



SOLO SHOW

by F.E. RECHNITZER

*Tip Hurley Was Grounded for Disobedience—
But No Brass Hat Could Stop That Hell-Bent Sky Rider
from Taking a Crack at the Roulents Dump!*

IT WAS ONE OF THOSE NIGHTS. The mess of Two Twenty Two was in an uproar. Blue smoke curled in streamers around the dim lights and then eddied toward the two by fours under the tar-papered roof. Glasses clinked musically and clattered back to wet-ringed table tops with a thud.

A snatch of song, echoed by the strident notes of a wheezing accordion, came from the far corner of the room. The song was drowned out by a burst of laughter from the table where some of the boys were playing Down the River, with the red deuces wild.

There was a crispy chatter as chips fell to the moisture-ringed table. Then a voice sounded out of the smokey haze.

“Come on, ante up, Hurley. Always dragging.”

“Yeah,” came from the other side of the ring. “If you’d keep your mind, assuming you have one, in one place, you wouldn’t be forgetting so much. Never did see a guy that could think of so many things besides what you’re supposed to be thinking of in my life. No wonder you’re always in Dutch with the major. You ought to take a memory course.”

TIP HURLEY yawned and tossed two white chips toward the pile. “If you guys don’t—”

“Come on—once again. It’s costing you three, not two. Or have you forgotten that we are all putting in three to stay?”

Hurley flicked a stained chip into the air and watched it turn over and fall into place with the others. He yawned again and then smiled as he glanced at his card in the hole. “As I was sayin’, I’m gonna bop somebody around here one of these days if they don’t quit riding me about forgettin’ stuff. Just because you guys didn’t see that Hun the other day an’ went sailin’ on without having a crack at him is no reason why I shouldn’t collect myself an easy confirmation.”

“Yeah,” growled a pilot who stood behind Hurley’s chair watching the play. “That’s what you think, but if you’ll try to get that think box of yours workin’, you’ll remember that the major ordered us to stick to the formation no matter what happened.

You busted right away from the outfit and went down on your own. What makes the C.O. so sore is the fact that you’re always forgetting orders.”

“One of these days he’ll forget which side he’s fighting on an’ we’ll have to knock him down to save him from disgracing his family,” came from another quarter.

“Take the whole bunch of you to do it, though,”

smiled Hurley. “Not a bird in the crowd could do it alone.” His eyes gleamed as he looked once again at the deuce of diamonds which lay face down in front of him. “Come on an’ play. I’ll give you eggs something to try an’ forget.”

The chips rattled to the center of the table. Everybody was staying, Hurley included, even if he did have to be reminded about shoving a few more chips toward the pile.

As the cards flipped through the air one of the men said: “The only good thing about your forgetting is that you forget to come to meals sometimes and that leaves more for us—Ace bets, Hurley. What do you say?”

“Three pretty blue ones,” smiled Hurley, “an’ I’m not forgetting that I’m playing you birds either. Don’t say I didn’t warn you.”

JUST then the door of the mess slammed open. The singing stopped. The accordion died away with a squeaky note. The cards dropped to the table. Chairs scraped the floor as the men turned to face their C.O., who stood smiling with one hand on the rusty door-knob. The other hand held a slip of paper.

“Sorry, fellows,” the C.O. said. “Guess you’ll have to pile off to bed. We’ve got an important job on first thing tomorrow.”

“What is it, Major?” chorused a half dozen voices.

“We’re bombing the dump at Roulents. Show starts at dawn,” came the C.O.’s even voice. “The ships are being loaded now, with twenty pounders—better break up and shove off to bed. See you at the field at four.

“All except you Lieutenant Hurley. Please don’t forget that you’re still grounded. You still have four more days to go, and if that doesn’t cure you of your bad habit of disobeying orders, I’ll drop the group commander a line about you—Oh, yes, I know you always claim that you forgot, but I’m trying to find a cure for that.

“Good night, gentlemen.”

AS THE men at the table settled up, Hurley wandered through the group and headed for the door. “Hey there, Forgetful, don’t you want your dough? Ever see such a guy, even forgets money.” The banker pushed a pile of five franc notes across the table.

“I didn’t forget them either,” said Hurley as he grabbed the paper up in his fist. “I was was just thinkin’.”

"That's news."

"Aw, shut up," grinned Hurley, as he stuffed the bills into his pocket. "I was just thinkin' that I was losin' the chance I been looking for all along."

"Chance for what?" asked the banker.

"Chance to do something in this war, stupid."

Hurley leaned forward, unmindful that his elbow was blotting up a ring of Scotch. "I came over here to do something, just like you birds. They say the war'll be over pretty soon, now that Jerry is on the run, and I haven't done a darn thing outside of knock down one lousy two-seater. An' I get grounded for doing that."

"Well, that's more than some of us have got," growled a man by the table. "You've got one, anyway. What more do you want?"

"Something to tell my grandchildren about, when they ask, 'Grand-pap, what did you do in the big war?'"

"Yeah, an' chances are you'll have forgotten all about ever being in a war by that time," laughed the banker of the game. "If you don't get that memory of yours working a little better, those kids will wonder why their Grandpappy doesn't come home from the big war."

Hurley joined in the laughter, and then sobered as the man behind him said: "If you weren't grounded, you could take on the show by yourself. You'd be a hero an' save us a lot of trouble; that is, if you could remember what it was you were supposed to bomb. Just think of the story you could tell those grandchildren you're expecting, if you went out and ruined that dump all by your lonesome."

"Baloney," muttered Hurley. "You heard what the C.O. said. Well, I'm sticking to my knitting until he let's me go into the air again. I'll show you guys something then."

"I'll be waiting with some smelling salts for you when you get back tomorrow. You'll need them."

ONE by one the men drifted off to their quarters and soon the mess was empty.

Only the tobacco smoke drifted around in the darkness.

Hurley went to his tent, which he occupied alone, as his tentmate had been knocked down the day before.

He lit the stub of a candle and slumped down on his cot, his hands clasped around his right knee, as he watched a moth flutter around the wavering flame.

Finally his lips moved. "A solo show sure would do the trick," he muttered. "Take a lot of nerve, though."

He shook his head and smiled. He picked up a paper-backed volume and lay back on the blanket.

He found the place he had marked that afternoon and tried to read.

The lines seemed to run together. He couldn't keep his mind on the printed words. All he could see on the page was a single Camel darting around a burning dump, like the moth around the candle. He dropped the book at his side and lay with his hands behind his head, staring up at the canvas peak of the tent.

"What a show that would make." His lips split in a grin. "Boy, that would give them something to talk about. Maybe they'd lay off their everlasting kidding. An' wouldn't I have something to talk about when I got back to the States. Boy!"

THE candle sputtered, and the restless moth continued its gyrations around the feeble yellow flame. Hurley closed his eyes. Against the pale red of his closed lids he pictured his Camel weaving through the skies over the dump at Roulents. Flame shot into the air, flame speckled with the debris of an exploding dump. A smile flickered across his face as he pictured a single ship, flown by a single pilot, and doing the trick which a full squadron had been told off to do.

The candle shortened. The moth lay in a crisped heap in the wax like a Stricken plane in No-Man's-Land. The chill of night was settling around the tent. Hurley reached out a sunburned hand for a blanket. It was at the foot of the cot. He had to sit up to reach it. "What's the use of tryin' to sleep?" he muttered, swinging his feet over the edge of the cot.

He got up and walked from the tent and headed for the dusky shadows of the hangars at the end of the land. Dim lights burned here and there, threw skeleton silhouettes across the darkness as they struck the ships on the line. A mechanic passed from a ship into the yawning mouth of the hangar. Hurley called after him: "Got the busses ready, Lawton?"

The mechanic called Lawton stopped and set a tool box down on the dew moistened sod. "Yes, sir," he said wiping his hands on a wad of waste. "Just finished putting the bombs on. They're all set."

"How's Burton's motor? It was missing a bit yesterday when he came in."

"Okay, sir," said the mechanic, dropping the waste into the box at his feet. "Like to listen to her?"

"Might as well."

Hurley settled himself into the cockpit. The mechanic swung the prop through. The Clerget

caught and broke out into a staccato beat. The needles on the dial quivered under the impact of the whirling cylinders. Hurley smiled as his eyes swept the instrument board.

“While you’re warming her up I’ll go get a new set of plugs for Lieutenant Larkin’s bus,” he heard the mechanic shout over the edge of the cockpit. Without taking his eyes off the glowing numbers in front of him, Hurley nodded.

THE whirling prop thrashed the night air into shreds. The beat of the engine increased as Hurley slowly shoved the throttle up on the quadrant. The needle on the tachometer crept slowly up. He grinned as he looked over his shoulder. His hand came back. The roar of the Clerget died to a murmur. He smiled. In a second he was out of the cockpit and was pulling the chocks away from the tires. In another second he was back in the ship, strapping a helmet on. He heard a shout somewhere in back of him as he drove the throttle up against the post. The roar of the motor and the wail of the prop, as it flailed the air, drowned out the words of the mechanic rushing toward the ship, which already had its tail in the air.

The Camel bounced once, settled back and then went into the air again. This time it held.

With his stick held back, Hurley watched the nose of his quivering Camel bore into the star-studded curtain ahead of him. Darkened blotches flashed under his wings as city and town appeared and then disappeared under his elevators.

HIS willing little ship clawed on and on into the night. A cloud scud above him seemed to drop lower and lower. Then his ship was enveloped in the gray blanket. In another second he was through the clinging mist and winging his way toward a half moon which cast its silvery beams in a shimmering ray on the billowing scud below. A grin kept the leather strap under his chin tight.

A gleaming ribbon flashed under his wings. Archie from Hun batteries whistled into the skies above him and then broke with a crash. Hurley knew that he was across the lines and somewhere below and a few kilometers ahead lay the black blotch which was Roulents. His gloved hand flicked the throttle back. The roar of the motor died away to a gurgle, and the prop whistled softly as it churned the air. Wind sighed through the wires as his tail went up. He was going down for a solo show.

He broke through the scud just behind Roulents. He cleared his motor once and then changed his course, as thin streamers of silver started to knife the night. Big stars twinkled behind him. They looked like stars, but Hurley knew that they were Archie sending out slithering hunks of red hot steel.

A gray ribbon of road unwound below him. A supply train was on its way into the black blotch under his nose. The ship sank lower and lower, with Hurley almost standing on the rudder bars and his hand resting on the throttle. Suddenly his hand moved. The Clerget broke into a roar. The ship swung around on a wing tip as Hurley’s eyes sought the sights and his right hand reached for the bomb toggle.

The ring in his Aldis sight picked up a spot on the ground and the ship carved its way through the dark in a climbing turn. Hurley looked over his shoulder. Tracer was winging its way up out of the darkened landscape as the Camel roared over the far end of the field. His eyes caught the flare of the exploding bomb as it let go in that dark splotch. A thin finger of flame licked toward him.

He came down the chute again, his fingers still clutching the toggle, his feet treading the rudder. He sat waiting with the tenseness of a killer. His lips curled back from his teeth in a snarl. A yank on the wire, and the next bomb went screaming through space. A kick on the rudder sent the Camel careening into an airsplitting turn, lifting the lightened ship away from the place called Roulents which was already vomiting flame and lead in his direction.

ONCE again he curved away into the curtain of darkness, taking care not to let his ship reflect the blazing building below, nor show its silhouette against the silver arc of the moon. His chin rested on his shoulder as he looked back over his tail for the flash of the second bomb.

For a moment he thought it was a dud, for an orange and blue flame registered in his goggles, only the pale yellow glow from the building where his first egg had landed. Then the answer came in a searing white flame, right from the center of the dump. A direct hit had set something alight. Flames shot into the air. Panic-stricken figures dashed madly about in an effort to evade the path of the next bomb.

Somewhere a one-pounder was adding its crackling roar to the din, as its gunners struggled to knock down the marauding Camel. Sparks flew heavenward and then began to settle in a fiery rain, only to billow up

again under the impact of a fresh explosion; sparks which mingled with the fiery path of tracer from hot Maxims. Off to one side along a wooded road a mobile battery added its note to the symphony of flame.

BULLETS zipped and droned through the bays of the Camel as it came around in another sobbing turn. Gusts of hot air tossed the ship around, like a chip in a millstream, and then let go as it slid into cooler air. Hurley leaned forward, his head resting on the rubber pads of the sight, as he hovered over the inferno.

The glint of flame on metal caught his eye. His foot moved the rudder slightly, and the ship veered from its course. The red light leaped higher into the sky and Hurley saw that the metal on which the fire shone was a great heap of gasoline drums. His fingers clutched the bomb toggle tensely as he held the nose of the diving Camel dead on that heap of fuel.

“Solo show,” he muttered softly to himself as he watched the heap of drums fill his sights. “Solo show—” His fingers gave the bomb release two quick yanks. The ship bounced upward as the steel-coated eggs let go and hurtled groundward. Hurley smiled and yanked the stick back against his belt.

The next second the wings of his ship stood out in bold relief. A blinding flame licked up from the ground behind and below him. It tossed to the skies like a flaming plant and then fell back to cover the dump in a sheet of searing flame. Rivulets of fire snaked their way across the dump.

Hurley looked back and cocked his head as he listened to the monstrous music that seemed to shake the air through which he was flying. Detonations merged into one another until they became one long roar. For a moment he was lost in a hell of sound, and drowned in noise and darkness as he struggled to guide his ship through the tossing air. Reverberations billowed upward behind him as he swung away from a stream of withering tracer and won his way to the safety of the black shadows.

The faint grin still twisted his lips as he looked back now and then toward the glare in the skies where the dump at Roulents had been an hour before.

Then he suddenly forgot all about the maelstrom of fire and death at Roulents. Those thin silvery knives of light were slithering through the night again. They crossed and crisscrossed in the skies to his left. Hurley knew that he was on his own side of the lines and could not understand why they should be trying to pick him up.

Then he saw them. Sitting above him were six black monsters of the air, carrying their load of high explosives—to Paris, he guessed.

HURLEY yanked the stick back and shoved the throttle up another notch. His Clerget labored as he struggled to gain the level of the sinister black blobs above. The white beams of a searchlight battery tore through a hole in the cloud scud and held a black-crossed Gotha in its grip.

Tiny stars began to twinkle around the invaders. Six wheels turned to escape the exposing ray. The light held fast and more stars twinkled with a crackling sound around the Gothas.

“Big babies,” muttered Hurley as his thumbs felt for the trips. “Won’t be long now.”

His eyes fastened themselves on the leading ship. That was the one to stop first. No doubt the leader of the Staffel sat in that job. Knock that one down and the attack would be broken up.

Tight-lipped and glassy-eyed, Hurley threw his crate through the air toward the leading ship. His Camel flashed through a blinding glare of light from the ground. The crackling stars disappeared. The anti-aircraft batteries on the ground had caught a glimpse of the circles on his wings. A fiery stream of tracer slithered past his wings but he held his fire. He wanted to get in close.

He got in close. His thumbs played across the trips. The muzzle cups on his Vickers reflected red flame. A line of scintillating fire connected his ship with the Gotha for a moment. Then his thumbs came way. The old smile was playing across his face again. He curved to one side and watched.

A thin tongue of flame began to eat its way along the fuselage of the lumbering Gotha. Hurley saw hands reach over the sides and beat frantically to snuff out the fire which was being blown back toward the rear cockpit by the wind. The flame grew heavier and ate faster and faster into the doped linen.

The Gotha became a torch.

A LURID light turned the ceiling into day as the machine curved away from the formation and dove through the blanket of gray. The Gotha, a mass of seething flame, roared earthward to crash in the cool meadows below.

Hurley looked over the side and brought his hand up in a salute. “One! Gives me more to talk about when I get home.” He swung his ship to the left and

brought his sights to bear on the long black fuselage of another Gotha. Another stream of hot lead chattered from his bucking guns.

A Mercedes coughed, sputtered and then died, followed soon by the engine on the other wing. Another bomber had been clipped by the stuttering guns of the solo flyer. Silently it turned away and glided earthward.

The formation scattered to the four winds. Pilots and observers gazed upward over their shoulders in fascinated fright. Bullets cracked around them, in a hissing menace. Gray-faced observers and bombers wriggled and twisted in their cockpits and then lay still. On their faces was the imprint of fear.

A Gotha turned. Its frightened pilot brought the ship around with a hand that shook on the wheel and headed for the safety of his own land.

ONCE again Hurley found a position to his liking. It was on the tail of another of the big back-winged ships. His fingers played with the trips. The twin Vickers in front of him snarled in unison for a moment and then one of them quit. A single line of tracer bit into the weaving fuselage ahead. Another spray of lead came to answer it from the gunners tunnel at the tail of the Gotha. For a second lead splashed against the whirling Clerget as Hurley, crouched low behind the guns, kept the one Vickers hammering away.

To the right of him an excited Hun reached for the bomb release. Huge steel-clad nuggets of death went hurtling and twisting down to break in a field below. The Gotha came around in a tight turn with all guns yammering at the Camel.

Hurley broke away from the ship with which he was engaged and turned to meet the Gotha which was trying to gain the safety of its own lines. The two ships swung around each other. Turns wove into banks and banks into screaming circles which tightened every minute. Foot by foot Hurley brought his bobbing Camel closer to the tail of the twisting Gotha.

His thumbs jammed the Bowden controls. One gun answered. Then Hurley remembered that the other one had stopped as he had attacked the other Hun bomber. His gloved hand punched the cocking handle with a savage blow. His fingers pressed the trip again, but the gun remained silent. Hurley threw his stick over and started to lift the lid on the gun block.

A blaze of fiery sparks curved from the tail of the Gotha. A stream of smoking lead spattered against his

motor and then traveled back over the cowling. Hurley let his glove drop to the floor boards as something thudded into his right arm. A searing pain flashed across the side of his neck. Something seemed to tug at the top of his helmet. Something sticky and warm began to trickle down under his collar.

His eyes widened. "Good night, I just remembered that the C.O. told me to stay on the ground. I'll catch hell, now, for sure," he muttered.

The Clerget coughed and spluttered. Hurley's hand dropped to the throttle. It didn't help a bit. The motor kept right on dying. His hand came up to his eyes. He shook his head and then looked up in time to see a black shadow drifting across the face of the moon.

HIS left hand sought for the button, found it and a stream of tracer zig-zagged toward the shadow. Specks of fire wiggled into the fuselage. He held the stick back still further and a shower of wooden splinters blew back in his face as his steel slugs ate into the belly of the lumbering giant of the air. A puff of smoke and flame seemed to tangle in his slowly whirling prop as he pushed the stick over to the side of the cockpit.

The Camel fell off on one wing and started to turn in a spin. Something thudded against the green linen of his fuselage. Trip hammers were tearing his motor to pieces as the shadow passed over him. A ship headed east. A ship running in the face of the enemy.

Hurley tried to smile but his face seemed to be dirty. He put his hand up and felt of his cheek. A bright light flared up in the sky behind him, but he did not turn to see the burning debris of the Gotha twisting to the ground. He felt of his face again. He struggled to open his drooping eyelids and then muttered drowsily: "All right, now. I just forgot, that's all."

HE STRAINED against the belt which was turning from brown to red. Funny lights seemed to flash in front of his eyes. There it was again. A blinding light flashed against his closed eyes. One single searchlight held him like the spot on an actor. He pushed the stick forward. The lights stopped whirling. Something pounded in his ears as the Camel went into a glide. The light held bright and steady. "Get that flashlight out of here," he half sobbed. "Let me alone. Quit kiddin' me—an' quit throwin' stuff in here."

The ship began to whirl again, and then stopped as he brought the stick and rudder back to neutral. A spasm of nausea shook him. He gritted his teeth. His

hand felt for the top of his head. That seemed to be muddy. He tried to smile, but there were spots of light, little luminous pinwheels, and streaks of color behind the pink curtain of his closed eyes.

Very lights seemed to revolve on an unsteady axis. His eyes seemed to be trying to force their way past his tightly closed lids. He drew his arm across his forehead. His jaw started to sag. Wires thrummed lazily in the night wind. The Camel settled lower and lower.

Once Hurley tried to look at the altimeter but the needle exploded into a thousand wavering arms of pale blue fire. He sank lower and lower in the cockpit. His hand moved the bullet-nicked stick automatically.

The wind kept up its steady sighing between the wires and splintered struts.

Hurley never felt the wheels dig into the sod. He never heard the crash of spruce or the tearing of linen and the grind of hot metal. He was out.

WHEN Hurley opened his eyes, eyes which still ached, there was somebody standing by his side.

"Here you are, big boy. Take this," he heard that someone say in a soft, kindly voice.

He tried to move his head. His neck was sore and stiff. "What happened? Did I walk into the machine-gun pit?" He opened his mouth and took the contents of the spoon.

He lay back on the soft white pillows and looked around the room. It began to dawn on him that he was not in his tent. He turned toward the woman at his side but she was busy writing something on a board.

He glanced around again. Everything was so clean and white, so different from his tent. He tried to raise his right hand to shield his eyes from the glare. A look of surprise crossed his face when it would not move from his side. He tried the left. It worked, and with it he lifted the corner of the white mountain enfolding him. A mass of spiral white bandage met his eye. At the end he could see the tips of his fingers resting against a splint. They seemed blue.

Below the hem of his nightshirt he could see more bandage which ended in something that looked like a mass of dough. He tried to move his leg but it seemed to be asleep.

He dropped back into place and looked down at the girl who was hanging the chart on the foot of the bed. "Did I fall off the roof of one of the hangars?" he asked, and was quite surprised at the huskiness of his voice.

"No, you kept them from getting through," she smiled as she moved toward the door. "Not a one got through—thanks to you. That make you feel better?" she queried.

"Kept who from getting through?" Then a smile flickered across the part of his face that wasn't bandaged. "Oh, I know. Gosh, I can remember all about it—Got bunged up a bit, didn't I?"

"There are some officers from your squadron outside now. Will I let them in?"

She stood with her hand on the knob of the door.

Hurley tried to nod. His head hurt him, when he moved it so he murmured, "Sure, send them in." The nurse smiled and left the room.

A FEW minutes later Hurley looked up as he heard the door open softly. A gasp of surprise and consternation escaped through his puffed lips as he saw his C.O. standing in the doorway.

"I'm sorry, Major," he forced a smile. "I clean forgot. Honest, I did. When I got in that bus an' heard the motor and looked through the prop, I could see Roulents. Before I knew it I was on the way. Give me another chance, please."

"But you realize that you spoiled a good show for us, don't you, Lieutenant?"

"I'm sorry, Major."

"So am I." A grim smile played across the major's weather-beaten face. "We made all sorts of preparations and plans for bombing the dump, and when we got there it was burning. One of the mechanics told me that you had hopped off just before dawn, so I knew that you had had another one of your memory lapses.

"The place certainly was in a mess. Then when we got back yesterday—"

"Yesterday!" interrupted Hurley in surprise.

"Yes, Lieutenant, yesterday. As I was about to say, word started to come back about some Gothas that a Camel had knocked down."

JUST then the nurse came back into the room and interrupted by sticking a clinical thermometer into Hurley's mouth. "That's better," she finally said after looking at the glass. "But you men can stay only a few minutes longer." She turned and walked out of the room.

"Then that Gotha stuff wasn't all a bad dream," mumbled Hurley. "I was layin' here thinking that maybe I was remembering something that really didn't happen."

"Then your memory is improving?" asked the Major.

"Yes, sir," said Hurley. "But say, Major, you wouldn't kid me, would you?"

"No, indeed, Hurley, you got them all right," smiled the Major. "One of the searchlights held you long enough to pick up your markings."

"How many?" asked Hurley. "I remember three."

"Memory's *much* better, eh?" The major got up and walked to the side of the bed. "Three's right."

Hurley lay back on the pillows. His eyes were closed a moment. Then a frown crept across that part of his face visible at the edge of the bandage. "I remember something else, Major," he said as he finally opened his eyes.

"What is that, Hurley?"

"About you sayin' you'd report me to the Group Commander if I ever disobeyed—I mean, *forgot*—orders again—Did you do it?"

The smile was erased from the C.O.'s face. He sat down on the edge of the cot. "I did, Hurley. You didn't expect *me* to forget, did you?"

Hurley shook his head. "No, I guess not, Major. Looks like curtains for me, after I get out of here—

What did the Group Commander say? Will I have to appear before him?"

"You will," said the major quietly. "Perhaps he'll come here." He grinned, pulled a slip of paper from his pocket and handed it to the man in the bed. "Here, read this."

Hurley, squinting out of one eye, read the paper over and over. According to it, he was a hero of the first water. Dumbfounded, he finally handed it back. A puzzled look played across his face wherever the bandage would let it.

"That's the answer to my report," smiled the C.O. "You get official confirmation for those three Gothas. And not only that, the Group Commander is coming up here with a couple of Brass Hats to pin a few medals on you."

"WELL, I'll be darned," grinned Hurley.

One of his wingmates, grinning in the doorway, spoke up. "How about telling us the story? Have to get in practice for those grandchildren, you know."

Hurley smiled. "Boy, an' have I got a story now. Believe me, I'll remember it, too."

"You're through forgetting, then?" smiled the major. Hurley nodded with heartfelt emphasis.