

1LT John A Pennau

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Pennau, Schettl, Oshkosh Men, Back From Foreign Service

Though They Never Met in
India, Both Flew on Missions
"Over the Hump" in Burma
Area.

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Though they were stationed within a comparatively short distance from each other, about 200 miles, neither knew it until they both arrived almost simultaneously in this country, and their home city, Oshkosh.

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John arrived just a week ago in this city. He had returned from India in three and a half days, by plane, from India to Miami. (How he happened to fly more than 8,000 miles in that time is a military secret.) Al arrived last Sunday, after 11 days of flight.

Each had a separate experience that would make enough material for several books. Both were near Imphal and Kohima when the Japs started their concentrated drive against the allied supply lines to China in April. Both had flown over the same territory in Burma and India, as well as China. Al was ferrying supplies while John was assisting in the destruction of Japanese fortifications and supplies. Both have had the experience of leaving India's scorching ground where the mercury gurgled at 110-plus and soared into altitudes in the sky where the temperature hit a 32-or-more below zero, all within a matter of minutes.

But let's take their stories separately. The experience of one is quite in contrast to that of the other.

John, the son of Mr. and Mrs. John H. Pennau, 11 Frederick avenue, entered service June 3, 1941, when he enlisted in the air corps. He was commissioned a lieutenant in October, 1942, at Roswell, N. M. He arrived in India on March 1, 1943, and left May 10 of this year. He has the distinguished flying cross for 200 combat hours; the air medal for 100 hours and the Asiatic ribbon with two stars for two separate phases, or campaigns, in that area.

He has over 50 missions to his credit—all over Burma, and all bombing runs. Though never shot down, his plane frequently came back from those missions with a score, or more, of shrapnel ("ack-ack") holes in the plane.

The bombing objectives, unlike European factories, railroads and objectives which cover widespread areas, were isolated fortifications or supply centers that were but a spot on the earth's surface and called for precision bombing.

Lieutenant Pennau lived in army barracks, on army rations that were similar to those in camps in this country. His appetite for social life and entertainment was satiated in Calcutta where, in the British clubs, it was possible to compensate for the moments of war.

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fication center in Miami after his 23-day leave expires. His many experiences that dealt with thrilling military engagements in Burma and India will remain locked within himself until the day comes when he can tell more about what he has done.

Staff Sgt. Alvin Schettl—well known for his football days at the Oshkosh State Teachers college, when he played end—did not spend as much time in India as John did but got to see enough of the war's experience to have a lasting memory of that country.

Al is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Schettl, 1607 Witzel avenue, has been in service about two years. On Nov. 15, 1943, he went directly to India with the A. T. S. as pilot, and left that country May 11, one day after Pennau did, and took 11 days to return, flying a different method than his Oshkosh mate had used.

Scheduled to be in India for 90 days of detached service, the Oshkosh pilot's time was extended beyond the limitation. Most of his time in India was spent flying C-87's (a Consolidated transport built exactly like a Liberator bomber but suited for transport rather than combat or bombing). He had 30 missions to his credit when he left that country. Each of these missions was in the manner of ferrying supplies "over the hump" to allied forces in Burma, India and China.

His work was almost on a 24-hour daily schedule. He slept in tents and native bamboo huts. Food consisted of army field rations. There was no time, nor nearby place, for entertainment or social life. Daily routine was either in missions or guard duty. Only one air raid was experienced by him. At the field, raided by the Japs, the enemy bombers overlooked a choice prey of several allied planes and hit one plane, an Italian plane, on the edge of the field and of no value to the allied field. The transport group Schettl was with saw few Jap planes and his plane was never shot at by enemy pilots and no flak molested him.

Flying "over the hump" with nothing more harmless than a .45 revolver and a "tommy" gun to hit the Japs, was ticklish business. All armament is stripped from the transport to save weight for precious cargo, the sergeant explained.

"Over the hump" is nature's weapon against the allies and enemy. Schettl explained the term "over the hump." He said it means flying over a 200-mile stretch of jagged, 20,000-foot peaks, infested with sudden violent storms, vicious air currents and icing. Add to this the fact that almost the entire tour is within Jap fighter plane range and over Jap territory. This is the "aerial Burma road" over which thousands and thousands of tons of materials flow to the Chinese and allied armies.

Schettl has a leather jacket that tells an interesting tale. Sewed on the back of the garment is an American flag. This has a value, if in bailing out of a doomed plane, the men should land in Burmese territory, it identifies the man as an American to the Burmese who may aid him in getting safely back to allied territory. Inside the jacket, however, is a Chinese flag. This is used if the pilot, or crew men, should drop into Chinese territory. It is worn in-

side as it may prove fateful if shown in Burmese territory where some of the Burma natives are unfriendly to the Chinese but friendly to Japs and Americans alike.

The matter of man's worth in Burma is a source of revenue to the Burmese, Schettl said. The Burmese are paid about \$300 in American money value in Japanese currency to bring in one American found in Burma. But the British and American armies pay about \$600 for the return of one of our men.

"It's good to be back. You can have India," Schettl remarked. "Oshkosh is still a great city."

There's good reason for Al to say that. He's getting married Monday to Miss Jane Winslow, a teacher at the Read school, and the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Winslow, 252 West New York avenue.

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