

The U. S. Destroyer Escort Stephenson received a message that there appeared to be a downed pilot in the southern end of the Straits of Korea, where they were patrolling. 127°15" west 32°10" North. The O.D. notified the Captain and was told to proceed to the location. It was not too far from their present location.

The lookout on the starboard wing of the bridge spotted it first. "Object in the water bearing 060 Sir" He yelled. The O.D. gave the helmsman the order to change course toward the floating object. The signalman on a longglass said "It looks like some sort of small boat with a man in it! "He really needs help, Sir. He is bailing as fast as he can and he looks very weak! "Call the Captain" yelled the O.D. As the ship moved slowly in towards the small boat. the Captain came to the bridge and gave the order for two of the crew to get ready to go into the water to help the man in the boat. "All stop" Came the order from the Captain. "All stop" echoed the talker. "Engines answer 'All stop! Sir.

"Recue team into the water" Came an order. The two men jumped into the sea and swam towards the sinking craft. The man in the boat stood up and made a grab for the side of the ship just as the ships wake hit the boat. The man fell headfirst into the side of the ship. His head hit the edge of one of the welded sheets on the ships side and cut his head wide open. The rescue team yelled for a stretcher and when it reached them, they placed the injured man into it.

While he was being rushed to sickbay, the Captain sent a request for a helicopter to take the man to a shore hospital. He could see that the mans injuries were severe. His Pharmisist Mates dressed his wound as well as they could and told the Captain he would probably be unconscious for some time.

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The rescue copter arrived a short time later and within minutes the injured man was in the emergency room of the hospital.

He was obviously suffering from exposure, hunger and dehydration. He had also, obviously, been in that small craft for some time. After complete examination, he was put to bed and fed intravenously to try to get some sustenance into his system.

He was in the hospital for three days before he regained consciousness. When he awoke, he asked one of the Pharmis~~ts~~ Mates where he was. "Your are the Naval Hospital" Was the reply. "How did I get here?" "Beats me buddy, they picked you up at sea". "I'll be right back" He said and left the room. A few minutes later a nurse came in and gave him a shot. As he was slipping into sleep, ~~he~~ ^{He} remembered a life raft with someone in it reaching for him.....

Ens. Gordon McCrea U.S.N.R. awoke to the soft touch of a feminine hand and the soft voice of someone saying "Wake up Mr. McCrea, it's time for breakfast. He looked into the brown eyes of a Navy Nurse. "Hello" she said, "It's nice to have you back with us!" "We found out who you were from your fingerprints" "It was quite a search" "How long have I been here" asked Gordon. "They brought you here three days ago"

"How did you find out who I was, I lost my dogtags"

"I told you, from your fingerprints" "They ~~were~~ ^{WERE} a shock to all of us" "Why"asked Gordon. "The doctor will tell you when the time is right. He will be in later, to see you." With that, she left the room, leaving Gordon puzzled.

Gordon was in the middle of his lunch, when a LT. Commander came into the room.

"I'm Milton Reynolds" He said. "I'm a psychiatrist, or if you like, a 'shrink'. and I'm here to ask some questions. After I ask my questions, you may ask yours, O.K?"

"Shoot"

"Can you tell me anything of what happened before you came here?"

"Where do you want me to start? When I was born?"

"No, start with when you left on your last mission."

"First and last, it appears. It was my first taste of combat and I was nervous and excited. I was a replacement for one of the other pilots who had become ill." "I remember the briefing in the ready room and how hard it was for me to keep from shaking. When we left the ready room, I passed one of my best friends, 'Mic' Abrahms. (I called him 'Mic' because he was Jewish and had the brightest red hair I have ever seen. I told him he had some of the 'Mic' in him. Hence the nickname) Anyway, he made a grab at me as I passed him. (He was on a ladder above me) I felt something slap against my ear, but didn't think of it at the time. As I was starting to take off, I ~~saw~~ 'Mic' running toward my plane waving something. It was my dogtags.

We had been in the air just a few minutes, when I saw my first enemy plane. They came swooping down on us and I heard the orders through the headphones to break and attack. I got on the tail of the first zero I could find and was starting to fire, when I heard a voice scream "Mac, he's on your tail" I don't remember what happened next except that I soon found myself in the water and the plane was sinking. I pulled the canopy back and slid out of the cockpit. I reached down and

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popped open my 'Mae West' and it was then that I realised that I was wounded. There was a huge gash in my upper right arm. Funny, I don't feel it anymore," He Paused and rolled up the sleeve of his pajamas and in amazement said, "It's already healed, how come"

"Go on" Said the doctor.

"Well, I was certain that I was going to die. The nearest land was miles away and with my arm as it was, ^{it} couldn't keep me going even with the life preserver on. The sound of the planes kept moving farther and farther north. I was just about to give up when I heard someone yell. I looked toward the sound and saw what appeared to be a life raft. Someone in the raft was using his hands as oars and was paddling toward me. As he came near, he reached for me and tried to pull me into the raft. When I told him my arm was wounded, he yelled, "Use the other one, stupid" I strained and finally got into the raft. As I got settled in one end of the small raft, I saw, to my horror, that he only had one leg. The right one was just hanging by a thread. He saw my look and said that it was no use to try to stop the bleeding, he said he would be dead in a few minutes. "All I want you to do for me is to tell my wife that I went down loving her with all my heart." Less than two minutes later, he was dead. "I covered his head with his flight jacket and said a little prayer. For both of us I guess. I bandaged my arm as best as I could and once again, I waited for death.

I must have passed out for sometime, because, when I ~~xxxx~~ came to, I saw that the sun was almost at it's zenith and I remembered that it was after noon when I crashed. I also noticed a bad smell. I realized that it was my rescuer. I said another prayer for him and after removing his dogtags, I gently rolled him over the edge into the sea.

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I don't know how long I drifted but it seemed like days. Then, one morning after not having eaten anything for a few days, I tried to figure a way to catch some fish. At last, I thought of using my rescuers dogtags. If I could make some sort of hook out of them and use the cord for a line, maybe it could work. I managed to make a sort of barb in one of them and lowered them into the water. I waited for a long time remaining very still and then suddenly, I felt a tug on the cord. I gave a quick jerk and a fish about three feet long landed in the raft. I had food! I bit the fish open and just sucked all the moisture I could get from it. Then I ate the entire fish. I did throw the head and tail away, though.

I used those tags for several days. I gathered some rain one day, which helped greatly, but one day as I was fishing, a large fish grabbed the line and before I could hold it, the fish tore the whole thing from my hand. I think I cried for an hour. I knew that that was my last chance of survival. I soon began to lose track of time. I don't know how long I drifted, or even where I was. I began to have strange dreams and then, one day I dreamed I saw an Island nearby. It seemed so real, that I dove into the water and started to swim for it. It seemed that I kept swimming and swimming forever. And that was the last thing I remember. I woke up here."

"I'm going to give you something to make you sleep for a while." Said the doctor. "I will be back afterwhile, because I have something to tell you that requires your complete attention!" He took the pill and was asleep in fifteen minutes.

Just after breakfast, the next morning LT. Commander Reynolds entered the room accompanied by a nurse. "This is LT. Olson, Gordon. She is my assistant, and a good one" "We are going to tell you things that will probably shock you and bring some sadness. "First of all we wish to express our condolences on the death of your mother. She died some time ago" "Why wasn't I notified" Asked Gordon. "How did it happen?" "She died in an auto accident in Los Angeles. It was quite sudden and painless" "You were not notified for the reason which am about to tell you"

"When you were shot down over the East China Sea, it was Oct. 13, 1943, right?" "Yes sir". "Well, here comes the shock" "You were picked up by the Destroyer Escort Stephenson in the Straits of Korea on May 14, 1950" "You are in the U.S. Naval Hospital in Tokyo, Japan and have been here for three days." To say that Gordon was shocked would be the understatement of the century. He just sat there in a state of wonder. "Are you all right, Gordon" Miss Olson asked. "No, I guess I am not. I just can't believe it all. What happened to the war? Is it over?" "Yes, it's over and the Japanese surrendered after being hit twice by the most terrible bomb the world has ever seen. Two complete cities were wiped out with just two of the bombs" "There is so much more for you to know, but for now we must ask you some more questions if it is alright with you" Do you ever remember having a skull fracture? "No" "Then, that must be the cause of your loss of memory. There were signs of two skull fractures in the x-rays we took of your head while you were still unconscious." "The Stephenson report said that you struck your head severely against the side of the ship as you were trying to get aboard. Do you remember striking your head? That was just four days ago. "No I don't remember anything before I woke up here.

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"We will talk more, later, but in the meantime we will have to get some meat on those bones. Do you know that you weigh only ninety pounds? The people here have orders to give you anything you want to eat and at any time, day or night. Take lots of fluids and get lots of rest. When we feel it is time for you to get out of bed and walk, we will see that you have pleasant company to help you.

When Gordon got his orders to return to the States, LT. Comm. Reynolds went with him. They became good friends, besides being doctor and patient. Gordon was something of a medical rarity. He was admitted to the Long Beach Naval Hospital and began a long series of interviews by different Psychiatrists and Psychologists. When he was asked if he wanted to let the press know about him, he declined, so he was known only to a few people. Just before Thanksgiving, Milt. asked Gordon if he would like to leave the hospital. "What do you think, Friend?" "I was wondering if you might like to spend some time with my wife and I. We have a quiet place up the coast aways and you could get some sun and fresh air. Also, you could begin to learn to be human again instead of a guinea pig!" "Cut the orders, Doc, I'm all set to go" Thanksgiving was spent at the comfortable home of Milt and Terry Reynolds. It was situated on a hill overlooking the ocean in the town of Cambria. The time he spent there were both restful and enjoyable. Milt and Terry were the best of hosts. They were there when he needed them and left him to his own thoughts when he wanted to be alone. He found solace in being alone. He thought back over his life and wondered why it was that he was in this quandry. Why me? was his thought,

Milt had to return to the Hospital just before Christmas, so with tearful goodbyes, they parted ways. Milt and Terry to Long

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each

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Beach and Gordon? Undecided. They parted in LA and Gordon bought an auto. He studied the vehicle code one afternoon and got this license the next day. When he got into the car after getting his license, he drove aimlessly around the town. He stopped at a cafe in ~~North~~ Hollywood and had lunch and as he was leaving, he saw a phone booth. He went in and picked up the phone book and thumbed through the pages. His eyes alighted on a familiar name. I wonder he mused. Picking up the phone he dial the number. After ringing several times, a voice answered. "Hello" it said. Gordon, with a tremble in his voice said. "Mic"? The voice at the other end of the line seemed to pause and then said. "Only one person uses that nickname, and he is dead. Who is this/" "I'm not dead 'Mic', I've just been lost for a few years." Gordon heard a scream at the other end of the line. "Honey! a miracle has just happened!" Then "Mac where are you" I'M at the corner of Victory and ~~WHITSETT~~, how far is it to your house? "How far!?! Don't you move. I'll be there in ten minutes." Gordon heard the squeal of brakes as the red sports car careened into the parking lot. A rather stout, balding man in shorts and a tee shirt came running to him. He threw his arms around Gordon and hugged him with all his might. When he stepped back there were tears in both of their eyes.