

CHAPTER 4

Love and the Machinery of War

In his autobiographical essays on his eight months in combat, poet Richard Hugo recalled that he volunteered for service as a B-24 bombardier hoping to overcome feelings of weakness and inadequacy. A virgin and a "sissy," he wished to feel "masterful" as a flier: 1

I . . . foolishly thought facing and surviving danger would give me a spiritual depth and a courageous dimension I lacked and desperately wanted. "I went hunting wild after the wildest beauty in the world." And when . . . I woke up one day, around my fifteenth mission, and realized I could be killed, things were never the same.¹

Quoting Wilfred Owens's "Strange Meeting," Hugo characterized his desire for aerial combat as a hunt for "the wildest beauty in the world." Although he did not describe his emotions in training or on his early missions, this passage suggests that at least temporarily Hugo discovered within himself the forceful, masculine qualities he craved.

Inside heavy bombers, young men—particularly bombardiers like Hugo who dropped tons of explosives on targets below—became masters of destruction. 2 Early in their military careers, they reveled in the power of the massive aircraft that carried them into battle, regarding the machines as extensions of themselves. With experience, however, real and imagined terrors overshadowed the pleasures of aerial combat. The targets of enemy antiaircraft gunners and fighter pilots, airmen became painfully aware of their vulnerability and dependence. Nevertheless, they continued to fly.

In Hugo's case, desire for social acceptance trumped fear of death,² but for many airmen shame was insufficient incentive to remain in combat. 3 In the hope of averting capture, injury, or death, airmen carried lucky charms and developed ritual behaviors. Some young men experienced a rebirth of religious faith. Others derived comfort from an inflated confidence in the abilities of the men with whom they flew and on whose skills their lives might depend. But experience undermined most airmen's faith in luck, ritual, comrades, and perhaps even God.

Combined with the pleasures of aerial combat, fear produced an affectionate, even worshipful, attitude toward aircraft. Like other soldiers, airmen sought refuge in the arms of local women and found solace in letters and photographs from home, but as Douglas Bond, who served as director of psychiatry for the Eighth Air Force in England, noted, some men's love of aircraft surpassed their love of women.³ Although they were often decorated with massive images of scantily clad women and given names like *Miss Yourlovin*, *Flamin' Mamie*, or *Hump Time*,⁴ heavy bombers were not simply vehicles of pleasure or objects of erotic desire. In the words of a poem by an unknown prisoner of war, they were valiant "queens" who "revel[ed] in flight" and combat.⁵ These warrior queens were also devoted mothers who loved their crews and fought to protect them from harm. So strong was the attachment of man for machine that airmen frequently mourned the loss of loved planes and sometimes regarded mechanical failure as akin to marital infidelity.⁶

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This chapter explores how aerial combat affected individual men, relations between comrades, and attitudes toward military aircraft. It follows the men from enlistment and training into combat, focusing on how conflicts between love and fear, power and impotence, shaped their sense of themselves as men and as combatants. It examines changing relationships among men and between man and aircraft, for the powerful and potentially dangerous women who dominated airmen's hearts and minds were not human but mechanical.

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There are many reasons why young men competed for the honor of engaging in aerial combat. A highly trained and elite military organization, the Air Corps attracted many volunteers who preferred it to other branches of the military. The pay was better and promotion quicker. Furthermore, the Air Corps offered some hope of professional mobility; particularly as a pilot, a bright young man might learn skills that would prove valuable to his postwar civilian or military career. Finally, the life of an airman, although not always comfortable, was certainly less grueling than that of a foot soldier.⁷ Of course, less rational motives also played a role in a young man's decision to volunteer for aerial combat. Some were attracted by aggressive publicity campaigns, but for many volunteers, the glamour of aerial combat did not simply derive from recruitment films or from newsreels highlighting the role of the Army Air Forces.

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Many airmen had, as boys, fantasized about flying and dreamed of becoming pilots. Being accepted as Air Corps cadets was a fulfillment of their childhood fantasies. For example, the first chapter of fighter pilot Robert L. Scott Jr.'s 1943 memoir, *God Is My Co-Pilot*, is entitled "I Knew What I Wanted." Scott had wanted to fly since he was a child. Ross Greening, a

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medium bomber pilot, shared these longings. Recording his memories a decade after the war's end, Greening recalled being fascinated with flight since seeing his first plane at the age of four. A photograph from three years later clearly documents the boy's glee on his first plane ride. After graduating from college in 1936, Greening applied for pilot training at the Air Corps Flying School at Randolph Field, Texas. Less dedicated airmen reported similar longings. David Zellmer, a dancer with Martha Graham's troupe, enlisted in the Army Air Forces soon after he received notification of his 1A draft status. "I could 'imagine' myself as a flier, not a soldier or sailor," he wrote. Zellmer could still remember the view from a barnstorming plane at age twelve; afterward, he and his brother spent hours beneath their father's desk pretending to fly in a "cockpit" fabricated from the desk, an overturned chair, and a small rug.⁸

The love of flying was, perhaps, strongest among pilots but was not confined to them. Many gunners, radio operators, navigators, and bombardiers joined the Air Corps because they wished to fly. Gunners Eugene Carson and his twin brother John had been fascinated with flying since they were children. Enlisting in the Air Corps, John was assigned to a bomber crew, while Eugene, who had trained and worked as a baker, unhappily found himself back in the kitchen. Through perseverance and a forged note from his widowed mother, he finally finagled a combat assignment aboard a B-17.⁹ Lyman Clark, another aerial gunner, had been president of his high school model airplane club and would have preferred pilot training, but he viewed the opportunity to become a gunner as a chance to fulfill his "childhood dream" of flying. Even though he never took control of an aircraft while in gunnery school, Clark reveled in the opportunity to soar and dive inside of AT-6 training planes. A popular poem spoke to the situation of men like Clark. Anonymously authored, "A Gunner's Vow" began: "I wish to be a pilot,/And you along with me,/But if we all were pilots,/Where would aviation be?" Although disappointed, the gunner of the title concluded that a pilot was just a "chauffeur" while the gunners "do the fighting" and vowed that he and his comrades would be the "best damn gunners/That have left this station yet." This poem was obviously some consolation to Dallas Moody who was sent to gunnery school after failing to qualify for pilot training. He clipped a copy of it from his camp newspaper and sent it home to his family. Another gunner, Joseph P. Bruckler, reproduced a slightly different version of the poem in the diary he kept as a prisoner of war in Austria.¹⁰

As fliers, young men discovered magnificence in themselves, airborne and looking down on "the poor earthworms below." In a letter to his parents, bombardier Byron Lane described flying as an "ultra-aliveness, like being king of the mountain—no one can touch you." For Moritz Thomsen, who "washed out" in pilot training, flying was the feeling that the plane "was nothing but an extension of your own unlimited potential." Moving in unison, man and aircraft broke "free of the laws of gravity" and "bored holes" in the yielding sky. This sexually charged feeling of power was common to many airmen in training and is evident in some of

the names with which airmen christened their assigned planes—*Big Dick, Cock O' the Sky, Nine Yanks and a Jerk, Purple Shaft*. The boast "big dick" graced at least five Eighth Air Force bombers, as well as innumerable crew positions—spelled out or symbolized by a roll of the dice.¹¹

In addition to feelings of mastery, young men discovered a new sense of belonging as members of a combat crew. While some airmen were sent overseas as individual combat replacements, most arrived as part of a crew. They met the men with whom they would enter combat during the final phase of training. This event has an almost magical quality in many airmen's memoirs. Unable to recall the details of the day when he met his crewmates, bombardier Moritz Thomsen remembered an intense feeling of love for them. The ten men, he wrote, were immediately "joined in an absolutely uncritical brotherhood," but this camaraderie did not long survive their entry into combat, as Thomsen was reassigned to another crew and fear of injury and death came to overshadow brotherly love.¹²

Less mystical but equally affectionate, aerial gunner and poet John Ciardi characterized his B-29 crew as a group of men joined by a common interest in "whiskey, women and airplanes." A large portion of Ciardi's first diary entry is devoted to describing his comrades at a dinner party thrown by pilot Robert Cordray for the other members of the crew. After enjoying a good steak dinner and a great deal of rum, Ciardi wrote:

. . . [W]e all made pretty speeches to each other, decided all over again that we're the best crew in the business—which of course we are—and made vows for the future. . . . We all shouted, loved each other very much, and got up—mostly drunk.¹³

Unlike Thomsen, Ciardi's loving attachment to this group of men survived combat. According to Cordray, he and the surviving members of the original crew became "life-long friends," largely through Ciardi's efforts.¹⁴

Inexperienced airmen were eager to enter the fray after many months of training. According to their contemporaries, new arrivals were easy to spot amidst veteran airmen. Bright-faced and cocksure, they viewed their more experienced comrades as "'flak-happy' or spiritless" and denigrated the fear they would soon come to know. The contempt for fear common to men who had not yet seen combat was perhaps the reason why veteran airmen often taunted new arrivals. Rummaging through the belongings of untried airmen, combat veterans would lay claim to various articles, explaining that they planned to retrieve these items when their owner was shot down and insisting that this event was inevitable.¹⁵ Displacing their own feelings of vulnerability and powerlessness onto the newcomers, veteran airmen also vented

their hostility toward men who did not share their fears. In most cases this practice only managed to convince new men that they would better withstand the stress of combat than those who came before them.

Untried airmen often viewed combat as a test of manhood, and they hoped to perform well. Describing a group of copilots who had recently arrived overseas and were waiting to be checked out for combat, pilot and prisoner of war John Muirhead mused: "How hard we all worked for the honor of combat; how bitter it was for any of us to fail, to wash out at any stage of our progress from neophyte cadets to the elitism of terror." He compared the aspiring combatants who stood before him to "trembling virgins waiting for the first touch on their flanks." This metaphor of combat as a loss of virginity is common to many bomber crew memoirs. Having learned to love flying, the first combat mission was, for many airmen, a sexual initiation. "If you ask a woman what emotions she felt on that special day when she lost her virginity," Donald Currier wrote, "she would probably respond: 'anticipation and apprehension, exhilaration and relief.'" Currier reported that he and his crewmates "felt the same way" on the eve of their first mission. Like many other novice airmen, they were too excited to get much sleep the night before this mission and did not need to be awakened for their first early morning briefing.¹⁶ **13**

More than injury or death young men feared failure or cowardice as they prepared to enter combat, a May 1944 survey of Army Air Forces combat personnel revealed.¹⁷ Although John Ciardi did not confide such precombat performance anxieties to his diary, the entry describing his first raid on Tokyo reveals the pleasure he derived from his crew's calm competence: **14**

I was cockeyed proud of the crew. Not a rattle in the bunch. The interphone clicked off the attacks easily and accurately. Every man was functioning calmly and well and it was a proud thing to know. This is a pilot's air corps, but it takes eleven men to fly a 29. And eleven men have to lose their fear to be sure of themselves before a crew can function. We functioned.¹⁸

This mission to Tokyo came complete with attacks by Japanese fighter pilots and the engine troubles endemic to B-29s, but Ciardi seems to have reveled in these difficulties because they underscored his crew's courage. On that day, Ciardi was the man he imagined himself to be; undisturbed by fear, he performed his part well.¹⁹

Although successfully completing his first mission might allay an airman's fear of failure and allow him to enter the ranks of combat veterans, typically it did not prepare him for the terrors to follow. To an inexperienced flier, aerial combat was "fun," "exciting," even "beautiful." That was how bombardier Moritz Thomsen described his first mission to **15**

uninitiated airmen back at base.²⁰ Navigator Ray Dunphy's account of his third combat mission conveys this excitement along with a detachment from danger characteristic of novice airmen:

Boy! oh Boy! I had a ringside seat for the bombing. Straddled my parachute and looked down through the glass. Man oh man did they smash the hell out of that target. It sure was fun to watch those bombs run up the buildings—Just like in the movies. One nazi pilot taking off ran smack into one. McKee was in formation with the 93rd and blew up over target. . . . Saw one Nazi go down in flames.²¹

Enjoying the spectacle, Dunphy seemed unmoved by the destruction of another bomber and the death or probable capture of its crew. Commenting on a similar situation during one of his early missions, Donald Currier, also a navigator, wrote, "It didn't register in my mind at all what that fiery sight really meant in human terms."²²

Shielded from the grim realities of combat apparent to any foot soldier, airmen often viewed combat as a game, keeping score on the sides of their bombers. Each bomb stencil denoted a credited mission. A swastika or rising sun represented each "confirmed kill" of an enemy fighter by the crew's gunners. Other markings signified ships sunk or bridges or trains destroyed. A purple heart meant that a member of the crew had been wounded in action. Holes and patches also disclosed the combat history of a plane and its crew. According to bombardier Byron Lane, accruing battle scars was part of the game; the crew that returned to base with the most holes in their bomber was "the winner."²³

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In the name of good sportsmanship, fliers shunned those among them who shot at enemy airmen forced to bail out of damaged aircraft. While this taboo reflected the hope that under similar circumstances one might be granted the same protection, this sense of fair play was also a symptom, in Douglas Bond's words, of airmen's "desire to keep the basic realities at a distance." Airmen "killed" planes, not fighter pilots; they bombed factories and oil fields, not civilians. If machines were their enemies and infrastructure their targets, they were not killers nor would they be killed. In fact, downed and captured airmen were often surprised and disturbed by both the hostility of enemy civilians and the damage they witnessed on the ground. Confronted by the sight of four Italian children who had been "clinging together in terror" before they died, B-26 pilot Ross Greening wrote, "I had to close my eyes." Although initially reluctant to accept his share of responsibility for such deaths, he gained a new understanding of the terrors he and his comrades had inflicted on civilians thousands of feet below.²⁴

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A combination of ignorance, denial, and identification with the aircraft that carried them into combat allowed novice airmen to escape fear as well as guilt. Ensnared in "huge, dependable, magnificent machines, bristling with machine guns, flying serenely at high altitudes, capable of destroying whole cities and any enemy fighter bold enough to come into range," these men enjoyed a false sense of "security" and a borrowed "potency," in the words of Norman Levy, a psychiatrist who served with the Twelfth and Fifteenth Air Forces in the Mediterranean theater of operations. Although informed of the dangers they would face, most did not fear combat. Copilot Jesse Pitts described this mind-set: "We were eager; we were unafraid. The risk of death inebriated us like a sparkling wine." The exhilaration of "being shot at and missed" seemed to confirm the conviction "they can't get me." In addition to intoxicating risk, inexperienced fliers enjoyed a new outlet for their aggressive and erotic energies, dropping tons of explosives on targets far below. Although unable to see the damage inflicted, Moritz Thomsen recalled the "sense of power and satisfaction" he experienced on his first mission as he watched bombs explode. He compared the act of releasing bombs to "the moment of ejaculation." Another bombardier, Richard Hugo, whose combat initiation preceded his sexual initiation, described his target "open[ing] like a flower below [the plane's] nose."²⁵ **18**

Aerial combat triggered feelings of helplessness as well as of mastery. Anchored to crew positions within the plane's interior by oxygen hoses, communications equipment, and the cords of their electrically heated suits, airmen were relatively immobile in heavy bombers flying at altitudes of over ten thousand feet. Portable oxygen units provided less than ten minutes of walking around time.²⁶ Each member of the crew saw only a piece of the war and depended on the vigilance of his fellows for safety. This limited scope of vision and action produced unpleasant sensations of passivity and vulnerability. Although he had initially enjoyed a very sexualized satisfaction in the destructive power of the bombs he dropped, Moritz Thomsen soon felt more like a target than a combatant. "Trapped" in the Plexiglas-covered nose of the bomber, he felt helpless, "waiting for something unspeakable to be done" to him. One tail-gunner turned this sense of being a target into a grim joke when he decorated his position with a crude bull's eye beside the words "shoot here Jerry."²⁷ **19**

Heading toward a target, airmen experienced building tension as they prepared for combat. The crew's gunners might be idle for hours, restlessly scanning the sky for the approach of fighters. The appearance of enemy planes after hours of apprehension often came as a relief, for shooting provided the gunners with an outlet for aggression and a release of tension. Before entering combat, bombardier Byron Lane confided to his diary that he imagined himself to be a "dealer of death," but he soon found himself playing the role of "glorified nose gunner." Although each bombardier was an officer trained in the use of the Norden bombsight, only the lead bombardier actually operated this complicated piece of equipment during a bomb run. The others simply released their bombs on his cue. Likewise, unless riding in the lead plane or guiding a crippled aircraft back to base, a navigator was simply a "flying **20**

bookkeeper" who monitored the plane's course and kept the crew's mission log. However, gun turrets in the nose of the plane did allow bombardier and navigator the release of shooting at their attackers. The plane's commander and executive officer, the pilot and copilot were denied even this satisfaction. More like truck drivers in a convoy than hotshot fighter pilots, their job was to fly at a constant speed and altitude nose to tail with the other members of their squadron. A defensive measure for mutual protection, formation flying concentrated firepower but allowed little room for evasive or aggressive action when under attack by enemy fighters or anti-aircraft artillery.²⁸

Once aware of their helplessness in the face of danger, airmen lost much of their initial enthusiasm for combat. Flak from anti-aircraft guns, which looked innocuous, even beautiful, to novices, was dark, evil, and terrifying when seen with experienced eyes. It crept up soundlessly from below, tearing its victims apart and leaving a "smutty black cloud" in its wake. Formation flying and fighter escorts protected airmen from attack by enemy fighter planes, but fliers could not fight against flak nor could they avoid the anti-aircraft guns concentrated in and around the cities and industrial facilities they targeted. Although some men fired at flak in frustration, their only defense was the armor plating on their plane and their own body armor. Enemy attack was not the only danger airmen faced, although it was the most feared. Human error could be equally deadly. Collisions while forming or in formation took the lives of many young airmen. Mechanical failure on the runway was another danger, particularly during takeoff when the planes were full of gas and loaded with tons of bombs. Bad weather was also an enemy; while it might ground enemy fighter pilots and confuse anti-aircraft gunners, low visibility made takeoffs, landings, and formation flying far more deadly. An airman's belief in his own invulnerability seldom withstood these dangers. In many cases, a growing fear replaced an imagined omnipotence.²⁹

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With experience, combat lost its game-like quality. The mission tally painted on the side of a plane came to seem less a "scoresheet" than a countdown to the day when the men would be eligible for rotation to noncombat duty in the United States. Fliers, unlike ground troops, served a set number of missions or combat hours called a tour of duty. Following the British precedent and on the advice of their own psychiatric consultants, the Eighth Air Force in England (the largest of the Army's air forces) instituted a twenty-five-mission tour of duty for heavy bomber crews in the spring of 1943. The tour of duty provided airmen with an incentive to remain in combat; if they were lucky, they might survive to go home. Heavy bomber crews assigned to the Fifteenth Air Force in Italy flew twice as many sorties but received double credit for flights over the Alps into territory usually bombed by the Eighth. In other theaters of operations, tours of duty were defined in different terms, but contemporary observers agreed that establishing such guidelines served to preserve the airmen's mental health and sustain their commitment to duty.³⁰

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Between July 1942 and July 1943, the Eighth Air Force's first year of combat, fewer than 25 percent of airmen completed their tours of duty. Most became casualties during their first ten missions. The statistics of survival were as follows: "63% survive 5 raids; of this 63%, 69% survive 10 raids; of this 69%, 82% survive 15 raids; of this 82%, 79% survive 20 raids; of this 79%, 83% survive 25 raids." Attrition rates for the following year were only slightly less grim.³¹ Conditions improved with the introduction of fighter planes able to escort bombers from England deep into German territory. But this improvement was a mixed blessing for airmen. As danger decreased, Eighth Air Force officials increased the number of missions required of each man from twenty-five to thirty in the spring of 1944 and from thirty to thirty-five later that summer. Pacific theater bomber crews suffered lower rates of attrition. Consequently, they were required to spend more time in the air. Furthermore, personnel shortages and lack of shipping space often meant that airmen remained in the theater and in combat even after completing their official tours of duty.³² **23**

Whether stationed in England, in Italy, or on a Pacific island, an airman had likely seen a comrade's plane go down in flames once he had flown several missions. He might have witnessed the death or tended to the injuries of a crewmate. The longer a man was in combat, the more likely he had helped pack up the personal belongings of a fellow airman, now missing or dead, for shipment to his family. The empty barracks that had once housed the members of an aircrew or the bed in which a deceased comrade had slept were reminders of loss. The arrival of replacements to fill beds and quarters provided some relief from this tension, but the presence of new men also underscored the absence of old friends. Veteran airmen often resented the cocky new arrivals and seldom made friends from among the replacement crews. As B-17 copilot Truman Smith observed, "Strangers die easier." Attempting to control the pain of loss by limiting their emotional attachments, survivors withdrew even from the men they loved best, the other members of their crew.³³ **24**

In combat, airmen learned to love and hate the men whose actions might protect or kill them. When interviewed by psychiatrist David Wright after completing their combat tours, more than 70 percent of airmen reported that they "develop irritability and a quick flaming anger at their crew-mates, in a way entirely foreign to their usual feelings and action, as their operational tours progress." The men lashed out at each other. The monthly dances held by operational groups often occasioned fist fights. The critiques that followed air raids, Wright wrote, were "marked by the most violent and outspoken recriminations, in open meeting, of someone else's judgment and technique." Although living comrades could be attacked, taboos against speaking ill of the dead (or even speaking of them at all) made it difficult for men to acknowledge hostile feelings toward fallen comrades. Psychotherapy sessions conducted by **25**

medical officers unearthed a wealth of repressed hostility in airmen suffering from depression. Grieving the loss of a comrade, an airman might punish himself, not because his actions had caused the death but rather because he had wished it.³⁴

In his memoir, bombardier Moritz Thomsen recorded an appalling feeling of "triumph" when he learned that Bob Wylie, commander of the aircrew to which Thomsen had once been assigned, was dead. Intermingled with sorrow was exultation at having survived. Similar feelings of relief and satisfaction were uncovered by psychiatrists using sodium pentothal (the "truth serum" of Hollywood fame) to liberate repressed emotions. The death of a comrade might represent life to a survivor. Aerial gunner Eugene Carson described this belief: "in my mind I had the thought that they had gone down in my place while I beat the odds."³⁵ Nevertheless, there was a strong identification between living and dead airmen. Empty beds and barracks were not simply symbols of loss; they were also mementos mori—reminders of one's own mortality. Gunner and poet John Ciardi wrote in his diary:

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It hurts . . . to pass the bunks the boys left. Hodges, Hunt, Dreier, Nyen, Yanik. It hurts when the smiling boys go down. The smiling, and competent, and warm. The good men chance took down. . . . It hurts and it darkens to see them go. And a lot of it because it might have been any one of us, or all of us, or me.³⁶

Witnessing the death or injury of a comrade, particularly a crewmate, could trigger crippling fear. Having once believed in his invincibility, a man became equally convinced of his imminent demise. In his autobiography, novelist and B-25 bombardier Joseph Heller recounted such an event later fictionalized in *Catch-22* as the recurring scene of Snowden's death. Returning from a mission over Avignon, France, Heller was called on to care for the top-turret gunner who had been wounded by flak. On the same sortie, his crew's copilot panicked, sending the plane into a steep dive; the terrified Heller believed his plane had been shot down, "like the plane on fire I had witnessed plummeting only a few minutes before." These events shattered what Heller called "my idiotic faith in my own divine invulnerability." Afterward, Heller wrote, "I was frightened on every mission . . . even certified milk runs." Like his fictional alter ego Yossarian, he became convinced "they were trying to kill me" and began bringing an extra flak suit on every mission.³⁷

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In most cases fear was not linked to an isolated event; it was an unexpected emotion that crept up on an unwary airman. John Ciardi, who had been so pleased with his crew's performance on their first combat mission, was surprised to find himself awake and wracked with anxiety twelve days later, the night before his fourth mission. Having once lived up to his heroic ideal, Ciardi was disturbed to find that he could not remain "unmoved" by the possibility of his own death; he hoped that his anxiety was simply a temporary and anomalous response. But this mission did nothing to soothe his fears. It was long and stressful. While over Japan, one of the plane's four engines malfunctioned, making it a target for Japanese

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fighter pilots. Once the crew had escaped attack by heading out to sea, they feared they would run out of fuel and be forced to ditch their plane in the Pacific where the chance of being rescued was distressingly low. When he finally returned to base, Ciardi thought he had "really survived something." Sometime that day he also found time to compose "Elegy for a Cove Full of Bones," a poem about his desire to escape "the vaporeing coves of death."³⁸

The change Ciardi noted in himself was common to combat personnel. The afterglow of the first mission often suffused the next few, but after three or four, most airmen's attitudes toward combat changed dramatically. No longer cocky young men eager to join the fray, fliers with four or five bombing missions under their belts became conscious of an almost overwhelming anxiety. This anxiety was not confined to time spent in combat; even on the ground, airmen were consumed with the dangers of flying. Anticipating future perils, airmen often suffered from insomnia, especially on the night before a sortie. Others relived traumatic experiences in battle dreams. The men's alcohol and cigarette consumption increased markedly during the course of their tours. Many reported loss of appetite and long bouts of depression and despondency.³⁹

American servicemen generally tolerated open expressions of fear. Beginning in basic training, they were taught to consider fear a normal response to combat. Lectures, training films, and handbooks urged men, when in battle, to admit they were afraid and to continue fighting. A man suffering from incapacitating anxiety (known as "operational fatigue" in the Army Air Forces) would receive medical treatment rather than punishment. But there were limits to this permissiveness. Commanding officers were seldom as tolerant as the Army's self-help literature,⁴⁰ and other airmen were liable to charge a comrade with cowardice if he proved unable to withstand combat stress.

Flight surgeon Milton Layden recorded such a case. More than halfway through his tour of duty, a bombardier aboard a B-17 experienced difficulty breathing while flying toward a "particularly dangerous" target. Fearing he would die of asphyxiation, the airman attempted to bail out of the plane before dropping his bombs. He was restrained by the crew's navigator and only ceased his struggle when he learned that the mission had been scrubbed because of bad weather. Later that night at the officer's club, a pilot called the bombardier "yellow," saying he ought to be "kicked out" of the squadron; others present agreed and declared they never wanted to fly with him. No one defended the bombardier, and his squadron commander began making plans to "get rid" of him. Demoralized by the charge of cowardice and fearful that his symptoms would recur, the bombardier requested a transfer to noncombat duty. It was at this point that he met with Layden, who as flight surgeon was responsible for treating physical and mental disorders and for preserving squadron manpower. Layden began the session by assuring the anxious airman that he was not "yellow" and was "man enough" to complete his tour of duty. Layden also sought to evoke feelings of shame: What, he asked, will

your friends and family think of you when you return home? How will you tell them that you "quit" and left your "buddies to go on"? Presented with the choice between a manly or ignoble future, the bombardier returned to combat "with enthusiasm." Prompted by Layden, the other men of the squadron helped cement their comrade's commitment by congratulating him on his rediscovered courage. Layden's patient successfully and honorably completed his tour of duty, but if he had insisted on removal from combat, his future would have been very different. He would have remained an object of scorn to the men of his squadron, and as an officer "medically fit to fly," he might have had to submit to the further humiliation of a disciplinary hearing before his group's flying evaluation board or even court-martial proceedings.⁴¹

Charges of cowardice were often leveled not by comrades but by the airman against himself. Case studies collected by medical officers reveal that these self-accusations could be as painful as punishments meted out by the Army Air Forces. One sufferer, a B-24 navigator who succeeded in flying six combat missions before he was incapacitated by anxiety, appeared before psychiatrist Norman Levy with tears in his eyes. He did not wear his wings, because he felt he was no longer entitled to that symbol of his status as a combat flier. In the words of a similarly situated navigator, he was distressed to discover that "I'm not the guy I thought I was." Shame and loss of self-esteem typically accompanied fear. Anxious airmen worried about losing the respect of their comrades and the love of their wives and sweethearts. Such feelings played an important role in both therapeutic treatments and administrative decisions regarding the disposition of men who were no longer willing to fly. On the one hand, flight surgeons were deft at manipulating such emotions, as Milton Layden demonstrated. On the other, psychiatrists like Norman Levy interpreted the absence of guilt as an indication that a man lacked "moral fiber" or "intestinal fortitude" and should thus be punished for cowardice rather than treated for a psychiatric disorder.⁴² **32**

Although only 3 to 4 percent of airmen were removed from combat as a result of cowardice or anxiety, many recorded conflicts of manliness, duty, and fear. After seven weeks in combat, John Ciardi contemplated requesting a ground assignment; by then the transient anxiety that disturbed his sleep before his fourth mission had become a constant, nagging companion. "I'd frankly bow out if I knew how to," Ciardi wrote in his diary. "I could go to Col. Brannock tomorrow and say I quit and be busted down to private. But I can't let myself and won't." He was unwilling to "accept the humiliation of being a general duty KP" after enjoying the admiration bestowed on combatants, but concluded: "I'd grab at any reasonable excuse to save face." Two months later, Ciardi was able to withdraw from combat without losing face—a move he believed to have saved his life. He accepted a desk job writing citations, awards, and letters of condolence—including letters to the families of his former crewmates who died when their plane exploded over Tokyo Bay soon after Ciardi's reassignment. Aerial gunner Ralph Edwards experienced a similar conflict. The night before his twenty-seventh mission, **33**

which he anticipated would be a "tough one," Edwards confided to his diary: "I am afraid to go up again and wish I had the nerve to admit it openly." Yet, for Edwards as for Ciardi, fear of shame trumped fear of death. Edwards remained in combat, completing his fifty-mission tour of duty even after two members of his crew were killed on mission number forty-five.⁴³

Paradoxically, admitting to fear was a courageous act. A survey of combat veterans revealed a great deal of sympathy and a strong undercurrent of admiration for airmen who withdrew from combat because they "couldn't take it." Although some (no more than 5 percent) recommended punishment, a majority of the men agreed "it might happen to anyone." Sixteen percent of officers and twenty percent of enlisted men believed that, after completing many missions, it took "more guts to quit than to go on."⁴⁴ If asked, B-24 bombardier Richard Hugo might have secretly agreed with the latter group. Suffering from nightmares and somatic symptoms of stress, Hugo presented a surface of calm courage, pretending even to sleep while en route to a target. In an essay written decades later, Hugo juxtaposed his own show of courage, a performance intended to impress his comrades, with the real courage exhibited by Charlie Marshall, a bomber pilot who refused to fly after enduring a series of accidents. Believing he had reached his "limit," Marshall braved the censure of his peers and threats from his superior officers in order to be relieved from combat. Hugo's high regard for Marshall's resolve was retrospective. Hugo explained: "[I]t never occurred to me that I admired a man for doing what I feared to do because if I did no one would admire me."⁴⁵

By the time of their tenth mission, most airmen were still scared but had learned to cope with fear. Many turned to religion. Although there were certainly confirmed atheists aboard heavy bombers, the majority of airmen found strength and comfort in prayer. Ralph Edwards, for example, petitioned God for the courage to complete his tour of duty after returning from the traumatic mission on which two members of his crew were killed by enemy fire. Painfully aware of the high attrition rates among men in his squadron, Edwards's diary is filled with such prayers and with thanks to God for his survival. Flying Fortress pilot Charles Alling found himself humming "A Mighty Fortress is Our God," while flying through antiaircraft fire over a particularly dangerous target. "I felt the presence of the Lord," he wrote in his memoir, which derives its title from the hymn, "and I put myself in his hands. I had total faith." Alling's faith was seemingly confirmed; although their plane was full of holes, he and his crew returned to base unharmed.⁴⁶

Promising life in the immediate future as well as the hereafter, the religion of combat attracted many new converts. Pilot Philip Ardery noted a dramatic increase in church attendance among previously nonobservant airmen. Although he did not attend church regularly, Ardery began saying brief prayers during combat missions and every night before going to sleep. Jack Fisher, also a pilot, was "born again" after his sixteenth mission, when a piece a flak pierced the windshield near his head. Unharmed, Fisher became convinced that

"the hand of The Almighty, of God, was upon me" and that his life was in God's care. A terrifying raid on the Ploesti oil refineries, likewise, inspired navigator Donald Currier to pray for the first time in his life: "God, give me my life, and I will never ask for anything else again." The act of praying enabled Currier to transcend his fears and provided him with a lasting faith in God's love.⁴⁷

Hoping that their prayers for survival would be answered, airmen looked to their group chaplains for assurance. In addition to presiding over Sabbath services and holiday rituals, military clergymen heard confession, gave communion, and led ecumenical prayer meetings before each combat mission. Chaplains also met the planes that returned to base and attended to the injured and dead. Gerald Beck, a Franciscan friar assigned to the 389th Bombardment Group, was particularly adept at ministering to his flock's spiritual and temporal needs. He forcefully shepherded nonobservant Catholics back to the fold and reached out to Protestants and Jews. Airmen of all faiths and of no faith sought Father Beck's counsel and attended Catholic mass; over the course of a year, attendance increased sixfold. To bolster the men's courage, the priest not only blessed departing crews but, until ordered to stop, also accompanied them on combat missions. Even after he was confined to the ground, Father Beck continued to offer emotional support by sleeping in the enlisted men's barracks the night before a scheduled mission. "The superstition," Philip Ardery wrote, "was that a crew would not be shot down as long as he was sleeping in their quarters." Father Beck was both spiritual leader and lucky charm, and like many of the men to whom he ministered, he was also an avid gambler. However, Beck's skill at cards and dice was likely augmented by the airmen's reluctance to bet against their intermediary with God.⁴⁸

Gambling was both a pastime and a way of life for combat airmen. Games of chance helped relieve tedium, particularly on remote air bases. Furthermore, as B-29 pilot Chester Marshall explained in his diary, playing poker and baccarat helped reduce building "tension . . . as the countdown to a successful completion of our combat tour continues." More important, the dangers of combat unleashed an impulse to gamble, for luck as often as skill or experience seemed to determine who lived and who died. In John Ciardi's words, "Imponderable chance became our life." Tellingly, Ciardi's final diary entry describes his unwillingness to volunteer for a dangerous mission. He preferred instead to cut cards and let fate determine who among the gunners would accompany their crew into combat.⁴⁹

Regarding aerial combat as a gamble, fliers literally calculated their odds of survival. John Ciardi described this process: "we add our losses per mission, derive percentages, forecast future losses, compute the percentages." At "even money" or "two to one," Ciardi and his comrades could believe they might survive. The problem was that mathematical formulas could not divine who would live or die.⁵⁰ Hoping to beat the odds, airmen covered their planes with good-luck symbols—four-leafed clovers, winning poker hands, horseshoes—and

developed a variety of personal and collective rituals. The ground crew chief of the B-17 *Penny Ante* began such a ritual by giving the plane's pilot a penny before takeoff to be returned at the end of each combat mission. By the logic of this ritual, the lucky penny would protect the plane and aircrew, and the men would survive to repay the loan. According to copilot Jesse Pitts, *Penny Ante* was popularly regarded as a "lucky ship" by the men of the 524th Squadron, many of whom requested assignment to the plane on their final missions. The plane's luck lasted through the end of the original aircrew's tour of duty only to be shot down two months later. Pitts concluded his memoir with this final note on the power of ritual:

On May 24, 1944, target Berlin, the *Penny Ante's* new crew, flying their sixteenth mission, were apparently hit by fighters after bombs away. The plane appeared to explode, and six chutes were seen. It is said that the crew had not continued the custom of taking the penny and returning it.⁵¹

Airmen's belief in luck was roughly as strong as their faith in prayer.⁵² B-26 pilot Ross Greening, a survivor of James Doolittle's daring raid on Japan, carried a lucky rabbit's foot on every flight. Although not normally superstitious, Greening explained, "I was the same as many others: I went along with superstitious beliefs just in case there might be something to it." By the time of his twenty-seventh combat mission, however, the charm had become an emotional necessity, and its loss unnerved him: "I couldn't help thinking about the many close calls that I'd had while carrying it." Later that day, Greening was shot down and captured by Italian soldiers. Most airmen carried some form of lucky charm into combat. One bombardier never flew without a Bible and a scarf made from the parachute of a dead friend. Cosmopolitan copilot David Zellmer ritually pinned to his flight suit a small jade goddess, a gift from Martha Graham; in his pocket he carried a miniature copy of the *Bhagavad-Gita*.⁵³ Other airmen borrowed their charms and rituals from more experienced comrades. On the advice of a veteran navigator with only two missions left to fly, bombardier Moritz Thomsen wore the same shirt on every mission; by the end of his combat tour, this shirt was caked with filth and stank of anxiety. Airmen did not launder lucky articles of clothing for fear that the luck would be washed away.⁵⁴

Airmen regarded luck as a limited quantity. They refused to fly "jinx ships," like *Bad Penny*, *Ole Black*, *Poisonality*, and *Taurus*, planes that had suffered a string of mechanical failures and accidents. Other aircraft were shunned for having survived a remarkable number of missions. The danger was that their luck had been "used up."⁵⁵ Airmen had the same fears about themselves. Each combat mission brought a chance of injury, capture, and death, and whenever military officials increased the number of missions in a tour of duty, airmen unhappily recalculated the odds. Such a policy provoked this complaint from pilot Kenneth E. Booke: "One new development that has us all highly peeved, is the fact that they have raised our missions from 25 to 30. It is the same as telling a man that he has to fly until he gets shot down." Although informed that hazards had decreased since the spring of 1943 when the

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twenty-five-mission tour was instituted, Boone insisted that aerial combat had become no less dangerous. Like many others, Boone believed that he had completed his tour of duty after flying twenty-five combat missions, the extra five were "free gratis for old Doolittle" (James Doolittle, commander of the Eight Air Force). Airmen regarded the death of a comrade on one of these five missions as "an unnecessary tragedy" caused by unfeeling officials and unfair policies.⁵⁶

Having beaten the odds by completing their tours of duty, few airmen volunteered for further combat. Those who did were considered foolish by their comrades. Perhaps resenting the ostentatious show of courage and commitment, airmen circulated stories of men who inevitably died while flying additional missions. Navigator Fred Rochlin's autobiographical account of his wartime experiences in Italy includes the story of an overly ambitious bomber pilot named Brad who continued to fly after finishing his fifty-mission tour of duty. Hoping to be promoted to the rank of colonel, Brad was an effective and well-respected lead pilot. He was awarded a Silver Star and other honors but did not live to make colonel. Moritz Thomsen recounted a similar story about Bert Stiles, a B-17 copilot and author of the popular and posthumously published memoir *Serenade to the Big Bird*. Craving literary fame and wishing to gather more "combat material" for his stories, Stiles volunteered for service as a fighter pilot after completing his tour of duty. He died escorting bombers over Germany. The moral of these stories was that it was dangerous to tempt fate.⁵⁷ **42**

More important than prayer or luck was confidence in crew and equipment. Most airmen assigned to a permanent crew were loath to fly with any other.⁵⁸ But, in combat, personnel needs outweighed personal preferences. Some men were never assigned to a permanent aircrew; most flew with several other crews in addition to their own. This was a stressful situation for airmen who did not know if they could depend on another crew as they had learned to depend on their own. John Ciardi, for example, was troubled to learn that pilot Robert Cordray would be transferred to another crew and that a former copilot would take Cordray's place. "Nothing changes until it gets worse," he commented in his diary. Although every member of a combat crew contributed to the success of the whole, the pilot was the focus of his fellows' hopes and fears, for, in bombardier Moritz Thomsen's words, he "held our lives in his hands." As aircraft commander, the pilot determined whether or not a mechanical problem or damage to the plane required the men to abort their mission and return to base. In case of catastrophic battle damage, he was responsible for crash landing the plane, ditching it in water, or ordering the other crewmembers to bail out.⁵⁹ **43**

Commenting on the bonds within bomber crews, psychiatrists Roy Grinker and John Spiegel reminded their readers that airmen's attachment to machines was equally strong: "Crew members habitually refer to each other as 'my pilot,' 'my bombardier,' 'my gunner,' and so on, and their feeling for their plane is equally strong, since its strength and reliability are as **44**

important as those of any human members of the crew." The popular practice of naming and decorating planes helped cement this identification between men and machine. Navigator Donald Currier explained: "When they give you an airplane and say 'this is yours,' you immediately want to personalize it—to make it distinctive. You want to christen it and put your own art work on it." Perhaps because they had not yet entered combat, Currier and his crew selected a particularly martial mascot. *Wood's Chopper*, named for pilot John Wood, featured a muscular arm bringing a bloody axe down on Hirohito's neck (Hitler's already severed head lay nearby). Designed to represent the crew's resolve to destroy their nation's enemies, this image was an assertion both of ownership and of readiness for battle. Other crews named their assigned planes after entering combat.⁶⁰

The words and images painted on bomber fuselages were expressions of both group cohesion and individuality. After selecting a name, the members of an aircrew would pool their money to hire a talented sign painter or mechanic. Sometimes the crew provided the painter with a photograph, cartoon, or pinup to copy. Often the artist helped choose the image, and some even created original designs. The practice of naming and decorating bombers augmented group cohesion; afterwards the men would identify themselves as the crew of a particular plane. The process of identifying as a crew and with a plane did not stop with the choice of name and art. Airmen often paid extra to have their crew's mascot painted on the backs of their leather flight jackets or flak helmets. They also painted their own names, nicknames, mascots, or the names of their sweethearts beside the positions they manned. An airman might even name his guns. Gunner George Watt, for example, debated whether or not to name the right waist guns he manned *Doran's Revenge*, in memory of a fallen comrade, but finally decided in favor of the boastful pun, *Watt's Cooking*.⁶¹ **45**

The practice of naming and decorating military aircraft has attracted the attention of social and cultural historians who interpret the art as a reflection of sexual politics in the nation at large. Elaine Tyler May, for example, uses a B-29 named *Shady Lady* and decorated with a massive nude to illustrate popular fears of female sexuality as an "aggressive, destructive force." In John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman's history of American sexuality, an aircraft named *Slick's Chick's* serves as an example of official attempts to "boost morale and encourage heterosexual fantasy in the sex-segregated military." Through a different lens, Robert Westbrook sees these painted pinups as idealized images of girls-next-door, "striking evidence" of how private obligation was mobilized for the purpose of national defense.⁶² **46**

There is some truth to each of these interpretations. Naming and decorating practices reflected individual and group attitudes about sexuality, combat, luck, and loving commitment. The images that graced heavy bombers were predominantly female and often scantily clothed. Not simply sexually provocative, some of these imaginary women also took aggressive action. Sporting names like *Pistol Packin' Mama* and *Impatient Virgin*, they were **47**

pictured carrying firearms or dropping bombs on targets below. On the other hand, wives and sweethearts and even children, mothers, and sisters often served as inspiration for heavy bomber names and Nose Art.⁶³ The B-17 *Miss Prudy*, for example, was named in honor of pilot Charles Alling's beloved sister, who died of spinal meningitis just before the crew entered combat. The plane featured a portrait of a young woman, her hair blowing in the wind, superimposed over a white wing, perhaps representing Alling's belief that his sister was "an angel on my wings."⁶⁴

The feminine identification of heavy bombers went deeper than the names and images painted on their bodies. In fact, many military aircraft featured names but no other artwork, and some were not decorated at all. Furthermore, although a seductive, seminude pinup was the most popular World War II Nose Art motif, many airmen adorned their assigned planes with masculine or gender-neutral names and images. Yet even a seemingly masculine bomber, like *Fearless Fosdick* (named for the Dick Tracy-like character featured in the *Li'l Abner* cartoon strip) or *Butcher Boy*, was imagined to be female. Air and ground crew members consistently referred to these planes with the pronoun "she," not "it" or "he."⁶⁵ **48**

Airmen lavished these feminine machines with loving care. They were disappointed when assigned to fly another airplane into combat and apprehensive when other crews flew theirs. Radio operator Harley Tuck's diary reveals a possessive and protective attitude toward the plane *Hi Jinx*. After the B-17 was damaged in combat, Tuck noted the progress of repairs in his diary. Once the plane was again ready for combat, he and the other members of his crew even debated forfeiting a two-day pass "rather . . . than let someone else let *Hi Jinx* get all shot up." Less than a month later, after learning that the plane was shot down while flown by another crew, Tuck wrote: "All of us feel pretty rotten about losing that crew in *Hi Jinx*. She was one of the best ships on the line, nothing wrong. . . . Losing the ship is hard to take, but the real thing should be & is the loss of a crew." Tuck mourned the loss of human friends, but as his diary entry suggests, the loss of machinery could be similarly traumatic. Philip Ardery's memoir describes an ardent fellow pilot, Ed Fowble, whose beloved B-24 was mortally damaged in a mid-air collision. Like an anxious family member, the worried pilot awaited the decision of whether or not his plane would be repaired. He was disappointed to learn that the plane would be scrapped and sadly watched mechanics strip it for spare parts. "Every time a nose wheel tire, or a wing light, or a flight indicator was removed from his ship it cut Ed's heart out," Ardery wrote.⁶⁶ **49**

Fliers' attachment to individual aircraft grew stronger with combat experience. "Maybe the darn things are just inanimate objects," pilot Kenneth Boone wrote of B-17s in general and of his own *Reddy Teddy II* in particular, "but it is hard to believe when you fly them in this racket." *Reddy Teddy II* was one of the older aircraft assigned the 407th Squadron and was experiencing engine trouble by the time of Boone's later missions. Boone, nevertheless, **50**

confided to his diary that he "would rather fly her than any of the new ones." With a change of engines, he was certain "she could be the best ship in the [squadron] again." A veteran of twenty-eight combat missions with two more to go, Boone was very aware of the dangers he had yet to face, but he believed that with proper care *Reddy Teddy II* would carry him through his tour of duty.⁶⁷

To the men who flew them, heavy bombers were not simply mass-produced machines but magnificent female entities that fought to protect their crews from flak and enemy fighters. Endowing it with "spirit" and "soul," pilot John Muirhead, described a B-17 as a divine being who "would put her strength in my hands," "bear me to the end," and "give herself to my mad purpose with perfect courage and beyond all human love." Gunner William Rasmussen variously described *Hell's Belle*, the "battle-hardened" B-17 assigned to his crew, as a "bird of prey," a "demon," a "dragon," and an "angry tiger." Ferocious as "she" was in battle, *Belle* was nevertheless concerned for the safety of "her crew," making sure after every mission that "we had all survived." On the crew's final mission, *Belle* remained aloft long enough to enable Rasmussen to escape the confines of his Sperry ball-turret before falling to her death.⁶⁸

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This devotion to bombers was evident not only on airbases but also in German prison camps where many fliers, including Muirhead and Rasmussen, were incarcerated after their planes were shot down. Although food was the primary topic of conversation among hungry prisoners, "hangar flying came in a distant second," according to pilot Billy B. Blocker. Imprisoned airmen, particularly pilots, spent much of their time reliving traumatic events, daydreaming about past glories, and swapping their favorite flying stories. Among the crafts produced by prisoners of war were many elaborate models of military aircraft, portraits of bombers, and depictions of aerial combat. In "Wartime Logs" provided by the YMCA and intended as keepsakes, prisoners of war composed poetic tributes to valiant, if ill-fated, bombers. Bombardier Joel Tutt even copied down John G. Magee Jr.'s famous sonnet celebrating the joys of "High Flight."⁶⁹

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T. H. G. Ward, an anthropologist who was also a pilot, argued that this reverential attitude toward aircraft, characteristic of pilots even during times of peace, was a product of erotic pleasure, on the one hand, and of fear and dependence, on the other. In addition to a sense of the plane as an extension of himself, a pilot enjoyed a feeling of "one-ness" with his machine, described by Ward as moving in unison, like a "couple on a dance floor." This metaphor made clear that pilot and airplane were two separate entities sharing an intimate moment as man and woman. But a plane did not simply follow her partner's lead; she was a powerful and independent entity who demanded to be treated with loving tenderness and the appropriate respect. Otherwise, the results could be deadly. Ward saw pilots' personal rituals as evidence

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of a love for and a fear of aircraft, with emphasis on the latter. But in aerial combat, the possibility of mechanical failure paled beside the dangers of enemy fire. Safe and relatively comfortable inside their planes, fliers were threatened from without.⁷⁰

Heavy bombers were the ultimate phallic mothers. Often decorating planes with women straddling or holding bombs, airmen imagined them to be both powerful and nurturing. Their dependence on the aircraft for heat and oxygen certainly heightened this confusion of machine and mother. On high altitude missions, airmen were physically attached to the interior of their bomber by oxygen masks and heated flying suits, as well as by communications equipment. So obvious was the analogy that the electrical cord connecting heated suits to sockets in the plane became known as an "umbilical cord" by the men of Philip Ardery's squadron, although its official nickname was "pigtail." Copilot David Zellmer described this dependence in his memoir. After completing eleven missions, he wrote, "I feel I'm becoming part of the plane": "I breathe only when attached to the plane's oxygen system. My heart beats only if the propellers are turning. I hear only when the radio is turned on. The plane's wings are my arms; the Automatic Pilot is my brain." To Zellmer this dependence was a threatening loss of identity,⁷¹ but other men seem to have found comfort in the womblike interiors of bomber planes. In his prisoner of war diary, navigator Eugene Halmos wrote of the day he bailed out over Germany: "I didn't want to jump, didn't want to leave the plane which suddenly seemed warm and alive—and safe—to me." Halmos's reluctance to jump was understandable in light of the capture, interrogation, and imprisonment that awaited him below, but his feeling of safety within the damaged plane was misplaced.⁷² The strength of the maternal metaphor is evident in the names with which some combat crews christened their planes: *Our Mom*, *Mother of Ten*, *Maternity Ward* (piloted by John V. Ward), and *Dear M.O.M.* (named for Marion O. McGurer, the mother of a bombardier who was severely wounded in combat).⁷³

Bombers were not simply protective. Like any good mother, they also were self-sacrificing. The legendary title character of air-sea-rescue officer Don Midlam's novel *Flight of the Lucky Lady* was a heroic B-29 who survived damage that would have destroyed "lesser planes" in order to return her crew safely to their home base. Although mortally wounded on her final mission, the plane nevertheless "battled" to remain aloft so that her crew would have enough time to bail out.⁷⁴ This conceit is partly explained by the standard procedure for bailing out while in enemy territory. The aircraft commander would steady the plane and put it on automatic pilot so that all crewmembers would have time to escape. Alive and falling slowly, airmen suspended by parachutes watched their planes crash to the ground (or, in the case of the *Lucky Lady*, into the Pacific Ocean).

Although oxygen masks and electrical suits were not necessary within the pressurized and heated interior of a B-29, the maternal metaphor still resonated with some of the men who crewed these aircraft. The newest, largest, and most powerful of American military aircraft during World War II, the B-29, with its mechanical difficulties, was perhaps a less likely mother than a B-24 or the even more popular B-17. More an object of admiration than of devotion, the massive bomber was, in pilot Chester Marshall's words, a "monstrous beauty." Decades after the end of the war in a letter to a former comrade, John Ciardi described the B-29 as "a stirring sight, even when I expected it to kill me." In his "Poem for My Twenty-Ninth Birthday," written while overseas, John Ciardi described the plane as a "metal womb," a source of murderous destruction.⁷⁵ And yet the most famous and destructive of maternal bombers was a B-29—*Enola Gay*, named by pilot Paul W. Tibbets for his loving, supportive mother the day before he and his crew were scheduled to drop the first atom bomb on Hiroshima. The massive plane that "gave birth"⁷⁶ to the atomic age also protected her crew, safely carrying them through the explosion and the shock waves that followed. *Enola Gay*, tail-gunner George R. Caron concluded, was "the right name for plane Number 82."⁷⁷ **56**

Toward the end of their combat tours, airmen often suffered crises of faith, fearing that crew, plane, luck, and prayer were insufficient to ensure their survival. Although seldom as deadly as his first combat missions, the final mission of an airman's tour of duty was regarded as a jinx. It was the only thing standing between him and the safety of home. Once on the ground fliers celebrated their good fortune. Combat crews on Saipan threw boisterous "Alive with 35" "graduation parties." In England, airmen marked the occasion by flying ahead of their formation to land with flares firing. On the ground, they were served steak dinners at a table of honor and ceremoniously awarded certificates of membership in the "Lucky Bastard Club." Signed by squadron commanders, these elaborate documents congratulated the men on having survived their combat tours, attributing their good fortune to the grace of God or the "fickle finger of Fate."⁷⁸ **57**

Following these celebrations, the elation often faded. Psychiatrists noted that many men fell into a temporary depression after completing their tours of duty. The guilt and anxiety that haunted airmen while in combat intensified before dissipating. But once these emotions dissipated, psychiatrists observed, airmen "appeared to forget . . . the reality of the internal and external stress to which they had been subjected and came to talk about combat like novices. Once again they were strangers to fear and intolerant of it."⁷⁹ Forgetting their fears, airmen could once again enjoy the erotic and aggressive pleasures they had known while in training and in combat, pleasures that were perhaps bolstered by the proof of invincibility provided by their having survived the dangers of flak and enemy fighters. **58**

For some men, combat was simply an exercise in terror, but many others experienced more complicated emotions. The machinery of war mobilized their desires as well as their fears. While eager to escape danger, men like David Zellmer felt "hobbled to the ground" when relieved of combat duty. Although unwilling to fly further bombing missions, he mourned his "clipped" "combat wings" while awaiting orders to return to the United States. In combat, he had discovered an "intensity of feeling" comparable only to performing with Martha Graham's troupe. Once returned to the United States, Zellmer was disappointed by the dull earth-bound safety for which he had once longed.⁸⁰ Removal from combat meant survival, but it was a loss of power, comradeship, and superhuman love.

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Notes

Note 1: Richard Hugo, "Catch 22, Addendum" and "Ci Vediamo," both in *The Real West Marginal Way: A Poet's Autobiography*, eds. Ripley S. Hugo, Lois M. Welch, and James Welch (New York: Norton, 1986), 98–99, 110.

Note 2: *Ibid.*, 97.

Note 3: Douglas D. Bond, *The Love and Fear of Flying* (New York: International Universities Press, 1952), 22.

Note 4: These are all names given to bombers whose artwork has been preserved by the American Airpower Heritage Museum. The term "hump" refers both to the act of sex and to flights over the Himalaya Mountains between India and China in the China-Burma-India theater.

Note 5: The B-17 was known as "queen of the sky." "Death of a B-17" in Royal D. Frey, "Poets Laureate of Stalag I," *Aerospace Historian* 16 (Winter 1969): 38.

Note 6: On responses to mechanical failure, see Bond, *Love and Fear of Flying*, 21–2.

Note 7: Roy R. Grinker and John P. Spiegel, *Men Under Stress* (Philadelphia: Blakiston, 1945), 3–7; Samuel A. Stouffer, et al. *The American Soldier*, vol. 2, *Combat and Its Aftermath* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1949), 324–61; John Boeman, *Morotai: A Memoir of War* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1981), 2–5; Michael Sherry, *The Rise of American Air Power: The Creation of Armageddon* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1987), 213–5.

Note 8: Robert L. Scott Jr., *God Is My Co-Pilot* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943), 1–4, 13; C. Ross Greening, *Not as Briefed: From the Doolittle Raid to a German Stalag*, ed. Dorothy Greening and Karen Morgan Driscoll (Pullman, Wash.: Washington State University Press, 2001), 1–3; David Zellmer, *The Spectator: A World War II Bomber Pilot's Journal of the Artist as Warrior* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1999), 5–6; Bond, *Love and Fear of Flying*, 19; Grinker and Spiegel, *Men Under Stress*, 4–6; Mark K. Wells, *Courage and Air Warfare: The Allied Aircrew Experience in the Second World War* (Portland, Oreg.: Frank Cass, 1995), 91–2, 95–6.

Note 9: Eugene T. Carson, *Wing Ding: Memories of a Tail Gunner* (n.p.: Xlibris Corporation, 2000), 9, 37–53.

Note 10: Lyman Austin "Ace" Clark Jr., *Missions of Shehasta: A Story of World War II Bomber Aces* (Terra Alta, W.V.: Headline Books, 1992), 1, 9–14; Dallas Donald Moody, *Aerial Gunner from Virginia: The Letters of Don Moody to His Family During 1944* (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1950), front matter; excerpt from Joseph P. Bruckler's wartime log, <http://www.buffalocommons.org/docs/smenu1/stalag17b.html#died> (accessed 1 November 2006). See also Ralph Sirianni with Patricia I. Brown, *POW #3959: Memoir of a World War II Airman Shot Down over Germany* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2006), 13.

Note 11: Byron Lane, *Byron's War: I Will Never Be Young Again* (Central Point, Ore.: Hellgate, 1997), 83; Moritz Thomsen, *My Two Wars* (South Royalton, Vt.: Steerforth, 1996), 114; Charles W. Sweeney, *War's End: An Eyewitness Account of America's Last Atomic Mission* (New York: Avon Books, 1997), 24, 31; T. H. G. Ward, "The Psychological Relationship Between Man and Aircraft," *British Journal of Medical Psychology* 24 (1951): 284–5; S. G. Kenagy, "Sexual Symbolism in the Language of the Air Force Pilot: A Psychoanalytic Approach to Folk Speech," *Western Folklore* 37 (April 1978): 94–5; Bond, *Love and Fear of Flying*, 19–20, 24–6; Sherry, *Rise of American Air Power*, 215–6; Paul M. Andrews, William H. Adams, and John H. Woolnough, *Bits & Pieces of the*

Mighty Eighth: An Alphabetical List of Names Give to the B-17s and B-24s Assigned to the Eight United States Army Air Force, August 1942–June 1945 (Savannah, Ga.: Eight Air Force Memorial Museum Foundation, 1991), 7, 11, 32, 37, 48; George Watt, *The Comet Connection: Escape from Hitler's Europe* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1990), 11; Donald R. Currier, *50 Mission Crush* (New York: Pocket Books, 1992), 13.

Note 12: Once in combat, however, crew assignments often shifted to accommodate squadron personnel needs. Thomsen, *My Two Wars*, 135–8, 174.

Note 13: John Ciardi, *Saipan: The War Diary of John Ciardi* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1988), 3–4. See also Edward M. Cifelli, *John Ciardi: A Biography* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1997), 78.

Note 14: Ciardi, *Saipan* xxiii–xxiv.

Note 15: Thomsen, *My Two Wars*, 193; Grinker and Spiegel, *Men Under Stress*, 44; Bond, *Love and Fear of Flying*, 17–9, 77; John Comer, *Combat Crew: A True Story of Flying and Fighting in World War II* (New York: William Morrow, 1988), 4–6; Bond, *Love and Fear of Flying*, 77; Jesse Richard Pitts, *Return to Base: Memoirs of a B-17 Copilot in Kimbolton, England, 1943–1944* (Charlottesville, Va.: Howell Press, 2004), 29; Jack R. Myers, *Shot at and Missed: Recollections of a World War II Bombardier* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004), 36–7, 45; Donald W. Hastings, David G. Wright, and Bernard C. Glueck Jr., *Psychiatric Experiences of the Eighth Air Force, First Year of Combat (July 4, 1942–July 4, 1943)* (New York: Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation, 1944), 20–21, 139–40.

Note 16: Pitts, *Return to Base*, 31, 34, 39; John Muirhead, *Those Who Fall* (New York: Random House, 1986), 42; Bert Stiles, *Serenade to the Big Bird* (New York: Norton, 1947), 31; Currier, *50 Mission Crush*, 59–61. See also Frederick D. Worthen, et al., *Against All Odds: Surviving World War II* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Fithian Press), 1996, 50; John C. Flanagan, "Report on Survey of Aircrew Personnel in the Eighth, Ninth, Twelfth, and Fifteenth Air Forces" (29 March 1944), File: 730 (Neuropsychiatry) Aircrew Personnel, 8th, 9th, 12th, & 15th A.F., Box 1315, Office of the Surgeon General World War II Administrative Records, Entry 31 (ZI), RG 112, National Archives, College Park, Md. (NACP).

Note 17: John C. Flanagan, *The Aviation Psychology Program in the Army Air Forces: Report No. 1* (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1948), 215. See also Myers, *Shot at and Missed*, 29; Pitts, *Return to Base*, 31; James M. Davis, *In Hostile Skies: An American B-24 Pilot in World War II* (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2006), 92.

Note 18: Ciardi, *Saipan*, 40.

Note 19: *Ibid.*, 37–44.

Note 20: Thomsen, *My Two Wars*, 17–71. See also Myers, *Shot at and Missed*, 48.

Note 21: 31 December 1943 entry, Ray Dunphy's diary, transcribed by Dan Dunphy <http://home.pcisys.net/~dandunphy/RaysMissions.htm> (accessed 1 November 2006).

Note 22: Currier, *Fifty Mission Crush*, 74.

Note 23: Fred Hamann, *Air Words: A Popular Aviation Definition of the Language Flyers Speak* (Seattle: Superior Publishing Company, 1945), s.v. "scoresheet"; Jerry Scutt, *USAAF Camouflage of World War 2* (Cambridge, Eng.: Patrick Stephens, 1976), 607; Lane, *Byron's War*, 158.

Note 24: Bond, *Love and Fear of Flying*, 79–81; Grinker and Spiegel, *Men Under Stress*, 43, 307; Greening, *Not as Briefed*, 62. See also Lane, *Byron's War*, 191. See also Sherry, *Rise of American Air Power*, 209–11.

Note 25: Norman Levy, *Personality Disturbances In Combat Fliers* (New York: Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation, 1945), 8–9; Myers, *Shot at and Missed*, 53–4; Pitts, *Return to Base*, 29; Chester Marshall, *Sky Giants over Japan: A Diary of a B-29 Combat Crew* (Winona, Minn.: Apollo, 1984), 68, 75; Thomsen, *My Two Wars*, 129–30; Richard Hugo, "Mission to Linz," *Making Certain It Goes On: The Collected Poems of Richard Hugo* (New York: Norton, 1984), 79–84. See also Bond, *Love and Fear of Flying*, 75–6.

Note 26: The experience of medium bomber and B-29 crews differed. B-25s and B-26s were flown at lower altitudes and so were not equipped with heat or oxygen. B-29s had pressurized, heated cabins.

Note 27: Charles C. McBride, *Mission Failure and Survival* (Manhattan, Kan.: Sunflower University Press, 1989), 28; C. G. Sweeting, *Combat Flying Clothing: Army Flying Clothing Through World War II* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1984), chapters 4 and 5; Currier, *50 Mission Crush*, 74; Thomsen, *My Two Wars*, 170–73; Hugo, "Ci Vediamo," 110; Carson, *Wing Ding*, cover photo.

Note 28: This passage describes B-17 and B-24 crews who flew combat missions in the European and Mediterranean theaters of operations. In the Pacific, bombers typically flew in looser formations, because they encountered less enemy opposition. Stouffer, *American Soldier*, 2: 408–10; Flanagan, *Aviation Psychology Program*, 216–7; Grinker and Spiegel, *Men Under Stress*, 29–30; Bond, *Love and Fear of Flying*, 37–8, 85–9; Hastings, Wright, and Glueck, *Psychiatric Experiences of the Eighth Air Force*, 143–4; John C. McManus, *Deadly Sky: The American Combat Airman in World War II* (Novato, Calif.: Presidio, 2000), 28–40; Lane, *Byron's War*, 147, 153, 163; Eugene E. Halmos Jr., *The Wrong Side of the Fence: A United States Army Air Corps POW in World War II* (Shippensburg, Penn.: White Mane, 1996), 3; Levy, *Personality Disturbances in Combat Fliers*, 6.

Note 29: Grinker and Spiegel, *Men Under Stress*, 34, 127; Bond, *Love and Fear of Flying*, 80, 85–9; Flanagan, *Aviation Psychology Program*, 215–6; Thomsen, *My Two Wars*, 187; Joseph Heller, *Now and Then* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), 185; Philip Ardery, *Bomber Pilot: A Memoir of World War II* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press), 124–5; Lane, *Byron's War*, 194–5; Cecil D. Conrad, "The Combat Man Presents Himself," in David G. Wright, ed., *Observations on Combat Flying Personnel* (New York: Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation, 1945), 27; Wells, *Courage and Air Warfare*, 30–33; Levy, *Personality Disturbances in Combat Fliers*, 8–9; Hastings, Wright, Glueck, *Psychiatric Experiences of the Eighth Air Force*, 20–22.

Note 30: Currier, *50 Mission Crush*, 123; Medical Department, United States Army, *Neuropsychiatry in World War II, vol. 2, Overseas Theaters* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Surgeon General, Department of the Army, 1973) 864–5, 871; Mae Mills Link and Hubert A. Coleman, eds., *Medical Support of the Army Air Forces in World War II* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Surgeon General, USAF, 1955), 499–500, 661, 663–4, 670–71, 852–4, 858; George V. LeRoy, "The Medical Service of the AAF" in Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate, eds. *The Army Air Forces in World War II, vol. 7, Services Around the World* (1958; reprint, Washington, D.C.: Office of Air Force History, 1983), 396–7, 419–22; Levy, *Personality Disturbances in Combat Fliers*, 9, 11; Grinker and Spiegel, *Men Under Stress*, 182–3; Flanagan, *Aviation Psychology Program*, 218–9; Bond, *Love and Fear of Flying*, 98; Robert Rehm, "Fifty Missions over Europe: Psychological Study of an Average Combat Tour" in Wright, *Observations on Combat Flying Personnel*, 11.

Note 31: Donald W. Hastings, David G. Wright, and Bernard C. Glueck Jr., "Psychiatric Report of the Eighth Air Force" (23 October 1943), File: 730 (Neuropsychiatry) Air Force, ETO, Psychiatric Report of the Eighth Air Force, Box 1339 Office of the Surgeon General World, War II Administrative Records, Entry 31 (ZI), RG 112, NACP. See also LeRoy, "Medical Service of the AAF," 401–2; Wells, *Courage and Air Warfare*, 46–7; Link and Coleman, *Medical Support of the Army Air Forces in World War II*, 704–7.

Note 32: Medical Department, United States Army, *Neuropsychiatry in World War II*, 2: 894; McManus, *Deadly Sky*, 299–300; Link and Coleman, *Medical Support of the Army Air Forces in World War II*, 661, 852–4, 941, 944; LeRoy, "Medical Service of the AAF," 422; John C. Flanagan, "Report on Survey of Aircrew Personnel in the Eighth, Ninth, Twelfth, and Fifteenth Air Forces" (29 March 1944), File: 730 (Neuropsychiatry) Aircrew Personnel, 8th, 9th, 12th, & 15th A.F., Box 1315 and John M. Murray, "Report of Survey of the Far East Air Forces" (ca. Summer 1944), File: (730 Neuropsychiatry) Inspections, Consultants' Visits in Pacific Army Air Forces, Box 1349; both in Office of the Surgeon General World, War II Administrative Records, Entry 31 (ZI), RG 112, NACP.

Note 33: Truman Smith, *The Wrong Stuff: The Adventures of an 8th Air Force Aviator* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), 21; McBride, *Mission Failure and Survival*, 34; Eugene Fletcher, *Lucky Bastard Club: A B-17 Pilot in Training and in Combat* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992), 132; Ardery, *Bomber Pilot*, 154; Grinker and Spiegel, *Men Under Stress*, 293.

Note 34: Hastings, Wright, Glueck, *Psychiatric Experiences of the Eighth Air Force*, 138–40; Marshall, *Sky Giants over Japan*, 178; Bond, *Love and Fear of Flying*, 37–42, 61–4, 71, 100, 122; Wells, *Courage and Air Warfare*, 94–5; Grinker and Spiegel, *Men Under Stress*, 131–4, 280, 288–306; Bond, *Love and Fear of Flying*, 59–64; Levy, *Personality Disturbances in Combat Fliers*, 16–7; Clark, *Missions of Shehast*, 111–2.

Note 35: Thomsen, *My Two Wars*, 199–200, 203–4; Levy, *Personality Disturbances in Combat Fliers*, 16–7; Carson, *Wing Ding*, 119; Studs Terkel, *"The Good War"* (New York: Ballantine, 1985), 198.

Note 36: Ciardi, *Saipan*, 82–3.

Note 37: Levy, *Personality Disturbances in Combat Fliers*, 8–10; Bond, *Love and Fear of Flying*, 59, 81–3, 89–90, 99–101; Roy R. Grinker and John P. Spiegel, *War Neuroses* (Philadelphia: Blakiston, 1945), 119–20; Grinker and Spiegel, *Men Under Stress*, 130–31; Heller, *Now and Then*, 177–84; Joseph Heller, *Catch-22* (New York: Dell, 1961).

Note 38: Ciardi later learned that the crew's flight engineer had miscalculated the remaining fuel and that there was plenty to get them back to base. However, while in the air, he was ignorant of the fact and anxious about his chances of survival. Ciardi, *Saipan*, 58–61, 93, 120–21; Cifelli, *John Ciardi*, 83–86; Keith Wheeler, *Bombers over Japan* (Chicago: Time-Life Books, 1982), 118.

Note 39: Grinker and Spiegel, *Men Under Stress*, 30–31, 54; Hastings, Wright, Glueck, *Psychiatric Experiences of the Eighth Air Force*, 21–2, 135–6; Rehm, "Fifty Missions over Europe," 10; Flanagan, *Aviation Psychology Program*, 214.

Note 40: Stouffer, *American Soldier*, 2:196–207; Conrad, "Combat Man Presents Himself," 28. On the Army's self-help literature, see Ellen Herman, *Romance of American Psychology: Political Culture in the Age of Experts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 100–112.

Note 41: Milton Layden, "Experiences with Anxiety States in Combat Flying Personnel," in Wright, *Observations on Combat Flying Personnel*, 13–8. For more on the disposition of airmen who were unwilling or unable to fly, see Link and Coleman, *Medical Support of the Army Air Forces in World War II*, 671–9; Bond, *Love and Fear of Flying*, 153–64; Wells, *Courage and Air Warfare*, 161–83; Levy, *Personality Disturbances in Combat Fliers*, 67; LeRoy, "The Medical Service of the AAF," 412–8; John C. Flanagan, "Report on Survey of Aircrew Personnel in the Eighth, Ninth, Twelfth, and Fifteenth Air Forces" (29 March 1944), File: 730 (Neuropsychiatry) Aircrew Personnel, 8th, 9th, 12th, & 15th A.F., Box 1315, Office of the Surgeon General World, War II Administrative Records, Entry 31 (ZI), RG 112, NACP.

Note 42: Levy, *Personality Disturbances in Combat Fliers*, 15–7, 32, 64–68, 73; Bond, *Love and Fear of Flying*, 89; Grinker and Spiegel, *Men Under Stress*, 77–78; LeRoy, "Medical Service of the AAF," 412–7; Medical Department, United States Army, *Neuropsychiatry in World War II*, 2:872–77.

Note 43: Flanagan, *Aviation Psychology Program*, 210; Ciardi, *Saipan*, 90; Cifelli, *John Ciardi*, 93–6; John Ciardi, "About Being Born and Surviving It," in Vince Clemente, ed. *John Ciardi: The Measure of Man* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1987), 14–5; Terkel, "Good War," 195–6; Donald Vining, ed., *American Diaries of World War II* (New York: Pepys, 1982), 313, 317.

Note 44: This statistical difference might reflect a discrepancy in the composition of the pool of respondents. Eighty-three percent of the enlisted men surveyed, compared to 60 percent of officers, served on heavy bomber crews. Flanagan, *Aviation Psychology Program*, 216–7.

Note 45: Bond, *Love and Fear of Flying*, 153; Thomsen, *My Two Wars*, 177–80; Hugo, "Catch 22, Addendum," 97–9, 101; Hugo, "Ci Vediamo," 126.

Note 46: Flanagan, *Aviation Psychology Program*, 217; Vining, *American Diaries of World War II*, 308–18; Charles Alling, *A Mighty Fortress: Lead Bomber over Europe*, ed. Elizabeth Alling Hildt (Havertown, Penn.: Casemate, 2002), 47–9. See also McManus, *Deadly Sky*, 308–12; Stouffer, *American Soldier*, 2:172–88.

Note 47: Ardery, *Bomber Pilot*, 92–3; Currier, *50 Mission Crush*, 140, 152; Roy R. Fisher and Susan Fisher Anderson, *The Lucky Bastard Club: Letters to My Wife from the Left Seat* (Bloomington, Ind.: 1st Books Library, 2002), 118; Donald F. Crosby, *Battlefield Chaplains: Catholic Priests in World War II* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1994), 26–7; Gerald Linderman, *The World within War: America's Combat Experience in World War II* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 65–6.

Note 48: Ardery, *Bomber Pilot*, 93–4, 99, 109, 173, 182; James Dugan and Carroll Stewart, *Ploesti: The Great Ground-Air Battle of 1 August 1943* (1962; rev. ed., Dulles, Va.: Brassey's, 2002), 53–4, 82; Jane Beck Sansalone, *White Flak: Vignettes of a Franciscan Friar* (Cincinnati: Regina, 1998), 93–4, 98–102, 104–5, 110–15, 122–4, 128, 130, 132, 135–6, 138–43.

Note 49: To save weight so that the number of incendiaries aboard each B-29 could be increased, the number of guns, ammunition, and gunners was reduced. Marshall, *Sky Giants over Japan*, 178; Ciardi, *Saipan*, 64, 103; Jackson Lears, *Something for Nothing: Luck in America* (New York: Penguin, 2003), 143–4, 219, 251; Ciardi, *Saipan*, 95, 103.

Note 50: Ciardi, *Saipan*, 88, 95.

Note 51: Pitts, *Return to Base*, 75–6, 221–2, 237, 262. See also Marshall, *Sky Giants Over Japan*, 178–9; Wells, *Courage and Air Warfare*, 104; Grinker and Spiegel, *Men Under Stress*, 184; Linderman, *World Within War*, 66–71.

Note 52: Sixty percent of veteran airmen (both officers and enlisted men) reported that "feeling that you were lucky and would not get hit" helped reduce their fear of combat. A slightly higher number of enlisted men reported deriving similar benefits from prayer. Flanagan, *Aviation Psychology Program*, 217. See also Stouffer, *American Soldier*, 2:188.

Note 53: Greening, *Not as Briefed*, 53–9; Bond, *Love and Fear of Flying*, 78, 145; Zellmer, *The Spectator*, 19, 26. See also Lane, *Byron's War*, 190.

Note 54: Thomsen, *My Two Wars*, 203. See also Myers, *Shot at and Missed*, 101; Bert Stiles *Serenade to the Big Bird*, 37; Carson, *Wing Ding*, 111; Koger, *Countdown!*, 33.

Note 55: John R. (Tex) McCrary and David E. Scherman, *First of the Many: A Journal of Action with the Men of the Eighth Air Force* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1944), 20–21, 46; Shaun R. Illingsworth, ed. "The Wartime Diaries of Captain Edward C. Piech, USAAF, 1942–1944" (B. A. thesis, Rutgers University, 2001), 109–10; Alling, *Mighty Fortress*, 161.

Note 56: Vining, *American Diaries of World War II*, 296, 304; Stouffer, *American Soldier*, 2: 383–5; Wells, *Courage and Air Warfare*, 104; Grinker and Spiegel, *Men Under Stress*, 182.

Note 57: Fred Rochlin, *Old Man in a Baseball Cap* (New York: HarperCollins, 1999), 81–88; Thomsen, *My Two Wars*, 232–8; Stiles, *Serenade to the Big Bird*; John C. Flanagan, "Report on Survey of Aircrew Personnel in the Eighth, Ninth, Twelfth, and Fifteenth Air Forces" (29 March 1944), File: 730 (Neuropsychiatry) Aircrew Personnel, 8th, 9th, 12th, & 15th A.F., Box 1315, Office of the Surgeon General World, War II Administrative Records, Entry 31 (ZI), RG 112, NACP. For the perspective of an airman who volunteered for further service, see Pitts, *Return to Base*, 235–9, 256–7.

Note 58: Ninety-eight percent of airmen stationed in Europe agreed that it was "very important" or "important" to fly with the same crew. Flanagan, *Aviation Psychology Program*, 217; Stouffer, *American Soldier*, 2:348–50; Research Branch, Special Service Division, Headquarters ETOUSA, "Attitudes of Combat Crews Toward Their Flying Jobs, Promotion, and Assignment" (7 July 1944), Information and Education Division, Microfilm Copies of Card Information on Attitudes and Opinions of Military Personnel 1941–1950, Entry 91, Office of the Secretary of Defense, RG 330, NACP.

Note 59: Ciardi, *Saipan*, 88–9; Ciardi, "About Being Born and Surviving It," 14; Thomsen, *My Two Wars*, 137; Rehm, "Fifty Missions over Europe," 7; Grinker and Spiegel, *Men Under Stress*, 23–4.

Note 60: Grinker and Spiegel, *Men Under Stress*, 24; Currier, *50 Mission Crush*, 11–4. See also George R. Klare, "Why Nose Art? A Psychologists' View," in Jeffrey L. Ethell and Clarence Simonsen, *The History of Aircraft Nose Art: World War I to Today* (Osceola, Wis.: Motorbooks International, 1991), 14; Robert Narden Bredau, "The Meaning of Nose Art: An Anthropological Perspective" (M.A. thesis, California State University, Sacramento, 1989), 107–20; Matthew Rogers Burchette, "Lonely Hearts and Lofty Ladies: Social and Environmental Factors that Influenced United States Army Air Force Nose Art in the Second World War" (M.A. thesis, Baylor University, 1998), 13–4.

Note 61: Currier, *50 Mission Crush*, 13; Watt, *Comet Connection*, 11; Fletcher, *Lucky Bastard Club*, 472; 7 December 1943 diary entry, Harley Tuck's diary, transcribed by Harley Tuck Jr. http://www.447bg.com/library/crews/gilliran/tuck_d1.html (accessed 1 November 2006). See also James H. Farmer, "Art and the Airman," *American Aviation Historical Society Journal* 20 (Summer 1975): 138–9; Bredau, "Meaning of Nose Art," 44–57; Burchette, "Lonely Hearts and Lofty Ladies," 14–26.

Note 62: Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), 69–70; Robert Westbrook, *Why We Fought: Forging American Obligation in World War II* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 2004), 79–80; John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), illustration 60.

Note 63: Nose Art is a registered trademark of the American Airpower Heritage Museum.

Note 64: Alling, *Mighty Fortress*, 19, 59–60, 122, 171.

Note 65: Bredau, "Meaning of Nose Art," 67–98; Burchette, "Lonely Hearts and Lofty Ladies," 102–23; Alan Harrison Newcomb, *Vacation With Pay, Being an Account of My Stay at the German Rest Camp for Tired Airmen at Beautiful Barth-on-the-Baltic* (Haverhill, Mass.: Destiny, 1947), 30; Hamann, *Air Words*, s.v. "she"; Watt, *Comet Connection*, 11.

Note 66: 30 December 1943, 1, 5, 6 and 10 January and 7 February 1944 diary entries, Harley Tuck, diary; Ardery, *Bomber Pilot*, 68–70.

Note 67: Vining, *American Diaries of World War II*, 306.

Note 68: Muirhead, *Those Who Fall*, 14–5; Randall L. Rasmussen and William E. Rasmussen, *Hell's Belle: From a B-17 to Stalag 17-B* (Santa Fe: Sunstone Press, 2003), 34–5, 38–41, 43, 50–51.

Note 69: Billy B. Blocker, *B B Bomber Pilot over Europe . . . P.O.W. in Germany* (Olive Branch, Mo.: privately published, 1994), 164–7; Frey, "Poets Laureate of Stalag I," 38–9; Art and Lee Beltrone, *A Wartime Log* (Charlottesville, Va.: Howell Press, 1994), 14–5, 134–5; David A. Foy, *For You the War Is Over: American Prisoners of War In Nazi Germany* (New York: Stein and Day, 1984), 95; Greening, *Not as Briefed*, 196–9; Joel H. Tutt, *A Wartime Log Covering Stalag Luft III and Stalag Luft VII-A* (Washington, Ga.: Wilkes, 1985), vii, 15; Neal Clyman's wartime log, transcribed and edited by Scott Burris, <http://www.heavybombers.com/381st/pow.html> (accessed 26 January 2000 but no longer online); *Stalag Luft I Online*, <http://www.merkki.com/> (accessed 1 November 2006).

Note 70: Ward, "Psychological Relationship between Man and Aircraft," 283–9; Flanagan, *Aviation Psychology Program*, 215–6.

Note 71: Ardery, *Bomber Pilot*, 136; Sweeting, *Combat Flying Clothing*, 32–38; Zellmer, *Spectator*, 48–9; Kenagy, "Sexual Symbolism in the Language of the Air Force Pilot," 95–6; Bond, *Love and Fear of Flying*, 22n.

Note 72: Navigator Ray F. (Hap) Halloran described a similar reluctance in Marshall, *Sky Giants Over Japan*, 194–200; Halmos, *Wrong Side of the Fence*, 4.

Note 73: Marguerite Madison Aronowitz, *Maternity Ward: Final Flight of a World War II Liberator and the Diary of her Waist-Gunner, S/Sgt William J. Fay* (Prescott, Ariz.: Pine Castle, 1998); 18 February 1944 entry, Harley Tuck's diary; Andrews et al., *Bits & Pieces of the Mighty Eighth*, 31, 34.

Note 74: Don S. Midlam, *Flight of the Lucky Lady* (Portland, Oreg.: Binfords & Mort, 1954), 59, 161–4. For another story of a "faithful" bomber who gave "her" crew time to bail out before crashing, see Richard Munsen and Katherine Munsen, *Bailout over the Balkans: Escape through Nazi-Occupied Yugoslavia* (Ames, Iowa: Sigler, 1994), 7.

Note 75: Marshall, *Sky Giants Over Japan*, 1; John Ciardi to Ed Lawson (19 June 1963) quoted in Cifelli, *John Ciardi*, 78; Ciardi, *Saipan*, 83, 109–11. On airmen's attitudes toward B-29s, see also Sherry, *Rise of American Air Power*, 211–12.

Note 76: The metaphor of bombing as giving birth was a common trope used by George R. Caron in the memoir he wrote with Charlotte E. Meares, *Fire of a Thousand Suns: the George R. "Bob" Caron Story—Tail Gunner of the Enola Gay* (Westminster, Colo.: Web Publishing, 1995), 231, 249. See also Bond, *Love and Fear of Flying*, 22n; Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *No Man's Land: the Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century*, vol. 3, *Letters from the Front* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1994), 238.

Note 77: Caron and Meares, *Fire of a Thousand Suns*, 250–51; Paul W. Tibbets, *Flight of the Enola Gay* (Reynoldsburg, Ohio: Buckeye Aviation, 1989), 38, 196–7.

Note 78: Fletcher, *Lucky Bastard Club*, 470, 480–2; Grinker and Spiegel, *Men Under Stress*, 183–4; Stouffer, *American Soldier*, 2:383, 385; Marshall, *Sky Giants Over Japan*, 184, 186; 24 and 25 February 1945 entries, Norman Andrew diary <http://www.geocities.com/CapeCanaveral/1393/andy.html> (accessed 1 November 2006); 15 April 1944 entry, Harley Tuck diary; image of "Lucky Bastard Club" certificate from the 91st Bombardment Group, <http://www.91stbombgroup.com/LBC.html> (accessed 1 November 2006.)

Note 79: Hastings, Wright, Glueck, *Psychiatric Experiences of the Eighth Air Force*, 25.

Note 80: Zellmer, *Spectator*, 107, 111, 124.