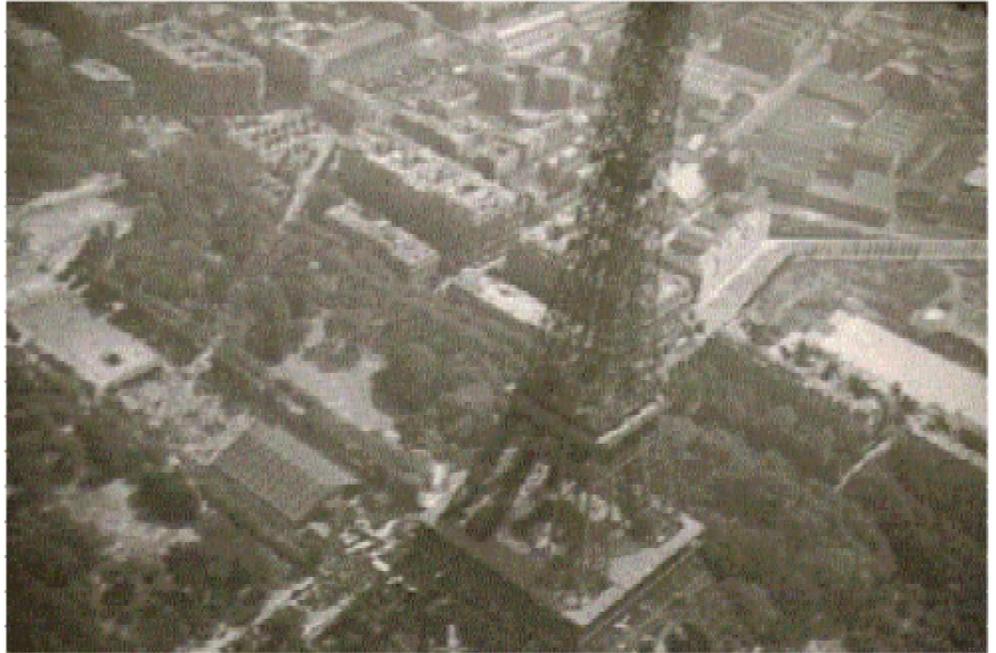


On the Way Home

Soon after the cessation of hostilities in WWII our B26 bomber crew was disbanded. Because I was a flight engineer, I was sent to a large airbase in France. During the several months there I flew a number of 'missions'. Each one was with a crew comprised of a pilot, a copilot and a flight engineer. The crew for each mission seemed to be randomly chosen. I remember three of the missions in particular.

One, in 1945, was a low level flight over Paris, where the French were having an air show. I took the picture of the Eiffel Tower from the waist gun window of the B26.



Another was as a part of a group ferrying a large number of planes to a B26 graveyard. I was amazed at

the large number of closely packed planes already there. I wondered what their fate was to be.

A number of USO groups were still in Europe to entertain the troops waiting to go home. Several missions were to transport them from one location to another. One such flight was unforgettable.

The flaps on a plane are extended for take off and landing. They provide additional lift for take off and shorten the length of runway required.

On that mission the pilot gave to the copilot the command, "Retract Landing Gear." The copilot then proceeded to raise the flaps, and we began losing altitude. I could see a stone fence at the end of the runway, and I wondered if this was to be my last flight. We barely cleared the fence and began climbing. Upon landing at the destination the USO people thanked us profusely for the great trip.

Shortly after this episode I was moved to a tent city to wait another six months to go home.