

ONE OF "BOYS OF BOULDER DAM"

Interesting Volumes Could Be Written On The Lives, Experiences of Hoover Dam Workers; Here Is One of a Series of Modest "Samples":

BY ELTON GARRETT

Shot down by enemy machine gun barrage as he flew Buzz Morrison's plane to bomb the federals during the recent Mexican revolution—survivor of four Mexican revolutions in which he flew—Col. Pat Murphey lives up to the tradition of his countrymen—he's now working driving truck in one of the tunnels, and "just waiting for another revolution."

Yes, it was the Hispano-Travelair ship that the Las Vegas lad Morrison had used to fly over Las Vegas and the Hoover dam country that Murphey was piloting when he made his forced landing on that day in 1929 near Naco, Sonora.

Murphey, in fact, was a member of the 'reb' outfit that captured the Nevada lad when HE made HIS forced landing in rebel territory three miles south of the border at Naco.

Murphey had charge of all aviation for the rebels from Chihuahua west, under General Fausto Topeta who is now in Los Angeles, a political exile from Mexico.

In charge of all aviation on the rebels' side was General Bob Polk, "jefe supremo," descendant of the early U. S. President Polk.

WHEN BUZZ Morrison, who had been hired to fly for the federal forces, had to make a forced landing near Naco, in enemy territory, that enemy, under direction of Murphey, took over his plane for their own use and held Buzz prisoner for six days, before permitting him to cross free to American soil at Nogales.

Murphey took the Morrison plane on a bombing expedition over Naco.

Now Naco is in two portions, one part in Arizona, the other in Sonora, the railroad dividing the two portions. The federals were stationed in the roundhouse there, with an old Spanish "one-pounder" in a strategic position for demolition of any train approaching with enemy forces or supplies.

MURPHEY'S AIM was to rout the federals from this roundhouse, by bombing it. The wind, however, caused three bombs to drift over the line and land in American territory. One of the three wrecked the front of the Western Union office there, a fragment of another cut the eye of an American newspaper reporter who was walking the streets, and another wrecked a garage in American Naco.

The irony of this was that wrecked in the garage bombing was also the fine automobile of Gen. Alechea, Federal superior of Morrison's.

Knowing the gravity of the situation arising from drifting of bombs into United States territory, Murphey the next flew lower, in another attempt to take the "fort".

First thing he knew, his ship was passing through a barrage of machine gun fire that riddled wings and fusilage with more than two dozen bullets.

UNHURT HIMSELF he believed he had weathered the "storm," but soon, as he "zoomed" to drop his remaining bomb, he noticed that the motor was smoking, the fumes coming back into the fusilage.

It dawned upon him that the water jacket must have been hit, causing loss of water. He headed her immediately for Mina Oro, the rebel camp where 2,000 Yaqui Indians were quartered with the other rebel forces. That was five miles away. Could he make it be-

fore the motor froze!

—No! By jove, she was freezing already! He saw he must land. He watched the ground, and picked the most likely spot! The plane made a three-point landing, but hit a gully of a sudden and nosed over with a crash.

HIS MOUTH mutilated, with pieces of front teeth imbedded in the flesh of his face, the flyer crawled from the wreckage and waited for arrival of a relief party. They shot holes in the gasoline tank and set fire to the wreck, that the federals might get no part of it, and went horseback on to camp, one man at least thankful indeed to be yet among the living.

When peace was made Murphey was next to the last to cross the line into America, the young bearded General Manrique, governor of Jalisco, though a Frenchman, being last to cross.

"Most of the Mexican commanders in the revolutions," Murphey reminisced to me, "seemed to be of Irish descent. Obregon was part Irish, his name really being O'Brien. In fact you'd be surprised how many gals with blue eyes and red hair there are in the interior of Mexico, gals that talk nothing but Spanish. They say many of them are descendants of the Irish mercenaries that came over with the Spaniards for the conquest of Mexico centuries ago."

After the revolution complications brought about a humorous incident in which a United States officer bore the brunt of the "joke."

MURPHEY HAD instructed in aviation in Los Angeles in 1920 Gen. Charlie Ming, descendent of the famous Chinese Ming dynasty, a U. S. student at that time Murphey, Polk, Al Le Quaine and Ed Koehler decided to sail to China and instruct in aviation for Ming, who was then with the Nationalists.

Wanted, however, as witnesses in hearings in Tucson resulting from conspiracy charges following the Mexican revolution, they were arrested in Honolulu, to be returned to America.

They were placed aboard the Japanese "Sitka Maru," technical prisoners, though not fettered in any way.

"Well, we sat for hours and hours in the fancy barroom and signed chits for drinks, treating everyone, an old seagoing custom. And when we got to Frisco we were handed a bill for \$270 for drinks. Then we told them for the first time we were prisoners, and the Japanese held the federal officers' baggage until they paid the bill for their prisoners. I understand the government finally reimbursed the officers for the \$270, after considerable red tape."

And now, in the absence of any more Mexican revolutions, Murphey "herds" truck on the graveyard shift in the upper portals on the dam project, while his wife and son are at home in Ardmore, Oklahoma. He has made application to join the Boulder City Legion post.

"I have been a colonel in the

Mexical rebels' army, but I'm only a buck private with the 'Big Six'," grinned Murphey.