

# Casting for Skyway

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23

as Jack Jackson

Bud Wilson

Billy Lewis

as Earl Sinclair,

announcer

Chet Alquist

Col. Vona Essig

Sgt.

Col. Chen, Tadao

Mr. Sound Effects

Ms. Music

## SKYWAY TO HELL

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SFX: BOOTS SLIPPING ON ROCKS, GIGGLE OF PACKS

SFX: WIND loud, sustained, then fading

Col

Owhch! Remind me to send someone else next time. You'd think that by 1993 it'd  
be easier to get to these remote places. Oh, my aching feet.

1 Sgt.

2 I seem to remember someone quoting that "it is our duty to return the long-lost  
3 sons to the bosom of our country."

4 Col

5 You would have to remember that. It wouldn't be so bad if this wasn't so  
6 inaccessible.

7 Sgt.

8 I'm sure they didn't plan on crashing here. Hey, you wanted to make sure we got  
9 everything this time.

10 Col. Essig.

11 I know, I know. There's never a good time or place for this sort of thing. Besides,  
12 someone should have found this lot long before now. We're a little late.

13 Sgt.

14 About 50 years too late, I'd say.

15

16 Col. Essig.

17 From what our Chinese friends tell us, it wouldn't have mattered if someone had  
18 found them right away. That video that the Chinese took showed a high-speed  
19 impact. Poor guys never had a chance. (pause) Wait a second--isn't that a flash  
20 of light over there?

21 (SFX: END OF HIKING NOISES)

22 Sgt. Where? I don't see any...oh, wait, I see it.

23 Col. Essig Hand me the binoculars, please, Sgt.

24 SFX drawing binocs out of a case, and then screwing them into focus.

1 Col. Essig

2 Yes, I think that's where we're heading. My heavens, no wonder no one survived  
3 the crash. That plane is splattered all over the glacier on that far ridge.

4 Sgt.

5 I'm amazed anyone has ever been in this area. That Sherpa hunter who found it  
6 must have been desperate to climb near enough to see it. From here, without the  
7 glasses, it looks like silver lace.

8 Col. Essig Must you get romantic on me?

9 SFX: FADE WIND

10 Sgt

11 No, really. Viewed slightly out of focus, it's beautiful. The snowy glacier, the  
12 mountains beyond, the silver...

13

14 Col. Essig (growling)

15 Fine, you keep your eyes shut. Beautiful, ha! I know people call these mountains,  
16 these Himalayas, beautiful. But beauty can be deadly. I've read the reports from  
17 pilots that managed to survive flying the Hump in World War 2. They didn't call it  
18 beautiful. They called it...The Skyway to Hell.

19

20 MUSIC: thunderous crash or oriental, then under

21 (MUSIC: THUNDEROUS CRASH OF ORIENTAL MUSIC, THEN UNDER)

22 Anncr: Joy Jackson Productions presents a original radio play called "The Skyway to  
23 Hell". But first, a word from our sponsors:

24 Anncr: And now...The Skyway to Hell.

1 MUSIC LOUD, EERY (AND THEN UNDER)

2 Jack

3 I watched them approach for the second time. A long line of heavily-bundled  
4 people. And I hoped...Oh, God, I hoped... Last time I saw them come, there were  
5 6 of us. Just when I don't know. It's hard to keep track of the time...when you're  
6 dead.

7 LIVE SFX: SILVERY NOTES SIGNIFYING PASSAGE OF TIME.

8 Jack

9 There were 6 of us that day, clustered in our usual spots, scattered around the  
10 debris field that used to be a living airplane. With the dawn, came the start of the  
11 bickering and accusations that pass for our conversations.

12 MUSIC END MUSIC

13 SFX WIND

14 Chet You know this is all your fault that we crashed here.

15 Bud

16 My fault? If we hadn't had to wait for a certain hot-shot AVG pilot to board, we  
17 could have gotten away between the storms. But no, you had to make us late.

18 Chet

19 If you'd been experienced enough, you'd have been able to avoid this bloody  
20 mountain.

21

22

23 Bud

1           Avoid it? Hell, I never even saw it. We had no visibility the minute we took off  
2           from Kunming, and then it got worse. (grumble) Kunming--if you can see the end  
3           of the runway, it's okay to take off. If you can taxi out of the revetment, the plane  
4           is fit to fly. The only walk-around we did was to see if the engines leaked. I'll  
5           have you know I had my eyes burned onto the controls the entire time. From the  
6           time we left that gravel strip they call a runway to when we flew into here.

7   Chet           If I'd been at the controls...

8   Bud    (snort of laughter)

9           Ha! I'd have liked to see that. A fighter pilot in the cockpit of a truck.

10   EARL (hurt tone)

11           Hey, don't call my plane a truck. It was a C-87, a modified B-24. Four big  
12           beautiful engines...

13   SFX   FADE WIND

14   Bud

15           It was a truck. What else do you call something which spends its entire life  
16           hauling stuff to somewhere else.

17   MUSIC   (1940s--TUXEDO JUNCTION) UP AND THEN UNDER

18   Jack

19           They were good boys. Most of them had been with me all the way from the  
20           States. (MORE)

21

22   JACK           Bud Wilson was my co-pilot, this trip. I didn't know much about him. I think he  
23           had been some sort of hotshot in Hollywood, but that sure didn't keep him from

1 being here. Heck, the high command was so concerned about making sure the  
2 planes didn't sit on the ground that I had a different co-pilot every trip. It seemed  
3 like if a pilot flew once with a veteran, his next flight would be as command pilot.

4 The brass never understood that flying the Rockpile was dangerous, and  
5 that maybe...just maybe....it would be safer to have a team effort in the cockpit.  
6 It's hard to be confident in your co-pilot when you've had to tell him where the  
7 controls were and how the flaps worked.

8 MUSIC END

9 Bud

10 I thought sure we'd have good luck this trip. I missed that Chinese guy that ran  
11 across the runway in front of the plane. I thought the Japanese were the ones  
12 with the kamikazis.

13 BILLY (laughing)

14 Oh, he just wanted to get rid of his dragon.

15 Bud His dragon?

16 BILLY

17 Yeah. Chinese all believe they are pursued by a dragon. If you can cut him off  
18 or confuse him, then your luck gets better.

19 EARL That's why the Chinese have bridges with doglegs in the middle.

20 Bud

21 Then he must have chopped his dragon off at his skinline. I kept waiting for the  
22 thump, but Jack was yelling at me not to stop, or I could be court-martialed. And

1                   then I thought I was going to drive all the way to India, since we weren't gaining  
2                   much in the way of altitude.

3   Chet   (wistful)

4                   I wish I could be up there right now.  Nothing like it, strapping on a pair of wings,  
5                   when I became the airplane.  Perfect harmony: plane, pilot, the air and weather.  
6                   I was happy when I was at home in the air.  As long as I was flying, I couldn't die.

7   MUSIC       (1940s--Tuxedo Junction) UNDER

8   Jack

9                   Chet Ahlquist was a different story.  A arrogant young guy, on his way back to  
10                  India for a brand-new fighter, and some sort of secret mission...something he  
11                  never lets us forget.  (chuckles)  We resented being treated like second-class  
12                  citizens by every fighter pilot in the area.  Why, they'd have nothing if we didn't fly  
13                  it in.  And we knew our flying wasn't any less hazardous than theirs.  Besides too  
14                  many of us were finding out about it the hard way.

15   MUSIC       END

16   Bud

17                  Yeah, well, you certainly got what you deserved.  Sorry to rob you of a pair of  
18                  wings, but you're stuck here with all us truck drivers.

19

1 Chet

2 If you hadn't crashed the plane, I would have been in seventh heaven. I had a  
3 doll all lined up, see. I seen her picking tea in Chabua my last stint there. She  
4 had only one strap of her sari over a shoulder, and when she bent over, one  
5 shapely breast winked invitingly at me.

6 Bud At least I saved her from you.

7 Chet And I had scored some of that Scotch that the Limeys hoard.

8 BILLY

9 You mean Haig-and-Haig? Woo--eee, that's good stuff.

10 EARL The only problem is getting it out past those Indian guards.

11 BILLY It just fried me having to load all that fine stuff and never get a drop. I couldn't  
12 see why we couldn't liberate a few of them.

13 EARL We were supposed to be allies.

14 BILLY We should have been able to eat, drink, and be merry as well as they did.

15 EARL After all, if it wasn't for us, they wouldn't even get that.

16 MUSIC (1940s--Tuxedo Junction) UNDER

17 Jack

18 Billy Lewis. Now, Billy was my navigator. A bright guy, if a little wild. When we  
19 left Florida, he guided us from stateside all the way to India using a drugstore  
20 Rand-McNally World Atlas: Puerto Rico to Georgetown to Khartom to Aden to  
21 Salah to Karachi to Chabua. And we were damned lucky to even have that!

22



1 MUSIC END

2 Bud (curious)

3                   What else did we haul for them, food-wise?

4 BILLY

5                   It made my mouth water. Frozen lamb from New Zealand, canned fruit, cheese,

6                   bacon, Tom Piper's vegetable stew.

7 EARL           (dreamy) And Eggs.

8 BILLY           Yeah. Baskets and baskets of eggs. Fifty-pound baskets.

9 EARL

10                  You could always get eggs in Kunming, at the Hump Haven. You know, that

11                  converted C-46 fusilage.

12 BILLY

13                  That wasn't in Kunming, Earl. That was in Yu-nan-yi.

14 EARL           Oh, yeah.

15 BILLY           Andy Hart crashed it at the airfield, trying to land without his engines.

16 EARL           Oh, that's right.

17 BILLY           He was overloaded, as usual, and broke his wings off when he smacked down.

18                  The Chinese, being thrifty, made it into a restaurant.

19 EARL           (dreamy) Eggis, the Chinese called them.

20 BILLY           Definitely the reward for getting to China.

21

1 EARL

2 Landin' in Kunming always gave me a laugh. That sign on Operations—  
3 remember, Billy? The on that said:

4 (BILLY & EARL) " You made it Again! Good Work!" (BOTH LAUGH)

5 MUSIC ( 1940s= Tuxedo Junction) UNDER

6 Jack

7 That's my flight engineer, Earl Sinclair. Best man with engines I ever saw. I only  
8 flew the plane... The engines belonged to Earl. He was our information pipeline--  
9 the guys fixing the planes knew everything that happened. He and Billy loved to  
10 swap tales. He's always been sure that we'd be found one day, which was more  
11 optimism than the rest of us church-goers ever had.

12 MUSIC END

13 BILLY I heard once that the 374th in China wanted a piano.

14 EARL Oh, yeah! They were willin' to trade 12 dozen fresh eggs for it.

15 BILLY But the Squadron at Chabua held out. When the biddin' got up to 24 dozen, the  
16 guys couldn't stand it.

17 EARL Two hundred and eighty-eight eggs!

18 BILLY When the eggs arrived, the piano quietly went on its way, after dark.

19 SFX WIND

20 EARL And probably got listed as cargo on the next plane that crashed.

21 BILLY There was always a rush to take care of all those moonlight requisitions, as soon  
22 as word was received that a plane went down.

1 EARL  
2 Well they had plenty of opportunity.  
3 Bud  
4 I really enjoyed having all the tea I could drink. Assam's hills were covered with it.  
5 And we got eggplant, and water buffalo.  
6 BILLY  
7 You haven't been here long enough to get tired of those. You think they're exotic.  
8 EARL I get tired of food that gets mildewed as you look at it.  
9 BILLY And the ants did everything but open the canned goods.  
10 EARL If I never see another can of Spam I'll be happy.  
11 BILLY No, the big reward for getting to Kunming alive was those fresh vegetables,  
12 boiled chicken and ...  
13 EARL (sigh) eggs.  
14 Bud But water buffalo isn't what I normally get at home.  
15 EARL And I dare you to find a tougher piece of meat.  
16 Chet  
17 All you guys can talk about is food. Too bad the beer didn't survive the crash. We  
18 could have partied for a long time.  
19 BILLY (cut to the quick)  
20 We weren't even carrying beer!  
21  
22

1 Chet (SFX: FADE WIND)

2 Don't kid a kidder, kid. I know what was in them boxes lined up alongside the  
3 skins of the plane, right behind the doors. At 20,000 feet they'd cool off pretty  
4 quick.

5 Jack (musing to himself)

6 Is that why you went to sleep on the flight home? Ah, Chet. You'd been into our  
7 private supply. You had scotch waiting for you in Chabua...but no...you had to get  
8 into our liquor as well. Lady was waltzing all over the sky that day. When I could  
9 get her to stay level, then we would go up and down like we were an elevator. I  
10 thought you had a cast-iron stomach to sleep through that. It didn't occur to me  
11 that you might have passed out.

12 Bud

13 Hey, Billy, what else did we haul into China? It couldn't all be food.

14 BILLY (SFX--WIND)

15 Let's see, there were lots of times that we hauled 4 mules, along with 4 Chinese  
16 cowboys.

17 EARL I don't know which got sicker, the cowboys or the mules.

18 BILLY And we ferried a lot of troops hither and yon.

19 EARL That was always fun. Those Chinese enjoyed throwing someone out the door  
20 while we were in flight.

21 BILLY And laugh! Laugh as the poor guy was spiraling down. (shudder at the thought)

22 EARL

23 We always locked the cockpit when they came onboard.

1 BILLY We didn't want any of them up front.

2 EARL And if they got too rowdy, Jack would just fly a little higher. Without any oxygen,  
3 they'd quiet right down.

4 BILLY

5 What else? Hmm...Let's see...there was a load of catsup one time for Chet's  
6 buddies in Kwei-lin. We weren't sure just what you guys used all that catsup for in  
7 those dinky fighters.

8 Chet Yeah, well, let me tell you...

9 EARL The money....

10 BILLY (IGNORING THE INTERRUPTION)

11 Bales and bales of Chinese paper money, printed by the American Bank Note  
12 Company.

13 EARL And really useful if you were out of toilet paper....

14 BILLY Which was about all it was worth for.

15 SFX--FADE WIND

16 EARL

17 We carried every drop of fuel, every weapon, every round of ammunition.  
18 Anythin' and everythin'. Carbon paper and typewriter ribbons...

19 BILLY (chuckle) (digging at Chet)

20 We had to laugh about the boxes of Kotex. The AVG kept the girls in style.

21 Chet (hurt tone)

22 Hey, we didn't use them for that. They were the best thing to strain the oil in the  
23 fighter planes.

24 BILLY (disbelief) Oh, sure. Tell that to Madame Ch'ang.

1 MUSIC (1940's--Stormy) Up and then UNDER

2 Jack

3 We always flew overloaded out of India and Burma, over the Hump. We  
4 were so loaded that it was tough to get enough altitude. We'd have to spiral up to  
5 gain enough air to start over the mountains.

6 The skyroad to China had been lower over Burma, and it was 40 miles  
7 wide. but once Burma was lost, we had to fly through the mountains. Five  
8 hundred and fifty-five miles, from Assam, Northern India, to Kunming, China.  
9 Over mountains that reared up to more than 20,000 feet.

10 On good days 3 1/2 hours one way; on bad days, and there were more of  
11 them, it took over 5 hours. Manuevering overloaded was tricky at best. Then  
12 throw in heavy winds, mountains and Japs shooting at you. It was a trip of a  
13 lifetime. Each and every time.

14 MUSIC END

15 EARL Hey, remember Ed Butler, that crew chief on Betsy's Star?

16 BILLY

17 Oh, yeah! The guy who couldn't get his pilot to pay attention to his load master.

18 EARL He wasn't the only one! I don't believe any plane ever flew over the Hump that  
19 wasn't over-loaded.

20 Bud What about him?

21 SFX WIND

22

1 EARL

2 His plane was carryin' troops out of Burma, near the Chinese border and all their  
3 gear. Ed kept sayin' there was too much weight. He was sure they'd never clear  
4 the trees.

5 BILLY His pilot musta been too young, or too dumb, to understand.

6 EARL He kept sayin' "No sweat, don't worry, no problem."

7 BILLY (chuckle)

8 Some pilots think they know everything. No offense, Jack.

9

10 Jack None taken. Every profession has its fools.

11 EARL

12 So on takeoff, the pilot stood on the brakes, revved the engines to full power, and  
13 let 'er go. The plane slowly gained speed over the gravel runway and the trees  
14 loomed closer. (building tones) And closer. And closer. Ed was lookin' out the  
15 open door and finally couldn't stand it any longer. He started throwin' out duffle  
16 bags.

17 BILLY Bet those soldiers weren't too happy about that.

18 EARL When they reached the end of the runway, he bailed out of the door, holdin' the  
19 last bag.

20 Bud Did he make it?

21 EARL Oh, yeah. He landed real hard, but he didn't break any bones.

22 Bud No, not your friend. Did the plane get over the trees?

23

1 EARL

2 Ed said he just laid there on the ground, and watched the plane lumber over  
3 them, trailin' leaves and twigs behind it. ..

4 BILLY Wow....

5 EARL And then it was gone, and the runway was silent. The Japs might show up at  
6 any minute.

7 BILLY What'd he do?

8 EARL Ed gathered all the dufflebags, piled them neatly, and sat on top to wait for  
9 whatever fate had to offer. He didn't know if it would be better to be captured by  
10 the Japanese or the Communists. Hours later, he saw a speck in the sky.

11 SFX FADE WIND

12 Bud ( in agitation)

13 Well, who was it? Friend or foe?

14 EARL

15 Take your pick. (CHUCKLING) It was his pilot. He'd dropped off his load and  
16 came back for his crew chief. (chuckle) Ed was sure he was gonna get chewed  
17 out but good.

18

19 Chet I'd have reamed him out for sure, jumping out like that.

20 EARL

21 If it hadn't been for his quick action in lightenin' the load, he would never have  
22 cleared the trees.

23



1 BILLY

2 I hope that taught the pilot to pay a little more attention to the load limits.

3 EARL Pilots who know what they're doing generally watch when the plane is being  
4 loaded, to avoid any unpleasant surprises.

5 BILLY Guys don't get too many second chances out here.

6 MUSIC (1940s--GEORGIA) UP AND THEN UNDER

7 Jack

8 Or any chance. None of us were top flyers--oh, except maybe Chet over  
9 there, if you believe his line. The top pilots and crews went off to Europe, to fight  
10 the Nazis. We got kids right out of flight school, with no instrument experience. If  
11 you got on the bad side of a commander at a base, you could suddenly find your  
12 name on the roster of personnel needed to fill the quota for the China-Burma-  
13 India Theater. "Ship the problems off to the CBI and forget them." The lost and  
14 the forgotten. Including me, Jack Jackson, Captain, Army Air Corps...now  
15 deceased.

16 I only had 50 more hours to go, to complete my 650 to go home. But then  
17 our job over here was to keep China in the war, by supplying her with troops,  
18 high octane gasoline, guns, whatever, in a 'round the clock operation. Most of us  
19 pilots flew 100 -160 hours a month...just about the limit of our endurance.

20 The Brass declared that there wasn't any weather over the Himalayas, so  
21 we flew when the birds walked. And the casualty rate for downed and missing  
22 planes reflected that. The Brass made it all look good, or at least better, by  
23 having our "accident" rate a reflection of how much tonnage we hauled to China--

1 so many planes per a thousand tons of supplies. Flying cargo wasn't supposed to  
2 be more hazardous than combat.

3 Count up all the ships we lost and then multiply that by the five or six poor  
4 lost souls in each and...ah, what's the use...

5 MUSIC END

6 Chet

7 India! Land of warm weather, warm food, warm babes...

8 EARL I'll give you India. Cockroaches the size of small dogs.

9 BILLY I walked out of mess hall one day, and stepped on a huge beetle, as large as a  
10 Texas armadillo. It held my weight, and moved under me. Instinctively I pulled  
11 out my .45 and shot it.

12 EARL Or that snake I found sleepin' in my boot. Nailed it with one bullet.

13 BILLY (SFX--WIND)

14 Or that time Bliss Thorne was walking between the air base and that small  
15 village. He was passing through a jungle trail and stepped on what felt like an  
16 automobile tire.

17 EARL What happened?

18 BILLY He was thrown about twenty feet. When he looked back there was that cobra  
19 moving off into the jungle.

20

1 Jack

2 And there were wild elephants crushing through the jungle, and bandits and  
3 head-hunters, not to mention every insect known to God. There were good  
4 reasons that everyone in Assam was ordered to wear their guns and carry gas  
5 masks at all times.

6 BILLY

7 Mosquito netting everywhere and so hot that we all slept naked. I'd wake up  
8 even more tired than when I went to bed.

9 EARL (concerned about his plane)

10 There weren't any hangers for the planes. They all had to be refueled from five-  
11 gallon cans carried on the heads of natives. We couldn't work on the planes  
12 durin' the day, because they were too hot to touch.

13 BILLY Ouch!

14 EARL We'd work all night, and try to have the planes ready to fly at dawn, when the  
15 Japs were sure to show up.

16 BILLY

17 You'd get up in the dark and it was still hot, then slog through the mud to  
18 breakfast,

19 EARL eat mud-flavored food,

20 BILLY and be taken out to your plane,

21 EARL which you'd have to finish loading.

22 BILLY And try to leave as much mud in India as possible.

1 EARL

2 And if it wasn't mud, then it was that confounded dust that got into everything.  
3 Into the food, the gasoline, the oil.

4 Bud

5 And God help you if you forgot any of your cold-weather flying gear, while loading  
6 cargo in 90 degrees. From too hot to too cold in minutes. No wonder everyone  
7 looked sick and run-down. I heard some folks had to fly with socks on their hands  
8 to keep them from freezing at altitude.

9 Jack

10 I used to use a blanket that I wrapped around my feet and legs.  
11 Worked pretty good.

12 SFX FADE WIND

13 BILLY (cautious but excited)

14 Skipper, I think someone's coming this way. See that glint over on the far hill?  
15 Way beyond those mountain sheep?

16 Chet

17 Give it up. That's just a flash of light on a piece of junk. You're always thinking  
18 you see something coming. What a crock.

19

20 EARL I always said someone will come.

21 Chet

22 And you infected Billy with that. Nobody has ever come. You knew we were way  
23 off course. Why would anyone look for us this far away from the main lines?

24 MUSIC (1940s--Stardust) Up and then UNDER

1 Jack

2           Coming back from China, we flew high, and there were lots of different  
3 routes home. We were fairly light. Anything was lighter than guns, gas and  
4 ammo. They even siphoned off part of our gas supply, leaving us with just  
5 enough to get back to base. The advantage of our C-87 was that she had 4  
6 engines, and could climb up to 28,000 feet, over most of the weather as well as  
7 the mountains.

8           However, there were hazards with that. The constant worry about oxygen.  
9 The problem of navigation, and the lack of radio beacons. If you were flying in  
10 clouds, the navigator couldn't get a fix.

11           And even if you were on course, there was no guarantee that you'd find a  
12 hole to descend back down to earth. Circling blind over the airport's beacon  
13 caused all of us more than just a few gray hairs. Even at those heights, I had to  
14 watch for the mountains, when I could see them, because they went higher. But  
15 when you get caught in the grip of a storm, it takes you where it wants you to go.

16 MUSIC      END

17 BILLY

18           Bud, you probably never got a good look at any of our maps. When they were  
19 originally made, they were in metric, but when the Army took over, they reprinted  
20 them in feet. BUT they didn't change the numbers.

21 EARL        So, you couldn't be sure that the height listed on the map was actually in feet or  
22 meters.

23 BILLY       Was that mountain at 2500 feet or was it really at 8500 feet?

24 Bud         You're pulling my leg. That means you couldn't trust them.

1 Chet Maybe that explains why we crashed into this mountain.

2 SFX WIND

3 BILLY

4 What I don't understand, skipper, is why we're still here. Oh, I know we crashed.

5 I remember the terror as we hit this ridge. It wasn't on my maps, at least where I

6 thought we were. I know I'm a ghost. but I don't get what has to happen to get

7 onto whatever's next.

8 Chet Hey, kid, this is heaven!

9 Bud If this is heaven, then how come you're here?

10 Chet To teach you devils some manners.

11 BILLY

12 No, I mean...aren't ghosts supposed to help someone so they can get their

13 wings?

14 Chet That's angels, kid.

15 BILLY How do you get to be not-a-ghost?

16 Jack

17 That's a mystery to all of us, Billy. My only theory is that we're tied to this place,

18 to this plane, because of our bones.

19 BILLY

20 You mean that if someone were to take our bones home to bury, we might

21 go...on?

22 Jack Could be. Or maybe that will happen when our bones become dust.

23

24

1 EARL

2 That could take a while. The cold seems to be pretty good at preservin' all this  
3 stuff. You notice that Billy's tommy gun still doesn't have any rust on it?

4 Chet

5 That's a pretty weak theory, Jackson. I see no proof of it, either for or against.  
6

7 Bud Well, Chet, it's clear you never believed in anything.  
8

9 Chet That's absolutely false. I've always believed in myself.

10 BIZ: groans from all.

11 **Jack:**"Give it a rest". **Bud:** "You're the only one." **Billy:** "Ohhh, sure."

12 SFX FOOTSTEPS ON GRAVEL

13 BILLY I told you, someone's coming!

14 EARL My position's the farthest. Should I go see, Skipper?

15 SFX FADE WIND

16 Jack Sure, Earl, why don't you do that.

17 Bud

18 You cats are just too much. Can't you get it through your heads that we're stuck  
19 here forever?

20 SFX FOOTSTEPS ON GRAVEL

21 EARL

22 Skipper, there is someone coming. He's walking up to the end of the wing. He's  
23 one of them Tibetan hunters. (urgency) He's picking up some pieces near the  
24 wing. He's...(gasp)

1 Jack Earl! Earl! What is it? Earl!

2 EARL (shaky)

3 He's touchin' my...(long shaky breath) Sorry, sir, that felt too weird. I've never had  
4 anyone touch me before.(beat) Now he's pickin' a few small pieces of the plane,  
5 and packin' it into his bag. And he's ...leavin'!

6 SFX PIECES OF METAL RATTLING TOGETHER

7 BIZ: (everyone is upset)

8 BILLY Noooo!

9 Jack (asserting his command)

10 Come on now. Get a grip on yourselves. What did you expect him to do? Bury  
11 us? If we're lucky, he will take word to others.

12 BILLY

13 But he was so close! Couldn't we have stopped him from leaving?

14

15 Bud That hasn't been successful with the goats.

16

17 MUSIC BRIDGE ORIENTAL MUSIC (LOUD THEN FADE TO OUT)

18 BILLY

19 It's not my fault that we got blown way off-course. We were jumping all over the  
20 sky.

21 Chet

22 I know, and it (mimics) "wasn't your fault we ran into a mountain." If it wasn't  
23 anyone's fault,(beat) why am I here?!?

24



1 Jack I know it was my fault. I couldn't hold her on course.

2 Bud (SFX---WIND)

3 No, it's not. There wasn't a thing you could do, when the winds took control of the  
4 plane. Updrafts, downdrafts, hail, the rate-of-climb was to the peg in both  
5 directions.

6 Jack

7 There was that long updraft that took us up 4000 feet per minute like a leaf  
8 blown up in the wind. We topped out at 32,000 feet, the highest I'd ever been.  
9 But we didn't stay there long.

10 BILLY

11 Mayday calls split the radio waves that day. I couldn't get a radio fix because of  
12 all the distress calls. It broke my heart to hear those calls: "We are at 12,000 feet  
13 and still dropping. Our left engine is dead. We are bailing out at 10,000 feet. I'll  
14 tie the key down and hope you can get a bearing. So Long." There was a steady  
15 tone and then it stopped, leaving only static.

16

17 Bud

18 All the gyros and the artificial horizon were inoperative. We got hit with a blast  
19 that skittered us sidewise and downward. We were hanging on the safety belts  
20 with dirt from the floor falling all around. How in the world could you sleep  
21 through all that, Alquist?

22 Chet Talent.

23 BIZ: Everyone groans--they've heard it all before, and are disgusted.

24

1 BILLY

2 Bud was calling all sorts of compass headings that didn't make sense. I had no  
3 idea where we were. I kept hoping for a radio beacon, or anything to give me a  
4 clue...

5 EARL

6 I was worried, but I knew other planes had made it back under similar conditions.  
7 Remember the C-54 that landed with buckled wings, torn rivets and shredded de-  
8 icer boots?

9 BILLY Yeah. That was a mess.

10 EARL That fuselage was twisted 3 to 4 degrees out of line, and there were rivets  
11 popped out all over.

12 BILLY The pilot was admitted to the hospital with a nervous breakdown. Or that C-46  
13 enroute to Tez-gwan from China? The one that encountered heavy  
14 thunderstorms?

15 EARL When didn't we get thunderstorms?

16 Bud

17 That only describes a couple of hundred planes.

18 BILLY (SFX--WIND)

19 At 19,000 feet, a violent updraft turned the plane on its back and threw it into a  
20 spiral dive. The crew couldn't bail out because of the centrifugal force. Then  
21 there was a severe jolt, and the plane righted itself at 4,000 feet.

22 EARL That plane did a "split--s" while diving at 600 mph, ---and they got back. Good  
23 plane.

1 Jack

2 That was because they'd gotten to those lower plains of India. With the Rockpile  
3 at 20,000 feet, they were lucky they made it out before that happened.

4 Bud

5 I remember seeing a plane on the deck just after I got into base. Its entire  
6 fuselage, the part that was in line with the propellers, was literally demolished. I  
7 had to ask about it. It seems that ice had built up on the props and they couldn't  
8 break it loose. I guess the de-icer boots or whatever didn't work. They told me  
9 that as the plane descended to clear the ice, the engines sounded like they were  
10 coming apart. The warm air and the clubbing props were letting loose large  
11 chunks of ice. Ice erupted from the wings in large sheets. And it pounded the  
12 fuselage to shreds. But they got down okay.

13 BILLY Jack, I think someone is coming again.

14 Chet (SFX--FADE WIND)

15 Get off it, kid! There was only that one guy. Ever since then, you've been seeing  
16 people come, only there ain't any.

17 EARL

18 Come on, Chet. You're always pickin' on Billy. I thought officers were safe from  
19 other officers.

20 Chet And you're no better. Always seein' something or someone.

21 BILLY No, look. Over across the valley. There's about 25 of 'em.

22 Chet

23 Well, they ain't comin' here. I tell you this is the end of the world up here. No one  
24 in their right mind would come visit.

1 BILLY

2 No, but they could be concerned about the discovery of a crashed plane.

3 Someone might still be alive.

4 Chet You're hopeless.

5 MUSIC TIBETAN MUSIC BRIDGE LOUD, THEN FADING

6 EARL (sideline whisper to Jack)

7 Skipper, they are coming closer and closer. They're almost to my position.

8 They're Chinese.

9 Chet How can you tell? That other guy wasn't.

10 Bud

11 You could tell us, hotshot. You're the one that flew for them. Do they look

12 Chinese or Tibetan?

13 Chet (unwilling)

14 Well, the uniforms have a resemblance to the Chinese army.

15 Bud (sarcastic) Hey, don't give anything away .

16 Jack

17 Steady on. All we can do is wait, and see what's gonna happen.

18 BILLY

19 They've got some funny looking boxes that they're holding up to their faces.

20 Bud

21 Maybe that's a new kind of camera. In L.A., the industry was comin' up with all  
22 sorts of different hand-held movie cameras. But they don't have film cannisters.

23 What I wouldn't give to take one apart and look.

1 Chet

2 Why, so you can try to take our picture? We're ghosts, we're not photogenic.

3 EARL

4 Jack, they're touchin' me again. Ohhhh, Jeez, they puttin' my bones into a big  
5 bag. Does this mean I have to go wherever they take my bones?

6 Jack Steady. All we can do is hope that's true.

7 EARL (concerned)

8 But I don't wanna leave you behind.

9 Jack (soothing)

10 They might find all of us.

11 MUSIC TIBETAN MUSIC LOUD AND THEN UNDER

12 Jack (sadly resigned)

13 But they didn't. They didn't find Bud and me, where we lay twisted in the  
14 wreckage of the cockpit, and they didn't find Chet. Earl and Billy, along with our  
15 radio operator, Donnie Hill, were packed up in seperate bags, and hauled  
16 downhill to their basecamp. They picked up everything that still had any writing  
17 on it, although the weather and the crash hadn't left much. Most of the aluminum  
18 skin of the airplane had been scoured clean.

19 It had always been hard to keep the idenitification markings on the plane. Flying  
20 through clouds with rocks in them did wonders for the plane's complexion. And I  
21 had to say good-bye to 3 great guys. They waved at us as they left.

22 MUSIC END

23 BILLY (calling) (off-mike)

24 Skipper, it should have been you going.

1 Jack

2 Look at it as a mission. You three will have to go and scope it out. And figure out  
3 a way to get them to come back for us. If we don't meet up ...on the other side, I  
4 want you to know I was proud to have you in my crew.

5 EARL (off-mike)

6 We'll find a way, Jack, we'll find a way.

7 MUSIC (1940'S--I'LL BE SEEING YOU) BRIDGE, FADING INTO A JET FLY-BY

8 EARL

9 Where do you think we are, Billy?

10 BILLY (chuckling)

11 Oh, sittin' on top of some glazed lacquer boxes, in a large hangar.

12 EARL No. What town?

13 BILLY

14 I think that last place we were had to be Lhasa, the capital of Tibet. I'd been there  
15 a couple of times. This looks more Chinese but it's not Kunming.

16 MUSIC ( Taps) UNDER

17 EARL

18 No, I know that. Nothing was familiar flying in.

19 BILLY Here comes another group of people.

20 EARL Yeah...They're unfoldin' American flags and puttin' them on them boxes.

21 BILLY (SOMBER)

22 Coffins, Earl. They're our coffins. Listen. Hear that? They're playing "Taps".

23

1 EARL

2 Hey, there's some of ours in this group. Look at their uniforms.

3 BILLY At least they still say U.S. on them.

4 EARL Dang! Is the whole Army run by women these days?

5 SFX SQUEAKY WHEELS (under)

6 BILLY

7 Maybe that's who they detail for this kind of duty.

8 EARL Oh-oh, we're moving.

9 BILLY Hold on!

10 EARL (LAUGHING) You think we can fall off?

11 BILLY Oh, yeah, I forgot. They're wheeling us out onto the runway.

12 EARL

13 My God, look at the size of that plane! It's huge! They're loadin' us into it. There's  
14 a markin' that says C-141. Has it been that long? Our bomber was a B-24.

15 MUSIC JET ENGINE REVVING UP AND TAKING OFF, JET NOISES IN FLIGHT  
16 UNDER

17 BILLY

18 Yeah, but when they converted it into a transport, that changed the designation  
19 to C-87. Not that big a difference in numbers.

20 EARL Still, must be quite a lot of different planes. And you notice that there isn't any  
21 propellers?

22 BILLY How do they make it fly?

1 EARL

2 Must be some special engine. I heard rumors that they were workin' on propeller-  
3 less planes, but it was only experimental. They tended to blow up.

4 BILLY (LAUGHING)

5 Well, we don't have to worry about that, do we?

6 SFX: END OF WHEELS; THUMP OF METAL DOOR;

7 MUSIC: (1940'S--ADIOS) UNDER

8 EARL (laughing)

9 Can't get us more than once. Hey, remember that chaplain we flew out of China?

10 BILLY

11 THAT goof-off and gold-brick? He always felt that a religious service was an  
12 annoying duty that he could race through like a quarter horse.

13 EARL At briefings, he was always in the sack.

14 BILLY His one visit to the hospital was to call on a crew member who owed him fifty  
15 bucks from a poker game.

16 EARL

17 When he received orders to go home, the crews drew lots for the honor of flyin'  
18 him out of China.

19 BILLY We won.

20 EARL He insisted on sittin' in my top turret, probably dreamin' of impressin' the bishop  
21 with his lies. And then--Without warnin', there was a dull plop, broken glass and  
22 the turret was full of blood and guts. (laughed) I thought we'd been attacked.



1 BILLY (LAUGHING)

2 Geez, that was funny! The chaplain was covered with guts, feathers, bone and  
3 yucch!

4 EARL

5 And Donnie said...

6 BILLY (IMITATING) "It's a friggin' boid. That's boid crap all over the padre's head. It's boid  
7 justice!

8 EARL

9 And he hasn't talked since we crashed.

10 BILLY I heard that the chaplain underwent a dramatic change. He was convinced that  
11 he had received a special message.

12 EARL

13 Speakin' about birds, I was on the ground one day, and watched a C-46 come in  
14 low over the field, just as one of his props stopped. They went around again to  
15 land.

16 BILLY What's wrong with that?

17 EARL I was standin' next to the crew chief, and he threw his oily rag on the ground in  
18 disgust.

19 BILLY I don't get it. What happened?

20 EARL (chuckling)

21 They hit a seagull.

22 BILLY (laugh) No!

23

1 EARL

2 It was no laughin' matter. (laughter) The leadin' edge of the wing between the  
3 engine and the fuselage was completely torn open. Oil and gas lines ruptured,  
4 and bird guts, feathers and a bright yellow beak were squashed into the wing.  
5 That plane was out of commission for THREE weeks!

6 BILLY

7 Milt Miller always used to say that the birds could be as much a hazard as enemy  
8 fighters, or the flak...

9 EARL Or the mountains, or all that ice...

10 BILLY Or that rotten fog... OR the maps used in China.

11 EARL The birds that nest on the Himalayan crags are a vicious lot.

12 BILLY Milt swore they had a kamikaze death-wish--one that insured them a special  
13 niche in bird Valhalla...

14 EARL But only if they died attacking a DC-3, B-25 or B-24!

15 BILLY Wonder how many of them made it?

16 MUSIC FADE MUSIC; INTO A JET LANDING

17 MUSIC (HAWAIIAN: ADVENTURES IN PARADISE) UP AND THEN UNDER

18 (BOTH ARE STUNNED ABOUT THE NO-SMOKING: IN THEIR ARMY EVERYONE SMOKED  
19 EVERYWHERE)

20 BILLY

21 This must be Hawaii. Bud told me about visiting here before the war. Did you  
22 see that sign on the building as we came in?

1 EARL

2 Yeah, it said U. S. Army, Central Identification Laboratory, Building 1028.

3 BILLY

4 No, the other one. The one that said, " In respect for the deceased please  
5 remove headgear. Restricted Area. Authorized Personnel only.No smoking."

6 MUSIC END

7 EARL No smoking? You're kidding. No, I missed that one.

8 BILLY They've put us in some sort of lab. It's a large room--about 60 feet long and 50  
9 feet wide.

10 EARL Hmm...It's got stretchers all over it.

11 SFX: FOOTSTEPS (AS IF HE GOES TO SEE) ON WOOD

12 EARL (continuing) And they've got bones on them.

13 BILLY Here's the rest of our stuff on the table.

14 SFX: FOOTSTEPS

15 EARL Watch it! There's a Jap!

16 SFX: BRUSH SOUNDS IN WATER, AND ON "BONES"

17 BILLY Relax. Bud said Hawaii has lots of them.

18 EARL But he's washin' our bones!

19 BILLY Well, someone has to.

20 SFX DOOR OPENS, SHUTS, FOOTSTEPS

21 Col. Essig. Good Morning, Tadao.

22 Tadao Good morning, Colonel Essig.

23 Col. Essig. How's it going? What did we bring back?

24

1 Tadao

2                   These are 3 young men, early twenties. The bones well preserved. So many of  
3                   them.

4 Col. Essig.

5                   We seldom get to bring back that many. These had been at high elevation, and it  
6                   was pretty cold there, even in the summer. Frequently, the bones you get to work  
7                   with are crumbling, and in fragments. Now we have to find out who they were.  
8                   Three men out of the 78,000 still missing from World War II.

9 Tadao            You found no dog-tags?

10 Col. Essig

11                   Unfortunately, we didn't get to go to the site. The Chinese took videos of it, and  
12                   I've seen them. I don't think that much about their photography. They had some  
13                   curious fuzzy spots on their videos. But they didn't deliver any dog-tags.  
14                   Wouldn't want to make my job any easier.

15 Tadao            I thought all soldiers wore dog tags in Second World War.

16 SFX DOOR OPENS, CLOSES, AND FOOTSTEPS (in middle of Col.'s section)

17 Col. Essig

18                   They were supposed to. We're pretty sure that this crew is from the Air Transport  
19                   Command, and flew their plane one too many times over the Himalayas. Most of  
20                   the dates in the log books that were brought back indicate they were flying in  
21                   Jan. of '44.

22 TADAO            So long ago...

1 COL ESSIG I've read that in the three and a-half years of schlepping cargo to China, the ATC  
2 lost 600 planes and one thousand crewmen.

3 TADAO So many....

4 SFX: BOX THUMPED ON TABLE

5

1 Sgt

2 Here's that box you wanted. 600 planes, huh? Let's see, at 3 and 1/2 years,  
3 that's 36 months plus 6 months or 42 months, divided by 600, that's roughly...  
4 My God! 14 planes a month!

5 Col. Essig.

6 Or one plane every other day. That's an average. There were times that no one  
7 crashed, and months when more went down. January 1945, I've heard reports  
8 than 30-40 planes crashed--depending upon who I talked to. One bad night nine  
9 of them bought the farm.

10 EARL (muttering to Billy)

11 Yeah, that's why none of us wore dogtags. What's the point in adherin' to Army  
12 regs when it's only a matter of time before you went down that last time, where  
13 no one could find you.

14 BILLY

15 Earl, you know that the tags were to identify the remains, when you died, so they  
16 could ship you home.

17 EARL

18 Naw, it was the Army way to put its brand on you. Not wearing them was a way  
19 to refuse to be part of it. Did you have yours on?

20 BILLY (chagrined)

21 Welllll... no. They were in my foot locker...

22 EARL (smugly)

23 I rest my case.

24

1 Col. Essig

2 Sgt, gather up any paper you come across that might yield a name--mess slips,  
3 receipts, those kind of things. I wish these guys had put their names in these  
4 logbooks. This one is a lovely record of engine performance, but not one word  
5 about who wrote it.

6

7 SGT What are you going to do with them?

8 Col. Essig

9 I've arranged for the Honolulu Police Dept to use some of their crime lab  
10 wizardry. They've been bragging on how much new equipment they bought from  
11 the 1993 budget. At least we know that this plane was a C-87, from that  
12 electrical data plate.

13 Sgt

14 And the flight and maintenance logs at least narrowed down the dates of the  
15 mission.

16 Col. Essig

17 But that still left us with too many possibilities. Even one name would help. Give  
18 me a hand with the files of the Missing in Action.

19 Sgt You betcha.

20 SFX FOOTSTEPS, DOOR OPEN, CLOSE

21 EARL What about my flight suit? They got it right here.

22 BILLY Did it have your name on it?

23 EARL I always wrote my name on it, to make sure I got it back.

24 BILLY Well, I don't think they can see it.

1 EARL Maybe the police could. Come on, it's worth a try.

2 BILLY To do what?

3 EARL To get my flight suit in that box.

4 BILLY And how are we going to do that? Wish? We can't touch it.

5 EARL

6 What if we tried to move it all together? (urgent) We've gotta try, sir! If they don't

7 find our names, they'll never go back for Jack and the rest.

8

9 BILLY I don't think...(reluctantly) Oh, alright. Let's do it.

10 BIZ: guys grunting as if they're working hard.

11 EARL It fluttered! I know it did.

12 BILLY

13 Donnie! Get your butt over here, and help us. I know you've always kept to

14 yourself, but the crew needs you now. (pause)

15 DONNIE (ANNOYED) All right All right!

16 BILLY Thanks. All together--one, two, three.

17 BIZ: grunts as if pushing hard (continuing until after sfx)

18 SFX: CHIMES TINKLED

19 SFX: FLUTTER OF MATERIAL AND THUMP INTO BOX

20 BILLY (panting)

21 That's got it! It's in the box!

22 EARL (panting)

23 We did it! We did it. (heavy breath) What do we do now?

24 BILLY (resigned, HOPELESS) Wait...Just wait.



1 SFX DOOR OPEN, CLOSE; FOOTSTEPS

2 Sgt I'll just close this box up and we can be off.

3 Col. Essig

4 We can get a couple of plate lunches while we're downtown.

5 Sgt (chuckle in voice) As long as I can have Spam in mine.

6 Col. Essig (laughed)

7 You've really gone native. Let's go.

8 SFX: DOOR OPEN, SHUT

9 MUSIC (HAWAIIAN--"HAWAII") up and then under

10 BILLY

11 They even have Spam in Hawaii. Gack. Earl, did you like the flight on that plane?

12 EARL Smooth, real smooth. I missed the special effects, though.

13 BILLY Like what?

14 EARL

15 Oh, I always enjoyed those small rainbows that were created in the clouds by the  
16 wing-tip lights. Or St. Elmo's Fire. That was always a thrill.

17 BILLY

18 Do I remember that! The balls of fire that edged along the wingtips. The huge  
19 circles of flame created by the propellers.

20 EARL

21 Or the dancin' tongues of electrical energy that entered the cockpit and tripped  
22 along the instrument panel, ticklin' the pilots hands and necks.

23 BILLY

24 Earl, I didn't know you had that kind of poetry in you.

1 EARL (embarrassed)

2                   Aww, it inspired that kind of thing. Otherwise I was scared witless, particularly  
3                   when we were carrying gas or ammo.

4 MUSIC       BRIDGE (HAWAIIAN) HAWAII UP

5 SFX    OPENING AND CLOSING BOOKS. FLIPPING THROUGH PAGES.

6 SGT (muttering)    No, not that one. No, no, no...wait a minute.

7 MUSIC       END

8 SFX    STOP FLIPPING PAGES

9 SGT                Halleluja! I found it!

10 SFX         DOOR OPEN

11 Sgt (calling)   Colonel Essig! Colonel Essig! I found 'em, I found 'em!

12 SFX         QUICK FOOT STEPS

13 Col. Essig     You found them? Let me see.

14 Sgt             It's this one, Colonel.

15 Col. Essig. (reading)

16                   41 dash 223862. B-24 slash C-87. Jan. 18, 1944, took off 0-400 from Kunming.

17                   Destination: Chabua. Never arrived, never heard from again. Weather--stormy

18                   12,000 to 50,000 feet, one mile visibility.

19 SFX         PAGE TURNED

20 Col. Essig

21                   Here's the crew: Capt. HB "Jack" Jackson, Lt. Frank "Bud" Wilson, Lt. William  
22                   Lewis, Sgt. Earl Sinclair...

23 Sgt

24                   Sinclair. That's the name that the cops found on that tattered flight suit.

1 Col. Essig Good thinking, Sgt, to send that over.

2 Sgt Umm (clears throat) ...Yes, ma'am.

3 Col. Essig Sgt. Donald Hill. (pause) That makes 5.

4 Sgt

5 That's all the crew. Since they needed the cargo space, they didn't carry the

6 bombardier or the gunners. But there was another guy on that plane, flying as

7 cargo.

8 Col. Essig.

9 Oh, I see that. Lt. Chester Alquist. Damn! And in the lab we only have 3 of them.

10 (sigh) I can see we're going to have to make a trip.

11 Sgt

12 Oh, boy. Beijing, here we come. Then Beijing to Lhasa, another 250 miles from

13 there to Lin Zhi, the provinical capital.

14 Col. Essig

15 And probable garden spot of Tibet. Then onward to (Yee-Gon) Yigon, and a 5 to

16 6 days hike to the plane. Sgt, my advice to you--Bring plenty of socks and

17 bandaids.

18 Sgt Not to mention mosquito repellent.

19 MUSIC TIBETAN under

20 Col. Essig

21 Two days drive across Tibet, followed by a 6-day hike up the valley. Six

22 Americans, 20 porters, Chinese soldiers and Tibetan officials. A 2-mile pre-dawn

23 hike across the spongy, partly-melted permafrost earth. Constant warnings about

24 how treacherous the glacier is in the summer, that it shifts and splits as it warms.

1                   We formed into 3 parties, each to travel over a different route to the crash  
2 site, in case avalanches or rock slides cut off one group or forced a different  
3 approach.

4                   The first group's mission was to get to the site, establish the limits of the  
5 crash and have priority-of-recovery tasks established for the rest of us. The  
6 officials and porters were in the final party, including Col. Chen, commander of  
7 the security force and myself. We had to carry the bulk of the equipment over a  
8 mile-wide field covered with glacial scree and boulders the size of small  
9 automobiles. Five hours later, we finally closed in on the aircraft.

10 MUSIC        END

11 SFX: FOOTSTEPS, HEAVY PACKS BEING DUMPED TO THE GROUND.

12 SFX   WIND

13 Col. Essig

14                   Sgt. we're going to map, sketch and photograph this site within an inch of its life.

15 Sgt                Leave no stone unturned, Yes Ma'am.

16 Col. Essig

17                   Set up the Global positioning System. I want to determine the center of the crash  
18 and its limits.

19 Sgt.

20                   Yes, Ma'am. (pause) Uhh...The altimeter says the highest point of the crash is  
21 13, 310 feet.

22

1 Col. Essig.

2 No wonder I'm having trouble breathing. Well, fan out. We're looking for any  
3 remains, or anything else that might prove useful for making identifications--like  
4 dog tags!

5 BIZ: PEOPLE SEARCHING THE GROUND: JOY, ANNA, BRYAN, MERRILL, LES

6 SFX: RATTLING OF METAL, MOVING STUFF. UNDER

7 Chet (worried) Jackson, they're not going to find me.

8 Jack Chet, these are Americans. They won't miss you.

9 Chet (getting desperate)

10 But look at them! They've already overshoot my position.

11 Jack Calm down, Chet.

12 Bud (digging)Where's that fighter-pilot cool?

13 Sgt: (Off mike)- calling

14 Over here, Colonel! I think this might have been the cockpit. And I think I can  
15 see... (SFX RATTLE OF METAL)

16 SFX FOOTSTEPS, END RATTLING

17 Chet

18 You can laugh. They just found you guys. They're going to miss me altogether.

19 Bud

20 If you hadn't passed out from drinking our beer, you'd have been in the right  
21 place.

22 SFX FADE WIND

23

1 Jack

2 I watched the Americans methodically search while Chet got more and more  
3 agitated. They pried Bud and me out from the mangled mess that remained of  
4 the cockpit. It was very odd being packing into a bag.

5 Chet (pleading)

6 Please. Help me. Don't leave me here alone. (in desperation) I'll...confess that I  
7 lied about how well I could fly.

8 Bud (disbelief) You're kidding.

9 Chet

10 I only shot down 1 plane, while I cracked up or wrecked 4 of ours. Plus I was  
11 never in the right place to save my wingman. Hell, I never even thought about  
12 him until I got back to base.

13 Bud Oh, so that's why...

14 Jack (as if he held up a hand)

15 That's enough, Bud. You can bitch and moan at him later. Here comes that  
16 Colonel. I can't get used to a woman being in command of such a task.

17 Okay, here's what we're going to do. We're going to try to herd her over to your  
18 rockpile by surrounding her and pressing against her. I think that will make her  
19 feel cold, and she'll go where we want. Bud, you get on the other side, Chet, take  
20 the tail.

21 Chet Will I ever!

22 Jack (deadly serious)

23 If you screw this up, Alquist, we'll leave you to the winds.

24

1 Chet (instantly contrite) Yes, sir.

2 Jack Okay, press her in that direction.

3 BIZ: grunts from the guys as if working hard

4 Col. Essig.

5 Brrr. Must be a cold spot. I didn't know you could get pockets of cold on land like  
6 you can in the water.

7 Bud (panting) Jeez, this is hard work.

8 Chet Just shut up and push.

9 Col. Essig

10 This seems to be a little more sheltered. Think I'll sit on this rock and catch my  
11 breath, until they get ready to go.

12 Jack

13 Okay, let her alone. Now, we have to kick up a little dirt, to show one of your  
14 bones.

15 Chet But...

16 Jack (exasperated)

17 Lookit, this is the only way I've figured out. Do you want our help or not?

18 Chet Yes, I do. But...Jeez. (beat) Alright, go ahead.

19 Jack Ready? On the count of three. One--two--threee.

20 SFX SCRATCH FINGERS INTO GRAVEL

21 Col. Essig.

22 Drat. Where did that wind come from? (pause, then sudden interest) Wait, what's  
23 this? (urgently calling) Sgt! Sgt! I think I've found a few more bones.

1 SFX FOOTSTEPS

2 Sgt (sarcastic) (coming on)

3 Oh, good. You realize that every bone we find we're going to have to pack it out?  
4 Not the porters. Not the Chinese. Us. (mutter) It seems to be against their religion  
5 to carry remains. Col. Essig, your pack is gonna be heavier.

6 Col. Essig

7 If that's what it takes. I don't want to leave anyone here in this god-forsaken  
8 place.

9 Sgt

10 Good thing we brought along those two guys. Both of them claim to enjoy  
11 carrying 80-pound packs. (glee-full) They're gonna prove it.

12 Col. Essig

13 We'll haul all this stuff back down to the base camp. Then I need to check in with  
14 Beijing and Honolulu. We'll probably leave tomorrow.

15 Sgt.

16 Good. The fewer nights I have to wrestle with that damp sleeping bag the better.  
17 Get a shot of joy-juice and hit the sack.

18 Col. Essig. (horrified) You didn't bring any alcohol.

19 Sgt

20 Alcohol? Who said anything about alcohol. I want a shot of pure oxygen.

21 Col. Essig (relieved) You had me worried.

22 MUSIC CHINESE MUSIC--Mournful voice, up and then under

23 SFX: THINGS BEING PUT INTO A PACK



1 Sgt Col. Essig, you're wanted by Col. Chen.

2 Col. Essig. Thank you, Sgt.

3 SFX END PACKING

4 SFX FOOTSTEPS

5 Col. Essig.

6 Colonel Chen. I want to thank you for all your help. It's been tremendous.

7 CHEN

8 I was pleased to be of service. Chinese, like Americans, revere their lost  
9 servicemen. It was an honor for our soldiers to assist in this mission to recover  
10 friends lost as they fought with us many years ago. We will never forget them  
11 and we extend our sympathies to their families. We hope now they will find  
12 peace.

13 SFX CHIMES: TINKLING

14 Chen (surprised)

15 And that is a good omen for our mission. And your journey back to your  
16 homeland.

17 Sgt (awe) Look at that!

18 Col. Essig.

19 Oh, my. Look at that rainbow. I've never seen one quite that intense.

20 Sgt And it looks like it's right over the crash site.

21 Col. Essig. (smiling) I'd say that we did good, Sgt. We did good.

22 MUSIC HAWAIIAN MUSIC (ALOHA OE) UP AND UNDER

23

1 Jack

2 And that was how me and the boys came home. They will be burying us  
3 tomorrow at Arlington. Hey, with any luck, we'll continue on our journey into the  
4 next life. We've had enough of this one.

5 Say a prayer for us, won't you?

6 MUSIC HAWAIIAN MUSIC (ALOHA OE) UP AND THEN UNDER.

7 Ann cr

8 You have been listening to an original production, written and directed by Joy Jackson.

9 It was based on a true story.

10 This script is copyrighted by Joy Jackson.

11 MUSIC END

12

1 Anncr

2 Col. William Jordan wrote about the discovery and recovery of this plane. He was in charge  
3 of the Army's Identification Unit in Hawaii.

4 The number of crashed cargo planes in the CBI is a matter of official record.

5 Skyway to Hell was what the air crews called their flight path into China, because they had to  
6 mark off each crash as they flew over it. To see if there were any new ones that lay below.  
7 (IRONY) Must have made for a pleasant flight.

8 The conditions of living in India and flying to China and back were a lot worse than we had  
9 time to convey.

10 The ghosts of this story are the author's. She chose to change the names of the people  
11 involved in this historical incident, and obtained permission to use other real ones instead.

12 The actual pilot of this flight was a Lieutenant, but the author promoted him to Captain. He  
13 never had that possibility in real life.

14

15 The Rainbow----was real.

16