

# Good News – Bad News by Ed Parker

It was the third week of December 1951. We had just finished flying our last recon mission involved with the Korean War.

After completed their debriefing procedures, the six Ravens departed for a lodge located at the base of Mt. Fuji. They began rejoicing about many things: We didn't get shot down when the battery of searchlights pinpointed us around 0200 in the morning over North Korea; We didn't get shot down when we wandered into China. But more than anything, they were looking forward to being with their loved ones on the otherside of the world. By Christmas!



*"Raven Mad"  
Before leaving Japan*

Soon after the first group left for the lodge word came through that our tour of duty was being extended another two months for a total of five months. Needless to say, that was one big disappointment. The name and picture painted on the side of our aircraft was quite appropriate under the circumstances. "RAVEN MAD"

I was with the next group to arrive at the lodge. Upon arrival I noticed some of the Ravens sitting around the lounge. Stupid is as stupid does, I had to be the one that broke the bad news. The resulting gloom that befell everyone there taught

me an axiom that I never forgot: "Give out good news immediately – hold bad news as long as possible."

Well, we grit our teeth and did our thing. We flew more missions. Gifts - that we were bringing back to the homefront - had to be mailed or held in abeyance. Without much doubt, family members were also unhappy. The receiving of presents couldn't relieve the heartache.

The middle of February 1952 finally arrived and off we went heading for our home base in Puerto Rico, with stopovers in Hawaii & Offutt AFB. We spent a couple of days in Hawaii but acquired very little sleep while there. Trying to sleep during the daylight period with extraneous noises in the barracks wasn't very successful.



*"Raven Mad"  
after landing at Offutt AFB*

When we left Japan we had the 16-man crew plus the two ground-crew- members. When we left Hawaii we left one man there, he was diagnosed with a venereal disease. Lucky stiff!



*The five Ravens that were killed when Raven Mad clobbered in, 1952*

*Top: Francis H. Bell - James T. Bordwell*

*Middle: Joseph B. Camp*

*Bottom: Walter I. Lawson - Alvin R. Barnett*

We arrived at Offutt AFB around 0230 on the 26th of February 1952. Unfortunately, the wheels of the RB-50G hit the ground several feet below the end of the runway. The plane lost its left wing enroute to the stopping point. The aircraft had rolled so that the right wing was on the left. The five Ravens within their compartment were trapped. At least one of them was still alive but they were suffocated when the fire-truck poured foam into that area. Other crewmembers came out of it with varying results: semi-critical injuries (a priest administered the "Last-Rites" over me) to no injuries. The gunner-radio operator didn't have a scratch on him until he miscalculated and broke his leg jumping from the plane.

Perhaps the fellow that had the VD faired the best; a paid vacation in

Hawaii and no injuries.

I'd rather have luck than skill, any day!

Ed Parker

Former Navigator & Raven

-----Original Message-----

Don,

Here is another TRUE STORY that you may use for MEMORY LANE; if you care to

From 1945 until 1955 I was a Navigator.

From 1955 until 1965 I was a Raven

I left the service in December of 1945 and was called back to active duty around Labor Day 1947

I was in the 343rd both as a Navigator in RB-50Gs and as a Raven in RB-47H & Tel Two aircraft

Ed