EAFB

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Mr. Ted Bear
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Dear Ted:

Am in receipt of yours of the 1st and happy that the neg might help. The print I got is surprisingly graphic, considering, and I myself was pleasantly surprised.

The shot was snapped by Pvt. Donald Seavey (Springfield, Ore. and U. of Oregon), 2d Materiél Sq, 4th Air Base Gp, on a Sunday morning in mid-January 1941. The time is about 8:30 to 900 hrs, judging by the cast shadows. Note also, no smoke coming from any of the tent chimneys and no activity about the mess hall. The gully at left of pic, across from which is the dayroom (it consisted of canteen, two battered pool tables, some overstuffed chairs of ancient vintage, and an area, screened off with chicken wire, which served as a plotting room where bomb hits were triangulated for scores, using the figs. that OP spotters phoned in over field phones from the PBXs or practice bomb ranges), was the parking area for the few autos owned by the men. I note only one visible. Note second tent, row two from left, has a fire burning in its Sibley. This was M/Sgt Fogleman's tent. He was up at five every morning, Sunday or no. We burned wood in our Sibleys. Note, however, that the orderly room, BOQ, communications shack, etc., all have oil tanks on racks just outside the doors. The auto parked near orderly room belongs to 1st Lt LaSalle. He was probably duty officer that day or drove over to pick up mail. Ordinarily Fogie (one never called M/Sgt Fogleman Fogie unless serving in at least his second hitch, at least not to his face) was OD, CQ, provost sgt, chief NCO-in-charge, IG, first sgt, sgt major, etc., all rolled up into one. But there was always a duty officer on the roster of the day, of course. LaSalle lived in a farm house (vacated by a homsteader when the U.S. decided it needed the reservation) out in the desert area, with Mrs. LaSalle. The men fixed it up for them and strung a field phone to it for communication. Our CO, Arbogast, lived in Riverside with his family, yet was usually around on weekends. On this wknd, however, it seems that he had flown to March or LA. The A-17A is nowhere in sight. I say LA because the Arbogasts called it home and simply leased in Riverside. The two autos parked outside the BOQ belonged to 1st Lt Foy O. Cook and S/Sgt Leroy Bebout. The latter, our chief radioman, had probably just driven in from Riverside to relieve Sgt. Charlie Kramer at the comm shack left of the BOQ. Bebout and Kramer shared a tent but took turns sleeping in the shack, two on, two off, so the radio warning signal would be heard by someone. The other officer, 2d Lt Wm Silance, did not have a car as I recall.

The men lived anywhere from one to four to a tent. They ordinarily sleep six but there was no point in crowding up. The tents at the right of the picture were unoccupied. Just over the second tent,

meaning days

first row, our hand fire truck is visible. If a fire broke out at one of the tents the prescribed procedure dictated that it be immediately hooked up to outlet in latrine while two men raced like hell with the truck to fire. Upon arrival all cursed lack of pressure. Outlet also located at water tank but this was potable while latrine was untreated.

Must also revise my recall. The fuel storage tank right at edge of lake and to right of windsock was automotive. Two men from March simply drove up a full tanker and took the empty back. Later a Standard Oil tanker drove over from Bakersfield (I think) and simply refilled our tanker. To the right of picture and just forward of the wooden bathhouse and latrine is the crash-truck tent. It had recently been moved up into camp to be readily availabe to personnel in case of an alert. To left of messhall and directly above the closed garbage rack is the motor-pool hospital tent. It is billowed out by the wind. The unwinterized pyramidal at left is the motor-pool office. The road just behind it led south over the desert to the the nearest metalled road at about Littlerock and on into Lancaster. We didn't drive on the lake unless an absolute necessity.

When you level the skyline or horizon the dayroom is lost, I guess, but it is hard to undrstnd the degree of slope down to the motor pool and lakebed from this picture anyway.

Maybe I can find something else. In any case this site is due south by SE (a bit) from the present Rockwell facility, I'd say three or four miles or so.

Seavey almost fell off the tower that morning. It isn't particularly high but had no climbing struts, so Seavey used the diagonal supports and slipped...

Don became our supply sgt when we got our new TO in early 1941 but soon left us, our first apptmt to Flying Cadets (they wore blue cotton in Summer and blue woollen in Winter, the being quite a bit darker than today's USAF color), forerunner of the Aviation Cadet program. We communicated for a while and when last heard from in 1944 was o'seas. Someone, I can't remember whom, remembered seeing him standing Retreat at Roswell AAF, N.Mex after that, a major in the Training Command (bomber transitional).

Ted, I will make a search through all my negatives to ascertain if there is among them something you can use. Unfortunately, a number of pictures of planes and operations at Muroc and elsewhere, incl my own and those of the U.S. Signal Corps and AAF official, burned up in a studio fire at a place I shared with other artists on SF's waterfront about twenty years ago. I had the above in a number of file folders for reference in my morgue. All went up in smoke and insurance simply does not replace the things one has collected over the years. Most of these were w/o negs but I'll look anyway. A lot of what I have is pics of buddies, etc., which I'm sure are of no use to a historian save those of key Muroc personnel. I am at