack and stood looking around. The sun was going down in a fiery ball over the great gray dragon of the Wall. It was a view of startling magnificence.

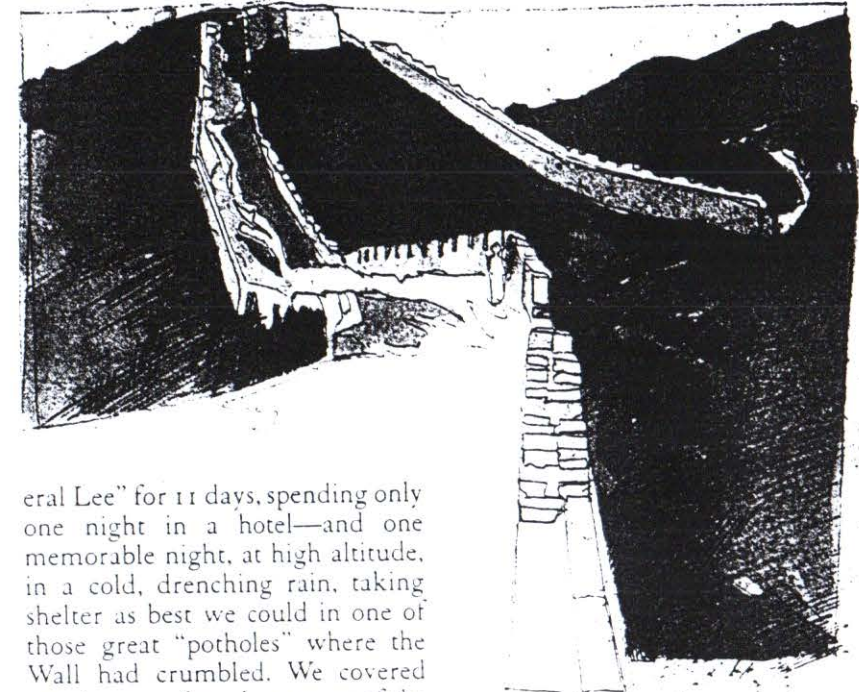
Mr. Li unpacked a teapot and trivet and heated tea over a kind of Chinese Sterno. We had a simple meal, primarily my homemade cookies, and then we bedded down inside the tower. Mr. Li had brought no food, which I suppose was another test of my ability to survive.

In the morning we paced around the watchtower and measured the base as 40 feet square. My instructor explained how the Ming engineers had made the foundation by digging parallel trenches in the solid granite of the mountain 25 feet apart, and then had cemented a wall between them of granite ash-lars—great 4-by-1-by-1/2-meter stones. With such a base, no wonder our tower was still standing.

In this way I traveled with "Gen-

1983

TO WALK THE GREAT WALL



eral Lee" for 11 days, spending only one night in a hotel—and one memorable night, at high altitude, in a cold, drenching rain, taking shelter as best we could in one of those great "potholes" where the Wall had crumbled. We covered nearly 250 miles, along some of the most spectacular sections of the Wall and through some of the most spectacular scenery in the world.

Trudging along the Wall, Mr. Li and I rarely spoke. But when we hunkered down for the night, we discussed many things. Mr. Li had a professorial air, and often explained the history or geography of the area. In turn, I told him of my lifelong fascination with the Wall, especially of that day during my China service when I had flown over Old Dragon Head on the Yellow Sea and then had followed my shadow along the section we were now walking. Near Old Dragon Head that day, as I zoomed past, I

had seen five giant Chinese characters on a gate-tower. I could not read the ideographs, but my trigger finger touched the release on my control stick and turned on the gun camera. Back at our base, the film was developed. But even Major Shu, our translator, had to search through his book of calligraphy to find the meaning: "First Gate in the World."

"General Lee" seemed to understand completely. China, he explained, considered itself the only world there was, with Beijing at the center. The gate on the Yellow Sea was thus, indeed, the "first" gate in the world. And so it was for me too.

For our meal that last night we

split a melon and ate the last of my cookies. By now they were nothing but crumbs, and when I dug them out of my pack I felt embarrassed. I made some joke about "that's how the cooky crumbles." I wasn't sure that Mr. Li would understand this Americanism, so I tried to explain, just as I had the Kilroy story.

We had reached a point 250 miles from the Yellow Sea, but I had to return to Beijing for a travel permit to continue. Mr. Li took me to the train for Beijing, escorted me to my seat, and didn't give me my new ticket until the train was ready to pull out. We shook hands and I thanked him many times. We were good friends now, but I couldn't help pulling his leg. He was sticking close to me, I suggested, because he feared that I might leave the train and try my fortune solo again.

He laughed. "That's the way the cooky crumbles," he said.

Old Dragon Head

THE NEW TRAVEL PERMIT took longer than I had anticipated to arrange. But finally it arrived, and thanks to a letter written by Mr. Li, I had full cooperation from the Chinese army for the rest of my journey. They delivered me to the very spot where Mr. Li and I had spent our last night together. From there it took me three days to walk the 70-odd miles to the small town of Gubeikou, where I was met by a Captain Chu.

At first Captain Chu would not hear of my walking the final 200 miles. He insisted I ride a truck that went that way every day. I explained my purpose, and at last he understood. But thereafter, every time the Wall came to a gap where the road passed through it, one of Captain Chu's army trucks was waiting for me.

Day by day I averaged 28 to 30 miles. My goal was drawing near. It represented the end of a dream, and suddenly it came upon me that I didn't want that dream to end.

As I thought back to all the hundreds of miles behind me I realized I had been enthusiastically hurrying each step of the way. That was life for me, the way my motor ran, never walking when I could run. Now I found myself doing everything possible to delay the trip—stopping to take a picture even when there was nothing to justify the shot.

I was headed for Jiaoshanguan (Horned Mountain Pass), a height on the coastal range some 15 miles up the slope of the mountains from the sea. I had flown over it in 1944, and there I would bed down for the final night.

Each time I topped a rise in the terrain I expected I would sight the Yellow Sea. When it came, it was unexpected, but there was the glint of the sea all right, and there was where the Great Wall dipped down through the Pass, my goal. It was nearly night, and walking along the top of the Wall was risky. So I

slid off my backpack and I stood there taking in the view, concentrating on that rambling old dragon of masonry I had been following.

Long after I had settled down and was wrapped in my ground cloth, I still found myself torn between feelings of victory and regret. Several times I crawled out of the bedroll and made my way precariously to the top of the Great Wall just to look around. I was watching the flickering lights in a coastal town, when suddenly I thought of Kitty Rix. It had been almost nine years now since she died, and I suppose that that was one of the reasons I kept myself so busy doing these strange things. I kept thinking about her the rest of that sleepless night. I shut my eyes and tried to see her face and imagine what she might say. What I heard were her very last words to me. I had leaned down and placed my ear close to her lips. She was whispering, "I know you had to do those things your way, and I understand . . . I understand."

I set off down the mountain before sunrise. Hurrying the dawn was foolish, and I came close to falling several times. How stupid it would be to come as far as I had, and then break a leg in the last ten miles. By full light, I was nearing level ground. The Wall was just about all ruins now until I reached the fort at Shanhaiguan, which had been rebuilt. There, welcoming me, were the 500-year-old Chinese characters: First Gate in the World.

Just past the fort, the restored Wall ran out. Then came the coastal highway, and beyond that the Wall was scarcely more than a raised pathway of hardened earth. I walked two miles and then two steps and then one, and with that I was standing on the parapet of Old Dragon Head just above the beach, the waves dashing in over some ancient rocks of the Great Wall.

I took off my blue cap and waved it in triumph at the far bluer sky, then ran down the slope of the sand dunes from Old Dragon Head and into the waves of the Yellow Sea, shoes and all.



HE'S NO AUTHOR - HE'S A STORY TELLER

By P. ATWOOD WILLIAMS
Staff Writer

"I'm not a writer, but I'm a storyteller. My grandfather in Aiken, South Carolina was a storyteller ... if it doesn't interest me, I can't expect it to interest anyone," said the author of 11 books with the 12th ready now for a publisher.

Air Force Gen. Robert L. Scott, Jr.'s books have also been published in German, French and Spanish, which could add to the title count.

But Scott isn't counting. He's writing. He stands at his sink at the meat cuttingboard with a yellow legal pad and writes his story in longhand before going to his IBM type-

writer to apply his four-finger technique.

It wasn't always so.

He dictated his first book in three days in 1943, but Charles Scribner's secretaries couldn't understand his southern accent. Then a colonel, Scott was bored with the U.S. tour for his commanders and hoped to use the book to get himself and more airplanes back in action in China. He determinedly applied two fingers to the task of typing his first China adventures and finished it in just a few days.

"Scribner didn't like the title, and we got a bad review in the N.Y. Herald Tribune in 1943, but very soon *God Is My*

Co-Pilot was a best seller and Scribner called me to say, 'You did not let your publisher down,'" Scott recalled.

Today a first edition of that book is worth at least \$100. And at a recent military reunion in Montgomery, Ala., a judge asked Scott to autograph a 42-year old copy of the book he had stolen as a young man from the public library, later paying the fine to keep the book.

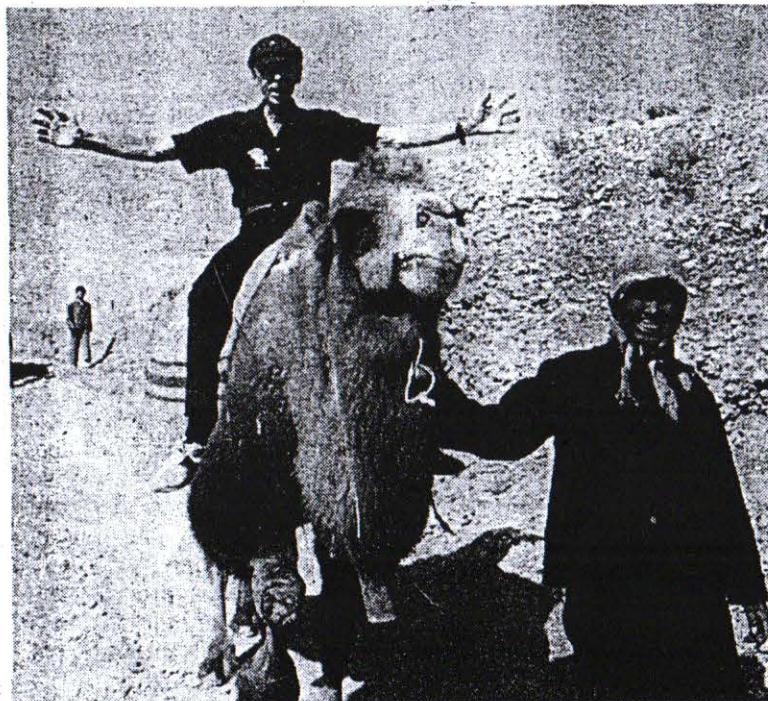
The P-40 aircraft was the main character of Scott's next book, *Damned to Glory*, in 1944. An old P-40 talks to a little P-40, and Scott uses "doggeral verse" in the meter used by Kipling to introduce each chapter about the plane "damned by the politicians, but flown to glory by pilots," he wrote.

The next year Scribners asked him for a book for boys ages 12-15 and what resulted was *Runaway to the Sun*, a book about men he had taught to fly and became Air Force heroes.

"Teaching others to fly is probably my greatest contribution in life," Scott reminisced.

An African elephant became the hero of his next book. At age 15 Scott learned about Samburu when he jumped ship on which he had been a deck boy in the Merchant Marines. In Nairobi a white hunter whom he knew from his Boy Scout days took him to "see the elephants—the Samburu Herd."

Scott discovered the exist-



Greeting the Chinese with open arms as he sits astride a camel, Gen. Robert L. Scott Jr. rides along the Great Wall of China in 1980.

ence of the herd again in 1951 when, while stationed near Munich, he flew weekly 1,200 miles to Tripoli to supervise the men in his command.

The next year, after spending hours in a museum studying an elephant skull and practicing the trajectory necessary to kill an elephant with a broom rifle, he was ready for the hunt.

For 30 days Scott hunted with a big game gunsmith, but left his party to track Samburu beginning in the northern swamp where the young are born each year.

"I had agreed to pay only \$5,000 for the hunt instead of the usual \$10,000 and was going to write a book on my safari. The ivory from the kill would make up the payment," explained Scott.

Samburu charged the party out of 12-foot elephant grass, and also destroyed the camp, but when the big moment came, Scott fired over his head.

"I had welched on my promise, but the professional Hunters Association of East Africa made me a member because I didn't kill him, and I wrote *Between the Elephant's Eyes* anyway, followed by *Samburu*, a book for boys.

His sixth book, *Flying Tiger: Chenault of China*, was published by Doubleday.

Next came a novel, *Look of the Eagle*, the title of which he got from his storyteller grandpa, who tailored his tales to each person and counseled Scott to "look at a person's eyes."

"If he's looking over the horizon, he has desire to accomplish something—the look of the eagle," his grandpa said.

Around 1956 he wrote an original paperback, *A Tiger in the Sky*, an anthology of military events, published by Ballantine Books.

Scott next tackled *God Is Still My Co-pilot*, the "toughest book I had written." He was 59 years old and "fighting mad" at the government's policies, vis-a-vis the "no win" war in Vietnam.

He raised money to get the book published by the now-defunct Augury Press in Phoenix, not far from Luke AFB, where he was serving his last command.

During his years as an author, he said, religious groups have objected to the relegation of God as "co-pilot." Once when some nuns took him to task over this, he taxied his

single-seated plane up and showed them the cockpit.

His next effort was *Boring a Hole in the Sky* (the Air Force term for "just putting in time,"), his attempt to blow the whistle on the Pentagon who had looked the other way at the waste of manpower. It was "written better, edited better and published better," said Scott. Although published by Random House, it was "permitted to die" without ever being pushed, he explained.

In 1980, he walked the Great Wall of China, whose image he had cut from a National Geographic magazine 38 years earlier.

He described in his book how he traversed 1,296 miles on the rammed earth or masonry wall on 72-year-old feet and rode between sections of the wall on camel, truck, bus, oxcart, jeep, boat and train. In April, 1983 Reader's Digest condensed it as *Return to the Great Wall* over which he had made shadows with his plane's wings in World War II.

Scott will discuss this trip and book when he speaks to a Sun City book review group at 1:30 p.m. Oct. 17 in the Arizona Room at Fairway Rec Center.

"I have my subject ready in my mind and never write my speeches," said Scott, who readily admits he needs a writing project to keep him mentally fit these days.

He has finished 23 chapters of his next book *The Maverick General*, a title given him by one of his friends. The book recounts the "times I was fired, and the times I should have been fired and wasn't," he smiled.

"My vocabulary has increased because I have looked up so many words," said the man who claims he is "not a writer" and did poorly in English, grammar and math in high school.

Scott says he also reads his text aloud ... the storyteller influence, no doubt.

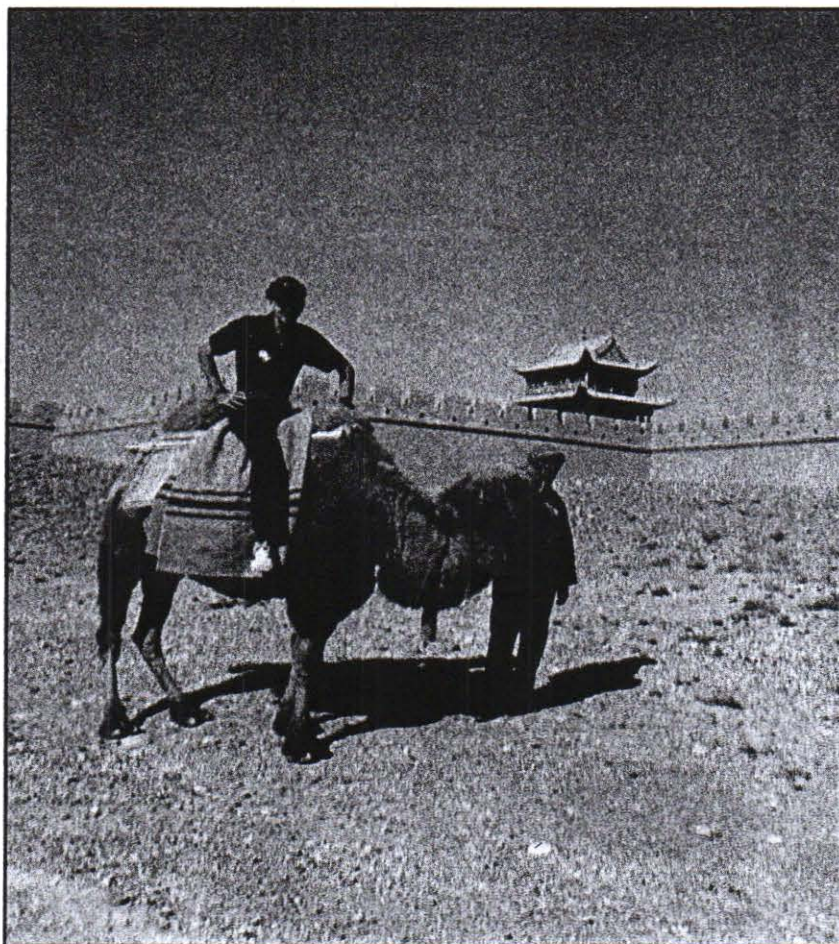
Currently he is negotiating with Random House and hopes they will edit and publish the text it took him six months to write. He looks forward to autograph parties all over the country and making publicity appearances.

The last chapter of his "love story between a pilot and a hundred fighters" is titled *The Ultimate Falcon*. In it he compares the first fighter plane he fought in which cost \$10,000 with the last one flown at age 76, made of titanium and costing \$19.4 million.

THE MAN WHO WALKED ACROSS CHINA

The incredible journey of Robert Scott,
author of *God is my Co-Pilot*

by Horace S. Mazet



'My trip to the great Chinese wall was one of great elation and bitter disappointment," said Gen. Robert L. Scott, Jr., USAF (Ret.) as we sat in his living room in Sun City not long ago. "I had long planned to walk the length of the Great Wall from its western end to the Yellow Sea, and now I was ready to begin. But there was no wall in this far

western, mountainous part of China!"

"No wall?"

"No—it had disintegrated in the long centuries, being made of mud. I would have to travel by bus to reach Khotan and join a camel caravan across the 900 miles of arid Taklamakan desert on what used to be the Emperor's Road. It has been called the Silk Road only for the last 180 years. Sand, sand and sand everywhere."

Scott thought a minute, recalled the latest disappointment in

OVER

Horace S. Mazet is a freelance writer who lives in Carmel, California.

7 Jan/Feb 1985

Az. Republic



Robert Scott in China, 1942

his 38-year dream to walk the length of the Great Chinese Wall. During World War II he had blazed a victorious trail across Chinese skies as a one-man air force and then was ordered to take command of the 23rd Fighter Group by that great tactician, Gen. Claire Chennault. During this phase of his flying he noted the shadow of his fighter plane's wings skipping across the Great Wall and resolved some day to return and walk its length. That no one had ever done such a feat did not deter him.

Anyhow," Scott continued, "when I tried to join a camel caravan, none was available. So I caught a ride on an army truck. It was a long, dusty, hot, interminable ride. We hit a sand storm that was worse than any I have ever seen in Arizona; it moved sand into drifts. And where drifts existed it moved them elsewhere. A few signs painted white on rocks had long ago been obliterated by flying sand. We had to drive without lights on. We lost half a day because of the storm, although we drove day and night, self-contained.

"I really didn't mind the heat. Maybe I was just so thrilled to be crossing the Taklamakan that I didn't notice the heat and dirt. I was finally on my way to the Emperor Wu Ti's wall, half flattened through the centuries."

"You finally found it?"

"Yes, I had found the ruins of

Wu Ti's wall nearby, situated where the Silk Road forks, in the most western part of the province of Gan Su. But let me tell you about Dunhuang and the Caves of the Thousand Buddhas. A tiny oasis is hidden between two famous mountains rising near Dunhuang: Mt. Can Wei and Mt. Ming Sha. All around lies a desert. But at this oasis, invisible until one is on top of it, are the Dunhuang Caves of the Thousand Buddhas, very ancient, discovered at the beginning of this century. They had been filled with blowing sand. From a geological point of view the position of the caves is quite vulnerable; any wind rising blows along the face of the cliffs straight into the caves where the statues and paintings are open to the weather. And now the entire site has been declared an historic monument. I went in. There are almost 2,000 statues, all Buddha, all sizes, some 100 feet high!"

"You took a picture of some of them?"

"You are not supposed to. But I am sure there are many more than the 2,000 Buddhas there, some not yet excavated. They were carved by merchants, to insure safe passage for their caravans."

Through services of a guide, Chang Jin, Scott was able to rent a car and driver to take him at last to Emperor Wu's wall. Here he was deeply disappointed again, for the wall was in such a state of bad repair that only parts

Robert Scott

were five or six feet high. The remainder had been demolished by time. A single fortress area had been restored, however, and close inspection of this site partly compensated.

And now it was the camel train. Chang Jin arranged for 11 Bactrian camels next morning, each with a driver. The General had his caravan at last, and soon the entourage moved out along the rammed wall toward Jin Yu Guan and the West Tower of Wan Li Chang Cheng (The Great Wall) which meanders over mountains and valleys 1,700 miles eastward to the end of his ambitious journey. The fabulous masonry wall has its western beginning at Jia Yu Guan and Scott was elated. Whenever the caravan halted for photographs, Scotty would mount the wall, then run along it until reaching a gap, as happy as if he owned a part of it. His dream was coming true at last.

Meals consisted of melons, tea and the remnants of cookies purchased at a shop in Dunhuang. After four days the wall had disappeared. Chang Jin knew it had been destroyed during the centuries, so he produced (magically) a car and the camel train was dismissed with protestations of friendship and warm thanks.

Driver, guide and Scott followed the map and, where they found remnants of the wall, the General would jump out and walk until the wall vanished again. Where he could, Scotty rubbed his hands along the brick, sentimentally, thinking of the aeons that had passed, and at times removed a fragment from the rubble for presents to youngsters in America who had requested them. Ex-Eagle Scout Robert Scott did not forget his friends.

"I was extremely happy to leave Jia Yu Guan," said Scott, reminiscing in his home in Phoenix. "This town marks the western end of the wall. If I was ever to reach the eastern end, I would have to hurry. My travel permit would expire unless I followed my star to the Yellow Sea."

He had planned his great trek for several years, written more than 200 letters and received only three which were promising. Then he faced the requirement that no one could enter China unless he was a member of an official tour. Seeing no difficulty in abandoning the tour when it came within range of the Great Wall, Scott remained on pins and needles, but was unable to quit the group; every morning roll call determined all hands were

present. And as a foreigner with blue eyes he would be unable to hide successfully.

In desperation he finally applied to the consulate in Peking and there met with some success. The way was made open, and he obtained a travel permit allowing him to travel. By plane, train, jeep, bus, on foot and car, he reached the far end of the wall, and began his ambitious journey to end before his permit expired. As he was 72 years old he did not feel that he could wait until diplomatic channels eased visitors to the

After four days, the wall had disappeared.

interior in future years. Scotty waits for no chance turn of fate—he is energetic, impatient and determined.

In his Arizona home he continually ran from one room to another, showing me various maps hung on the walls, with red lines indicating the see-saw trips back and forth until he was able to quit the official tour. Then he dumped a bag of shards on the coffee table. They were the souvenir stones he had brought back with him, to the puzzlement of the Customs authorities; these pieces of the Great Wall were for his Boy Scout friends. When I had admired them dutifully, he replaced them in the sack and ran back to another room.

Rangy, lean, nervous and at his fighting weight of 146, Scott moved about his house as if he were pursued by some Chinese devil, running each time to produce some bit of evidence that he had achieved his goal, his greatest adventure in peace time. When he sat it was on the floor, but he did not remain still very long. I thought his running suit and shoes were very appropriate.

"Mazie," he said, using my nickname, "I run about 10,000 meters three times a week. But lately I have been trying speed walking; it is just as good. I did not jog, I ran. Now my doctor tells me that this new exercise is just as beneficial for me. If I could only be hungry at supper time! I never eat lunch because then I wouldn't eat any supper, even though I cook it myself on my Chinese wok, which I lugged back from China. The doctors say I have 'reactive depres-

sion"—who knows what that is? I think it's just sitting around this place. I am anxious to be going again, perhaps back to China."

This is the old Scotty I knew back in 1939-40 when we were instructing Air Corps Cadets in how to fly the sky. Lieut. Scott, at that time, always kept moving about, and on several occasions I discovered him dive-bombing one of our landing circles after hours, his ammunition being a lap-load of melons or cabbages. He was not idly having fun. He was practicing for the war to come, and never let an opportunity pass. Later on, at night above the overcast, I heard him sighting in on a certain mountain, then carefully letting down through the clouds to a safe landing (blind flying) in a trainer lacking proper instruments for such a feat. He used an air speed indicator, an altimeter, and a compass. He was preparing for his future role as the man who wrote *God is my Co-Pilot* from his activities in Chinese skies. And it was no mean best-seller; it is still in print after more than 40 years!

Between his two China visits he lost no time in driving ahead. His wife, now deceased, once told me, "I have never heard him say, 'It can't be done.' I don't think he knows the meaning of frustration. The only thing I have ever been jealous of was a P-12 pursuit plane in Panama when Scotty flew all the time during one month to represent his squadron in a competition." And his squadron took the trophy. By the time Scott retired from the Air Force he had acquired a total of 33,000 hours (second highest of any USAF pilot). Obviously he throws himself into any activity that appeals to his energetic personality.

In 1976 and 1977 the retired general left the USA and traveled on foot through the Karakoram Range of the Himalayas from Hunza to the Pass of Tagdumbash in 19 days. He watched the Red Chinese and the Soviets build a black-topped road 18 feet wide from remotest Afghanistan to China—which was prohibited. He saw it all from peaks far above the workers, and threw stones into forbidden territory.

"I enjoyed the company of my Hunzakut guide," he told me, "although I never learned much of his language. He kept saying to me '*Cho khon, hiyak khon.*' And that means: never offend a yak, much less a rajah. I believe I successfully passed the test."

Scott made a report to the Pentagon of his scouting through the hinterland, but

if any action resulted he never heard of it. His long walk of 340 miles, mostly uphill along Marco Polo's road was tempting enough to write a book about, but he had no climax, no ending. So a book lay dormant.

"I have to find a finish to my book," he told me in 1979. "And I have an idea: come with me. We will walk a thousand miles from Wu Wei along as much of the Great Wall as we can cover, to Peking. Here I think I can end my story. I am going even if I have to slip in from a regulation tourist group."

Lack of time and many obstacles prevented me from accompanying Scotty on his unprecedented adventure to my regret. His wife said once that she was "living with a stick of dynamite." I would have found it exhilarating to go.

Now Scott was in high gear and for several days reveled in walking portions of the Great Wall as he had seen it during WW II. At intervals he found ruins instead of a proper wall, yet he continued knocking off a regulation four miles an hour, now and then chiseling his name in Chinese characters, using a screwdriver and a rock for tools. He muttered "Kilroy was here" as he did so, eyeing the character for Scott which so closely resembles a running man.

His food consisted of oatmeal and some cookies, and melons which he obtained from farmers along the route, plus tea which he heated on small wood fires from scarce greasewood type branches of desert plants. All farmers giving him melons refused payment of any kind except perhaps color postcards, or one of his remaining copies of *Arizona Highways* brought from home on an impulse.

But he was in his element now, and before him stretched the happy conclusion of his dream if all went well. He would pass through FuKu, then across the Yellow River by ferry and on to Datong, each day bringing more joy and each evening calm repose in his sleeping bag on the Great Wall—otherwise known as Wanlichangchen, the long rampart of 10,000 li. (A "li" is one third of an English mile.)

It was bad news, perhaps disaster, at Datong. When Scotty slipped from official sight to begin his long trek, he had left a railroad train without permission, bound not to lose the opportunity within grasp. Now the Chinese Secret Police, who had been looking for him for the past nine days, took him into custody.

Please turn to page 20

Robert Scott

Continued from page 7

Constant prying into his whereabouts during the past half month, the police obviously considered him some sort of spy on a mission in their country, possibly connected with the CIA. And he had confessed to wandering along the edges of their nuclear test centers. What for?

A week of this trying experience brought Scott to the edge of patience, but he remembered that he had carved his progress with a screwdriver at certain places along the Great Wall, and suggested they could be verified. Each one, luckily, checked out and his story of wanting to walk the entire length of the wall was partially believed. The general was freed, but felt he would like to ride by train to Pekin. He had, however, come all this way to walk, and walk he would to the extent that the wall still existed to its eastern end in the Yellow Sea.

The police were not entirely convinced, and assigned a Mr. Li to accompany him, a personally conducted tour across mountains and near towns for 250 miles. During those nine days Mr. Li—whom Scott now called General Lee—proved to have a sense of humor, and walked with him on the wall, rode with him across gaps where the wall no longer remained, ate and slept in the same ruins, sharing shelter against the rains.

"When I first met Mr. Li—whom I promptly classified in my own mind as a former soldier because of his bearing—I considered him a typical inscrutable Chinese. He was to me ageless. He could outwalk me with packs on our backs and I was 72 and pretty sure I can walk as if I were 35 or 40. Mr. Li could have been 45 or 50. I figured he knew plenty about the Pre-Cultural Revolution. But he really was the essence of the human being you would like to have as that mythical companion on some desert island.

"At first," he continued, "I wondered if he understood my jokes and banter. He not only understood the punch lines and innuendos but was way ahead of me. I told him about Kilroy—who-was-here everywhere, and also, doling out my cookie crumbs, often said 'That's how the cookie crumbs,' He was, in short, the greatest personality I met on the whole wonderful journey, helpful, considerate, and—later—indispensable."

Day after day and night after night they concentrated on traveling the ancient rampart. Walking stretched into miles, and Scott suspected General Lee had at first been skeptical that an American could traverse the distances he claimed he had already covered. Soon he was convinced, and a warm respect developed between the two men.

Without this guide Scott might never have achieved his purpose. "When General Lee finally guided me to Ky-Pei-K'ou he left me with a letter granting permission to walk the final terminal of the wall. And when he left me with jeep and driver, he waved and called back, 'That's the way the cookie crumbs!'

"Once my back pack was replenished by the friendly commandant at the tower fortress of Ky-Pei-K'ou I knew for sure that I had proven to the Security Police that I was not a CIA spy. Then, as you go another 130 or 145 miles eastward from this center, you come to the end of the Great Wall at Shanhaikwan. Each day I would expect to find the ocean at the end of my rainbow, and finally there it was! The effect on my morale was indescribable!

"I had experienced the worst of sensations and the best. My low points were not the obstacles trying to obtain permission to enter this country, not seeing the Great Wall in the west mere rammed earth in complete disintegration, not leaving the train at Yin-Chuan and walking for 190 miles with hardly any wall to see, all the way to the Yellow River—it was being detained by the police and fear of being taken in disgrace back to Pekin.

"And of course the crowning high point was the moment when I stood on Old Dragon Head at Shanhaikwan where the wall ends, waved my cap and ran down into the sea, clothes and all!" He had an ending for his book!

□

Note: Scott's walk covered 1,296 miles measured by Seikoelectronic pedometer, mostly uphill, in 63 days. His entire travels in China totaled 30,960 miles during the four months—by air, train, bus, ox cart, camel, jeep, truck and once in a boat—and some of it was repeating the official tour route with his own walking exploit. Such a walk had never before been accomplished.

Love of lifelong learning rewards Sun Citian

ANNIE BOON
DAILY NEWS-SUN

A passion for teaching and an inspirational volunteer spirit earned Ernie Stech of Sun City the honor of being named one of Arizona's Ageless Heroes.

Stech, 73, is a volunteer instructor for the Sun City Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Arizona State University. Tuesday, he joined 18 other seniors from across the state who were honored at the Ageless Heroes event in Phoenix.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona developed the Ageless Heroes program to recognize extraordinary seniors 65 or older for their accomplishments. This year, more than 200 nominations were submitted, and an independent panel of judges narrowed the

entries to 18 finalists in six categories.

Winners were announced during Tuesday's Ageless Heroes luncheon at the Arizona Biltmore Resort, featuring legendary journalist Hugh Downs and his wife, Ruth, as the emcees.

Stech was nominated by the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute in the "Love of Learning" category, along with two other nominees. He didn't win the top honor in the category, but was recognized during the luncheon and praised for his achievements.

"This is a real honor. I enjoy teaching, so it's a labor of love and this is a reward for that," he said. "There is a group of people who just want to learn. The fun part is they ask questions and get involved ... it's been literally a

fun experience for me."

Since the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute was established in Sun City in 2004, Stech has been an instructor and volunteer. Most recently, he taught creative writing, a session on "Exploring the Meaning of Life," and a course called "Hohokam: Ancient Residents of Phoenix." He also serves as chair of the institute's publicity committee.

"Ernie is probably our most active participant and supporter," said Diane Gruber, assistant facilities director for the institute, who nominated Stech for the honor. "He teaches very popular classes, mentors other instructors and serves on the board."

"He's our model Osher participant, and we wanted to thank him for all he's done

for the program," she added.

Jenny Brooks, Ageless Hero program coordinator for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona, said Stech and the other finalists were chosen for their dedication and unique contributions.

"We look for people who are breaking the stereotype of being a senior. They're living life to its fullest in their retirement years," she said. "We understand that the senior population is a very vital part of the state population as well as an important influence on younger generations, so we want their activities and inspiration to be known."

Stech and his wife, Yvonne, call Sun City his home during the winter and spend their summers in

See SUN CITIAN, A3



THOMAS BOGGAN/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Ernie Stech receives a rose from Katy Kelewae before a portrait session at the Ageless Heroes of Arizona banquet at the Arizona Biltmore Resort in Phoenix Tuesday.

Flagstaff. He serves as executive director of the Flagstaff National Monuments Foundation, a nonprofit organization that provides educational and interpretive materials and programs at Flagstaff area national monuments.

During the summer, he is a volunteer interpreter and ranger at Walnut Canyon National Monument helping visitors understand the archaeology, geology and natural history of the park.

He has a doctorate in communication studies and taught communication courses at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Mich., for 15 years. In 1985, the university presented him with the Alumni Teaching Excellence Award. He has penned seven books, including "The Transformed Leader" and "Leadership Communication." He is active in the International Leadership Association.

Stech said he loves teaching Sun Cities' residents who come to class eager to learn and build relationships. His educational philosophy is simple:

"Learning can and should be informative and fun. People acquire information in different ways — through seeing, hearing, reading and even touching and tasting. Adult learners appreciate enthusiastic, knowledgeable and organized instructors."

For information about the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Arizona State University, call the lifelong learning office in Sun City at 974-6985, Sun City West at 584-4288 and Sun City Grand at 546-742, or visit www.west.asu.edu/lifelong/osher.

Annie Boon may be reached 876-2532 or aboon@aztrib.com.