

BACK HOME

by

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At Cuneo I received orders to go to Rome for the purpose of calling Dorothy on the trans-Atlantic telephone.

In Rome I found out that Edward was missing but by the time I could get the telephone call through to Dorothy, Ed's body had been found at the foot of a cliff near Catamount Mt. and there was actually no reason for haste. However, I spent the night with Ed Palmieri and then flew in several stages to Casablanca, where I presented my travel orders. I was told that I would have to await my turn for a plane back or take a transport ship which would take several weeks. I reported to the Captain in charge of travel orders and showed him the message I had received from the American Red Cross telling of Ed's death, and my orders to return to the United States for discharge. I could see from the crowd waiting around his office that my chances of getting on a return flight were not very good but I determined to exhaust every proper resource available to me to get on the next plane for home.

Casablanca was suffering one of its periodic sand storms but I was planning to blow up a sand storm of my own if they did not furnish me with immediate transportation regardless of my lowly rank.

The Captain had just cleared the list of Major Generals entitled to transportation on the next plane. As I stepped to his desk and presented my orders for transportation, my chances of prompt transport did not look very good. The Captain glared at me, waived a hand at the milling crowd and said, "Sorry, Major, you will just have to await your turn."

As the Captain reached for the message from the Red Cross which I presented to him, I was preparing one of the most brilliant speeches of my career. The Captain read the message, brushed the tears from his eyes and ordered his Adjutant to bump the lowest ranking Major General on the list and substitute my name.

The plane made a refueling stop at the Azores but I did not risk getting off the plane there or at Gander.

The most beautiful sight I have ever seen or hope to see was the approach to Idylwild Airport. It was not marred by any premonition of approaching blindness. I was home again.