

The Author

Wing Commander (retd) S. M. Ahmad, popularly known as 'Lanky,' joined the Indian Air Force in 1945 and retired from the PAF in 1970. As one of the pioneer of Pakistan Air Force, he has been in a position to see it grow into a mighty force.



Wing Commander Lanky Ahmad in the middle at Skardu airfield early 1950s.

He has been mentioned in dispatches for gallant/distinguished service in Kashmir during February 1949, with high appreciations of the President of Pakistan.

In 1951, he was appointed Captain of the PAF C-in-C aircraft and in that capacity also flew General Muhammad Ayub Khan, the C-in-C Army and other VIPs for many years. He was awarded "Green Endorsement" in his flying Log Book for having flown two thousand hours in Multi Engine Aircraft from 1951 to 1959, without any avoidable accident. He has also held some important Staff and Command appointments in the PAF. He was seconded to the Civil Aviation Department for nine years.

In 1955, he had the distinction of being selected the ADC to three Heads of States, President Bayar of Turkey, King Hussein of Jordan and Colonel Gamal Abdul Natsir of Egypt. He was also privileged to accompany the President of Egypt as his personal

guest to Indonesia to attend the Bandung Conference. The same year General Ayub Khan the Defence Minister especially requisitioned his services as ADC when he went to Turkey to sign the Baghdad Pact.

His memoirs are full of interesting episodes, portraying his enviable and exciting Air Force life, which he is very proud of.

Foreword

They say, old memories die hard!

In the twilight years of one's life they come to the fore before extinguished forever. We remember, the old friends and the adventures and high points of our lives in the minutest details. The stories written here are true depiction of events as observed and heard through my own eyes and ears. These memories are neither intended to be "Historical Notes" nor an "Autobiography."

I have never kept a diary, the only authentic source which helped me to remember the incidents are my numerous flying Log Books. They provided me with correct dates and names of the personalities, whom I have neither flown with nor met in my official capacity. If there are any omissions or inaccuracies they would not be intentional or because of any bias on my part. I have tried to be as objective as possible, no matter how important the person is being mentioned and discussed.

In the course of my twenty-three years service in the Pakistan Air Force, I was lucky to meet and observe the great men and leaders of our history. Being a pioneer of the Pakistan Air Force, I am proud that I had the opportunity and honour to see this great institution growing rapidly into a formidable force.

I also happen to be the only lucky survivor of the first IAF/PAF course which forced me to write about a few fatal and other accidents. Without the sacrifices of our

pilots and hard work this Air Force would never have been the same, as it is today.

I feel it is the right time I should leave something behind as a legacy for my children and for young PAF pilots who might gain from my experiences. It is through these reminiscences, that I would like to say, I met great men and women when the world was a much simpler place. In the words of a simple airman, I was lucky to be there.

"Oh, I have soared with the eagles and touched the face of God." --- **S. M. Ahmad**

1945-95 Fifty Years --- A Long Inning

How time flies!

Today, on 6th of August 1995, while visiting the beautiful city of Montreal Canada, takes me back exactly fifty years, when an atom bomb was dropped over Hiroshima, Japan. That fateful day was also the beginning of my Air Force life. It was on this date, I was selected for a Commission in the Royal Indian Air Force as a pilot. I am nostalgic and old memories are becoming clearer.

Half a century ago I had no conception of a lone, B29 bomber named "Enola Gay" would change the history of the world events so radically and there would be no other World War during my service career. The nuclear bomb over Hiroshima killed more than a million innocent people and two days later, the second bomb was dropped over Nagasaki. All this devastation was planned and perpetrated to warn the Japanese that there would be more to come, to wipe off even Tokyo, from the surface of the earth. Much has been written and spoken in favor and against this drastic and unilateral action by the United States.

Even today, the debate goes on unabated on the rights and wrongs that led to this great human catastrophe.

On the insistence of my friends and relations I have tried to relive and narrate, the eventful days of my Air Force life. This particular memoir is perhaps the last one, but would be the first in the chronological order of my previous articles. These episodes are from a pilot's recollections and reminiscences who luckily survived many incidents and accidents, some of them near fatal.

After the Bachelor of Arts examination from Government College, Lahore in 1945, I decided to join the RIAF much against the wishes of my parents. My other two class-fellows Zafar Chaudhry and Saeedullah Khan who were younger to me, had already joined the Air Force in 1943 and 1944 respectively. I was also selected with them to report to the Combined Military Selection Board at Dehra Dun but was not allowed by my parents. They forced me that I should first pass my B.A. examination. The former classmate rose to be the Chief of Air Staff and retired as Air Marshal, the latter became his deputy and was retired arbitrarily by Prime

Minister Bhutto much before the fulfillment of his aspiration to become the next Chief. Both were considered highly professional and proficient in their jobs.

I was holidaying at Solan near Simla Hills, when the call came for me to report to the Selection Board at Dhera Dun on 2nd of August, 1945. In our neighborhood lived an exiled Burmese Minister, whose young and pretty daughter had become friendly with me. She came to see me off at the railway station, crying non-stop and would not leave the compartment when the train actually started moving. With great difficulty and the assistance of a cousin, at whose house I was staying, she was physically off-loaded from the train. I had to promise her, that if I did not get selected I would return to Solan. She might have thought that my chances of selection were very remote, being physically weak and stammering a little bit. However, fate willed otherwise!

Writing about the selection, it reminded me of an incident when I joined Government College, Lahore in 1943. Mr Sondhi, the Principal of the College was my father's class-fellow in the same institution in 1920-21, asked me, "Why do you want to join this college." He might have noticed my handicap, answered himself, "because it is the best college in India."

I knew very well that this kind of treatment would not be offered and meted out to me by the Selection Board. One of the factors which might have helped me to get selected was, that on the application form, I had written 'Air Force' as my choice on all the three columns, soliciting the preference of a particular Service. This I did, because basically I was enamoured by the Air Force, its uniform and also to have some due regards for my parents wishes. And thought, that I should have only a limited chance in the overall success. Moreover, the attrition rate of the qualified candidates in the Air Force was also very high. Out of one hundred selected cadets, who were sent to different Flying Training Academies, approximately 50% got their Wings and the Commission.

The British chairman of the Selection Board told me to reconsider the choices mentioned in my application as there was a possibility, that I might not be found medically or otherwise fit for the Air Force. He also advised that I should keep the other two options open i.e. for the Army or the Navy. I politely declined his kind offer by saying that my preference was only for the Air Force. This probably had confirmed his views, that I was the right kind of candidate and material to become an airman. In New Delhi, I passed the medical examination as well and

telegraphically informed my parents and the Burmese girl friend about my selection. As I came to know later they were not happy. This was the beginning of my eventful career which provided me the most exciting and rewarding life.

I reported at the Elementary Training School, Poona on the 3rd of November, 1945. T. S. Jan who was also my contemporary in the Government College, Lahore joined the Air Force two weeks later. He retired as an Air Commodore, after a long and meritorious service in the Pakistan Air Force. At Poona, I met AVM, Micky O'Brien, whose course was having their passing out Dance Party that night. He was the Senior Cadet and won the Swimming Trophy along with some other prizes. A number of Anglo-Indian and Parsee girls from Poona and Bombay were invited by the Cadets. The next morning was a Sunday. After a community bath, where all the cadets were supposed to take showers naked along with the others, I explored the beautiful building of Parsee Orphanage, where we were going to stay for the next three months. The newly built accommodation was requisitioned by the Government for the Air Force. That morning I got yet another rude shock and exposure to the Air Force life style. Beside the empty beer bottles, there were a few used condoms scattered behind the sofas and bushes in the lush green garden of the mess.

One evening, T. S. and myself were in uniform when we met two girls taking walk in the picturesque Bund Garden adjacent to our school. We introduced ourselves to them, the Anglo Indian girl mistook Jan as John and the Parsee girl became my friend. We remained in touch with them for the duration of the course and they also invited us to their homes to meet their parents.

My younger brother Bashir, with whom I had a wonderful equation and rapport was posted in Bombay with the Mackinnos, a British Shipping Company. He often used to visit Poona, where he introduced me to some close relatives of the Aga Khan. The younger girl 'Saidi' had travelled with him from England to Bombay in the same ship. The elder sister Rakhshi, later got married to Nawab Muzaffar Ali Qizilbash. It was she, who first introduced me to her husband at the Gymkhana Club, Lahore. He became the Chief Minister of the West Pakistan and later the Finance Minister in the Central Government.

After the completion of the course I had to go through an operation for a deflective septum of the nose. In the hospital, the patients were offered a peg of brandy or rum before the dinner as an appetizer, which was also known as

'comfort.' Although I never had smoked regularly but whenever I did, I got a bad throat. The doctor also warned me to get the tonsils out. To avoid that operation I stopped smoking, since then I had no problem with my throat.

I would never forget a rebuke from my father, when I was only ten years old. On my return from the School in Mussorie, U.P. he kissed me as usual and smelt the cigarette smoke. He asked whether I had smoked, I told him 'No.' When he saw the cigarette packet in my coat pocket, he slapped me and said that it was for telling him a lie. He said, if I had confessed he might have forgiven me. This probably has been one of the main reasons for my maintaining good health and saved a lot of money.

the Doctor gave me two weeks leave for rest and recreation, which resulted in my missing the course at the Flying Training School, Jodhpur. Late, I was sent to RIAF Coimbatore (South India) to while away my time, until the next course. Air Commodore Narandera was commanding the school who got married to Maharaja of Jind's daughter. Her brother G. B. Singh was my course-mate at Poona and we became good friends. Narandera also became the first Indian C. O. of Ambala. After the partition he was killed in Switzerland while ferrying a Tempest aircraft from England in 1948. His wife and daughter Vera are now settled in Toronto. We sometimes meet each other when I visit Canada.

Since there was not much to do at the new Station except for the morning P. T. and evening games I was allowed to take one month's leave. I visited the beautiful hill station of Ootacomed, Madras and Banglore where the gardens were as beautiful as the ones in Tivoli Copenhagen. I spent a week with my aunt in Hyderabad Deccan. My uncle took me to see the Nawab's "Kothi" palace. Inside the compound, I saw about 40 small houses built for his concubines. I always wondered as to how the Nizam, a small-stature man managed to satisfy so many wives. It is difficult to look after even one these days. Incidentally, he was one of the richest men and the greatest misers of the world. He wore inexpensive clothes and a 'Rumi Topi' which covered about half an inch thick layer of oil ring around it. He, however, gave reasonable stipends to his wives and good education to all of his offspring from the large 'Haram.'

I also visited Colombo where my younger brother Sharif was posted. He took me to Neauralia by train, a picturesque hill station. In the hotel we became friendly with the Sri Lankan Speaker of the National Assembly and his so-called young

niece. They gave us a lift in their car to Kandy where we saw the biggest footmark in the world of the Lord Buddha, and his sacred tooth. We also saw the abode of Ravan where he kept Sita after abducting her from India. It was my first visit to Ceylon, the second one was on board --- the Queen Elizabeth III, the fabulous luxury Liner in which I was fortunate to travel from Karachi to Singapore in 1989.

On the Q E 2, I became friendly with Mr F. A. Fahim, a Minister in the Central Government and Akbar Liaquat Ali, the youngest son of our first Prime Minister who was assassinated. I also met Mr Habib Ibrahim Rehmat-Ullah, the Quaid's associate, and his wife. We had many interesting discussions on the Pakistan's history. The Colombo Skyline was considerably changed since my first visit in 1946, but the bazaars were more congested and dirty.

At Coimbatore, one evening, I did a stupid thing and nearly got killed by a Sentry's bullet. I returned late in the evening and forgot to collect the 'Password' before leaving the camp. At the gate on my return I was ordered to halt, which I did not and pressed on riding fast on my bicycle. The Gorkha's guard fired in the air. At night I felt very bad, as it was not a big offence to come late and without a password. I promised that I would never commit such a blunder again, although I might have violated some safety rules in the air and got scot-free because of my strong faith in God and my mother's prayers.

I nevertheless, landed up at Jodhpur in the middle of 1946 for the elementary flying training in the mono-winged Cornell and biplane Tiger Moth aircraft. The course consisted of about 30 cadets mainly Anglo-Indians, Hindus and Sikhs. To my surprise, I was made the senior Under Officer. It was the British "Raj" and there was no favouritism, although the Anglo-Indians were in their good books, because they could speak English. In the beginning, our British C. O. was Wing Commander Young who was replaced by Wing Commander Maqbool Rabb, the first Indian who was given this high position.

One morning, a long nose Spitfire XIV landed at our base and nobody other than Flying Officer Zafar Chaudhry alighted proudly from his aircraft. He was flying it to Lahore from Karachi via Delhi, because there were no fuel and other facilities available on that route. I am sure he did not see his classmate wearing the Under Officers' badges otherwise he would have certainly congratulated me in spite of the fact, that I gave him a smart salute.

My instructor at Jodhpur was Flt/Lt Massalamani from South India. He was a daredevil pilot and nearly got both of us killed on a dual sortie, flying very low but at fast speed. Much against the advice of old mothers to their sons to fly "low and slow." One day when we landed, the Tiger Moth started swinging to the port. He shouted on the mike "What the 'Fuck' is wrong with you this morning." I told him that he never handed over the control of aircraft to me. Later, we both realised that the aircraft was properly trimmed and landed unattended by itself.

During one of our Bristol Freighter weekly Mail Runs to Dacca in the early fifties, we had to spend a night at the Indian Air Force Mess at Palam due to the engine trouble. Group Captain Massalamani was Commanding the base and came to see us to find out if we were comfortable. He immediately recognised and embraced me in the bar. After a few drinks I pulled his leg and said "what the hell two Indian Tempests could not shoot an unarmed PAF Dakota in the Kashmir Valley in 1948." I was aware, that he himself was flying one of them. He said that his No. one, finished all the bullets chasing the aircraft. Dogar was clever to lose height immediately and started flying low over the Indus River, by taking full evasive actions. According to Massalamani his own gun chamber got jammed, so he could not shoot. Some bullets did go through the body of the Dakota and killed one of our ejector crew and injured a Signaller. For this encounter Dogar got "Sitara-e-Jurat."

Dogar was my Commanding Officer in the VIP Squadron in 1952 when I was selected by the AHQ's and ready to proceed for training on the Governor-General's four-engined Viscount aircraft in England. He strongly objected to my becoming a permanent VVIP Pilot and eventually replacing him as CO. He managed to get my course cancelled and recommended a junior and less experienced pilot. He now wears a long beard and joined the *Tabligi Jamaat* after his retirement from the PAF as an Air Commodore. I wish him all the luck in his pursuit of happiness.

In the early sixties when I was the Station Commander Lahore, an Indian Air Force Illushin-19 on its way to Moscow had to spend a night at Lahore due to some technical problem. To my surprise the Captain of Aircraft was Sqdn/Ldr Budhwar from the Mussoorie school whom I had not met since 1939. When I asked him that was he the same fellow whose parents were very friendly with mine? He confirmed in affirmative. I invited him and Group Captain Lodhi the Indian Air Attache in Moscow for dinner. He was on board the aircraft and the elder brother

of Captain Lodhi of PIA who opted for PAF. Luckily my boss Air Commodore Dass the D. G. of Civil Aviation and the late Group Captain Bapu Murad were staying in the mess. Lodhi was in Kohat with them before the Partition. He being a Muslim did not open up in free discussions as 'Naite' Budhwar. I am glad I got the opportunity to return the hospitality of the Indian Air Force, as they did earlier for us at Palam.

To our bad luck when we arrived at the Advanced Flying Training School, Ambala in early 1947, the acting Pilot Officer rank (APO) was withdrawn as the War was over. We were, however, told that the Commission would now be given to us after the completion of the course in October, 1947. The political negotiations were at their climax and suddenly in May the Viceroy of India, Lord Mountbatten announced the date of transfer of power and the so-called "freedom at Mid-Night". Most of the Muslim Officers decided to opt for Pakistan.

I remember, spending one week-end at our ancestral home in Mussoorie (UP) where I saw our Chief Flying Instructor of Ambala, Sqdn. Leader M. Asghar Khan with his 'life long' companion and wife Amina Shamsi. Flying Officer Bill Aziz Khan was also there courting his future wife 'Bunti'. Her younger brother Micky Kidwai was in a junior course at Ambala. He took me to his house near the Savoy hotel Mussoorie for the evening tea and introduced me to his future brother-in-law whom I already knew from Lahore. Micky later left the Pakistan Air Force in 1949 and eventually became the Chairman of the Indian-Tea-Board after marrying a niece of the Indian Army Chief General Criappa.

Mussoorie was known to be the Queen of hills. Most of the Maharajas and Nawabs from India had built their palaces and spent summer seasons there. Their rickshaws, driven by men in different multi-color uniforms and turbans, were a sight to watch. The Hakman Night Club and Skating Rink were two popular rendezvous where one could see the pick of the Indian elite. I also remember having seen a BOR (British Other Ranks) Club in 1935, where on the entrance gate it was written in bold letters "Indians and Dogs are not allowed." It showed the intensity of hatred some British had towards the Indians in those days or was it a love for dogs to equate them with the human beings?

To finish this article, although written last, some readers might like to know as to how I got the name 'Lanky'. I used to be thin, tall and played very good Tennis and Badminton. In those days, the senior officers and their wives always encouraged

and groomed young officers to become social and often entertained them at their homes. In 1948, at Peshawar, our Base Commander's wife Mrs. Mavis Dass and Mrs. Farahat Abdullah Beg, the wife of my Officer Commanding the Transport Squadron, started calling me 'Lanky' while playing the evening sports. It was a fashion and very much in vogue that every Air Force Officer should have a short nickname. Although, I did not like it in the beginning, but when everybody started calling me "Lanky" I had no choice but to accept it gracefully. All my colleagues and the senior officers know me by this name and have forgotten my real name Mahmood given to me by my parents.

I must mention a few anecdotes about the late Captain Abdullah Beg. He was the father of Transport Flying in Pakistan. In the early fifties, he joined the National Airline "PAK AIR" and trained hundreds of pilots. He spent most of his active life in the air, rather than on ground. He also trained me on Multi-Engines flying and had sent me solo in the Dakota aircraft only after four hours of dual flying in 1948. He wanted me to join the Civil Airline along with him, which I luckily did not.

The life that the Air Force had provided me, was so unique and unparalleled, that I could never have imagined in my wildest dreams. He was my colleague in the Civil Aviation Department in 1969 and strongly recommended me as the Chief Pilot to Mr. Baldasarini, the highest executive of the Tarbela Joint Venture, who came to see the Director General to get a pilot for the TJV. Abdullah Beg called me on the Inter Com. And informed him that I was retiring soon and was the best available pilot for the executive type of aircraft Cessua 310, which they had ordered.

To complete my thirty-three years of flying, I flew for another ten years for the TJV, the WAPDA and the Pakistan National Constructions Company at Abu Dhabi. I might write another book, if this one is appreciated by the readers. It will contain some interesting and unknown episodes as I had flown four Chairmen WAPDA. Mr I. A. Khan, Mr Shahnawaz Khan, Generals Saad Tariq and Fazle Razik, Mr. Azim Khan, Managing Director of NCC. And also a majority of Mr. Bhutto's Ministers including the Governor of the Punjab Mr Ghulam Mustafa Khar who preferred to fly in the WAPDA's aircraft. It was extensively used by Mr Sherpao, Mr Hafeez Pirzada, Mr Jatoi and Dr. Mubashar Hasan. I have also flown three World Bank Presidents Mr Eugene Black, Mr George Wood and Mr. M'cNamara.

Captain Abdullah Beg hailed from Hyderabad Deccan having a tremendous sense of humour and the gift of gab. He was always full of jokes with hilarious laughs. He was a very good Tennis player and we made a regular foursome with the late Group Captain 'Zobo' Aziz and a young and rich Khoja Manager Swiss Airhostess, who used to become regularly to see us play Tennis. He used to tease her by saying "Darling, if you ever decide to leave me, get married to an Admiral." She eventually got married to the young Khoja Tennis player, after her divorce.

He also used to say that his first ex-wife got married to an Air-Marshal who became the C-in-C and the second to a senior most Army General who nearly achieved that highest position. His wish of making a real "troika" of his ex-wives was not fulfilled.

It is a brief write up about a great pilot and instructor who was full of life. Most of his pupils, still remember him because he always instilled confidence and inspired them, which was a rare quality in those days.

August, 1947

Holocaust in the Eastern Punjab

While under-training at the RIAF Advanced Flying School Ambala I was on a solo cross country flight to Adampur, Halwara and Patiala of three hours duration on 27th August, 1947. The weather was hazy and a thunder-storm was expected in the afternoon, much after my estimated time of arrival at the base. My thoughts were full of our newly established country and the bad news about the massacre taking place in the Eastern Punjab, where my parents were still residing. After Adampur, I diverted to my home town, a few miles away from the designated route, just to see if my mother and father were safe. There was no news from them for the last one month. After two or three low passes over the house, I was happy to see them waving at my aircraft, I felt relieved and set course for Ambala.

When I was near Patiala city, I saw the forecast thunder-storm was heading towards Ambala, much before the expected time, I circumvented the storm and flew very low to reach the destination which was inaccessible due to heavy rain and storm winds. A few miles short of Ambala, I had no other choice but to divert to the nearest Airfield, which happened to be Halwara near Ludhiana. From there I had just passed through about an hour ago. For the last two hours I had to fly very low over the canals due to clouds. The rampage and carnage which I witnessed, made me more frustrated and helpless. Besides the household material, a number of dead bodies were also floating in the water. On my final approach at Halwara, a red light indicated that only a few minutes of fuel was left over in the tanks. I was prepared to make a forced landing at any other flat ground. For that alternative and eventuality, I considered myself qualified having won the "Forced Landing Trophy" at the EFTS, Jodhpur. The flying instructor used to cut off the aircraft engine at about three thousand feet above the ground and the pupil was supposed to land at the nearest spot, marked at the Airfield.

In those days, Halwara had only two neglected airstrips built during the Second World War. I believe, that the Indians Air Force have since then developed it like our base at Sargodha. While taxiing to a safe place, I hid my identity card under my seat, because, I was not sure as to who the first person I was going to encounter, a Hindu, Sikh or Muslim. One man with a bid 'Danda' in his hand approached my aircraft. I asked him a bit authoritatively as to who he was? To my good luck he was a Muslim Chowkidar of the Airfield. I retrieved my Identity Card

and dismounted the aircraft. My next question was, " how far is the nearest village?" He told me "Sahib, it is only two or three miles, also named Halwara."

After securing the aircraft properly I went with him to the village. It was a Muslim pocket where the injured, maimed and mutilated bodies were pouring in at intervals. The Numberdar, the headman of the village, became my host for the next four days. He told me that the place could be attacked by the Sikhs at any time. I did not want to be in a situation known as "from frying pan to the fire." I had to organise a round the clock security duty roster and also personally guarded the outer boundaries of the village with a 'Danda' in my hand.

The following morning, a Military truck from the Baluch Regiment luckily arrived. It was evacuating the left over families of the Military personnel, who had opted for Pakistan from various 'Muslim Pockets' in the East Punjab. Their next stop was Jallundar and returning later that evening to Halwara. I decided to go in this truck and hoped to contact Ambala about my whereabouts. On the way, the driver suddenly stopped the vehicle, at that time we saw some Sikhs were running and trying to hide themselves in the sugarcane fields.

Two Jawans from our truck, got down and aimed their guns towards the Sikhs. I stopped them, from taking such a drastic action, as they did not commit any offence, except for fleeing away in panic upon seeing a military truck. They obeyed my orders, because I was the only officer present. Later, after a few miles, driving on the canal bank road, we witnessed two carts loaded with Muslim children and women being looted by two Sikhs. They were busy snatching and removing the ornaments from the poor women, who were uprooted from their hearths and homes. As soon as they saw us, both the Sikhs immediately jumped into the canal. One Baluch jawan blasted the head of a Sikh into pieces, which splashed the water into red; the other got away by swimming under the water.

In Jallundar, I went to the Police Station, they informed me that due to the riots there was no communication with other cities, for the last three weeks. One of them, seemed to be a little cooperative and told me that there was a wireless set connection with the Simla Police headquarters, but it was not in operation at the time. However, he took my message for transmission to Ambala, which was never received by them. I did not intentionally disclose my identity as a Muslim, but

gave the aircraft particulars and place of forced landing and returned to Halwara in the same truck.

the next two days, I kept on going back and forth to the Airfield from dawn to dusk, with the hope that a rescue team might arrive to evacuate me from this ordeal. On the third day, a Harvard aircraft landed, flown by a British Pilot with an Indian Army Engineer. They were inspecting all such abandoned airfields from Delhi to Lahore, for the suitability of an emergency operation by Dakotas. The pilot was very sympathetic and felt sorry seeing me in that plight. He promised to inform Ambala or Lahore as soon as he would get in touch with either of them. On the following day an Oxford Communication Aircraft arrived from Ambala with the fuel. The late Flying Officer Masroor Hosain was one of our Instructors at Ambala, who flew the marooned aircraft back on the 31st of August, 1947 and I returned as a guilty passenger in the other aircraft.

At Ambala, after continuous search and rescue sorties for three days in the Simla hills and surrounding areas, they had lost all hopes of my survival due to the severe thunder-storm which hit the hills only a few minutes before my scheduled E.T.A. Thanks be to God, that my parents did not receive any message about their son being missing and later declared "presumed dead." My younger brother Bashir was my next of kin, as mentioned in the documents. He was working with the P. & O. Shipping Company in Bombay also got the alarming news.

He was in constant touch with the British Commandant of the School, to find out about my fate. Upon my safe arrival at Ambala, the Air Commodore was nice and congratulated me for being alive, and immediately connected me to Bombay from his office. My brother could not believe that I was still alive after being missing for the last four days.

On the 4th of September, I flew one of the 6 Harvards allotted to Pakistan. It was God's will and my parents prayers which helped me to survive and made myself as one of the fortunate pioneers of the Pakistan Air Force. I am very proud to have had the opportunity to serve my beloved country right from its birth. I was told later by my elder sister Hameeda, that until her death in 1953, my mother always used to pray for the safety of any aircraft flying overhead, just because her own son was in the Air Force.

September, 1947

Pakistan's Share of Aircraft from Undivided India

The first contingent of training aircraft to arrive in Risalpur, Pakistan was on the 6th of September which consisted of six Harvards from Ambala. These were flown in by Instructors Flt. Lts. Khyber Khan, S. A. Aziz, Flying Officers Rahim Khan and Zafar Chaudhry. (The last two, later became the Chiefs of the Air Staff) acting Pilot Officer Afzal and myself. During the landing at Risalpur, Afzal had a swing and scraped a wing-tip on the grassy runway causing its first minor accident. It was repaired during the night by our Technical Officer "Chacha" Siddique who was known to be an expert in repairing damaged aircraft.

The next day, these aircraft were emblazoned with the newly designed Pakistan markings, which gave a boost to our morale. Most of us rushed to have ourselves photographed next to the Crescent and Star, the new insignia of the Royal Pakistan Air Force.

A few days later, another ferry was conducted to fly our share of the Tiger-Moths from India. The story of this ferry flight is perhaps best told by one of its participant, Flying Officer Zafar Chaudhry. His article has also been published in the PAF History Book.

"Upon the division of India, the RPAF was allotted eight Tiger-Moth aircraft from RIAF's Elementary Flying Training School at Jodhpur and our team was tasked to ferry them across to Risalpur. When we reached Jodhpur we were told that we could only have seven of them as one aircraft had been damaged beyond repairs at that station. After a careful briefing by the leader, the formation took off in the early hours of 12th September.

The seven machines were piloted by Squadron Leader Joseph, later he became Air-Vice Marshal Yousaf, Flying Officers Masroor Hosain and myself, Officer Cadets Lanky Ahmad, Saleem, Asif and Chaudhry. It was rare that the trainees with less than a hundred hours of flying experience were required to ferry aircraft over such a long and difficult route. Moreover, the aircraft were to be flown in formation and the cadets had not even practiced the formation flying.

At our third stop at Nawabshah, thousands including the fresh arrival of Indian immigrants, swarmed all over the Airfield to see the spectacle, despite the stifling heat; their enthusiasm was something to watch. The fact that the aircraft now belonged to Pakistan made them wild with excitement. The night was spent in a local rest-house, where all of us fell dead asleep after a full day of exhausting but satisfying work. Next morning, twenty minutes after getting airborne for Jacobabad, Joseph's aircraft force-landed in the desert with a "dead engine." The remaining six continued to Multan via Khanpur, barely making it before sunset. Here, one aircraft flown by Cadet Chaudhry sustained some damage while landing and then we were left with only five Tiger-Moths.

On reaching Mianwali on the morning of 14th September, the escorting, Dakota crew told us that some sugar had been found in the fuel tank of the Leader's aircraft and this had been the cause of the engine failure. On checking our aircraft we found the filters in three of them were choked with sugar. Had we taken off for Risalpur in that condition the ending would have been tragic. As it was only one aircraft flown by late Masroor Hussain was declared serviceable and flown to Risalpur, landing there in the afternoon of 14th September which was our planned date of arrival.

At Mianwali, we waited for two days under the open sky for the arrival of Air Headquarters' inspection team which somehow never showed-up. In the meantime, the four unprotected Tiger-Moths were likely to get damaged in the seasonal dust-storms without any mooring facility. We cleared the engines, as best as we could with the limited staff, ground tested the aircraft and took off for Risalpur in a gale, which was threatening to overturn them. The engines made funny noises and the weather looked grim, but we pressed on and reached our destination in the evening. The pilots looked like ghosts, laden with dust and oil, unshaven beards and hardly any clothes on them due to heat and humidity. It was obvious that someone had put sugar in the fuel tanks of four aircraft which were housed in a separate hanger at Jodhpur. Was it a parting kick or a gift from some Indian Airmen?"

I remember a connected incident with the above story. We were going to Peshawar from Risalpur by a PAF truck to be flown by a Dakota for Jodhpur to ferry the Tiger Moths. At Pabbi town we were stopped and not allowed to proceed further as the Hindu-Muslim riots were in full swing at Peshawar. Sqn/Ldr

Joseph, our leader went to the Railway Station Pabbi to inform Risalpur about the situation. I followed him to make sure that he was not harmed because he was then a non-Muslim. To my surprise, he spoke the Pashto language very well. I was relieved and felt a little embarrassed in trying to be extra smart to protect a senior officer who happened to be our Chief Flying Instructor.

January, 1948

First Graduation Parade at Risalpur and Subsequent Visit of Quaid-e-Azam

The first pilots' course comprised seven Officer Cadets, only five of them completed their training successfully. These first ever to graduate from Risalpur were Under Officers Saleem and myself, Cadet Sergeants, Asia, Chaudhry and Chopping.

The second of January, was a red-letter day for Risalpur and indeed for the RPAF that was celebrated jubilantly. The C-in-C of the Royal Pakistan Air Force, Air-Vice-Marshal Perry Keene reviewed the parade. Mr. Abdul Qayyum Khan, Chief Minister NWFP and the GOC Peshawar, Major General Nazir Ahmad were among the many dignitaries who were present on that great occasion.

It was adjudged as an "above the average" course, as such, we were immediately posted to a Tempest Squadron without having flown any intermediate aircraft like the Hurricane or Spit-fire as they were not allotted to Pakistan. Three amongst us were selected for the instructional duties only after one or two years of fighter flying. It was indeed an unfortunate course. Asif, a younger brother of Air Marshal Asghar Khan died in a Harvard crash at Gilgit on 14th February 1948. Saleem had a fatal accident in a training "Dogfight" manoeuvres against a much experienced instructor Flt. Lt. Saeed Ullah Khan, later to become an Air Vice Marshal, Chaudhry got killed at Risalpur while imparting training to a cadet. Chopping's case was the most pathetic and tragic. The following day, on his return from England after completing a successful course on jet aircraft in 1950, he under-shot and crashed his Auster aircraft at Multan airfield due to the shortage of fuel. He had opted to ferry the aircraft to Peshawar, instead of flying in a passenger plane.

There is only one survivor of that unlucky course who is writing these reminiscences. I probably, survived, because I was posted to a Transport Squadron after my first landing accident in a Tempest aircraft. At that time, it was known to be the fastest propeller driven fighter/bomber aircraft in the world. It had a bad characteristic of swinging after landing due to the 'hand brakes' instead of 'toe brakes' which we all were used to in training aircraft. I am sure the sacrifices, have not gone waste as these have made the PAF, a formidable force. It has kept a much bigger powerfull country India at bay, in carrying out its nefarious designs and activities to undo the existence of Pakistan.

At Risalpur, my instructor was late Air Marshal Rahim Khan for only three months. Our left over training from Ambala started in October, 1947 since we had already spent the whole of September in collecting and overhauling our share of aircrafts from Ambala and Jodhpur. Flying Officer Rahim Khan was another brave instructor pilot, who had to teach me some aerobatics and night flying, which were not completed in India. Once he nearly killed himself and me over the Cherat hills as we recovered very late from an international spin. When we landed, he saw me pale and thought that I did not like such manoeuvres.

Once he got annoyed with me as I went to East Punjab to evacuate some of my family members in an Air Force truck. When I returned he asked me where the "hell" I had been for the last three days. I explained to him, that it was an official convoy and we had the approval from the Commandant Risalpur and the AHQs. He insisted that being his student, I should have taken his prior permission before leaving the Station. I explained to him that it was a short notice, given to us on the previous week-end and moreover, he was not available. He did not believe me warned me that it should never happen again. Such was the discipline and sense of duty of our Instructors in those days.

Air Marshal Rahim Khan became friendly with me only when he came to know that he was younger than me by a few months. And after an abrupt termination of his services from the Air Force as the C-in-C by Mr. Bhutto, the Prime Minister. Later on, he resigned from the Ambassadorial post in Spain due to some serious differences with me P.M. Once he was staying at my house in Lahore, he saw a number of photographers framed with the autographs of different Heads of States. He smilingly said as to why his picture was not among them. It was nice of him to send his photograph later with a very nice caption, in C-in-C's ceremonial uniform, taking a salute at the RAF Cramwell in England.

Another incident, I remember about him was on a Partridge-cum-Duck shoot at Larkana when he was the Commandant of the Staff College at Drig Road in 1968. My younger brother Bashir, was more friendly with him, also accompanied us in a Cessna 180. After an unsuccessful shoot the aircraft refused to start due to the weak battery. We had to stay an uncomfortable night at Larkana with our Sindhi host and got the accumulator charged. In those days Rahim Khan was friendly

with Mr. Bhutto, the Foreign Minister and always regretted afterwards for not having stayed at "Al-Murtaza".

The passing out date for the first IAF/PAF course, consisting of 5 cadets was originally fixed on the 20th of December, 1947. The British Commander-in-Chief, Air Vice Marshal Perry-Keene was supposed to take the salute. Two days before, Wing-Commander Asghar Khan, the Commandant informed us during the last "dining in night" that the passing out date had been postponed to the 2nd of January 1948 due to the C-in-C's sudden indisposition. Since I was one of the two Under Officers I took the liberty to talk to him. "Sir, it means that we would now be known as 1948 Commissioned Officers" He replied 'so what'. Although, in twenty-three years before the retirement, I have had a wonderful inning during my service career, without achieving a higher rank than Wing Commander. It was mainly due to the fact that I was seconded to the Civil Aviation Department for nine years. Nevertheless, I always envied my three college class-fellows from the Government College, Lahore who earned their Commission and higher ranks much before me.

APRIL, 1948 - THE QUAID-E-AZAM VISIT TO RISALPUR

The Quaid's historic visit to the Flying Training School at Risalpur in 1948 was a landmark for the RPAF, which raised its status to the level of a College. Accompanied by his sister Miss Fatima Jinnah, the Quaid arrived in his Dakota aircraft flown by the British crew early in the morning of 13th April and proceeded to review the ceremonial parade held to mark the great occasion. The Flight Cadets of the 2nd, 4th and 5th GD(P) course formed the Parade. It was commanded by the late Squadron Leader Salahuddin known as 'Big Sally'. After taking the salute, the Quaid, delivered his historic address in which he spelled out the crucial role of the RPAF in the defence of our country and wrote in the Visitors' Book:

"It gives me great pleasure to pay my first visit to a unit of the Royal Pakistan Air Force. There is no doubt that any country without an Air Force, is at the mercy of any aggressor. Pakistan must build up her Air Force, as quickly as possible. It must be an efficient Air Force, second to none, and must take its rightful place with the Army and Navy in securing Pakistan's defence."

Pakistan Air Force has not lagged behind, in honouring the Quaid's invaluable and everlasting advice throughout its existence. I am proud, to have been in the Pakistan Air Force. Not knowing, that after a few months I would have the honour to fly him as a second pilot to Quetta on his last flight to recover from his fatal disease.

February, 1948

First Fatal Air-Crash at Gilgit

It was a very sad day for me because on this day of 14th February 1948, I lost one of my best Air Force friends and course mate, the young Pilot Officer Asif Khan.

It was only a day before, that we both were selected to fly to Gilgit Airfield for the first time. We were of course thrilled and flew together in a Harvard aircraft to Risalpur, where a second plane was to be provided. At the Peshawar Airfield, Asif won the toss and earned the right to sit in the front seat. Enroute, he flew extremely low over the Kabul River, nearly touching the water with the propeller tips. I am sure, this was done to impress and show me his dare-devil flying skill. Luckily, I had a joystick in the rear seat and had a constant pressure on it to avert a possible ditching in the river.

To this day, I rue the fact, why I did not report his dangerous flying to his elder brother Wing Commander Asghar Khan, the Commandant of RPAF Risalpur. He might have grounded him and thus cancelled his illfated trip to Gilgit. But such was the fate of many a dashing inexperienced pilots of any Air Force and to report against a friend was not in good taste. This was the first casualty from my course and I was undoubtedly badly shaken.

We took off early in the morning in a formation of three Harvard aircraft led by the late Flt. Lt. F. S. Hussain, who was known to be one of the best aerobatics pilots in Pakistan. He was also flying to Gilgit, for the first time. Our mission was to fly back the Commandant of the Gilgit Scouts, Major Aslam Khan, Asif's elder brother, a lady doctor and a wireless operator. He was to be replaced by the Airman who was unfortunately sitting in the rear seat that I had occupied while flying with Asif from Peshawar to Risalpur.

The Commandant had earlier briefed us to fly a few miles towards the town ahead of the old and very small landing ground made by the British, for their biplane Wapati aircraft. It was primarily to warn them of our arrival as there was no communication between the Pilot and ground. Over Gilgit town, I saw Asif's aircraft at my tail, as I was number two to land after the leader. When we both switched off our engines we did not see Asif's aircraft nor could we hear the engine and propellers drone in the valley. I suggested to F. S. to walk towards the

start of Air Strip as there was possibility of undershooting the aircraft in a wind-shear. It had a steep drop of about 200 feet down to the Gilgit river.

When we were walking to the beginning of 'Katcha' runway, we saw three ponies riders approaching us. Dismounting hurriedly, they gave us the terrible news that the third aircraft had crashed in the heart of town and both the pilot and the airman were instantly killed. They had received this message on the field telephone line and we were asked to make our way there immediately. Wearing flying overalls and the ordinary shoes, riding horses for about four miles over the rough terrain to Gilgit was a tough job. But the news of Asif's death was so heart-breaking that we galloped all the way.

Incidentally, there were no motor vehicles in Gilgit in those days and the first jeep ever flown, was by me in the Dakota aircraft in 1950. The remoteness and isolation of this area in those days can be imagined by the fact that one of the retarded locals thought that the jeep was an animal. He had literally put a bale of grass in front of it. This story was also related, by Mr. IAN Stephen, the editor of famous Indian newspaper Statesman, in his book with the title "Shangrilla".

What we saw is indescribable. Two dead bodies covered with white bed sheets lying on the ground in a small compound of the post office, right in the center of small town. The aircraft had crashed with its nose down and was resting with the tail up in the vertical position; luckily, no other person was killed. We were informed that Asif made another pass over the town and performed a slow roll, close to the ground from which the aircraft never recovered.

I had no courage to see my friend's face and instead went towards the crashed aircraft. The first inspection confirmed my suspicion as to the main cause for the mishap. Asif wanted to impress his two brothers on the ground, the other was Lt. Anwar Khan and performed the fatal aerobatic. Once inverted, the airman obviously got panicky, not knowing what was happening, grabbed the joystick instinctively towards him, making it an impossible situation for Asif to pull the aircraft up due to the reverse action of the controls. The stick should have been removed and stored properly in the aircraft in its position before flying from Risalpur. Unfortunately, there was also no communication between the pilot and his passenger because the airman was not provided with a helmet with the

intercom system. These are of course, hind-sight comments which one learns only from experience.

In any case, Gilgit town that is about five thousand feet A.M.S.L. is like a bowl, surrounded by high mountains in a narrow valley. It was difficult to build up enough speed to perform an aerobatic manoeuvre, like an inverted roll. But that was what flying is all about; thrills and dangers lurking around every corner. When only two aircraft without passengers returned to Risalpur, the Commandant, who was waiting for us at the tarmac, could have suspected something amiss, but losing a brother would have been the last thought on his mind. The loss of such a dashing and fearless pilot was an immense tragedy. I had always visited Asif's grave, whenever, I had a chance to go to Gilgit town after that fateful day.

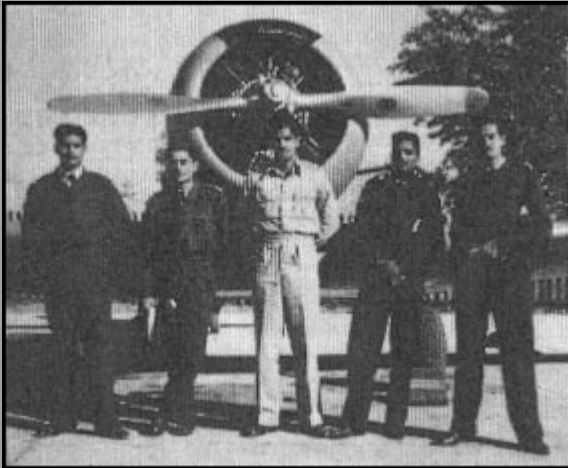
I was so disturbed by the accident that in my nervousness, I bounced off the grassy ground at Risalpur in my first attempt on landing, and had to go-around. On my second close circuit, I saw the Commandant's family waving their hands from his house, thinking that it was Asif's aircraft because only he could have taken that kind of liberty of flying low over the "out of bounds residence". I remember, he used to make low passes over the Commandants house in the Tempest aircraft. He was once warned and grounded for a week by the late AVM. M. Rehman, Station Commander Peshawar on the complaint received from his brother. It was known to Asif that I had also made a few low passes over him. He never disclosed this fact and took the punishment entirely by himself.

In 1958, Air Marshal Asghar Khan lost yet another brother Squadron Leader Khalid Khan. His parachute did not open above the Jamrud Range, after he ejected himself from an aircraft F-86 Sabre because the engine had flamed out. He was a perfect gentleman and a good flyer. I came to know him more closely when in the same year I and my wife visited Munich, He was there on attachment with the West German Air Force. He helped me to purchase an old Mercedes for our European holidays.

I must once again pay a tribute to the bereaved family for the courage they had shown to bear the irreparable and very tragic twin loss. I always used to dread and pray for my own two brothers, Mubarak and Khalil who were also in the Pakistan Air Force as pilots. Thank God, that they are happily settled in Canada. Whenever I visit them, they often talk about the exciting and thrilling life we all

had during our service career. Khalil an Aitchisonian was permanently grounded as he did not stop doing unauthorised low flying in a T33 jet aircraft and retired as an Air Traffic Controller.

Picture Gallery I



Dedicated to the memory of my entire first IAF/PAF Course-mates Asif, Saleem-el-Edroos, Chowdhry and Chopping who sacrificed their lives in the early years of Pakistan Air Force (names as above from left to right including the author - 1947.



President Bayar of Turkey and Author's father.



Air Marshal Asghar Khan, Captain Abdullah Beg and the Author.



King Ibne Saud received by the Governor-General and Muhammad Ali Bogra. Prime Minister



King of Iraq and Regent Abdul Illah greeted by Mr. Ghulam Muhammad, Governor-General



Prince Ali Khan, Field Marshal Ayub Khan and Begum Vicarunnisa Noon.



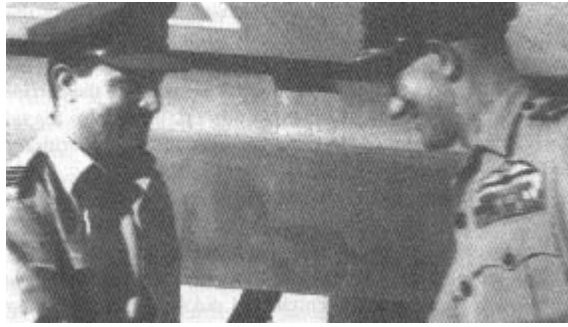
King Hussein of Jordan asking "what are you doing in civil dress"



Mr. Arnold Palmer and his wife after flying the author in their aircraft at Oklahoma city.



Mr. Iskander Mirza Interior Minister and General Ayub Khan, Defense Minister conspiring to oust the G.G. at his house.



C in C RAF and station commander PAF, Lahore

July, 1948

Quaid-e-Azam's Last Flight to Quetta

I still remember, a solitary figure standing in an Achkan and Rumi topi (Cap) with a Chooridar-Pajama and a stick in his hand. He came to see off the Quaid-e-Azam at 4 o' clock in the morning on 26th July, 1948. It was none other than Khawaja Nazimuddin, the President of Muslim League, who after the Quaid's demise, in the same year on 11th September, became the second Governor-General of Pakistan.

I was the second pilot on this flight that was kept extremely secret until the last moment. Probably, with the exception of the Captain, no other crewmember knew as to where we were going and who was our worthy-passenger. I figured it out only when Khawaja Sahib asked me "At what time the Quaid-e-Azam's aircraft is taking off for Quetta"? I said 'after one hour' and requested him to sit on a wooden bench available in the corridor of the terminal building of Mauripur airfield. It was also the seat of Air Headquarters of Pakistan Air Force after the Partition of the Indian Sub-Continent.

After briefing and clearance from the Control Tower, when we went to the aircraft I was surprised to see a temporary arrangement of white bed sheets that were hung up on either side of the aircraft. This was so arranged that an ambulance could easily back up to the entrance. I did not see any dignitary on the tarmac, not even Khawaja Sahib who was perhaps the only person who knew about the departure plan. No Air Force Officer was present to see off the flight although it was a protocol requirement. There were only a few Air Force ground personnel to remove the 'purda' arrangement from the entrance of the aircraft. Two ground crew members were also to be seen near the nose of the plane; their job was to clear the starting trolley and wheel chocks after both the engines had started. We went to the cockpit and the Captain still did not disclose who was our sick passenger.

The ambulance arrived exactly at five and we took off with the rising sun to avoid the turbulence. It normally began later in the morning over the rocky mountains of Quetta. We were instructed not to enter the passenger cabin during the flight and not to use the washroom, situated at the rear of the aircraft. To reach the toilet from the cockpit the crew had to pass through the area where our

distinguished passenger was lying on a stretcher, surrounded by his paramedic attendants and personal staff.

At Quetta, the same kind of arrangement was provided for the reception by the Army Jawans. On the arrival of our aircraft, they immediately placed a screen on either side of the ambulance and the aircraft entrance. After about fifteen minutes, when all was clear, we came out of the aircraft and realised that our worthy passenger was indeed the Founder of Pakistan. Unfortunately, it was his last flight to Quetta, in a desperate attempt by his doctors to cure or at least alleviate, the cruel affliction from which he was suffering. From Quetta he was taken to Ziarat hill station, where the cool, dry and bracing climate with the pollution free atmosphere was beneficial for those suffering from tuberculosis.

During the next few days, I had some more flights to Quetta carrying Dr. Ilahi Bakhsh, the Quaid's personal physician, Mr. M. Isphani our Ambassador in the United States, the nursing staff and life-saving drugs as well as some medical equipment. On the 11th of September the same year, when I was flying to Fort Sandema from Peshawar we heard the sad and disturbing news on the aircraft radio. The father of our Nation had left us for good, the man without whom Pakistan probably would have never come into existence and become a reality.

We came to know later, that on his return flight from Quetta, the ambulance which was carrying him to the Governor General's house from Mauripur airfield broke down. It was foul smelling and stagnant water area of Keamari, where the fishermen dried their fish in the sun. This was the last journey of the great leader who founded our country.

Are we following his examples of integrity and leadership that he displayed and practised single-mindedly during his entire life? If we did, I am sure Pakistan would have been a different and better country to live after fifty years of his death.

Air Commodore Atta Rabhani has recently written an informative publication "ADC to Quaid-e-Azam" which is worth reading. The Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto performed the inauguration ceremony of the book.

At one place, the author writes that on his posting to Risalpure as Chief Flying Instructor, he requested the Quaid-e-Azam for a signed photograph. He showed him the area that had a lighter shade for the caption and autographs. Quaid-e-Azam did not approve of it and smilingly said that he did not want to spoil his trouser's crease. As we remember he was a meticulously dressed person and fond of well tailored clothes.

March, 1949
V.I.P. Flight to Miran Shah

My first V.I.P. flight, as a Captain of the Dakota Aircraft, was on the 14th of March 1949 from Peshawar to Miran Shah, a tribal town near the Afghan-Pakistan border. The second pilot was Flying Officer Maksowich, a Polish citizen expatriated to Pakistan due to the shortage of Pakistani pilots. Our worthy passengers were Khan Abdul Qayum Khan, the Chief Minister of the North West Frontier Province and General Muhammad Yousaf, the General Officer Commanding of the Peshawar Division of the Army.

Qayum Khan was a staunch Muslim Leaguer who was responsible for defeating the Indian Congress Ministry led by Dr. Khan Sahib, the elder brother of Khan Ghaffar Khan, the Frontier Gandhi. It was reported to the Quaid by the British Governor that both the brothers did not honour Pakistan Flag on Pakistan Day. A Referendum was held whether the people of N.W.F.P should choose to remain in India or to join the newly created Pakistan. Qayum Khan with his fiery speeches, won the self-determination issue and was made the first Chief Minister by the Quaid-e-Azam.

At Miran Shah, after an impressive guard of honour, by the contingent of Tochi Scouts, a fabulous breakfast was laid out in the Mess. It consisted of a full roasted young lamb, chickens with delicious stuffings and some beer to drown the heavy meal. In the afternoon, after the sumptuous lunch which also included Afghan mutton leg pilao, we returned to Peshawar.

It was Qayum Khan's first flight in an Air Force Dakota, which in those days had only bucket seats. He seemed to have enjoyed the flight and was pleased with the visit's outcome. On arrival he thanked and said "Captain Sahib, can I be of some assistance". I immediately said "Sir, I don't have a driving license for the use of a motorcycle which I have recently bought". He asked me to come to his office at 0900 hours next morning. Subsequently, on my arrival I was promptly ushered into his office. He immediately pressed a button and soon after Mr. Ghulam Ishaque Khan, who later became the President of Pakistan entered the office. In those days, he was a handsome, smart and tall young man.

The Chief Minister introduced me to him by stating that a day before I had flown him and the G.O.C to Miran Shah and had a very comfortable flight. He also mentioned that I did not have a driving license for the motorcycle. Mr. Ghulam Ishaque Khan was then a Provincial Civil Service Officer and posted as the Chief Minister's Political Secretary. He took my particulars and within half an hour, while we were still having a cup of tea, the license was ready. It also included the permission to drive a car and truck. He must have thought that if I could fly a big plane, I would have no problem in driving any conceivable vehicle on earth.

I remember, while in Abu Dhabi when I applied for a U.A.E. driving license in 1979, although I was the Chief Pilot they failed me twice before they issued the license. There was nothing wrong with my driving but due to sheer arrogance on their part, the Police department never gave a driving license to any Pakistani on his first two attempts. It was because the U.A.E. had the left hand driving system. In spite of the fact that I had driven in Europe and America which they knew from my application form.

The first time I ever drove a car was a convertible Austin in 1943, belonged to Flying Officer Noor Khan, known as 'Nuru', later he became the Commander-in-Chief of the PAF. The car was parked in the late Col. Nasrullah's house, his class mate from the RIMC Dehra Dun. The latter's father was a close friend of my father from Mussoorie U.P. As I entered the bungalow, I noticed that the key was still in the ignition hole and it was very tempting to have a free ride. I did not even know how to use the gears and clutch properly. I stalled a number of times before I managed to have a complete round of Model Town, Lahore. I am sure nobody heard the car leaving and re-entering the porch. Later, I innocently entered the house but felt guilty having driven somebody's car without his permission. When young Noor Khan left, I told the inmates of the house about the mischief I had done. They just laughed over the incident as there was no damage done to the car. It was my first unauthorised solo in a car. If I knew that the owner of the car would one day, become the C-in-C and I would also join the Air Force, I dared not have touched it.

Mr. Ishaque Khan was the Chairman, WAPDA when I was posted as the Station Commander PAF, Lahore from 1960 to 1964, and we used to meet quite often at official functions. However, I never introduced myself lest I should remind of the incidence in 1949 when I got my first driving license without a road trial and a

written examination. One day in 1961, I flew him and the World Bank team in a Bristol Freighter over the Indus Basin projects. After the landing he thanked me for the successful and smooth flight, I casually mentioned that I was building a house in the Cantonment and could not rent it out to the US-Aid people. I also added that the Administrator had shown interest in hiring it for himself, but he wanted a house that had a three phase electricity. In those days, there was only one phase line from the MES in the Cantonment.

He asked me to see him the next day in his office. Upon my arrival he called the Member Power and told him about my requirement. The latter asked me as to how many houses had already been built in the C.M.A. Colony, to which I replied that there were only five or six. He further inquired as to how many more would be constructed in the next two years, while I was still thinking of an answer, the Chairman said that about one hundred bungalows might be built in the area. I promptly agreed with him. My house is across the Railway line from the main Gulberg area. As such, it was not difficult and expensive to extend the 11KV line, much before my house was complete. For this help I have always been grateful to Mr. Ghulam Ishaque Khan, who did a favour not just to me but for the entire Cantonment. We all got the three-phase electricity at least two years earlier than the residents would have normally obtained it.

This was my second and the last favour from my important official in Pakistan who really mattered. The first one was to get the driving license in just half an hour and the other was to expedite the three-phase electricity line for my house.

My owning the first and only house and how I managed to build it, is an interesting story. Mr. Khan Zaman, the Director of Lands and Cantonment in the General Headquarters Rawalpindi came to see me in my office in early 1960 and requested for a family accommodation in the PAF Officers' mess for a week. He wanted to show them the Horse and Cattle show. After the completion of the event he came to thank and asked if I had a residential plot in the Lahore Cantonment. I told him that I had no intention of building a house since I had no money. I also informed him that I had recently surrendered half a square of agricultural land in Thal that was allotted to me by the Air Force for my services in the Kashmir Valley.

The main reason for not accepting the land in the desert was that I could not afford to pay the installments and spare any time or money for the development. He insisted that I should not turn down this unique opportunity as I had to pay only fifty or sixty Rupees as annual rent, extendible beyond one hundred years period. He accompanied me to see the four kanal plot which had an awkward shape with five corners, the last one left in the CMA Colony. Reluctantly, I accepted his kind offer although I was dreading as to how to raise the money during the next two years for the construction of the house, which was one of the conditions for the allotment. When we returned to the officer he himself dictated the application to my P.A. and wanted to take it with him, I did tell him that according to the rules it should be channelled through the AHQs. He said, it was his problem.

On the insistence of the late General Nazir Ahmad, who had a soft corner for me, I applied for the house building advance of maximum thirty-three thousand rupees from the PAF. To complete it another sixty thousand were arranged by selling the car, the air-conditioner and the household goods including a gold watch which was presented to me by King Hussein of Jordan in 1955. I also borrowed some money from my father and the elder sister. When I managed to get the three phase electricity I got a two years advance from the US-Aid. This is how the great God helped many a Defence Service Officers in those days that could hardly have built a house from their hard earned and meager pay.

Today, I am still living in its annexe built in half a canal land that was constructed in 1975, while serving as the Chief Pilot in and outside Pakistan for ten years. This is the only property I owe in the whole world after 33 years of service. Due to the sale of the main house in 1985 that I luckily invested in the Government Saving Schemes has enabled me to lead a comfortable and honourable life. My greatest assets are, of course, my children who with the Almighty's blessings are settled and doing well in their professions and occupations in the United States. I managed to provide them with the best education mainly because of my foreign exchange earnings in Abu Dhabi, where I earned about one hundred thousand U.S. Dollars in two years.

I clearly remember, before building the house I used to say, that since I had wedded the Air Force in 1945, I really had no need for a personal house. I am happy and grateful to God for giving me a shelter at this stage of my life when the

prices have indeed soared very high. Apart from my regular morning walks I still play golf and sometimes indulge in the game of Bridge with my friends. I am trying to catch up with my reading and writing for which I never had much time while on active service. They say, "It is never too late."

Thank God, I am at peace with myself.

November, 1949

Visit to Taj Mahal

No aircraft was based in East Pakistan during the first two years of Independence in 1947. The Government, therefore, decided to send at least six AOP Austers to Dacca. The first contingent was flown by Major Azmat Awan who later retired as a General and Captains Baber, Ghalib, Fazal, Zafar and Mahmood. Major General Naseer-Ullah Khan Babar became the Governor of N.W.F.P. and the Interior Minister of Pakistan during the People's Party Government. I was the Captain of the escorting Dakota carrying the maintenance equipment and the personnel for these small aircrafts.

After taking off from Lahore, the first night stop was at Agra, in between, the aircraft were refuelled at Ambala and Delhi. At the Agra Base we were the guests of the Indian Air Force, which was commanded by Group Captain Bhatia, a senior officer who was also friendly with some Pakistani Officers. He arranged a dinner party in our honour and also invited a few civilian officials, which included the Superintendent of Police Das, who was the younger brother of Air Commodore B.K. Das, a very senior officer of the PAF. I was carrying a personal letter from him for the S.P. and was briefed to be careful while delivering it though the Base Commander, who introduced me to Mr. Das. As soon as I had the chance of being alone with him, I gave the letter from his elder brother. It obviously, did not contain any secret. It was a letter from one brother to another; who has not met or corresponded with each other since the Partition.

After Dinner, Group Captain Bhatia asked us if we would like to visit the Taj Mahal in full moonlight. Everybody appreciated his kind offer. A Squadron Leader of the Security / Intelligence branch accompanied us. It was my third visit to that famous wonder of the world. The Taj Mahal in the full moonlight looked like a beautiful girl in a white wedding dress waiting for the bridegroom. Everyone knows, that it was a befitting tribute of love by Shah Jahan, the Moghal Emperor for his beautiful wife Mumtaz Mahal. After Partition, visiting the great white marble monument once again was a dream come true. It has still survived and preserved the perfect harmony and precision work, after four-hundred years.

Around midnight while returning to the mess, the Indian Air Force Officer and I were walking slightly ahead of the party. At that time, we were suddenly stopped

by some civilian intelligence personnel who questioned us about our identity. I am positive that they very well knew as to who we were. They told us that the foreigners were not allowed to visit the Taj Mahal, without a permit from the civil police. The Indian Air Force Intelligence Officer disclosed his identity and nearly lost his temper, when the Indian Police Officer started arguing with him. The latter insisted that before bringing us here, the Air Force should have arranged for a group pass. The IAF Officer shut him down and finally told to report the case to the Base Commander whose guests we were.

Those were the early days of Independence when the feelings were not as bitter as they are today. We made another night stop at Gaya in an uncomfortable rest-house, after refuelling stops at Lucknow and Benares. We reached Dacca the next day, via Asonsol and Dum Dum, a custom stop. On the way we saw the mighty Mount Everest; the highest mountain in the world, which was clearly visible because of good weather and clear skies. The Army was exuberant, having received the first Squadron of the army aircraft in East Pakistan, even before the Air Force. The Sabre and Fury were to come much later.

This particular trip will always be an unforgettable event in our lives, because of having seen the splendid Taj Mahal in full moonlit night built by the great Muslim architects. It always will, and undoubtedly be acknowledged as one of the eight wonders of the world provided the Indians look after the beautiful monument. The white marble has now started decaying due to the pollution from the factories in and around Agra city. This is being reported by the Indian Newspapers.

May, 1950
Re-burial of General Raza Shah of Iran

The Pakistan Government decided to send a high level Military delegation to Tehran in 1950 to participate in the funeral ceremony of the Shah of Iran's father. He was deposed in 1941, in favour of his son. His remains were brought in from Geneva Switzerland, where they had been interned for several years.

I was detailed to head a formation of four brand new Bristol Freighters from Drigh Road Airfield to Tehran. In my lead aircraft, three Pakistani Heads of the Services, General Ayub Khan, the C-in-C Pakistan Army, Commodore Khalid Jamil, the acting C-in-C Navy and Group Captain Asghar Khan, who after a few years, was to become the first Pakistani C-in-C of the PAF were the passenger. Also accompanying them were some senior officers from the three Services. In the other three aircraft there was a contingent of one hundred personnel, from the Top Army Bands who were supposed to march at the funeral parade.

We arrived a day earlier from Lahore, in a different aircraft carrying the full complement of four sets of Air and the ground crew. The aircraft were checked the same day and we were assured that they were fully serviceable, and had recently been flown into Pakistan by the British crew. The scheduled take off time was at 0700 hours on the 3rd of May, for Tehran via a refuelling stop at Zahidan. When I aligned my aircraft on the runway I found that the compass was off by 30 degrees. I looked towards my Navigator, Flt / Lt. T. S. Jan who was also not happy with the situation. We had a great rapport as we had been together as students in Government College, Lahore and had joined the Indian Air Force in 1945. I told him that, if we abandoned our take off now and got the compass swung by the ground crew, it would take at least 2/3 hours and we might not be able to take off that day. We did not want to arrive in Tehran at night, as the Captains of the other three aircraft were not yet instrument rated.

I also did not want to face the three Services Chiefs and cut a sorry figure. However, we decided to take off with a faulty compass by keeping our fingers crossed. All the four aircrafts got safely airborne and T. S. applied thirty degree off-set course, to adjust the error for heading to Zahidan. Being the leader, I told the other Captains to change over to a secret channel, so that, no one should hear our conversation. It was a great relief to find out that all the other compass

except ours were in order. I did not disclose this fault to them as they might have panicked at some stage, because their job was to follow my aircraft in a loose formation.

After refuelling at Zahidan we headed towards Tehran, where we were going for the first time. It was a five hours flight over the desert and uncharted terrain which was clearly marked as such on the charts and the topographical maps which we were carrying. After 4 hours of flight near Tehran's high mountains, a lot of clouds were present and extended about 100 miles around the Mehrabad Airport. To get into the clouds with three young budding pilots was undoubtedly suicidal. I had to descend quickly and take a deviation of about 30 to 40 degrees to hit a Railway line leading to Tehran. We had crossed our estimated time of arrival and sent our signaller down to convey a revised E.T.A., and also the reason for flying low about one thousand feet above the ground. We had luckily pinpointed the Railway line, which was running North to South in the narrow Valley from Tehran.

Group Captain Asghar Khan came up into the cockpit and asked, as to what was happening since some passengers were feeling uncomfortable. The aircraft was flying very low with the threatening black clouds overhead, being a pilot himself he understood the problem. He went down to inform them that we were on the right track and only 30 minutes of more flying time remained.

When we landed in Tehran our Ambassador Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan and the Iranian protocol officials were much relieved and happy to see us, although, we had kept them waiting for about forty-five minutes. After dropping the delegation which was to stay for ten days in Tehran we were supposed to return the following morning. The aircraft were urgently required in Lahore for supply dropping mission because of river floods and heavy rains in the Punjab area. I apprised the Group Captain that it would not be possible for us to take off as planned, because all the aircrafts required servicing, maintenance and some rectification. He realised that we were very tired after flying for about eight hours from Karachi in bad weather and on a difficult route. He agreed and directed me to send a message to the AHQs for a 24 hours unexpected delay, which I gave to the Ambassador for the transmission. He was happy about this change as he has planned to send 20 Iranian University girls with us for a week's visit to Pakistan.

At about 2 o' clock in the morning, Group Captain Asghar Khan knocked at our room where T. S. Jan and I were sleeping in the beautiful Officers Club, fully covered with the Iranian hand made carpets. He showed us the reply from AHQs, saying that the C-in-C Air Force, AVM Atcherley, desired that we should get back according to the schedule, as the aircrafts were urgently required for supply dropping. I told him that we would try our best to get airborne by 10 o' clock after servicing the aircraft, if not, I could not take the responsibility of landing in Karachi at night with three inexperienced pilots. He said that we should try our best. We all went to the Airport early in the morning but could not get our aircraft serviceable before one o' clock in the afternoon. Another message was sent explaining the reason for not complying with the C-in-C's orders.

In the evening, we had the chance of visiting the city and Durban, the summer hill resort of the Shahinshah of Iran. T. S. tried to refresh his Persian language taught by our great Professor and Poet Soofi Tabbasam, with some college girls, whom we had come across while sight-seeing. At night, the Ambassador organised a dinner party where we were introduced to the University girls, who had come with their parents. The next morning, all the girls had to fly in my aircraft, as it was the only one which had appropriate seating arrangements. The other aircraft had bucket seats, which were hard and not comfortable.

During the flight I got a message that a pretty girl named Yaleh Cyrus wanted to come up in the cockpit since she was not feeling too well. She gave us good company in the long return flight. Spoke good English and told us a lot of things which were happening in her country. The following day, we had to fly back to Lahore for the relief work, leaving the girls with the staff of Karachi University.

I was again detailed to bring back our important passengers on the 13th of May. The girls had already been flown back 2 days earlier, in the 3 aircrafts headed by Flt / Lt. Maulvi Arshad who was to lead the Army band back. Later on, I was told that Yaleh Cyrus became friendly with him but nothing came out of the 'crush'. She was so enamoured by the Pakistani Air Force Officers, that after one year when the late Group Captain Mubarik was sent to Tehran for a Technical meeting with an introductory letter from Arshad, she became interested in him as well.

It reminded me of a couplet from the great Urdu Poet Ghalib "oh my friend I have no complaints against you. Give my salams if you ever meet the messenger who delivered the letter to my beloved."

I was told, some years later, that she eventually got married to a British Airline Pilot and had settled down happily ever after.

1949 to 1951

Transport Flying in Kashmir Operations

During the early fifties, the Dakotas had begun to give concern about their serviceability due to their long service and the lack of spare parts. An engine failure for an example, while flying on the Indus Valley route, meant an obvious catastrophe.

The following episode is an illustration of the poor condition of these aircraft and the lucky survival of two crewmembers and a foreign passenger after an engine caught fire in the Kashmir operations. It was one of the last sorties on a Dakota aircraft of No. 6 Squadron. I was authorised to fly from Chaklala to Gilgit with only air signaller Sgt. Quddusi, due to the acute shortage of aircrew in those days. My lone passenger was a Belgium Colonel of the United Nations, who was on an urgent mission. The aircraft cabin was loaded with over one hundred petrol jerrycans. While entering the aircraft the grey-haired, pale looking UN officer gingerly requested, if it was possible for him to sit in the cockpit as the passenger cabin was full of gas fumes. I had already decided to put him in the second pilot's seat which was lying vacant.

On the chilly morning, of 10th January 1950, the good old Dakota with the rear door open, took off with as much fuel in the cabin as there was in the four tanks of the aircraft. The weather was clear and the aircraft was flying at 9,000 ft. above the mean sea level, which was about 6,000 ft. over the Indus river bed. Just before Chilas, one of the engines started cutting with a few bangs. The Colonel grew paler and shouted, "Captain, there is a lot of smoke in the right engine". I was seriously contemplating to feather that engine and did not waste another moment. Luckily, despite my worst fears, the engine feathered quickly and the aircraft started to lose height gradually.

The signaller was busy sending out "Mayday" messages and asking the old Colonel to throw the Jerrycans out of the aircraft, to reduce the payload, was out of question. He could hardly lift one. At this point, the distance to Gilgit was approximately 80 miles, the rate of descent was four to five hundred feet per minute, but improving with the decreasing altitude. I considered the possibility of putting the aircraft down at Bunji air dropping zone, where a small emergency landing ground existed. It was made by the British for their light Wapati biplanes.

At that time, the Dakota was flying 1,500 ft. above ground level and the risk of aircraft catching the fire was so great and imminent, that I had to make a snap decision to go for Gilgit which was still about 25 miles away. Soon after Bunji, there was a ridge which the aircraft just managed to clear. I had to take that action as the crash landing at the small dropping zone would have been disastrous.

Ten miles short of Gilgit airfield, the aircraft was only one hundred feet above the ground. With fingers crossed, I asked Gilgit control tower for a straight-in approach. At long last the aircraft reached short finals, when the wheels were lowered and a safe single engined landing was made. Upon investigation it was found that one of the cylinder-heads had sheared off and a new engine had to be installed. We were flown back to the base the next day to continue flying in the valley operation. It was a pity that no commendation was awarded for this unavoidable incident except that after some years an article was published in the PAF History Book as "Tired Work Horse".

Those were memorable days and it times the pilots were also well looked after at Gilgit by some senior officers and given the V.I.P. treatment. On may occasions, the late Sardar M. Aslam Khan the Political Agent, father of AVM Asif Khan used to send Maharaja Kashmir's horse named 'Moty' for me to ride and shoot some ducks or partridges, by the time the aircraft was being unloaded. Col. Ismail, the Commandant of Gilgit Scouts always entertained us extremely well in the mess, whenever we had to spend a night at Gilgit. By the way, the PAF aircraft were the only source of supply for them to get newspapers and fresh vegetables.

In those days, we took a lot of risks to continue supporting our soldiers by free and para droppings in the remote areas of Northern Kashmir. Once in the winter of 1949 Col. Aslam the Commandant made me fly over the Mintaqa Pass, 80 miles west of the famous Khunjarab Pass at the Chinese and Pakistani border. He said that his troops did not have ration for many days due to the heavy snowfall in the area. He sat with me in the second pilot seat to show the exact spot. We had to fly over 13,000 feet A.M.S.L. to reach the site. A wireless message had already been sent to the Platoon Commander from Gilgit, and he was waiting for us with the firewood signal, and the white bed sheets spread out on the ground marked as dropping zone at 11,000 feet.

It was a para dropping from 12,000 feet, the highest we could go without Oxygen and Super-Charged engines required for the tight turns in the narrow valley. The speed of the aircraft came down to near stalling at 100-110 miles per hour at that altitude. The aircraft behaved like a feather flying in thin air. Luckily with two straight in approaches from the opposite directions, the winter rations were para dropped. When we returned to Gilgit, I told the Commandant that it was the first and the last sortie by an old and faithful "Work Horse". He made us stay overnight in the Mess and sent a long report to the G.H.Q in the morning, about the dangerous and risky mission which we undertook to save our soldiers at the Mintaqa Pass. Incidentally, the four international boundaries meet in that area, Russia, China, Afghanistan and Pakistan. No letter of appreciation was ever conveyed to us for this hazardous mission, we were called upon to do.

In 1949 when the Indian fighters shot one of our Dakotas we started night operations. We used to fly the most difficult route of the world. With the rising full moonlight, we could see the shining river bed, lakes and the snow clad peaks. Later, we also carried out para Dropping with the Halifaxes. The Indian never came near the aircraft as it had gun turrets. Wing Commander Asghar Khan used to brief us at Risalpur for the sorties and he at times himself flew in the second pilot seat to encourage and kept our morale high. Till December 1953, I had logged about one thousand hours of flying. The highest number in the PAF in valley in Dakota and Bristol Freighter aircraft, out of which thirty hours were of night. For these operations all the aircrew were awarded the Kashmir medal with "mentioned in the despatches" and a brass clover leaf.

Once in 1951, I flew the Chief Pilot of Bristol Freighter Company in their brand new aircraft to Gilgit and Skardu. I intentionally flew low over the winding route in the valley. He let me do whatever I wanted to show him off, basically the type of flying we had to do, whatever I wanted to show him off, basically the type of flying we had to do, whenever the clouds base was low. He knew that we were in the process of changing over from the vintage Dakotas. They remained in service for over forty years and did a commendable task in the world, especially, in the Chindwin Operations over Burmese jungle in the Second World War. When I flew the Chief Pilot back to Chaklala, he praised the flying and the performance of the new aircraft on the most difficult and dangerous route. He also said that he would not do this kind of operation for any money with a pronounced stammer, with which he was badly afflicted.

Our aircraft did thousands of para and free droppings over the Astore, Khel, Shamshal and Misgar passes. We had a few fatal accidents in the valley, but that was expected as a part of life with that kind of flying. A wise pilot once said that if you don't want accident, never fly.

In April, 1950 one of fatal crashed in Indus Valley was of Flying Officer Ali, a good officer who came from a U.P. family. He flew with me as my second pilot a few times in the Kashmir operations. When he was due for a also flight in the Bristol Freighter I happened to screen him as the check pilot. I cleared and found him capable of flying as a Captain in the valley as I did for many others. After seeing him off for Gilgit, I flew back to my base at Lahore.

Next morning, the Base Commander Wing Commander B. K. Dass walked into my bedroom at the mess with a sullen face. He asked me, whether I had passed Ali for the valley flight operation. I said "yes". Then he asked me another question. How was he, as Captain of the Aircraft? Now, I guessed that something serious had happened to poor Ali. He then told me that he had crashed yesterday in the Indus River while returning from Gilgit. An enquiry was held and my statement was recorded first, as I had screened and cleared him. All the passengers and crew members died in the crash near Sazin, Kohistan area. What actually happened was that while returning he found the Valley blocked with clouds. He decided to fly low over the Indus River instead of returning to Gilgit for the night.

His father was a Veterinary Colonel in the Army who never believed that his son had actually died. He also visited the scene of crash and surrounding areas a few times, but could not recover his son's body along with all the others who were perished in the river. He came to see me at my office after two years when I was the Flight Commander of No. Six Transport Squadron. He asked me a number of questions about Ali, as I was very fond of him and responsible for sending him on his last flight to Gilgit. I was bewildered and surprised when he said that Ali was still alive as he had often dreamt about him in the mountains with some "Parees", beautiful fairies.

We carried out innumerable landing sorties at Gilgit and Skardu, where the runway and other facilities were not adequate and safe. I was one of the few pilots who never made any excuse for not flying at day or night in the valley. I

used to wear a golden ring which was given to me by my brother when I joined the Indian Air Force. It had a verse from the Holy Quran, meaning "Is God not enough, for whatever He has created". Whenever, I was in trouble while flying I used to feel for the ring under the hand-glove and recited the verse. Once I misplaced it somewhere at Skardu. It was so cold that it just slipped out of my finger when I wanted to remove some warm clothes from the parachute hand bag, but luckily found it the next morning. Although, I never believed in any superstitions, that ring became my most precious possession and an article of faith. I unfortunately again lost it for ever in the Gulf while swimming at the Abu Dhabi beach. I continued flying without it for another year in 1980 as my faith in God was greater.

In 1951 Col. Ismail the Commandant took me to Skardu for an inspection trip. His fiancée Sheila, whose father was Doctor Deen, the Agency Surgeon of Gilgit also accompanied him. She was allowed by her Scot mother, who was everybody's Mummy, only when I promised to bring them back safe before the evening. After the inspection of troops the weather suddenly clamped in. I took off in a gale and found the Valley completely blocked and could not return. I had to fly very low over the Indus River. My crew and the couple thought that the wings were nearly touching the sides of the hill. Thank God we landed back in one piece at Gilgit. I would never forget the night, the way it was celebrated by the parents and the great Col. Ismail and his fiancée. It is a shame, that he would not be able to read what all I have written about him, he has left this world in 1995.

The first time I ever visited Naltar was for an Ibex shoot in 1949. Lt. Shah Khan, the uncle of late Mir of Hunza was my host. We had to ride small mountain ponies of the Gilgit area, as there were no jeeps in those days. We stayed two nights in the so-called 2-room old dilapidated dak-bungalow. In the morning we had to climb another four thousand feet to shoot the animal. Naltar's height is about 10,000 ft. After two thousand feet I gave in, but my host, kept on climbing like a goat and shot one female horns. The next day he again tired, but could not get the coveted 'Trophy'. We cooked and ate the dry Ibex meat for the next two days and nights, as no vegetables were available. On the third day, Shah Khan shot a 'Ram' Chokor which made a delicious meal.

In 1950, Shan Khan joined the Air Force and retired as a Group Captain. He was responsible for training the aircrew into physically being tough officers. Kala Bagh

Rescue school near Nathiagali and the Naltar ski resort for the Air Force were mainly constructed because of his efforts. Both the places are now fully established with comfortable heated rooms and messes. I have been to Naltar twice for skiing in the Northern Area and for many visits to Kalabagh. My children, became very fond of these places. Masood my eldest son and his wife has recently shifted to Colorado from New York after resigning from the Bank jobs. Just because they love the high mountains and the terrain which is like 'Pakistan'. He has recently met a serious accident while ski-Jumping at the Copper Winter resort in Colorado. Thank God he only broke his right pelvis and is recovering fast after the operation.

Talking about old Dakotas I nearly had a near fatal accident in one of them while carrying out a single engine night landing practice at Mauripur Airfield in early 1951. On my final approach the live starboard engine suddenly cut and there was no time to restart it. I was three-hundred feet above the ground and there was no alternative but to belly land, straight ahead. I told my second pilot to retract the undercarriage and found the aircraft was luckily swinging to right towards the fair weather strip because of the low speed and no engine power.

The normal procedure for such emergencies in Dakota is to shift oneself to the second pilot seat and send the crew to the passengers cabin. The reason for this drill was that the left propeller always entered the Captain's seat after shearing off from its hub upon hitting the ground. It had already cut many heads into half in similar accidents. Apart from the fact, that I had completely forgotten for such an eventuality, there was also no time to change the seat. When the aircraft came to a halt the propeller blade was resting only one inch behind my head after piercing the back of the steel chair. It was the closest call to meet the Almighty. But perhaps He wanted me to live and write these memories for the benefit of future pilots.

To finish this article it will be appropriate to produce a letter from the late Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan to the C-in-C Air Force on 1st January, 1949 after an attempt was made by Indian Pilots to shoot our aircraft in the Kashmir Valley.

"Due to the lack of fighter protection and the hazards of weather and other conditions you have faced, in continuing the airlift on which the people of Gilgit

Agency mainly depend for the sustenance during these winter months. Under these conditions your work had been admirable".

To quote PAF history book on the subject:-

"With the pioneering exploits, the transport crew has set very exacting standards of daring and enterprise in the very first year of RPAF life. In the decades to come the example, would inspire the successors only to ever greater heights of courage and history."

I was lucky to serve my country in those difficult times.

February, 1951

Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case

In the early morning of 26th February, I was detailed to fly Mr. Ghulam Muhammad, the Finance Minister from Mauripur to Lahore. He later became the third Governor-General of Pakistan. As soon as the aircraft got airborne, the control tower directed us to land immediately at the Karachi Airport to pick up Mr. Iskander Mirza, the Defence Secretary. He, after four years ousted Mr. Ghulam Muhammad to become the fourth Governor-General and the first President of Pakistan.

Without making a proper circuit we landed on Runway 07 where the Defence Secretary's car was already waiting. As there was no wind and air traffic, the controller allowed us to take off from the opposite direction. Soon after we got safely airborne Mr. Iskander Mirza walked into the cockpit and asked me if I could drop him first at the Sargodha Airfield, where Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan, the Prime Minister was waiting for him for an urgent meeting. After a few minutes he entered the cockpit again and said, "Ahmad, the Finance Minister is not in a good mood and wanted to know as to why his aircraft was made to land at the Karachi Airport without his prior permission".

The Minister had an urgent meeting at Lahore, and since the aircraft was not required for his return flight, it could be at the disposal of the Defence Secretary. After dropping the V.I.P. at Lahore we took off and landed at Sargodha, which in those days had no control tower or any other facility. In his autobiography "Friends Not Masters", Field Marshal Ayub Khan, who was also called by the Prime Minister at Sargodha had written that the P. M. asked him "what had happened to this damned fellow" meaning, Mr. Iskander Mirza who arrived late by one and half hour because Mr. Ghulam Muhammad did not let him first get down at Sargodha.

Mr. Iskander Mirza was a very polite and considerate person and knew how to keep the pilots happy. Before leaving the aircraft, he informed us that the Commissioner's car which had come to take him to the Railway Station, where the Prime Minister was staying in a Saloon, would be sent back to us. We were required to join them at the Rest House for lunch. When we arrived, the Prime Minister, who was campaigning for the elections was already there. He was

surrounded by the Noons and Tiwanas, conspicuous in their long and short coats with white turbans. General Ayub Khan was also there and on seeing me, directed to send his aircraft, a Bristol Freighter back to the base. He wanted to travel with us to Rawalpindi, for a brief stop over, to pick up his clothes on the way to Peshawar. He knew me very well, as I had been flying him since he became the C-in-C Army.

At Peshawar, it was again Mr. Iskander Mirza, who came into the cockpit and told us that he did not know for how long they would be staying. However, he would keep us informed about the programme. I mentioned to him that none of the crew members had any clothes apart from their overalls, as we were supposed to return to Mauripur the same afternoon. He immediately offered, some of his own clothes and invited me to stay at the Governor's House with them. I gratefully declined the kind gesture and told him that we would be able to arrange some clothes from our friends in the Air Force Mess. After two days the Military Secretary to the Governor, I. I. Chundrigar, informed that our next flight was to Lahore and the Inspector-General of Police Mr. Qurban Ali Khan would also be on board. In Lahore, Mr. Iskander Mirza thanked each of the crew members individually, and told us that we could now go back to Mauripur.

The next day, I again flew to Lahore, with the Governor-General Khawaja Nazimuddin in his Viking, captained by Sqdn. Ldr. Dogar. In the morning, when I was listening to the news on radio, I came to know, that it was the Pindi Conspiracy case which had kept us in suspense for the last three days at Peshawar. I had wrongly guessed, that all the high level meetings, were about organizing some frontier tribesmen for the Kashmir Campaign. Little knowing, that all the secret activities were related to a Conspiracy Case. It had been hatched to overthrow the government, for not allowing the regular Army to fight the Indians in the Valley. The trial of the conspirators took about two years and all the senior officers involved, including two generals, Air Commodore M. Janjua and Mr. Faiz Ahmad Faiz the great poet with leftist leanings were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. Mr. Suhrawardy was their lawyer, who got them a reprieve when he became the Prime Minister in 1957.

The story would not be complete if I did not relate a connected incident, in which I was supposed to fly a VIP guest to Lahore at midnight. His identity was a closely guarded secret. He was coming from London on a BOAC Flight, which arrived two

hours late. The passenger was brought in at Mauripur, escorted by the Army Station Commander Col. Ismail Khan and an Officer in the civilian clothes. I was surprised to see that it was General Nazir Ahmad, who had been attending the Imperial Defence College Course in England. As soon as he saw, that it was me, he warmly embraced and asked about the news of his family and my parents. At that time, I was not aware as to why a senior General was flown in such a clandestine manner.

I saw that the Superintendent of Police Malik Tiwana who was escorting him, took the Station Commander aside and told him that the Captain seemed to be his relative and might help him to escape to India or some other country. Col. Ismail told me later, about the police officer's apprehension. He assured him that I was fully trustworthy. We had been personally known to each other since the Kashmir Operations in 1950, when he was the Commandant of the Gilgit Scouts. At first light, when we landed at Lahore, the S. P. thanked me profusely for bringing them safely to the destination. In the later years, he always greeted me warmly whenever we met each other.

General Nazir Ahmad was also tried with the other senior officers and was awarded one day's suspended sentence for not informing the government about the conspiracy. He denied any knowledge of conspiracy in the court. It was solely master-minded, by General Akbar Khan who was known by his pseudo name as General Tariq during the Kashmir operation of 1948, and had served under General Nazir. Later, it came to light that the real motivating force, in this unfortunate drama was General Akbar's wife Naseem Shahnawaz, who was known to be very ambitious and aspired to become the first lady of Pakistan. Both have since died, thus it is not possible to verify as to who was the main conspirator and driving force in this unsuccessful and unfortunate attempt at the 'coup d' etat'.

In 1972, I met General Akbar Khan in an entirely different set up. He was the head of the National Security Organization created by Mr. Bhutto, the Prime Minister. I was the chief pilot Tarbela Joint Venture, and was informed by Mr. Shah Nawaz Khan, the G. M. Tarbela that I was summoned by General Akbar in his office the following day at 9 o' clock at Rawalpindi. He knew me since 1948 when General Nazir was his GOC. I was ushered into his office by his Deputy Brigadier Muzzafar Malik, who later became the Chief Secretary, Punjab. The General did not offer

me a seat whereas the Brigadier occupied one of the chairs in front of him. He had a file in front of him and asked me, "Are you Wing Commander Ahmad". I said, 'Yes Sir', then he continued, that I was the Commander Afzal's party (a younger brother of Air Marshal Asghar Khan) on a particular date at Nathiagali which I denied. He mentioned the name of Lady Noon, Sher Baz Mazari and Mr. Mazhar Ali Khan, who was the publisher of a leftist magazine 'View Point'.

I was a bit annoyed and told him that I was not in that party, how did he expect me to meet those people? He insisted that his intelligence report could not be wrong. Then I suddenly remembered, that a week earlier I, along with my family had stayed with the Afzals at their house as guests. I informed him about this and mentioned that Air Marshal Rahim Khan was also present one evening, when we had a dinner together. He was still not satisfied with my answer and asked me the last question. "Since how long do you know Commander Afzal and his family?" I replied that since 1947. He let me go and said if need be, I would be called again which he never did. I always wondered as to how Mr. Bhutto made him the Chief of National Security, knowing fully well that he was involved in the Pindi Conspiracy Case and sentenced for many years in jail.

It reminds me of another character Mr. Masood Mahmood who was made the Chief of Security Force and responsible for bringing Mr. Bhutto to the gallows. He was one year senior to me in the Government College, Lahore and I personally knew him since then. He joined the Police and was unpopular with his colleagues and the superiors as such he was never given any important assignment. In the middle sixties I happened to meet him in an official capacity when he was the Director of Tourism and I was the Director of Aerodromes. I was also x-officio Secretary of the National Facilitation Committee, a highest body, to facilitate the international passengers in all the Air ports of member countries of ICAO.

In bi-annual meeting of 1966 which was prescribed by Air Marshal Asghar Khan, Chairman of Civil Aviation, Tourism and PIAC, Masood Mahmood raised a point of order that the NFC Secretary's post should be transferred to the Tourism Department. The President asked the D. G. Civil Aviation for his views. He replied that the post was affiliated and created by the ICAO and the Director of Aerodromes of all the member countries is ex-officio Secretary. When Masood Mahmood still insisted that the Tourism was the right Department to understand

and solve the problems of the visitors entering and existing Pakistan, the Air Marshal asked him to put up a working paper, which he never did.

August, 1951

Crash Landing of a Halifax Bomber

This is a story of days gone-by about an aircraft in distress. A story, which lies in some dormant segment of the minds of a crew of seven. Their undaunted will and the untied determination enabled them to survive through this extraordinary ordeal. Those of us who had the opportunity to fly the old four-engined Halifax Bomber, surely cherish the thrill and challenge of it. This was an aircraft which also played an important role in the Second World War and made a valuable contribution towards the evolution of "Air War Fare".

Soon after Pakistan became independent in 1947, the Pakistan Air Force acquired a few of these second-hand aircraft from RAF. Flying became an adventure for some of the transport crew, who were selected to be in the Halifax Squadron. This was not just because of the thought that these aircraft were one of the most powerful bombers which were extensively deployed in the last World War. But also the fact, that by the time we acquired them they were so worn-out that flying them even in the peacetime training role was an obviously hazardous undertaking.

The mission was the first light, bombing sortie on 23rd of August, out of the Air Force Station Mauripur to the Jamrud Range near Peshawar, about 800 miles away. It was conducted under the guidance of a check bomber pilot Flt/ Lt. Mansoor Shah. The bombing was to be followed by flag showing landings at Risalpur, Chaklala and Lahore by me, before returning to home base the same day. The take off was scheduled at 2 a.m. for which the formalities were completed the previous evening. The weather was good and the flying conditions were ideal. The plane took off on schedule and after three hours, Jamrud Range was sighted, which showed its readiness to receive us with a green flare. At down, after a successful live bombing exercise, we landed at our Alma-Mater, PAF Risalpur for refuelling. Took off again, without Poly Shah who was posted there for the instructional duties on Harvard aircraft.

On our final approach at Chaklala when we lowered the landing gear, a red light came on in the cockpit, indicating that the left main wheel had not been locked down in its ultimate position. Aborted that approach and went around to try again, but as the gear was lowered the light re-appeared. A close fly-past over the

Control Tower confirmed our fear. The left wheel was dangling half way down unlike the right wheel which was locked down properly. Climbed to a safer height, to carry out the emergency procedure, which unfortunately did not work. In the meantime, got into further trouble because the right and the tail wheels refused to retract.

This was not a happy situation to be in, because we had a reasonable chance of making a safe belly landing with all the three wheels retracted. Under the circumstances there were two options open to us, either to abandon the aircraft by parachuting or to try and make a controlled crash landing on one wheel. Although the crew sensed the emergency of the situation, they did not show any anxiety. Before I could explain the dilemma to them, we were directed to fly back to Risalpur so that the emergency landing procedure could be conducted at that airfield. Meanwhile, the ATC and the Air Rescue Services were alerted. The choice of that airfield was made by Air HQs Mauripur, which had a vast open flat grassy area around the main concrete runway. However, the final decision whether to bail out or to crash land, was left entirely with the crew. Upon reaching Risalpur we were again unsuccessful in locking the left wheel down. By now it was clear that the hydraulic and pneumatic systems, for both the lowering and retracting the gears were not working properly.

The flight maintenance crew opened the hydraulic pipelines under the cockpit floor and poured all the available liquid which included water, tea and coffee into the system. When all this liquid had been hand pumped, some of the crew members had to leak their own fluid in the thermos, this procedure was actually tried out during the last World War with some success in building up the hydraulic pressure. We then held an intercom conference, it was unanimously decided, to leave the decision upon me to take any action that I considered appropriate. We decided to stay together until the last moment, as none of us had any bailing out experience. Although a controlled crash landing was also risky. It however excluded the possibility of a huge unmanned aircraft hitting even the sparsely inhabited areas, or killing some innocent people in the fields.

Once the decision was made we got busy preparing for the crash with three hours of suspense to consume the excessive fuel. During this long ordeal, each crew member again tried his hand at getting the crippled wheel down and locked. We also had enough time to consult the aircraft handbooks and other technical

publications which were luckily available on board. All the possibilities and eventualities were fully discussed and visualized. The instructions from the experts on the ground were meticulously followed, in case something might have been missed. When every effort failed, I decided to hit the right wheel a few times on the runway, to force the left wheel to go forward and lock in its correct position. This too was not successful.

The plan, for executing the crash landing, took shape gradually. Risalpur by this time became fully prepared and equipped for the crash of the heaviest aircraft in service in those days. Meanwhile, two extra crash tenders of the latest type arrived from Peshawar. I was directed to touch down at a particular spot on the grassy side of the runway, from where the travelling distance after the impact had accurately been calculated. A few crash tenders and doctors with ambulances were positioned, as close to the site keeping in view to the safety limits. By this time, a huge crowd consisting of the Air Force Academy personnel, Army officers, soldiers of the garrison and hundreds of others had got collected. Their curiosity was aroused after watching a huge aircraft hovering in the sky for three hours. The crew of Halifax, could clearly see all that commotion on the ground below as compared to the cool efficiency on board. Fears in any, were not visible or shown.

The emergency drill was thoroughly rehearsed. The flight engineer, Flying Officer Rehani was the real hero in this trial and tribulation. He was the busiest man on board, who kept a complete watch on all the instruments, and monitored carefully the consumption of fuel from the eight tanks. Because of possible danger of explosion and fire, the crew had rehearsed to evacuate the aircraft speedily, soon after the aircraft came to a halt. Each person knew his particular station and the manner of exit. At last, the long ordeal came to an end and the flight engineer announced that only ten minutes of fuel remained. The ATC was informed and a normal landing circuit was set up, just as it would have been done on return from a routine bombing sortie.

The plane touched down on one wheel on the fair weather strip, exactly at the stipulated and marked spot with a white line. It rolled straight ahead for three hundred yards on one wheel then the left wing fell and touched the ground, the entire plane started swinging to the left. This was aggravated with screeching noises, as the right undercarriage and the left wing began breaking off from the main body of the aircraft. The plane swung almost a complete 180 degrees to its

direction of landing, and the stress was so great that it broke the fuselage into almost two equal halves. The huge clouds of dust rose which made breathing difficult. The moment the shattered aircraft became stationary. I shouted to the crew to jump out. Everyone followed the instruction after quickly releasing their harnesses. I was of course, the last one to exit from the roof hatch; which was expected from a captain of aircraft.

Through gradually clearing dust, created by the impact and once safely on ground, we looked for each other. The flight engineer could be seen standing at some distance from the crashed plane, where he had made a quick dash for his safety before the foam from the crash tenders was released to extinguish any likely fire. Soon after, Rehani suddenly keeled over and fell flat on the ground. This was the most unwarranted finale, because he seemed perfectly fit and active with his sleeves rolled up, throughout the difficult period which we all spent together. The spectators were clapping and jubilant at our safe escape from the crash, but became suddenly silent upon seeing this belated casualty. Medical staff rushed to his assistance and carried him off on a stretcher, but before they could get to the nearest ambulance he sprung up on his feet. All set and ready to proceed for yet another bombing sortie.

This certainly was a great survival experience for the entire crew and we surely kept the PAF flag flying, although not in the same aircraft. We were always ready for more thrills and the risks which were a part of the Air Force flying, especially in those exciting and early days of its existence. The entire crew deserved a letter of commendation or some award which unfortunately was not given due to some reason or the other. Presumably, in those days the aircraft were considered more precious than the pilots and crew by some senior officers who were not active on flying duties.

I remember an incident when Group Captain Noor Khan, the Director of Operations at AHQ Mauripur arrived unannounced, while I was just going to taxi out a Halifax. He entered the cockpit and ordered me to sit on the second pilot seat. I knew that it was his first flight on the bomber. I told him that I was not an instructor and it was not right for him to sit at the Captain's seat as he never had any dual instructions. He would not listen and took off with my assistance after two attempts to keep the aircraft straight on the runway mainly due to miss-manipulation of four engines throttles. Luckily, we landed back safely. Only Group

Captain Noor Khan could take such kind of unauthorised risk. When my C.O. Dogar came to know about this incident he used a "four letter word" for allowing him this irregularity, to sit at my seat. Dogar reported the case to the Station Commander who forwarded it to the Air Headquarters with strong adverse remarks. Group Captain being the Director of Operations, had his explanation that it was a surprise check to see the standard of training of the Bomber pilots and its crew.

The Halifax Bombers were primarily used for training transport crew. They looked spectacular while information of six aircraft on Independence Day Fly Past in the early years of Pakistan Air Force. We also flew them for real operation in the Kashmir Valley for supply dropping role when the Indian aircraft shot one of our unarmed Dokotas in 1948. Once the Halifax Bombers were deployed in the warzone, the Indian aircraft were not to be seen anywhere near, as the bombers were equipped with the nose and rear gun turrets.

I am glad I did get a chance to take part in the aerial War with India during my service career in 1949.

October, 1951

Assassination of the Quaid-e-Millat

The mystery surrounding the murder of Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan, the first Prime Minister of Pakistan remains unsolved to this day. I remember, that fateful day of 16th October 1951 very clearly.

It was about 7 p.m. in the evening when I was escorted by the duty officer from Mauripur Officers' Mess to the C-in-C's office for an urgent mission. Without the preliminaries, the acting C-in-C, Group Captain Asghar Khan asked me, "Lanky", have you heard the news"? Seeing my blank expression, he disclosed that the Prime Minister had been shot dead that afternoon in Rawalpindi, and his body had to be brought to Karachi in the C-in-C's aircraft. He then asked me how long would it take to get airborne, as he had to coordinate the plan with the people in Rawalpindi who were getting the P.M's. coffin ready for his last journey to Karachi. This had to be coordinated so that the body could be loaded immediately upon my arrival. I told him that it would take about two hours; nevertheless, he desired to speed up the arrangements and take off as soon as possible.

I could not get airborne before 9 p.m. as a co-pilot was not available. The unserviceable auto-pilot of which I had known from my previous flight was another serious problem. It was the darkest of nights; it probably was so, because of the sad and the tragic occasion. Nothing was visible, except the stars and the rivers. The Indus and Jhelum rivers were strung out like silvery ribbons and the occasional glimmer of late night lights of a few towns enroute. We made the flight to Chaklala airfield on schedule at 1.15 a.m. The Air Force ADC to the Governor-General was waiting on the tarmac and asked about the number of seats on the DC-3. I gave him the configuration which consisted of 8 VIP seats and 2 sleeping cabins. He informed that Khawaja Nazimuddin had decided to travel in my aircraft and send the PM's body in the G.G's. Viking. He also inquired how long would it take to get airborne. Despite fully knowing the additional time, the aeroplane required to refuel and do the pre-flight clearance, I said about an hour on sensing his anxiety. The PM's coffin was already at the Airfield and Sardar Abdul Rab Nishtar, a senior Minister in the Liaquat's cabinet decided to accompany it.

Nishtar was also a likely choice for the PM's post. I remember when he was appointed as the Governor of the Punjab in 1949 he ordered his staff that in

future no alcoholic drinks would be served in the Government House. His ADC Shakir Durrani and three sons late Jamil and Ajmal and the only survivor Dr. Tarique and I saw the draining ceremony of the vintage wines and other beverages. In those days' I also flew him to Multan to lay the foundation ceremony of the Nishtar Hospital in 1951. It was the month of May and the temperature of the D'Haviland Dove aircraft engines were at the dangerous point. We could hardly climb, I prayed and God helped us to arrive safely at Lahore.

The Governor-General was at Nathiagali hill resort on vacation, when the alarming and disturbing news reached him. For him it meant a possible transformation and change from being the head of State with all its privileges of that high office, to the position of a Prime Minister, with full involvement in politics and its intrigues. The Viking took off at about 2 a.m. One can imagine my condition and the prospect of flying alone manually for another four hours, to repeat the same track but in the reverse order. Karachi city was blanketed with a thick fog and the visibility was below the prescribed minima for landing. The Viking had already landed at 5.30 a.m. ahead of us when the fog had not yet settled in the area. I had the option of diverting the flight to Nawab Shah, an alternate airfield, about a hundred miles away but decided against it and put the aircraft safely down at first light. The visibility was so bad that I could barely see the acting C-in-C who was waiting on the tarmac to receive the Head of State.

The crew of a VIP aircraft normally leave their seats after the dignitary has left the aircraft. I could not see the Governor-General and his staff leaving the plane. After what I considered a suitable waiting period, left the cockpit along with my two crew members Flg. Off. Syed and Sgt. Siraj. We found that Khawaja Sahib was still in his seat and talking to Chowdhry Muhammad Ali, the Secretary-General who had boarded the aircraft when the entrance door was flung open by the ground crew. We, therefore, retreated our steps into the cockpit and waited for another fifteen minutes before the party finally disembarked. I remember, I was half asleep after flying the whole night without prior notice and the rest required for such emergencies.

I do not know what these two distinguished gentlemen had talked about and both of them have since left this world. One can safely imagine that the talk might have been focused on the funeral arrangements and about finding a successor to the departed Prime Minister. Perhaps, Chowdhry Muhammad Ali might have

suggested that the GG should take over the more powerful position of the P.M., to save the country from further chaos. A bad situation might occur from the effects of a second tragedy to befall upon our nation within three years of its existence. As the Secretary-General of the Cabinet, he could have also recommended that the senior most minister Mr. Ghulam Muhammad, who was considered to be too inflexible for the PM's job, should be appointed as the GG in Khawaja Sahib's place. The Cabinet on its 17th October meeting, did indeed endorse all these top positions including Ch. Muhammad Ali as the Finance Minister.

As luck would have it, he later became the Prime Minister of Pakistan when the bureaucracy had a strong grip over the national affairs. One extra hour of waiting in the fog at the airfield after the departure of the PM's body, did indeed help him to reach the highest position in the country. He was removed by Mr. Iskander Mirza who brought Dr. Khan Sahib to form One Unit of the West Pakistan and subsequently Mr. Suhrawardy took over. Ch. Muhammad Ali was also the architect of the 1956 Constitution which was eventually abolished by the Martial Law in 1958. Had Khawaja Sahib not agreed to the suggestion by Ch. Muhammad Ali that fateful morning he might have remained the Governor-General for life with a different chain of command.

Mr. Nazimuddin was removed from the office, a year and half later by Mr. Ghulam Muhammad, the Governor-General who wanted to be in complete control of the Government affairs. Mr. Muhammad Ali Bogra, Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States was appointed as the Prime Minister. But that is all in the game of political intrigues, which have always been prevalent in our country, resulted in instability and retarded the progress badly needed for a newly developing country.

Unfortunately, Pakistani leadership has of lately involved itself more in the corruption than the fair game of democracy and politics. The aim of some leaders has been to keep the seat and make as much money as possible, while they are in power. The results of 1997 election are the eye opener for all of us. Lets hope that an honest era starts from now.

December, 1951

Fateful Ferry Flight of Three Tempests

In the early fifties the PAF was actually short of both the pilots and aircraft. The Government purchased a few old Tempests aircraft from the Royal Air Force in Singapore. During the last week of December, 1951 I was detailed to fly there, for the first time in a Bristol Freighter. The passengers were Sqn/Ldr Zafar Chowdhry, Flt. Lts. Boss Ahmad, Gully Haider and some technicians to service the three second hand Tempests.

We left Lahore on the 26th of December, and arrived at RAF Sletar Air-Base on 28th December after making a night stop each in Dacca and Bangkok. All this happened soon after Christmas and before the New Year's eve. In the bargain, we had a wonderful rest and recreation at Singapore, a small beautiful island. We purchased some wooden carved decoration pieces made from the walnut tree. These artifacts do sometime bring back the memories of that fateful trip.

On the second of January when the RAF base came to life again, the three pilots were shown the rusted and neglected aircraft. These had been lying for a long time in the open, under torrential rains and scorching heat. I could see the immediate reaction of our most experienced Fighter Pilots, who were told by our British colleagues at Peshawar AHQs that the aircraft had flown only a few hours and were in good flying condition. The next five days our technicians, along with the RAF ground crew, cleared and serviced the aircraft and declared them airworthy late in the evening of 7th January. Since we were already delayed, a quick air test was planned just before the departure next morning. Luckily, all the engines started, the three aircraft got airborne and landed back safely without any serious defect.

My crew members Flying Officer Syed, the Navigator, and Sgt. Khan, the Signaller were all set to get a thumb sign from the leader of the Tempests aircraft for the first leg to Penang Airfield (Malaysia). When all the three fighter aircraft took off, the Bristol Freighter with the maintenance crew immediately followed them and flew as fast as permitted by the manufacturers to land there soon after.

Over the Penang Airfield we could see an aircraft had overshot the slippery runway, mainly due to the rain and was lying nose down in tail up position. We

got permission to land on the alternate but shorter strip and soon reached the scene of the accident. Zafar Chowdhry was bleeding from the wrist and the mouth, his head was down and the legs were up. The RAF rescue team was busy sawing the fuselage and window to get him out as soon as possible. When they wanted to cut his straps and remove his flying boots, he shouted that he would rather 'die with his boots on'. We were happy that he did not lose his sense of humour even at that hour of agony. (The PAF Fighter Pilots started wearing the plastic helmets only when the jet aircraft were introduced in our country).

With great difficulty, we managed to get him out from the aircraft. After a shot of morphia he was carried to the ambulance, I and other two pilots accompanied him to the Hospital. After the surgery his wrist was bandaged and he felt better. When the doctor told him that he had to stay in the hospital for a few days, he reacted strongly and requested them to allow him to fly in the Bristol Freighter on a stretcher. The Doctor reluctantly agreed, since a day after he would be admitted into the Combined Military Hospital in Dacca in his own country. In Rangoon, the para Medics were on alert to take him to a clinic for a night stop.

On our way to Rangoon, I heard Haider on the Radio Telephony, sending SOS distress message to the Tavoy Airfield control in Burma for an emergency landing. The aircraft engine had failed and he made a good job putting the aircraft down on a 'dead stick'. We landed soon after him to find out as to what had gone wrong to our second aircraft. The technician declared that the engine had ceased due to oil leak and it would require a replacement. The Air Traffic Controller of the deserted airfield, was pestering us to take off immediately. He was expecting a guerrilla attack from the Communist Insurgents. We collected the lucky pilot, leaving the aircraft there and landed in Rangoon, where Ahmad had arrived earlier. The next day we landed at Dacca and left Zafar Chowdhry, in the good hands of his brother Anwar Kahloon.

At Lahore, just before landing the pilot of the third aircraft, Ahmad had a near fatal mishap. His joystick got jammed, and he was compelled to use some extra force with his feet, to unlock the stuck up position of the elevator. The aircraft was repaired and cleared as airworthy after one month. Flying Officer Baldy Chowdhry flew it to Karachi for its final destination. On his final approach at Mauripur the engine stopped working. He undershot the runway and was badly injured and remained in the Hospital for three months. After a short period, he

bade farewell to the PAF and joined the PIA, and retired as a Captain of Boeing 747. I was detailed to carry out an enquiry into the accident. I happened to have some experience on the Tempest aircraft and had the firsthand knowledge as to what had actually happened, since the ferry flight left Singapore. The result of the investigation was simple and easy to compile:-

- (i) that the aircraft had not been flown for about 2 years,
- (ii) that the pipes and hoses got so brittle and old; they easily gave in after some flying.
- (iii) that the reason for the engine failure near the Tavoy Airfield, was also the leaking of oil.

This was a sad story because of a misunderstanding or carelessness involving some senior British officers working with the PAF, who made a bad deal with their RAF counterparts in Singapore. The appropriate action should have been, to send a team of engineers for the acceptance or otherwise of these aircraft before detailing three senior pilots who nearly got killed. And committing a Bristol Freighter to ferry them out during the X'mas holidays, I am not aware, whether the remaining aircraft were ever flown to Pakistan or the deal was rescinded, but the fact remained that a very serious human error was inadvertently occurred. This time, not by the pilots, who were normally blamed for the accidents.

Such was the life the Pakistan Air Force had in early days of its existence. On the advice of Quaid-e-Azam, the founder of our Nation, we did build the Air Force rapidly to defend our frontiers but at what cost? Neither of the three crashed aircraft, were ever repaired and flown again but luckily all the four fighter pilots involved are still alive, after rendering valuable service to the Pakistan Air Force and the Airline.

1950-52

V.I.P. Pilot to the C-in-Cs of the Air Force and Army

I was lucky to be assigned as a V.I.P. Pilot to Air Vice Marshal L.W. Cannon and General M. Ayub Khan, within three years of my Commissioned Service. I learnt a lot from both the Chiefs and met most of the top brass of the two Services. The PAF C-in-C's Dakota C406 was the same aircraft which was used by the Quaid-e-Azam, as the first Governor-General of Pakistan. Whenever I flew this aircraft it always reminded me of the last journey to Quetta in July, 1948 in which I was a second pilot.

General M. Ayub Khan mostly flew in the brand new Bristol Way-Farer, a V.I.P. version, when he became the Army Chief in 1951. He was a good passenger and it was a pleasure flying a handsome and smiling personality, who was every inch a General. At times, he used to sit in the second pilot's seat to see the terrain and the routes which we flew. Once, while flying over the Rohtas Fort and the inaccessible Jogi Tilla on top of the Thitar Ranges near Jhelum River, he asked me if I knew the Fort's name to which I replied in the negative. He told me the importance of the Rohtas Qilla during the early Moghal days in India and also about his numerous partridge shoots in that region.

In early 1951, I flew the C-in-C Army to Thal near Parachinar, a border town. Brigadier Habibullah Khattak received him at this small and neglected Army strip. After landing, the propellers picked up small pebbles which hit the fuselage. Thank God, there was no damage from this meteoritic attack, which the General also felt and noticed. Our host explained that the Army had got the airfield bulldozed everyday since they came to know of his visit. At breakfast table, the C-in-C's ADC gave him the morning newspapers. In those days Martial Law was declared in Lahore due to religious tension between Ahmadis and Ahrar parties. The C-in-C laughingly said that other day his youngest daughter asked him as to why there was a picture and the news item everyday about General Azam Khan, the G.O.C., Lahore but no information about him. According to him, she was satisfied when he explained to her that it was not his job to run the day-to-day affairs of the Army.

Unfortunately, there was also a news item about Wg/Cdr B. K. Dass, who had, a day before force landed near Amritsar in a Harvard Aircraft. I did not know the full

details but I fully defended him as it could have happened to any pilot. He was also my Commanding Officer at Lahore. Later on, I came to know that due to a bad compass and very poor visibility he had by-passed the Lahore area. After pin pointing Amritsar he decided to backtrack but had consumed all the fuel. He made a belly landing in a cultivated wheat field and saved himself. He was taken to Amritsar by the Police and was released by the Indian Air Force after a few days of interrogation.

I flew the Air Force C-in-C and Air Board to all the PAF Stations for Annual inspections and had a fair idea, of how to run the PAF units. It definitely helped me to run the Lahore Station successfully for five years in the early sixties. I was also concurrently appointed as the Regional Controller of the Civil Aviation in the North from Rahimyar Khan to Skardu. And was responsible for shifting the civil operations from Walton and Chaklala airports to their present locations. My only regret was that no new Terminal building was ever made during my tenure at the major Airports in Pakistan including Dacca and Chittagong. I contributed a lot towards making out the feasibility reports prepared by the foreign consultants, who also designed the Orly Airport of Paris. More money has since been spent on the additions and alternations of the old buildings and hangars. Luckily, the Karachi Airport is the only exception, where I was the Airport Manager in 1968-69 a new terminal building has recently been built. The new site was also selected by me with the help of other officers connected with the development of Civil Airports in Pakistan.

In the early sixties, I had a large scale mosaic aerial photograph displayed in my office at Lahore to show an excellent site for the proposed terminal building. It was at the end of the Shaheed Aziz Bhatti Road near the Army Garrison Gold course. Since then the Army has built some quarters for the Jawans at the proposed Car Park area. In those days the Government did not have enough funds to invest on larger airports to meet the requirement for wide body aircraft. I strongly feel that it is still the best site available as a large size of area is still under Air Force Ministry of Defence. The existing terminal could be used for the domestic flights. The Army could be compensated for their land and the newly built houses. Going across the runway from Bedian Road nearer to the Indian border is not a god proposition. I strongly recommend that the appropriate authorities should even now re-investigate and examine this proposal for the betterment of Lahore Airport which is in a very bad shape. Although three years

have elapsed since the decision was taken for the new site the work on the new terminal building has yet not started due to some serious problems like a proper approach road.

I remember a funny episode when the C-in-C Air Force and Mrs. Cannon visited Gujrat, to see the new furniture for the Air House in Karachi. Wing Commander Rashid Malik known as 'Chacha', and a cousin of Mr. Ghulam Muhammad, the Governor-General of Pakistan was responsible for the deal. When the order was completed I insisted that he should fly with me from Peshawar to inspect the abandoned airfield at Gujrat for a trial run. I was not happy with the condition of the Airfield for a V.I.P. flight. But when Malik promised to get the stones and bricks removed from the runway, and also cleared the cattle and other animals by next morning, I reluctantly agreed to make this trip.

When we landed, the 'Chacha' received us with six shabily dressed policemen who were sent to guard the Airfield and aircraft. To our surprise, he made them stand in a line, for the C-in-C's inspection and gave the orders for the General Salute himself. I could see the amused faces of C-in-C, his wife and their house companion Mrs. Guest. After return from the furniture shop in Gujrat, he again re-assembled the poor sepoys and presented the guard of honour in his loud voice. He was known for such surprises and stupidities and always got away with them.

The second Commander-in-Chief of the PAF AVM. Atcherley, had a great impact on the life of our young Air Force. He came to Pakistan with new ideas like the creation of Shaheen Air Scouts and the modernisation of the Air Force with jet aircraft. The Attacker aircraft were selected to form the first Squadron, commanded by Sqn/Ldr. A. Rahim Khan. Our pilots were trained in England and ferried most of the aircraft to Pakistan. One of the Attackers had force landed at Damascus (Syria) in November 1948 due to flameout of the engine. It was my first flight abroad as a Captain of the Dakota Aircraft carrying a new engine for the jet aircraft.

We had two nights stop at RAF Habania (Iraq) as there was some technical problem with our own aircraft. We got the opportunity to drive to Baghdad and saw Karbala and other famous religious sites. We stayed another two days at Damascus and went to Beirut by road. It was a wonderful and escalating drive

through the winding hilly route. After making the Attacker serviceable with the new engine we started our backward journey. Bahrain informed us that there was no 100 Oct. fuel available and suggested that we should land at Sharjah, an oil and dust Air-Strip. I remember, there were only a few mud huts at the Dubai village. While posted at the U.A.E. in 1979-80, I discovered that the oil company's Air-Strip was later converted into the famous cricket ground of Sharjah and Dubai, the twin interconnected cities.

One afternoon in early 1949, Sqn/Ldr. Rahim Khan, in uniform walked into my bedroom at the Mauripur mess from Drigh Road. He was tired and looked worried. I asked him what was the matter with him. He told me that two of his Attacker aircraft had force-landed at Jiwani due to shortage of fuel. He wanted me to fly there immediately with the fuel and some food, as both the commodities were not available at that unattended Airfield. I told him that it was four in the afternoon and I must take off by five as there were no night landing facilities at Jiwani. I also requested him to make sure that the jet fuel in the 45 gallons drums had been loaded in the aircraft before the deadline.

He was my instructor in Risalpur and he knew my ways of doing the flying duties. He was not happy and said, that suppose there was a War and I was required to rescue two stranded pilots at night. I said under these circumstances, I would not like to kill myself and my crew. In the meanwhile, I arranged for the crew and some food/coffee from the mess. When we arrived at the airfield, the aircraft was not loaded and there was no sign of the maintenance crew, for another hour. Rahim Khan was fretting as to why his arrangements were delayed. At six when the fuel was loaded I told him that I would now take off at four o' clock in the morning to arrive at Jiwani at first light. He was not happy with my overriding decision.

Once I was flying the C-in-C Atcherley to Chaklala from Mauripur in 1949. He was a lone passenger in an old Dakota, which along with others were being phased out, in place of newly inducted Bristol Freighter. He had an important meeting with the Finance Minister concerning the payment of the above-mentioned Fighter and Transport aircrafts. The other day, Group Captain Majid Khan told me that once he received the Finance Minister Ghulam Muhammad at Mauripur Airfield. He took him aside and asked him whether the price of a Bristol Freighter

as rupees nine lakh was a fair one and hoped that nobody had made a kick back and commission.

When we were near Mianwali and flying in the clouds at ten thousand feet above sea level, Atcherley gave a buzzer in the cockpit. I sent the Navigator, Flying Officer Rogers, a fair looking Anglo Pakistani Officer, to the passenger cabin. On his return he informed, that the C-in-C wanted the E.T.A. for Chaklala and he was looking uncomfortable because of the cloudy weather. After calculating carefully, he went back to the cabin and returned immediately to say that he did not want to E.T.A. but would like to eat his lunch. Soon after, old Rogers again came back with the lunch box and was in a panic and said that the C-in-C wanted the 'Heat and not Eat'.

He was feeling cold and showed the sun to old Rogers, when we momentarily came out of the cloud. This time he was sure what he wanted and the Heat which was immediately switched on. The C-in-C had a strong cockney accent and it was difficult to understand him, especially, when flying in a Dakota which was not sound proof. When we reached Chaklala it was raining and he waited for us to come out of the aircraft. He said that being a Fighter Pilot, he always wanted to see the surface before hitting it. No wonder, he lost his twin brother another AVM in the Mediterranean, while flying very low over the sea, just to avoid the clouds. His body was never found.

In the early fifties, I flew Air Commodore Amlot, Chief of Staff of the Air Force and his beautiful wife Ruby to Bombay at night. He was retired from the PAF after two years of service and they were catching a P & O ship to Southampton with their heavy luggage. Mr. Iskander Mirza, the Defence Secretary was very friendly with the couple, also came to see them off at the Mauripur Airfield along with other senior PAF officers. We made a night stop at the famous Taj Mahal Hotel. Soon after 'checking in', I took a taxi and went to the Marine Drive to see the place where I had some wonderful time in 1946. I went to the flat where my younger brother Bashir was paying guest, to a young handsome couple from Goa. I was happy to see the signboard of Mr. and Mrs. Fernandes which was still there. After a few buzzers a fat Marwari woman opened the door whom I thought was their maid servant. When I asked her about the Fernandes she said that last year they had gone back to Goa and she now owned the flat. I was very much disappointed and returned to the Hotel with the mission incomplete.

In 1955, Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinluck of the Burma fame was a business partner of my father in Karachi, and was invited by him for a dinner party at the Mauripur mess. Everybody who mattered from the Defence Services from Karachi and my father's business friends were present at the function. The C-in-C Air Force with his wife were happy that their ex-pilot was entertaining the distinguished guests on his father's behalf. When I was introducing him to the Field Marshal, the C-in-C told him that I was his personal pilot for two years and now working on a staff appointment.

Those were the encouraging and rewarding words for any pilot. I am sorry most of us never tried to learn such good traits of the British.

February, 1952

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt's Visit to Pakistan

In February of 1952, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, the former first lady of the United States was on a UNICEF World tour to introduce her famous subject "Human Rights". She stayed about ten days in West Pakistan, and visited all the four provinces to see and meet a cross section of the people. She was an honoured guest in her own right, even though her husband was four times, President of the U.S.A. who had died in 1945. The Government of Pakistan placed a V.I.P. aircraft at her disposal and I was lucky to fly it.

Begum A. Waheed of Ferozsons was known to Mrs. Roosevelt and a tall journalist, Miss Wajid Ali, the daughter of a senior Government Official accompanied her. The first three nights she stayed in Karachi, with a day's visit to Ghulam Muhammad Barrage in the interior of Sindh. She met the selected groups of ladies who were active in the social and educational works. She was also invited to a high society marriage ceremony by Begum Raana Liaquat Ali Khan. The bridegroom, Aftab Ahmad Khan, a young Civil Service Officer, was my class-fellow at the Government College, Lahore in 1943/45. A few years ago, he retired as the federal Finance Secretary to the Government of Pakistan. Mrs. Roosevelt was much impressed with the marriage functions which included dances performed by beautiful girls from the leading families of Pakistan. Their gorgeous dresses and the loads of jewellery added to the glamour and enhanced the gaiety of such occasions.

On the fourth day, we flew to the Annual Baluchistan Darbar at Sibi, which was then at full swing. At the end of the ceremonies, the Agent to the Governor-General Mian Amin-ud-Din presented some sealed envelopes to the prominent Sardars. They were dressed in their colourful 'choghas' (Gowns) with fold upon fold of 20 meters 'shalwars' (Trousers) and as much length on their "Pagries" (Head Dresses.) Mrs. Roosevelt could not help asking a few questions about the baggy dresses and large turbans. She was also curious to know about the contents of the envelopes, which contained the Government monetary rewards, for keeping the various tribes under control. It was for the first time that the wives of some high officials were also invited, they drove all the way from Quetta for the occasion. This was purposely arranged so that Mrs. Roosevelt should not feel embarrassed being there by herself. All eyes were glued on the towering figure of

the foreign lady who intentionally wore a long dress to cover her ankles as per local traditions.

In the evening, we flew to Lahore, a beautiful city of gardens, historical monuments and a famous centre of education and learning. She was awarded an honorary Doctorate degree at the Punjab University. In Lahore, she addressed a few social forums arranged by the academic and enlightened women's circles. After having been to Sind and Baluchistan, she relaxed at the Governor's House which was full of chrysanthmum and tulip beds. The hectic programme also included a luncheon party, given by the Nawab of Kalabagh at his fort, overlooking the Indus river near Mianwali, although he was not the Governor of the Punjab in those days. He escorted Mrs. Roosevelt inside the house to introduce his family who were in 'parda' and segregation.

The next trip was to Peshawar to show her a glimpse of the Pathan culture. She was taken to the 'Kissa Khawani Bazar' (The story teller's street) and to the Khyber Pass; on the latter trip, when she came to know that I had never visited the historical gateway to India, she invited me to accompany her. On the way, she asked me to tell the driver to stop the car. I naturally got alarmed and wanted to know the urgency, as it was a dangerous prohibited area where a sniper could shoot from behind the hills. It was an exclusive tribal zone except for that particular road. The Pathan driver from the Government House, who could understand some English stopped the car. Her personal physician Dr. Greviech who was sitting next to her got down with his camera. He took a picture of a small wooden sign board mounted low along the road, showing a motor vehicle and a camel. It was an indication to warn the camel drivers and the thousands of Nomads who start entering Pakistan from Afghanistan before the winter that they should not use the metalled road.

As a courtesy, I had to get out of the car also. Luckily we had a convoy of few government cars with a Military jeep mounted with a machine-gun, obviously, there was no likelihood of shooting. At the Khyber Pass she crossed the Pak-Afghan Border on taken with the great lady . I was, however, a little disappointed as I did not see a narrow pass in a closed valley which I had always imagined this to be. After sometime, I realised that a large area was necessary for the invading Armies to camp there and conquer India at their own time and leisure.

At the Peshawar Airport, when we were going back to Lahore she asked me if it could be possible to see the Himalayas and Nanga Parbat. I told her that I knew the area very well and even flew at night time in 1949 to keep the supplies running for our soldiers, after the Indian Fighter Aircraft fired at our Dakota during the day time. I briefed her, that we had to fly at much higher altitude and would be late by about 45 minutes for arrival at the Walton Airport. From there she was flying to New Dehli by an Indian Airline Dakota. I invited her in the cockpit so that she could have better view of the Nanga Parbat and a community of snow covered high mountains. She was very much thrilled and appreciated the invitation to the cockpit.

At the Walton Airport, she asked if I had ever visited the United States to which I said "No Madam". She invited me to visit her whenever I was in that country and asked her Secretary to take my address. On her return to New York she sent me and my navigator Flying Officer Syed a letter of thanks and her portrait with a nice caption in a beautiful silver frame. It still is one of the prized pictures in my house.

While on secondment to the Civil Aviation Department from the Air Force I was sent to the United States in 1964, on a three months U.S. Aid tour, as the guest of the Federal Aviation Agency in Washington D.C. Unfortunately, Mrs. Roosevelt had already died two years earlier in 1962. Luckily, I had remembered the name of her Secretary Miss Maureen Corr, and I had no difficulty in finding out her telephone number in New York. When I rang her up from my hotel Hilton, she was pleasantly surprised. She asked me about my programme and particularly the arrival date in New York, when I had a few days free to see the 1964 EXPO.

In Washington, she arranged my meeting with Mr. James Roosevelt, the eldest son, at the Senate House. He talked to me about Pakistan and how much his mother had admired that country and its people. He suggested that while I was in New York, I should visit Hyde Park, eighty miles from the city, where his parents were buried. He instructed Miss Corr on the Phone, to make, necessary arrangements for my visit. After visiting the Cemetery and the Archives we were invited for a dinner at John Roosevelt house, he was the youngest son. He showed me his Armoury and was very keen to visit Pakistan and shoot a Marco-Polo sheep which I could not organise, as it was a rare and declared as an endangered animal.

At the Archives, I asked the Archivist if it was possible to see Mrs. Roosevelt's 'My day' Columns which she used to write daily until her death. He took me to the proper section and showed my name mentioned by her, during her trip to Pakistan and the wonderful flight she had of the Himalaya and Nanga Parbat. I felt proud and happy that at least the name of a Pakistan Air Force Officer would always remain in the Roosevelt Archives at the United States.

In New York, I was invited for dinner by Dr. Grevech who bought Mrs. Roosevelt's personal flat after her death, on 63rd Street in the East-End. He also invited some of his friends and made me sit at the guest of honour seat. During the dinner, he narrated an interesting story. Once Mrs. Roosevelt invited Mrs. Indra Gandhi for a dinner party. One of her guests asked Mrs. Gandhi 'How is the Goa constrictor'. She lost her temper and banged the table, saying that it was not Mr. Krishna Menon, who was then the Defence Minister, responsible for attacking Goa. The people of Portuguese enclave wanted to join India, and if anybody was to be blamed it should be her, being the President of the Congress. It was her haughty and short tempered nature which made her quite unpopular even when she became the Prime Minister of India. Dr. Grevech presented me with Mrs. Roosevelt's biography and the picture of the camel and motor vehicle on a billboard, which he took on the way to the Khyber Pass.

For many years, I kept on wondering as to why a captain of the PAF aircraft was given so much importance by the family and private secretary of Mrs. Roosevelt, twelve years after she visited Pakistan and two years after she expired. I am sure, she must have liked the people of Pakistan, who honoured and admired her more than the people of other countries which she visited during that trip.

I remember having sent, her own picture printed in a post card from Rotoroa, New Zealand the same year. She visited that country during the Second World War and was standing with a Moari Princess whom we also had met during the sight seeing tour. We had also exchanged a few X'Mas cards afterwards. Those were the only contacts I ever had with that great and gracious lady, apart from the fact that I also did act as her Aide throughout her visit. She must have spoken well about Pakistan to her two sons and other people after her visit to our country. I am happy, that I extended her full courtesy and attention to make her trip comfortable, not knowing and expecting that one day, I would be given a V.I.P. treatment in her great country.

June to August, 1952

Cross Country Trip to Australia And New Zealand

The Pakistan Air Force used to organise a number of flights to different parts of the world, basically to provide international aviation training for the Transport crew. Beside flying and navigational experience, foreign Air Trips were of great cultural and educational value. The aircrew always looked forward to such adventures, and this particular one is likely to remain an outstanding undertaking by the PAF.

There was repeated requests from the Australian Hockey Association and the Pakistan High Commissioner. Mr. Yousaf A. Harron who also had the honour to be the Quaid-e-Azam Honorary Aide. The Air Headquarters finally agreed to send the PAF hockey team to Australia on one of the newly acquired Bristol Freighter aircraft. I was lucky to be chosen as the Captain of this flight with the late Z.A. Khan as the second Pilot. I was asked to report to AHQ to discuss the details of this coveted trip. Later, Z. A. Khan became the Governor-General's pilot in my place, for reasons known to our Commanding Officer Dogar.

It took me sometime to convince the Training and Operational staff that it would be better to send an old Dakota aircraft rather than a newly acquired Bristol Freighter. The main reason was that I had a personal liking and more experience on that type of aircraft. The only other convincing argument, towards this conservative view, was that in the event of Bristol Freighter becoming unserviceable, we were likely to be stranded for a longer period. The spare parts of this aircraft were not available in that part of the world. The D.C 3 aircraft, however, was still in service with the R.A.E. in Singapore and the Royal Australian Air Force, who were supposed to be our hosts for maintenance purpose. The arguments in favour of the Freighter were, that it was new and could carry a greater payload. Eventually, my point of view was accepted and a good old Dakota of my preference was earmarked for this long and arduous journey.

The change over the aircraft, caused a lot of heart-burning and disappointment among some crew members and the reserve hockey players who had to be dropped. After a few meetings the final list comprised 6 aircrew 6 ground crew including a technical officer Flt. Lt. Hafeez Rana who later became an AVM. Twelve hockey players and one Manager were selected. The late, Squadron

Leader Masroor Hosain was chosen as the captain of the team. The Mauripur Airfield was later named, as the Masroor Airbase after his tragic death in a B-57 Bomber, which occurred while flying low when a vulture hit the aircraft screen.

It was also decided to include, the World Squash champion, Mr. Hashim Khan to exhibit his masterly skill. E was going on the special request of the Pakistan High Commissioner and a number of Australian Squash Clubs were keen to see him in action. In view of the publicity, that he would be able to give to Pakistan, a seat was created for him at the eleventh hour. Besides, twenty-five persons including the crew with their baggage, 1500 Lbs of tools and spare parts, 500 lbs. Of the hockey kit, were also to be airlifted in the same aircraft.

Another, important problem to be tackled with, was the preparation of a detailed Flight Plan for the route. To our surprise, we could not get any charts or maps beyond Darwin, the first port of entry for the "Down Under". However, none of us had any knowledge about our Hockey schedule in Australia. The latter which was supposed to convey the hockey fixtures, was either lost in transit or on its way through the Foreign Office. It was urgently needed, to plan the route and to make suitable and convenient stop-overs in that Continent. The planning and training staff thought, that the whole trip would take about one month, and one hundred hours of flying with only one 'fifty hours' aircraft inspection in Australia. It, however, did not work out that way mainly due to the additional itinerary of New Zealand which was later given to us.

We took off from Mauripur in the early morning of the 29th of May, 1952, and were assured that the Hockey program and flying itinerary would be cabled to us either at Singapore or Jakarta. In fact, we never got to know about them until we reached Sydney. With this kind of briefing we embarked upon a training Cross Country which was to become the longest and most memorable trip for all the persons on board. As briefed by the Met office, we hit the monsoons in the central India and did not fly clear out of them upto Dacca. The only incident worth mentioning on this flight was a severe air pocket, in which our goal-keeper the late Flying Officer Durrani a brother-in-law of General Fazle Razik, injured his right foot for not strapping himself, in spite of clear and repeated instructions. His own white metal box which for some reasons or the other he had unlashd, caused this injury. This served as a warning to other passengers, who throughout the journey had their safety belts on, whenever required.

From Dacca we flew to Bangkok in rain and poor visibility, remaining in clouds till we landed safely at Don Muang airfield. Most of the hockey players had never flown in the clouds for five and a half hours at one stretch. It was an unusual experience for them, which automatically built up their confidence in the ability of aircraft's crew, a prerequisite for such an arduous and long trip. We had a good night's rest and recreation in Bangkok, the beautiful capital city of Thailand. In the afternoon some of us managed to visit a museum and saw the relics belonging to Anna and the King of Siam. Next day, again flying in the rain and scattered thunder storms we reached Singapore. That evening most of us went on a sight-seeing tour of the fabulous city. Some of us did window shopping and made a mental note of the articles that we wanted to buy on the way back, hardly realising that on our return flight we would be quite broke.

The following day, we crossed the Equator. For all of us it was the first time that we had this imaginary and novel experience. I remember in the K.L.M. Airline, they used to present a certificate to the passengers to commemorate the event. There was no champagne to go round but we, nevertheless, celebrated the occasion. We flew over hundred of islands of the Indonesian archipelago, and made a night stop at Surabaya after a refuelling halt at Jakarta. On the way we had a good peep over the highest volcano peak in Indonesia, the aircraft got a few small bumps, caused due to an active crater at that time. One could see the red lava oozing out and falling on the sides of the cup-shaped mountain.

On the Surabaya to Darwin leg we had the first incident, which delayed our schedule by nearly a day. Soon after taking off from Kupang, the left engine cut a number of times. We landed back safely and the aircraft was made serviceable late at night. The limited staff of the Control Tower helped us in improvising some kind of shelter and food. They served us plain rice with thin vegetable soup and canned bully beef, left-over from World War-II for dinner and the same menu with the addition of tea for breakfast. This was the best they could manage for a contingent of 25 uninvited guests. We were grateful to them for their hospitality, the cost of food was, however, paid from the imprest.

At Darwin, we spoke to the Air Attache to late Squadron Leader Mustafa Kamal in Sydney, and told him about the incident and unforeseen delay. He insisted that we must try to reach Sydney immediately. As it was difficult to change an

important hockey fixture at Canberra on weekend. It would also upset his reception arrangements, the following morning. Flying across the Australian continent at night was the only alternative. It was a wonderful experience to fly a distance of about two thousand miles which was covered in thirteen hours, with two refuelling stops at some God forsaken bush airfields, called Colongurri and Charleville. Luckily, the weather was clear with full moonlight, we could see the vast areas of barren land with endless stretches of jungle without any sign of habitation or life in them. The reception at the Sydney airport was heartening, the Air Attache with the journalists and photographers were present to welcome us. This airfield was one of the busiest in the world. Every minute an aircraft took off or landed on six different runways available to handle the Air traffic.

The following day, we flew to Canberra with the High Commissioner Mr. Yousaf A. Haroon and his ever smiling wife Pasha on board. Both were very popular, for their good nature and known Pakistani hospitality in Australia. We played our opening match in the beautiful capital city which is surrounded by hills, similar to the ones in Islamabad. Luckily, we won and made some sports headlines in the newspapers next morning. We flew back at midnight to RAAF Richmond about thirty miles away from Sydney and handed over the aircraft to the Australian Air Force for the first fifty hours inspection, which had become due since we left Karachi. After five days, the aircraft was flown back to Sydney and started the Hockey tour of Brisbane, Melbourne, Wagga Wagga and Point Cook. On looking over at the itinerary the High Commissioner was informed, that another inspection of the aircraft would be necessary, before proceeding back home. The Air Headquarters were apprised accordingly about the impending delay.

During these flights the port engine again started giving the same trouble, much to my consternation and annoyance since I was solely responsible for selecting this aircraft. However, it was gratifying that the passengers had gotten used to these "Bangs". At an RAAF airfield near Brisbane, we got stuck again due to this trouble for two days, while extra Hockey Matches were arranged and played. An Indian Muslim businessman who had settled there for the last fifty years invited us for a dinner party. As customary he delivered a speech and said that he was "produced" in Pakistan near Gujranwala. He had an Australian wife and children.

The engineers could not make the aircraft, fully serviceable and declared partially airworthy for the Richmond flight. There, the Maintenance Chief informed us

that, in case, they could not replace two of its defective cylinders, a new engine had to be installed. There was no other choice but to leave the aircraft at their mercy. It took them about 10 days, including two long week ends, to make the aircraft fully serviceable without changing the engine. During this period our team played a number of matches in Sydney, and near about places travelling by road and train. All the players gave satisfactory account of themselves bringing a good name and excellent publicity to Pakistan. The Captain of the Hockey Team had to give a number of "after dinner speeches", and after a while he became an expert.

In the glare of publicity and good name our team projected, the New Zealanders explored the possibility of getting us across to their country. The High Commissioner felt that it was a good opportunity to show the Pakistan Flag in that territory as well. The captain of Hockey Team and I informed him that the approval of Air Headquarters was necessary for making an extra three and half thousand miles journey across the Pacific Ocean and back. After obtaining the necessary permission, we headed towards the land of the Maoris. We flew for five hours in clear weather and landed at a tiny Island, called Norfolk which is only 4 x 5 miles long. If we had missed this place, there was no other alternative but to ditch in the sea. This leg was stretched over more than 1,200 miles from Australia to New Zealand, and was known to be infested with sharks.

In New Zealand, the old Dakota flew in both the North and South Islands. We played a number of matches in Auckland, Christ Church, Rotoroa and Wellington. The country looked more or less like England. No wonder, they had given similar names to their cities and roads. The only difference was one of the climate. It was snowing in New Zealand while England was having a good summer. One Hockey fixture was played at Duneden, the southern most tip of this country. Here, in the mess, we were served with live oysters in an appropriate sauce, which most of us tried for the first time and but did not like. Beyond this point one could reach the South Pole after flying a few hours over the sea and Antarctica.

In Kiwi's land, we had a new experience of flying in the "Air Ways" in which one has to fly strictly on the navigational aids. At one place, the aircraft started losing height due to icing on the aircraft wings and propellers tips. The memory of which still makes me shudder and tremble. When we broke clouds, we were in a valley with high mountains on our left and right, a slight navigational error would have been a different story. The credit went to our two navigators, Flg. Offs. Beg and

Malonwsy, a pole who provided with correct headings and ETAS throughout the long trip.

We visited the hot water springs in Rotoroa, where the locals cooked their food in the sealed utensils in the sulphur streams. We also saw a number of Moari dances in their colourful and gorgeous costumes. The Air Force Messes where we stayed were new, beautifully designed, decorated and furnished. When we asked some officers how did they manage to have such luxurious messes, their reply was interesting and simple. They got permission to purchase one hundred aircraft but ordered only ninety-five. With the left over money they built five impressive messes at their five Airbases. The Government did not object to it since the Air Force saved about five million pounds from their budget.

On the return route, a flying record was created for the Dakota aircraft. We flew a distance of about nine hundred miles from Norfolk Island to Richmond, without refuelling at Brisbane. It was a normal stop-over for refuelling when fully loaded. At night, in the mess when we told the RAAF officers about our straight hop they would not believe. It was a great experience, flying over the sea, in and out of clouds and a tremendous relief to have the first glimpse of the Australian coastal line at dusk. When we landed we still had half an hour of fuel left in the tanks, which is not a point to boast. Luckily, we had a number of alternate airfields on the Eastern coast, with which we were in constant contact and could have landed anywhere for refuelling. Although it would have delayed us considerably after a long and tiring flight. Richmond is about thirty miles west of Sydney harbour although it was still a suburb. In those days, there were no high rise buildings, I believe Sydney has now a radius of about fifty miles.

By now, we had done one hundred hours of flying in this aging but faithful "Work Horse". It took another ten days, before the aircraft was made finally serviceable, for the return flight to Pakistan. By this time some of us had started getting homesick. The captain of the Hockey team was keen to return home, as his wife was expecting their first baby. He had refused a very good offer of Air Headquarters, to stay an extra week in Indonesia and play some more hockey matches. This he had to decline because a number of players had sustained injuries, during the hockey matches in the last two months of extensive playing, without having any reserve players.

On the 1st August, 1952 we started the homeward journey and hoped to make Mauripur by the 7th, as some of us were required to take part in the rehearsals for the Independence Day Fly-Past on 14th August. But unfortunately, in Darwin we were held up due to the undercarriage trouble, the spare parts were flown from Richmond. As we wasted three days in this barren and uninteresting place, we reached Karachi on the 11th night and could not be included in the fly-past. The return flight was very strenuous and tiresome. A night stay in the Bali Island, offered the only relaxation for the crew and left some beautiful and indelible memories for me.

The Pakistan Embassy in Jakarta had sent their Press Attache Mr. Iqbal Chaudhry to look after us, with a personal request from the Ambassador, to stay at least one additional week in Indonesia. To please us, he managed to arrange an after-dinner show of the Balines dances for the entire contingent. After the show, I was invited to the famous 'Kuta Beach' in full moonlight by a well-known 'Palar' family of Bandung to whom the Press Attache had introduced me. It is a very long and interesting story which developed into a serious affair over a period of three years. It requires many more pages, if not a complete book. During the courtship I made two more visits to Indonesia. T. S. Jan, my friend knew about the whole episode, he always used to tease me that our infatuation was developed through the courtesy of Post Master Generals of both the countries of Pakistan and Indonesia.

When the Dakota touched down at Mauripur airfield, it had flown one hundred and fifty hours, and covered twenty-four thousand miles of a fascinating flight; a distance which could easily have taken us around the world. It was definitely a memorable and eventful training 'X' Country. We had visited a new Continent learnt a lot, played good Hockey and Squash and above all kept the Pakistan flag flying for two and half months. The main credit of this trip goes particularly to the High Commissioner and his staff who looked after us extremely well. And, of course to Air-Headquarters which had complete confidence and trust in the crew and the PAF Hockey team. No verbal or written appreciation was ever given to us about the trip because Sqn/Ldr Dogar did not like our prolonged stay, which was beyond our control. During this period the V.I.P. Squadron had two less pilots to meet ever increasing commitments.

I was once again reminded of this great trip when Mr. Hashim Khan came to see me in the Base Commander's office at Lahore in 1962, after his latest visit to that country. He recalled his first visit to the "Down Under" and thanked me profoundly. He said "Sir, do you remember, there were only fifty Squash Courts in Sydney in 1952 and today there are more than five hundred courts with a very high booking". I told Hashim Khan that it was because of him that the Australian picked up Squash very fast and got enamoured by the game. He felt very happy and proud of his achievements and the glory he had brought to Pakistan. I wonder how many more Squash Courts have since been built in Sydney after the lapse of about forty years?

The Australian and New Zealanders were not only fond of "After the Dinner Speeches," they are also great lovers to sports.

February to March, 1955

State Visits by President Bayar of Turkey and King Hussein of Jordan

1955, was the most momentous and eventful year of my life. I was ADC to three foreign Heads of States, and to General M. Ayub Khan, the Defence Minister and C-in-C Pakistan Army, for the duration of his visit to Turkey to sign the Baghdad Pact. I also got married twice and divorced once in that year.

President and Madam Bayar of Turkey, arrived in Pakistan by his personal 'YACHT' in February on their first State visit. He was assigned Aides from all three Services and a Military Secretary, Brig. Khawaja Wassiud-din, the senior most Army Officer from East Pakistan. Madam Bayar, was accompanied by her gracefully dressed niece. She was also provided a separate Military Secretary, Brigadier Prince Abbasi from Bahawalpur state who later became the Nawab and Governor of the Punjab and an ADC Flt. Lt. Akbar Hussain, the son of Mr. Akhtar Hussain the Defence Secretary. The President and the entourage were flown in a special PIA Super Constellation aircraft to Peshawar and by a special train to Lahore. He was taken to the famous Khyber Pass and was entertained to a garden party, at the Municipal garden of Peshawar. On the way to Landi Kotal, the Turkish Head of State was presented with 2 lambs. To his great relief, they were not supposed to be flown to Turkey as souvenirs from the tribesmen but were to be slaughtered there, once he had touched them. This is a customary tribal offering, which was supposed to bring him good luck and the Allah's blessings.

In Lahore, the guests were shown the Badshahi Mosque, the largest in the world, and the famous Shalimar Garden, where a tea party was given in their honour by the lively people of great city. The following day, a grand Army Parade and an Air Display overwhelmed to entourage by their excellent performances. It was a beautiful sunny and wintery day of Lahore. At night, there was a grand banquet at the Governor's House where my late father was also invited. A fascinating picture of him sitting with the President Bayar and being introduced by his own son, will always be adorned at my house.

In Sind, the party was shown the newly built Ghulam Muhammad Barrage and given a splendid dinner at the Government House Karachi. In those days, Mr. Ghulam Muhammad, the Governor-General was a sick person, he had to be assisted by his two ADC's, as he could barely stand when the National Anthems of

two countries were being played. The Naval ADC was the late Commander Mazhar who was also an aide to the Quaid-e-Azam, He unfortunately died in a helicopter crash in early sixties, with his newly wedded wife Salma near Bandung, Indonesia. Captain Zameer of the Army was the other ADC who married the Governor Gurmani's daughter, later became the Military Attache of Pakistan in Egypt and the Chief of Protocol. He eventually retired as an Ambassador to Morocco.

Both the ADC's were conducting the President of Turkey at the dias. I happened to be free at that time and was standing just behind Mr. Iskander Mirza, the Interior Minister and General Ayub Khan, the Defence Minister in the Government House's lawn. I knew both of them quite well, since I had been flying them from the early fifties. After the National Anthem, the former abruptly spoke to the latter. "Don't you think it is a shame that a sick person who can't hardly talk or walk is our Head of State." The seed of Mr. Ghulam Muhammad's downfall was probably sown, in right earnest that evening. After a few months when the Governor-General went out for an evening ride in the open Mercedes car, presented by the King Ibne Saud, was not allowed to enter the Government House. Instead he was taken to his daughter's house at Bath Island.

With the help of his friend General Ayub Khan, Mr. Iskander Mirza took over the reign of power in the country, and both were responsible for making One Unit of the four provinces of West Pakistan. This action was considered necessary to make a parity between the East and West wings of Pakistan. Mr. Iskander Mirza became the first President of Pakistan in 1956 after declaring it into a Republic. The same year the new Constitution was also promulgated. The irony of fate is that he was removed from the Office, by his own friend General Ayub Khan, the Martial Law Administrator in 1958. The General took his action as he thought that the President was involved and responsible for the unrest in the country due to his political intrigues.

Visit of King Hussein of Jordan

The following month King Hussein of Jordan arrived in our country for a week's visit. It was the first visit of this young and handsome King. He could speak and project himself far better than his cousin, the King of Iraq who was shy and not as dynamic and agile as the Hashemite head of State. I was lucky to meet both the Monarchs. He was accompanied by his mother Queen Zain, who was his Mentor,

after her husband was declared mentally incapacitated. The King divorced his first wife Dina, from Egypt, a few days before leaving for Pakistan on this visit. His present wife Queen Noor is a daughter of Mr. Hallaby. He was the Administer of Federal Aviation Agency of U.S.A. who presented me a certificate on completion of my course in 1964.

A similar program was repeated in Peshawar and Lahore for the King, as was arranged for the President of Turkey. On his return to Karachi, after the banquet he was taken to Tando Muhammad Adam, by a special train at midnight for a partridge shoot. Muhammad Ali Bogra, the Prime Minister of Pakistan and General Muhammad Ayub Khan also accompanied him. The train was stopped near the game reserve and shooting site in a dense jungle. In two hours, nearly one hundred partridges were shot dead by five to six guns belonging to the Royal party. I was assisting the King as a retainer, with the next loaded Churchil gun. At the tail end of the shoot, when the poachers employed by the game warden were visible, I saw them removing the birds from their bags. They could hardly fly. On seeing this stupid action on their part, the General got annoyed and told one of the police officers to stop this "Tamasha", a nonsense.

To divert the attention of the King and his uncle who was the best shot in the group, he declared the "shoot-closed". The General congratulate them on having a very successful shoot. I don't know whether the guest of honour, actually saw the "poachers" throwing the tired and half dead birds towards the shooters. The King must have sensed and got amused, as to why the birds were not flying with the same speed as before. After having the partridge breakfast on the V.V.I.P train, we returned to Karachi before noon to attend a garden party at the Frere Hall.

Thirteen years later, in 1968, when I was the Airport Manager Karachi, and standing in the Reception line, the King recognised me and asked, "what are you doing in the civilian dress". Before, I could reply, the Chief of Protocol had already introduced me to him.

It was remarkable, for a popular and clever head of Muslim state to remember my face, if not the name, after a long passage of time. For the last forty years I have closely watched his great and admirable life progressed through the media and the name which he was made for his country is remarkable. My greatest desire is

to see Jordan and meet the King in his grey hair and beard in which he still looks young and handsome when I was his ADC in 1955.

April, 1955

Visit by President Natsir of Egypt and the Bandung Conference

Lt. Col. Gamal Abdul Natsir, the President of Egypt was in Karachi for a three days State visit in April, 1955 on his way to attend the famous Bandung Conference in Indonesia. His entourage consisted of two Ministers Anwar Saadat and Saleh Salem with a few high officials including Mr. Haikel, the editor of the prestigious newspaper "Al-Jamhuriat" and his personal staff. In addition, there were fifteen young Military Security Officers in civilian clothes. It was obvious from their stance and a right hand always in the trousers pocket, that each of them was carrying a revolver. All these security measures were taken to ensure the President's safety because he had recently overthrown General Najib, the head of the Military Junta responsible for the ouster of King Farooq of Egypt. Natsir was warned that on this trip an attempt on his life had been hatched and planned by the opposite group.

When we arrived at the Governor-General's House from the Airport, his Military Secretary Major Ahmed asked me if it was possible to remove temporarily the picture of President Najib from the living room. It was placed amongst the other Heads of States photographs in the gilted frames, at the mantle piece of the fireplace. Mr. Ghulam Muhammad was shortly scheduled to receive Col. Natsir in the same room. I explained my inability to take such an action and informed our Military Secretary who also politely declined that only the Governor-General himself could accede to such a request.

Apart from sightseeing of Karachi, and a visit to the President's mounted Body Guard, there were two State Banquets. One was to be given by the host country and the other from the visiting dignitary. After the first Banquet when returned to the main building, I casually mentioned to the Egyptian Military Secretary that at Bandung, where they were heading, my fiancée also lived there. He asked, whether I would like to accompany them, as the chartered Indian Super-Conny aircraft on which they were flying had plenty of spare seats. I thought, that he was just being polite and diplomatic, reluctantly showed some interest to test his fantastic offer. To my utter surprise, he got up and went to President Natsir's suite, where he was having coffee with his ministers. He came back soon and informed that the President would be happy to take me to Indonesia as his

personal guest. Incidentally, Col. Natsir did not indulge in any alcoholic drinks but was a heavy smoker and coffee drinker.

It was eleven o' clock at night, when the Military Secretary asked me if I had my Passport on me. There was only one day left before he could get my visas for India, Burma and Indonesia. In the early morning, I went to Mauripur and brought my passport. Before lunch all the three gratis visas were stamped, through the courtesy of the Egyptian Embassy. I just could not believe how all this could happen so suddenly. My problem was now to get the foreign leave. Luckily, there was another Banquet that evening when I met the C-in-C Air Force, AVM Cannon whom I have been flying and he knew that my fiancée was residing in Bandung. He asked me to call Air Commodore Raza the Chief of Staff who was also present in the party. The C-in-C told him that he had approved my one month's leave abroad, and due to the paucity of time the regularization action should be taken on my return.

The next morning, I was on my way to New Delhi. The moment I saw six PAF Sabre-Jets escorting our aircraft I went to President Natsir and informed him that the formation of aircraft, was in his honour and safety. They would fly with him up to the Indian border. He smiled with his sharp eyes and made me sit next to him and asked a few question as to how did I meet my fiancée. I narrated the story as briefly as possible because I did not want to take too much of his time. We were already flying over the Indian territory, and thought that he might like to see the terrain and countryside.

At Palam Airport, he was received by the Indian Prime Minister. There was no apparent discipline, the journalists and photographers were thronging the aircraft stairs. I saw Mr. Nehru actually using his stick against the unwieldy crowd to find a place for himself. There was no guard of honour as it was not a state visit. We were driven straight to the Rashtra Pati-Bhawan, where President Natsir was going to stay and meet the Indian President Dr. Rajendra Parshad. There, the Egyptian Military Attache to India, Brigadier Nasir who was also an instructor of Col. Natsir at the Egyptian Military Academy, introduced himself and said, that I was an honoured guest of his President. He asked me, if I would like to stay with the rest of the entourage at the Hyderabad guest house or in a hotel. I left the choice up to him. Luckily, he put me up at the Five Star Ambassador Hotel, next to his house.

After two days I read in the newspaper that Prime Minister Nehru had invited Col. Natsir and his Ministers to travel with him to Bandung in his aircraft. The chartered aircraft was discontinued and ten Security Officers were sent back to Egypt. One morning, while I was sitting in the Military Attache's office, Maulvi Farooq, the Imam of the Srinagar Mosque was trying to get an audience with the President. He brought a copy of the Holy Quran as a gift for him. When he was alone, I acted as an Egyptian and asked him if the plebiscite is held, would the Kashmiris join Pakistan or India. He clearly said, that neither of them as they rather prefer to have an independent state. I told him that it would be difficult to sustain themselves without the financial support of either country. He said that in any case due to the geographical situation of Kashmir, both India and Pakistan were bound to help them. He also added that the strained relations between the two countries would certainly be improved because of the joint meeting grounds for both the people. This was his opinion forty years ago. He has since been murdered in 1990 by the Indian border forces. His son, who resembles him a lot, is not the Chief of All Parties Hurriat Conference, which also stands overtly for self-determination.

The Egyptian Military Attache provided me with a first class return ticket to Bandung and Karachi by the BOAC Airline. After five days stay in New Dehli I was scheduled to leave for Indonesia with the remaining party members. At the airport, when my passport was checked it was found that there was no entry date stamped. The Military Attache had the answer ready, that I was a special guest of the Egyptian President, and had come in his chartered aircraft from Pakistan. There was no entry date stamped I the other Egyptian passports as well. The immigration staff, after getting the clearance from the Foreign Ministry, stamped all the passports for the entry and exit dates accordingly.

In Bandung, the most beautiful city in Indonesia, I was staying with my in-laws. They had a lovely house just in front of the Mardeka (Freedom) Hall where the Bandung Conference was being held. The building looked like the Old Gymkhana Club of Lahore and the garden was similar to the Jinnah Gardens, of course without any mountains in the background. Since my name was included in the entourage list, I was invited to all the social functions. In the last farewell Dinner party at the Mardeka Hall I saw Mr. Nehru strolling, arm in arm, with Mr. U-Nu of Burma, at the same time he was busy talking to Mr. Chou-en-Lai through an

interpreter. I noticed, he did not even look once towards the Burmese Prime Minister, who was much shorter in height than the Indian P.M. In order of priority the popular figures in the Conference were the Chinese Prime Minister, President Natsir, Mr. Nehru and President Soekarno. The rating of the Burmese Prime Minister and Mr. Muhammad Ali Bogra was low. Although, the latter had his newly wedded wife from Beirut (Lebanon) present in all the social functions dressed in the exquisite 'Indian Sarees'. However, both the PMs did not stand out in the galaxy of great statesmen and heads of States.

I stayed three weeks in Bandung and got married I early May. It was after a long courtship with the girl whom I had met at Bali Island in 1952 while returning from Australia and New Zealand trip. Luckily, the marriage did not last long as she never came to Pakistan. She was the only daughter of her rich parents, who wanted me to leave Pakistan and settle in Indonesia and join the Garuda Airline, if I wanted to continue flying.

The main reason of our marriage breakup was, that Tanneke's parents were mixed Indonesian Dutch, and she was a very good ballet dancer. She knew that her love for ballet would be discouraged in Pakistan and I would have not allowed her to continue her life long ambition. After the divorce, she got married to an Indonesian Army Officer who was posted in the Parague (Czechoslovakia) as Military Attache. She got the opportunity and became an accomplished ballerina. When her husband's tenure was and did not allow her to perform the Ballet in Indonesia. I believe that she is not happily married to a Choreographer and she got her initial training. She has two grown up daughters, who are also following in the footsteps of their mother. The last time I met her was in 1970, on my way to Japan to see the Expo in Osaka. In those days, my friend T. S. Jan was posted as Pakistan Military Attache in Indonesia. We both visited her in Bandung, but the world had changed a lot since 1955.

Thank God, better sense prevailed and the same year after my return from Turkey I got married to a Pakistani girl. She is the mother of our three lovely children, Banker Masood MBA, Dr. Fauzia (Ph.D.) and Engineer Jamil MSc. They were sent for higher education to America when I was the Chief Pilot in Abu Dhabi. All of them are married, and doing well in their professions in that country, although, they miss Pakistan and visit us as often as possible. Their mother and I also meet them separately, whenever we can afford, although we have been divorced for

over a decade. Being alone I have now all the time and opportunity to write my memories, play gold and bridge occasionally. I try to keep myself fully occupied with healthy activities like listening to good oriental and western music and the T. V. documentaries and news.

Thank God I have no regrets, guilty conscience and complaint against my ex-spouses.

June, 1955

Signing of the Baghdad Pact

In June, a month after my return from Indonesia, I got a call from the Air Force C-in-C's office that I should report to General Ayub Khan the Defence Minister at 3 p.m. I was required to accompany him as his ADC to visit Turkey for the signing of Baghdad Pact. I went to Napier Barracks at the Office of General Muhammad Musa Khan who was the Deputy Chief of the Joint Services, representing all the three Arms of Defence. General Ayub first enquired as to how was I and then disclosed his program leaving Karachi a day after.

He said that his son-in-law and the ADC, Captain Prince Aurangzeb, had suddenly fallen ill and he thought that I was the best person available to replace him on such a short notice. I am sure he must have observed me during my assignments as an aide to three Heads of States earlier that year and had all the necessary ceremonial uniforms. The question that embarrassed me most was, when he jokingly said "Ahmad, are you going to look after me or will I have to look after you" my reply was of course, courteous and to the point "Sir, I will do my best". He instructed me to collect three tickets from the PAN-AN Office including one of Brigadier Yahya Khan, who later was to become the President of Pakistan.

The Field Marshal had to relinquish his office in 1969 due to ill health and the fast growing Opposition demand for his resignation after a 'non party' elections, which he had overwhelmingly won through the Basic Democracy system.

The fourth person in the delegation was Mr. J. A. Rahim, the Foreign Secretary, who was the architect of the PPP's manifesto and became a senior Cabinet Minister in Mr. Bhutto's government. He after sometime fell into disfavour of the Prime Minister, and was badly beaten along with his son by the Federal Security Force. They were physically abused and assaulted at three in the morning. This dastardly incident happened because once he left the Prime Minister's house dinner party after waiting for a long time, loudly declaring that he was nobody's servant. I was also instructed to find out as to where Brigadier Yahya Khan was staying and to inform him that we would pick him up at five in the morning of our departure.

With difficulty I located Commodore A. R. Khan's house where the Brigadier was staying and informed him about the program. His residence was at the Naval Barracks, where the hotel Taj Mahal now stands majestically. The next day, I was supposed to report that all the instructions were carried out. When I arrived at General Musa's house in the evening, he saw me carrying three Pan American bags in my hand. He asked if I could give one to him since I must be having many. I immediately obliged him and found him happy and smiling. Those were simple and unsophisticated days of Pakistan when even the Generals sometime behaved like subalterns.

The next morning, I picked up General Ayub and Brigadier Yahya for the Airport without their hosts as they were not allowed by the former to see him off. The first thing I realised that it was Brigadier Yahya Khan, who was doing the ADC's duties, carrying the General's briefcase and opening the car door for him. I did not want to make a point, as I saw that he was voluntarily and happily doing it most of time during the trip.

When we arrived in Istanbul we were put up at the recently built Hilton hotel, overlooking the Bosphorus Sea. It was known to be the best and most modern hotel in the world in those days. In the lift while we were going to our rooms, the General made a passing remark in Urdu, about the luxurious furnishing and carpetting of the hall. In those days, he was very cost conscious and austerity minded. He said that the Turkish people did not have much to eat, and questioned the money wasted on the luxurious hotel

He was given the Presidential suite and I had an adjacent room. He asked me to get some tea. In the meanwhile I scanned through a few pages of the Conrad Hilton book which was placed in each room. It was clearly mentioned that all the foreign exchange and 60% of the total expenses were incurred by the Hilton group. While having tea he made similar comments regarding the golden sanitary fittings, the glittering door knobs and the beautiful China tea set. I could not resist, and explained to him, about what I had just read in the Hilton book, and defended the colossal amount spent. I also said, that the investment would gradually be recovered from the rich guests staying in this fabulous hotel.

He changed the topic and asked for my opinion as to who was the most suitable Pakistani officer, eligible to become the next PAF C-in-C. I told him that being the

Defence Minister, he was the best judge himself. He again, insisted that he was seeking my personal opinion. I told him about the PAF seniority list indicating that AVM M. Raza, Air Commodores Maqbool Rab and Asghar Khan were the three likely choices. I strongly recommended the last name who was still active in flying and the most popular. I also knew that Mr. Muhammad Ali Bogra, the Prime Minister, had already recommended AVM Raza's appointment on the file which was still at the Defence Ministry for the Governor-General's approval.

The next day we arrived in Ankara, our Ambassador Mian Aminuddin also accompanied us from Istanbul. After the guard of honour, the General told me that both of us would be staying at the American Ambassador's house, who had specially come to receive him. When we arrived at his house Mr. Warren showed us our rooms and the luggage was brought in by his valet. Soon after Mr. Aminuddin also arrived unannounced. When our host left for a few minutes to check about the tea arrangements, the Ambassador asked the General, that if possible he would also like to stay with him. His own house at Ankara was closed as his family was in Istanbul at their summer residence. I could easily sense that the General did not like this idea and told him to check from the American Ambassador himself, if he had an extra bedroom. After the tea, Mian Aminuddin asked Mr. Warren if a spare room was available, to which he immediately replied "No".

Our Ambassador then suggested that he could stay in the ADC's room who should be shifted to the Ankara Hotel where the Turkish Government had reserved four rooms for the delegation. To please our Ambassador, the General said that he did not mind this arrangement much against Mr. Warren's wishes. I came to know later that Mian Aminuddin was allegedly following the instructions from somebody in Pakistan to keep an eye on the General. If I remember correctly, Mr. Warren was posted in Pakistan before coming to Turkey and they had become very friendly with each other. The next day, was a Sunday and both of them went for a shoot without informing our Ambassador who must have felt neglected and insulted. Later in the day, he left the house in their absence to stay somewhere else.

I also noticed that the General did not give much importance to the Foreign Secretary who unfortunately had speech impediment due to a facial stroke. All the work of making a report and signing the Baghdad Pact was done by Brigadier

Yahya Khan. No wonder, Mr. J. A. Rahim much later, when he was in the PPP Government accused the General in the newspapers, that he had purchased some gold from Beirut in 1955. I know for certain, that the only thing he bought was a piece of cloth known as "Kamkhab" a gold laced textile from a jewellery shop for his wife, who especially asked for it.

A day before leaving Ankara for Pakistan, the delegation called on the President of Turkey Mr. Celal Bayer to say good-bye. I also happened to be his ADC a few months before in Pakistan. He asked the General, if he could stay for another week in Turkey, because on the following day the King of Iraq and his uncle Abdul Illah, the Regent were scheduled to arrive. The President especially wanted the General to see the Turkish Parade which was going to be held at the end of their tour, in honour of King of Iraq. Mr. Bayer insisted that since he had already witnessed the Pakistan Army parade and the Air Force show, he very much wanted to reciprocate Pakistan's hospitality by this opportunity. The General looked towards us and agreed to the invitation. At one point when the President of Turkey asked him, about the latest situation in Afghanistan, he almost used some harsh words against Prime Minister Dauood.

There were a number of functions for the King of Iraq and his party. He was a bachelor and rumour was afloat that he would choose a young Turkish bride for himself. There was a Royal Ball in his honour at the main Banquet Hall, the roof studded with huge crystal chandeliers. The King led the dance with Madam Bayer which was followed by the Turkish dignitaries and their wives. I was introduced to a Minister's pretty daughter who was sitting at our table. She danced with me the entire evening. The General came in the dance hall at mid-night and tapped at my shoulder and said "to stay on" as long as I wanted since he was leaving with Mr. Warren. The girl's parents dropped me off at my hotel and on the way, she slipped one of her rings into my finger. This was in spite of the fact, that I had already told her while dancing that I was recently married to a beautiful girl in Indonesia. She refused to take her ring back and said that 'one day' I would remember her, which has literally become true after a long passage of forty years.

The King did not dance with any other lady present there after the opening dance with Madam Bayer. That also gave an indication that he either did not like any particular girl from that gathering or he was too shy. I also noticed that he hardly talked to anybody that evening. Perhaps, he had a premonition about his

overthrow and eventual murder in the near future. All the Army Parade, Mr. Nuri-e-Said, the Prime Minister of Iraq, who was slightly deaf. was sitting next to our General. He made a remark a bit loudly, that the Pakistani soldiers were smarter than the Turkish. I was very happy to hear this and hoped that no Turkish V.I.P. sitting there overheard it.

Col. Ismail the Military Attache Turkey gave two bottles of premium whisky for our stay in Beirut where we were supposed to break our journey for three days. It was ostensibly to write the report on the Baghdad Pact but mainly to take some rest after the hectic ten days and nights in Turkey. Since we were late by one week our Ambassador in Lebanon and Syria Mr. Lal Shah Bokhari informed that he could only arrange three rooms at the St. George's, the best hotel and that one room was booked next door at the Velenicia hotel. When we arrived at our hotel, the Ambassador again asked the General as to who was going to stay at the other place. Brigadier Yahya Khan sensing the situation, asked the Ambassador whether the ADC's room had two separate beds, which he confirmed. He immediately looked towards me, if I had any objection. When we arrived in our room he inquired about the two bottles. I told him that I had put them in the General's suitcase. He suggested, if I could possibly retrieve one. When I went to the General's room he asked me to take both of them, he said that he had considerably reduced his drinking as per his doctor's advice. However, I took one bottle from his suitcase.

After dinner, our Ambassador invited us to the night club "La-Bourge" of Paris which was in the basement of the hotel. The General apologised by saying that he was very tired. I left the night club early as I was also exhausted. My room mate arrived late without making any fuss or noise. The next morning, he opened his suitcase and told me to select any two ties from the lot, which he had purchased them from Turkey for his friends. I still sometime wear them since they bring back the memories of that trip and the generosity of our former President. He was very brilliant soldier and a friend. Whenever, he saw me especially when I was the Airport Manager Karachi, he always had a kind word or two. At Brigadier Bilgrami's daughter's wedding with Captain E. D. Noon in Karachi he called me from a distance and asked as to why I did not see him more often. Thank God, I never requested any favour from him or Field Marshal Ayub Khan when they were the Presidents of Pakistan for over thirteen years. This might have been the main reason that I was always in their good books.

The Field Marshal had a lot of good qualities. He was honest and had a genuine love for Pakistan. He was far less dictatorial than some of the civilians who ruled our country. When I went to the United States for the first time in 1964 for a Civil Aviation Course he was very popular there. The Americans remembered his speech in the combined house of the Senate and Congress which was the subject of his autobiography "Friends not Masters".

In America, I toured very extensively to visit all the International Airports as the U.S. Government's guest for three months, where many officials asked me if I was related to our President. I told them that I was his personal pilot and he was always kind and treated me as his son. Before he became the President, I flew him for many years and I think that was why he had a complete confidence in a PAF Officer to accompany him to Turkey as his ADC. I had the opportunity to see the world's choicest places and did things that many young officers could only dream of. After my Air Force retirement in 1970. I was the Chief Pilot WAPDA and Mr. I. A. Khan was the then our Chairman. After a dinner at Kot Adu, the day Lui Armstrong put his foot down at the moon, he asked his executive members and me, "what would you like to be, if you get another life". My wish was simple and honest to join the "Air Force" again and his choice was to become a "Town Planner".

While working for Tarbela in 1971, I went and called on the Field Marshal without a previous engagement at Islamabad. He was kind to come out of the house and waited for me at the porch when the chowkidar announced my arrival on the Inter Com. I stayed with him for about one hour and talked on a number of subjects. I asked him, why he could not have better relations with India, when he was on top of his popularity. He said he tried his best and even suggested to have a joint defence system for both the countries. Mr. Nehru spurned it down by saying "Defence against whom"? He also told me that he had refused the Chinese offer to attack the Indian occupied Kashmir in 1962. When I showed him a picture of Mr. Bhutto, in the morning newspaper with a big crowd following him from Lahore to Gujrat for the coming elections. He replied "don't you know, he is farce".

He also narrated how he managed to get the approval for the Tarbela Dam despite much opposition. One day, when he was the President, Mr. George Wood

the President of the World Bank was invited by him for breakfast in Karachi just before he was returning to Washington. He explained to him the necessity of having another Dam, after Mangla for our country. Mr. Wood was convinced by his arguments, and promised to reactivate the case with the donor countries. Sure enough it was finally approved. He was happy to know that I was still flying and working for the Tarbela Dam which is very close to his home town Rehana.

While in Ankara, we also visited the Ataturk's mausoleum. It is very impressive yet a simple monument standing on plain concrete columns. We also went to Jallaludin Rumi's tomb in Konia and saw his disciples wearing long "rummy topics" caps, dancing in trance and circling the shrine in the form of a "Wajad". The last dinner in Istanbul was hosted by Mr. Adnan Mendres, the Turkish Prime Minister at an Old Ottoman Challet built on a tiny Island in the Bosphorus. He presented us with the Turkish silver cigar and cigarette cases with his monogram.

It was a "Grand Finale" from a brotherly country of Turkey.

November, 1957
President Iskander Mirza's State Visit to Spain and Portugal

It was the first state Visit of the first President of Pakistan and Begum Nahid Mirza to Spain and Portugal. A large entourage accompanied them. Planned as an elaborate and extensive trip of three weeks which also included two non-official visits to England and France. A standby aircraft was considered necessary, for such a long journey and I was detailed to fly this aeroplane. After staying for four days in London we flew to Paris for the same number of nights. Mr. Iskander Mirza stayed with Prince Ali Khan as his personal guest, who later on, was appointed as the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the U.N.O. Our President also spent one day shooting trip with the President of France.

The crew of both the aircrafts was put up in a grand old hotel near the 'Chan's Elysee' square. One morning, I got a call from a partner of the Guisson and Guisson Company, who were supplying arms and ammunition to Pakistan. He asked, if I was free the following day as he would like me to fly a French four engined Nortlas transport aircraft. Their Company had been trying to sell these aircraft to Pakistan and they thought that I was the right person to promote and recommend the sale. I accepted the unofficial invitation and the next day he came to pick me up from the hotel. My reference was given to them by their counterpart in Pakistan, Brigadier Saifur Rehman, the son-in-law of General Sherjan. I did not like the performance of the aircraft mainly because when I asked the Captain to feather one of its engines, he made some excuses. After the flight he invited me for a lunch at the famous Maxim's restaurant.

He spoke good English and became friendly with me. That afternoon he was planning to go for the races at St. Cloud and requested me to accompany him, to which I reluctantly agreed. At the races, where we were already late, he wanted me to bet. I told him that a day after we were flying to Lisbon, and had no spare money for such a risky gambling. He insisted and lent me some money, on the condition that if I lose, it could be repayed in Pakistan on his next visit there, Luckily, I won with a considerable margin after selecting the winning horse and returned the loan immediately. In the second race, I placed all the winning money on a horse which came in the second position. Whereas, Mr. Guisson had lost in both the races.

Suddenly, he saw Prince Ali Khan sitting in his box, he thought that since the Prince had not gone for the shoot with the Presidents of France and Pakistan, his horse which was running in the next race should be a sure winner. He wanted me to bet all my winnings on it and said that I would then certainly have a good time in Spain and Portugal. The reason he expounded was not a sound one. It was not obligatory on the part of the French President to invite Prince Ali Khan just because our President was his house guest. I did not bet on his horse but instead found a good looking sterling, which came in the third position. Prince Ali Khan's horse did not come anywhere close to the placed horses. Mr. Guisson was surprised when I explained him that why I did not bet on his horse. He said Captain "please leave your job and settle down in Paris" I thanked him for the wonderful time and on enjoyable day, I had spent in Paris.

Lisbon, had its own charm with its ancient churches and old buildings. It was different from London and Paris. After four days of a quiet stay and rest in that picturesque but lonely city we left for Madrid. There, I remember some interesting episodes and incidents, worth narrating.

The Spanish are handsome people and their girls more beautiful than the other Europeans. The late, Sqdn/Ldr Bakhshi was junior to me, and flying the President's aircraft along with Sqdn/Ldr Shah. We explored the great city and with some difficulty found out Wing Commander S.I.R. Bokhari's inlaw's house, and delivered a few presents from his wife Gloria Bustamante. They have since long settled in Madrid, after the husband's retirement.

We were all invited for a last Dinner Party at the Ambassador's house, who was the elder brother of Mr. Suharwardy, our ex-Prime Minister. Begum Nahid Mirza was talking to us before the Dinner and asked how much did we enjoy the long but interesting trip. I mentioned to her that a day before we had gone to see a Bull Fight. She said that there was no such thing during the winter in Spain. I explained that there was one at the town of Orankhaweze, some forty miles away from Madrid. It was in the aid of the people affected by the Valencia River flood. She asked to find her husband and beckoned me to bring him to her. I went and informed Mr. Iskander Mirza that the Begum Sahiba wanted to speak to him. He said "what for" I had to tell him a lie saying that I did not know, as other guests were talking to him. Escorted him to his wife, who in a loud voice said "Darling, I will never forgive you for not taking me to a Bull Fight in Spain". When he came to

know that we had really been to one, he politely told her that since it did not take place in the main Arena of Madrid, they were not invited. Furthermore, it was not included in their official program.

Mr. Iskander Mirza wanted to change the topic and asked use, if on our way back to Pakistan we were also going to see Cordoba, historic Mosque. It was built by the Muslims more than one thousand years ago. My second pilot, the late Flt/Lt Iqbal said that we would like to go there, if at all possible. The President said 'why not' and asked me to call Air Marshal Asghar Khan, the C-in-C PAF, who was standing with his wife in a group of dignitaries. When I informed him that the President wanted to talk to him. His first reaction was the same 'what for' I kept quiet and brought him to Mr. Iskander Mirza, who told him to allow the standby aircraft to visit Cordoba as well. The C-in-C did not like the idea and refused the President that it would not be possible to change the itinerary at the last moment. Much to the President's chagrin, because the way he was first treated and questioned by his wife and now by an abrupt refusal of the Air Marshal. He told us "Sorry boys next time we will include Cordoba in the program, whenever, you visit Spain."

At eleven o' clock at night I got a phone call from the ADC to the C-in-C, Sqdn Ldr. Waheed Butt informing that the C-in-C wanted to see me at the Royal Palace guest house, he following morning at 8 o' clock, before we were supposed to get to the Airport. I sent the remaining crew for clearance, and at the exact scheduled time the Air Marshal questioned me as to why one of my crew members spoke to the President about going to Cordoba. I tried to explain to him that it was the President himself, who suggested that we should also visit Cordoba's historic mosque. It was probably, also to make sure, that our aircraft might be required in case his own aircraft become unserviceable. He told me to convey his displeasure to my second pilot, which I never did until, we safely arrived back at Lahore.

I am sure the C-in-C felt unhappy, as he had to refuse a small request made by the President. The Air Marshal might not have been aware at that time that according to the latest rules no prior permission was required to fly over the IATAS approved international routes published in the weekly 'Jepson'. One could file the flight plan one hour before the departure and amend it at the last moment. It was futile to convince the C-in-C at that time, when he obviously looked annoyed. The

possible reason, was that being a strict disciplinarian himself, he did not like a PAF crew member speaking directly to the President.

The matter was not forgotten and closed as I thought. After a few months, the C-in-C visited Lahore for an Annual inspection. Air Commodore Noor Khan being the Air Officer Commanding No. 1 Group Sargodha also accompanied him. Poor Iqbal (who later died in the 1965) and myself were summoned at the Station Commander's Office. The Air Marshal, recounted the whole incident and gave both of us his verbal displeasure. Knowing him, I did not want to open my mouth and walked out of the office. Although, feeling greatly disappointed and helpless as I thought that we did a very good job and deserved some appreciation on the European tour of our President.

Once, I was travelling by Tezgam from Karachi to Lahore, my companion was Mr. Fazlur Rehman the Commerce Minister from East Pakistan. He and his wife were also in the entourage of the President during the Spain and Portugal trip. He praised Air Marshal Asghar Khan, who according to him had the guts to refuse the President. He said that the whole Cabinet liked him for his firm stand.

I hope, when the Air Marshal reads this part of the book he would forgive me for being frank and honest, as it was how, I perceived and observed the event. I always considered him as my ideal. He has also been my patron-in-chief, who kept me as Station Commander Lahore and concurrently gave me the responsibility of the Regional Controller of Civil Aviation of five years from 1960 to 1964. In addition, he posted me to some important jobs like Director of Aerodromes in Pakistan and the Airport Manager Karachi. My appreciations and memories are full of him as this book mainly portrays most of his activities. There is no doubt in my mind, that he has contributed a lot towards making the Pakistan Air Force a great and admirable Service.

It is ironical how an honest and a clever President like Iskander Mirza was ousted by his friend General Ayub Khan because a stage did come when the two swords could not be housed in one scabbard. The former settled in England where he had to work in an Indian restaurant as a manager. Such is life, how at times it treats even the high and mighty!

Picture Gallery II



Mr. Yousaf Haroon and Airport Manager, Karachi



Sqdn/Ldr Masroor Hosain laying a wreath at the monument of unknown soldier at Sydney, Australia



Hockey Team arrived in Sydney with Flt/Lts Hafeez Rana and Durrani



Mrs. Akhtar, wife of A.O.C. 1 group presenting Tennis Trophy to the Author.



Station Commanders Army and Air Force with Young Masood Ahmad waiting for the arrival of Queen Elizabeth II and Duke of Edinburgh.



President of Turkey and Shahinshah of Iran inspecting a Guard of Honour at PAF, Lahore



Field Marshal Sir Auchinleck with Wing Commander M. Akhtar, Mr. Risaluddin and Sqdn/Ldr Rahim Khan.



F.M. Auchinleck with Mrs. Cannon and Mrs. Noor Khan in a party hosted by my father Mr. S.A. Hai



Mr. Chon-en-lai, Prime Minister of China received by the author.



Princess Beateaux of Holland welcomed by Station Commander PAF Lahore.



Shahinshah of Iran greeted by Senior Officers of Lahore Garrison.



King Hussein of Jordan presented with an Air Force Shield by AVM Cannon. C in C Air Force.



President Natsir with staff at the Egyptian Ambassador's house in Karachi.



President Bayar of Turkey escorted by Khan Qurban Ali Khanm, the Governor of N.W.F. P. at Peshawar Airport.

June, 1964
An Encounter with Arnold Palmer

In 1964, I was on an official visit to the United States to study their Aviation System for three months. In some interesting circumstances, I met the World Golf Champion, Arnold Palmer in Oklahoma City. A day before, I watched the live tournament, in which he was the most popular player. The crowd supporting and following him was known as the 'Arny's Army'.

It so happened, that the General Manager of the Aero Commander Company, was keen to show me a jet Aero Commander under construction, forty miles away from the company's airfield. The aircraft in which the G. M. wanted to fly had some radio problem. He immediately taxied back to his office and spoke to the control tower to request Arnold Palmer, if he would be kind enough to fly him and his important guest from Pakistan to Tulsa to which he readily agreed. The aircraft was ready for take off on the runway when the G. M. made me sit next to a lady without proper introduction because nothing could be heard and understood, when the engines were running.

Soon after take off, I tried to make some conversation with my companion. I first praised the choice of Arnold Palmer, for purchasing an expensive executive aircraft, which was also included in the fleet of the President of United States. To continue the talk, I asked her whether she saw Arny playing the golf match a day before. She replied in the negative. Since there were a few minutes left before landing, I made yet another attempt to socialise with this stuck up lady. I asked if she knew as to why Arny lost so badly". She said "Don' know", least suspecting her as Arny's wife I continued; because he was holding a blond's hand after every shot.

Now, she could not keep quiet and started talking, "you know I am his wife and only short while ago, arrived at the city Airport from Los-Angles after flying most of the night. My husband drove me straight to this airfield and insisted that I must have a ride in his brand new Aircraft. I was half asleep when you tried to make some conversation with me" I apologised for being so naïve and unthoughtful. This lapse of mine was mainly due to the fact that she was plainly dressed and did not look like a billionaire golfer's wife.

On landing, the first question she asked her husband was about the blond with whom he was so friendly. Arny looked hard towards me and replied "Darling you know she was Suzy whom I met her after many years". Everybody laughed and the matter seemed to be closed. After inspecting the new jet aircraft and a cup of tea, an official instantaneous picture was taken in front of the Aero Commander with Arny and his wife, which he autographed with a nice caption. During the visit of the factory, Arny asked me a few questions about Pakistan and was surprised to know that there were about ten Golf Courses in our country. He and his wife both showed keen interest to visit Pakistan. I met them again in Washington D.C. during the P.G.A tournament. They reconfirmed their visit to Pakistan the next fall after playing a tournament in Hong Kong.

On return to Pakistan in July, I mentioned the episode to the C-in-C PAF, Air Marshal Asghar Khan, who in those days was a very keen golfer and had a single digit handicap. He was kind to approve my invitation and said that I should write them to visit Pakistan on his behalf with a suggested itinerary as the guest of the Pakistan Air Force. No reply came, in the ensuing few weeks. The C-in-C on one of his visits to Lahore again asked me to remind them as they might not have received my letter. Sure enough before another letter was despatched a very nice reply came from Arnold Palmer's wife. She regretted very much for the delay in replying my letter and added that they would not be able to visit Hong Kong and Pakistan this fall, due to Army's heavy commitments. They, however, promised to come next year.

In 1965 the new Commander-in-Chief was Air Marshal Noor Khan, who was not a golfer. It was out of question for me to find some world renowned Tennis players because he was fond of this game. That year, unfortunately, the War also broke out with India and I was posted to the Civil Aviation Department as the Director of Aerodromes at Karachi. That was the end of the Arnold Palmer visit to Pakistan. I did try to meet him in the USA whenever he was near my place of stay. Last year, I was at Palm Coast Florida, where my friend Hassan Zaidi, his wife Carrol and their lovely daughter 'Naila' were staying. Arnold designed a beautiful Golf Course and has also built a house there. When I rang up he was as usual, out of town.

Talking about golf reminds me of an interesting story which was related by nobody less than the late President Ziaul Haque at the Gymkhana Club Lahore after a Prize Distribution ceremony. To quote him:-

"The other day I was playing golf with General Ershad, President of Bangla Desh, He kept me involved with a golf story which eventually made him win the match. A husband and wife were playing golf together. Most of the time the husband was caught looking towards a pretty lady golfer on the course. When it became obvious that he was really interested in her, the wife asked him, 'darling, if I die, will you marry again'. The husband replied, may be, 'yes or no'. After sometime she repeated the same question and added, 'would you bring her to our bedroom'. He gave the same answer. Third and last time when she asked him, whether he would give, her golf set to his new wife. He immediately said, 'No darling'. She was very happy to hear this and felt that at least the husband had some regards for her. To her surprise when she asked him, as to why, he replied because you are a left hander."

When we were having tea, I asked the President if he would like to hear another golf joke, he immediately replied 'yes'. I said,

"There was a very good golfer who could hit a 300 yards drive. After a period of time he could hardly hit 150 yards. He got worried and went to a Doctor who happened to be a golfer as well. After examining him thoroughly the Doctor said, Mr. Smith, "there is good news and bad". He said give him the bad news first as he was used to them all his life. The bad news, that he was changing his sex. The good news, that very soon he would be able to tee off from the Ladies Tee."

The President was in a good mood and apparently enjoyed the golf story which was published in the Reader's Digest Magazine in those days.

August, 1965
Forced Landing at a Paddy-Field in East Pakistan

I was the Director of Aerodromes in Pakistan from 1965 to 1968. During one of the inspection visits of East Pakistan, I flew to Sylhet from Dacca in a two seater Cessna 150 aircraft. My passenger was Mr. Rukunddin, Executive Engineer of the Pakistan Works Department. We had receive complaints from the PIA that the runway of Sylhet Airport was giving in at some places and the pilots were alarmed with the situation.

After inspection of the Airfield, we took off for Dacca. The weather was cloudy and due to the Moonsoon rains, the greater part of the terrain was inundated. It was difficult to recognise one rive from the other. Half an hour before the E.T.A. I descended below the clouds. We could not find any pinpoint to set our course correctly for Dacca. It was getting dark when we did find a railway line. I was sure that it would take us to our destination, as the famous saying was that "all the roads lead up to Rome in Italy". There was no R/T contact due to the fact that we were flying at low altitude. I had already consumed three and half hours of fuel which included 1.45 hours on the outward journey to Sylhet where 100 octane gas was not available.

After a little while, I realised that I was heading towards the East on the way to Ishurdy instead of Dacca. I told my passenger that we had lost our way, and there was hardly any fuel left in the tank. With a 'Toddy' beard which he was wearing, he started saying his prayers loudly. I had already decided to put the plane down on the first available piece of dry land. Before I could find one, the engine cut. Poor Rukunddin began crying and said, that he had a big family and there was nobody else to look after them if he died. I consoled and calmed him down as much I could and told him to tighten his security belts.

It was quite dark and to our good luck we had just managed to brush through some wires and landed straight ahead into a watered paddy field. After a little distance, the aircraft entered a small Nallah (drain) and we nosed over, in a tail up position. The X-en hit the staring wheel and was bleeding from the mouth and forehead but continued reciting the verses from the Holy Quran. Before I could get out to help him he had already jumped out from the door, which got opened

due to the impact in the ditch. By the time, I came out of the aircraft he was already in a 'Sajjada' and kissing the ground.

There was a Court of enquiry into the near fatal accident and I was grounded for three months. Luckily, I was not on active flying, as such the period passed away quickly. At that time, the deciding authority for such enquiries was the Director General of Civil Aviation, Air Commodore B. K. Dass. He himself was involved in a similar accident in 1953 near Amritsar when he lost his way to Lahore from Peshawar, due to poor visibility in the area. I was fortunate to return to Karachi on the 3rd September. It was P.I.A's last flight over India before the 1965 War. Khawaja Shahabuddin, the Interior Minister in the government was also on board the aircraft, and told me to tell the PIA crew to keep the Indian Radio news on, during the flight. Sure enough, the flights over the Indian territory were terminated the next day, and the War with India began on the 6th of September.

The flights in East Pakistan were always full of interesting incidents. Once the Shahinshah of Iran was on a Tiger shoot at the Shamsheer Nagar hills. As normal, he and his party saw many pug marks but did not bag a single Tiger. He did not sit in a 'Machan' as it was a day's shoot on the jeep.

Once I was flown to Sunderban, the famous tiger shoot area in the world, in the Governor's amphibian aircraft. My host was Mr. Khalil Omer, the President of the Dacca Flying Club, who along with his foreign guests had already gone to the shooting site as I was late to arrive from Karachi. We landed in the river just before dusk. A sleek 'Sampa' with a boatman was waiting to take me to a 'Machan', a few miles away from the base camp. On the way I shot a deer from the boat. The poor animal just stood dazed on bank of the river, when a torch light was focused on him. It was the first and the last inhuman thing which I did in my life. At the 'Machan' I sat for a few hours before dawn. When there was no sign of a Tiger, I came down, and saw the lucky goat still alive and standing there. At the breakfast table in the main camp everybody shot some 'Lines' or the other but not the real 'Lions'. Indeed, everyone saw some kind of pug marks.

In the early fifties, we flew to Lal-Munir-Hut, a border town between India and Pakistan. The Regiment was under the canvas pitched at the airfield. It was commanded by Lt. Col. Akhtar Ali Malik, a brave soldier who crossed the Chumb and Jaurian sector in 1965 War. He was stopped by the government and replaced

by General Yahya Khan, who could not consolidate the initiative which was already achieved by his predecessor. General Akhtar was removed because he was considered to be too ambitious, like General MacArthur of the U.S.A. He could have accelerated the war at the International border which the American Government did not want. Since I knew him personally he wanted us to make a night stop and play a game of bridge, however, we did have a few hands before we departed for Dacca in the evening. My second pilot was late Wing Commander N. A. Sheikh, the base Commander East Pakistan who was also crazy about bridge. Next day, we flew to Jessore for another inspection visit. We drove to the Khulna Boat Club, where we had a good lunch with my brother Bashir and late Lt. Col. Waheed Niazi, a family friend and his wife 'Jija'.

Once in 1952, I was a second pilot, flying Khawaja Nazimuddin, the Governor-General from Dacca to Karachi in his Viking aircraft. Being a real Nawab he was very fond of good food and fruit. While eating himself in the aircraft he normally used to send some dishes to the crew in the cockpit. The big juicy "'Rasgoolas' from Ranga-Mati were his favourite 'dessert'. We were also presented with a few bunches of delicious big bananas from the Jang Shahi district, when we disembarked at our destination.

Whenever, there were floods or cyclonic storms, we spent many anguished days and nights in Dacca and Chittagong for relief work. Every time we saw hundred of swollen human bodies along with the animal's carcasses scattered around the beaches and off shore islands. It was always a pathetic and disturbing scene, and I never had a proper sleep at night. Such calamities occurred a bit too often in those days, which made me see every nook and corner of the land which was once part of our country.

I flew General Azam Khan and later Governor Munim Khan whenever they inspected the marooned areas like Coxe's Bazar and Sundip Island, helping the affected people in the rains and storms.

Although East Pakistan is separated from us but such tragic memories don't fade away easily.

March, 1969

Pierre Cardin, the Designer of the P.I.A. Air Hostess Uniform

After his retirement from the Air Force in 1965, Air Marshal Asghar Khan became the Chairman of Civil Aviation, Tourism and the Managing Director of P.I.A. To acquaint himself with the working of Civil Airline and problems of the Aircrews, he got converted into a Captain of Boeing aircraft and occasionally flew as such.

One day, when I was working as the Airport Manager Karachi, the Director General of Civil Aviation rang up and informed that the air Marshal wanted me to accompany him the following day to Lahore and Rawalpindi for an important mission. His own Personal Staff Officer, the late Wing Commander C. S. Khan had suddenly fallen ill. At Lahore, he wanted to visit the Wazir Khan Mosque and the interior of the old city; from the Tourist point of view. We stayed at the Falletti's Hotel, as he had to oversee all the evacuee property Hotels in Pakistan, and he had some ideas for their improvement. At dinner-table, he briefed me about his program for the next day, and enquired if I knew the interior of Lahore. He also told me to inform the Chief of Archaeological Department to meet him at 9 o' clock at the Wazir Khan Mosque. From there he wanted to walk through the 'Mughal' Delhi Gate to the Lohari 'Darwaza' near the Anarkali Bazar. The beautiful small mosque was not in a good condition, he advised the head of the Historical Buildings for certain improvements.

While walking through the narrow streets of the interior of Lahore, he told me that he was looking for some kind of head dresses and light jewellery for the Air Hostesses. He stopped at a few shops and a small crowd started following us. When we were passing through the famous Dubbi Bazar (where I was born, in "Haveli Kabli Mal" a Mini Fortress of my maternal grandfather), one person asked him whether he was Asghar Khan? No answer was given, and he kept on walking more seriously. After a lapse of some more time, another Lahorite posed him the same question to which he replied, if he thought that way, then he was the same person. By this time everybody started saying that he was actually the Air-Marshal. The crowd became bigger and began shouting "Asghar Khan Zindabad". We also saw big portraits of the Quaid-e-Azam, Ayub Khan and of himself, which were being sold at the footpaths. I noticed some relaxation on his face, and I thought that was the crucial and wrong moment, when he might have considered that he was very popular amongst the masses and could become a political

leader. In my humble opinion, a political leader is normally a shrewd intriguer or a clever, liar, which he is neither.

At the Suha Bazar he entered one of the jewellery shops but did not like any trinklet for the Air Hostesses. The shopkeeper offered him some tea or cold drink which he politely declined. The jeweller requested him that he wanted to address the crowd which had now become big and unwieldy. From the raised platform of his shop he delivered a short speech in the Punjabi language:

"We are so lucky, that today, we have Air Marshal Asghar Khan standing with us. You remember, in 1965 War when the Indian fighter aircraft were flying low over our shops we did not close any establishment. It was because of this great man who made the Air Force so strong that we did not have any fears."

Again, there were some full throated slogans of 'Asghar Khan Zindabad', which continued till we crossed the Lohari Gate and sat in our car. This unexpected reception might have reconfirmed his view that he was fit for politics and the real source of power was the masses. It was a turning point in his life and eventually he resigned from his important appointments to become a politician. The last straw which broke the camel's back was perhaps the main reason; that F. M. Ayub Khan had superseded him by making Admiral A. R. Khan the Defence Minister, a post for which Asghar Khan was better suited.

The late Commander Afzal, a brother of Air Marshal Asghar Khan related me the actual story as to why he was not made the Defence Minister. Once the Field Marshal invited him and Admiral A. R. Khan for a dinner. After the dinner the President took them out separately in the Government House lawn for a few minutes private talk. He informed them that according to the Constitution he had to appoint a 'Three Star' rank as his Defence Minister.

He posed them a simple question. "Should the C-in-Cs of the three armed forces be directly under the President, who is also the Supreme Commander or under the Defence Minister?" Asghar Khan replied that since the Defence Minister would be answerable to the President, the three C-in-Cs should be under the former. When the same question was asked to A. R. Khan, he immediately replied that they should be under the President, because he was the Supreme

Commander and a direct control of three C-in-Cs was necessary. It proved, that the ex-Naval C-in-C knew the President more than the ex-Air Force Chief.

In Rawalpindi, we stayed at the Flashman hotel. A night before he told me to ring up the Intercontinental hotel and find out about Pierre Cardin. When I spoke to him, I informed him that the P.I.A. Chief was staying at the Hotel opposite to his and he wanted him to have the breakfast at his hotel at 8 o' clock. After that, we were going to see the Pakistan Day Parade. Pierre Cardin promptly arrived on time although I was 2/3 minutes late due to some last minute telephone calls. During breakfast the Air Marshal told him, that he could not find any head-dress or the jewellery for the Air Hostesses uniform in Lahore. As such, he should design and recommend something Oriental which should go well with the Pakistani culture.

The world renowned designer looked towards Nasreen, the Air Marshal's eldest daughter who was sitting next to her mother and said that he would be needing a model once the uniforms were ready. He invited her to visit Paris as the Company's guest. French men are extra polite towards women and I am sure, it was initially taken in that spirit by the parents of the young girl. After sometime, he again repeated his invitation that he was serious and said 'Nazreen with a French accent on 'Z' would do full justice to the clothes which he was going to design. I could notice the Air Marshal's reaction, as he always had a twitch on his nostrils if something was not according to his wishes. It was apparent, that he did not appreciate this repeated offer to his daughter. I had to nudge Pierre Cardin under the table to stop his over indulgence. By this time, I am certain he must have realised that he was not in France, where it would have been considered as a big complaint for the whole family.

The parade was excellent and General Yahya Khan, the President was in great mood and form. We remained another day or two in Rawalpindi to enjoy the brisk cold weather and the best to impress upon the Air Marshal. A brief biography may help the readers to understand him better.

Air Marshal Asghar Khan, the founder of Istiqlal Party joined the Indian Air Force in 1940 and served in Operations against the Japanese in Burma during the second World-War. He was appointed as the first Pakistani Commander-in-Chief of the Pakistan Air Force in 1957 at the young age of thirty-six, the post which he

held for eight years. He has been an honest, and a hard task master during his long career both in the Military and Civil Service. In 1942. The Royal Indian Air Force was ordered by the British Government to bomb the Pir of Pagara's village to crush the uprising of the Hurs. He refused to carry out the order, which in his opinion, was too drastic an action for the Indian Muslims. Asghar Khan has been opposed to the military regimes of Field Marshal Ayub Khan, Generals Yahya Khan and Ziaul Haq. He was under detention in his house for the total of nine years on different occasions. He also condemned and was against the Military action in East Pakistan, which resulted in break up of the country in 1971. He is the main architect and builder of the Pakistan Air Force. The 1965 War with India was a clear manifestation of his contribution to the discipline and training of a young Air Force. It encountered a much bigger enemy by attaining 'Air Superiority' in 1965 War. While in the service he promoted and sponsored the game of golf in the country and, he himself achieved a single digit handicap. He has been my "Role Model" throughout the service.

In January, 1968, as the Airport Manager Karachi, I flew him and Air Commodores B. K. Dass and Rahim Khan in a Cessna 185 to Badin for a partridge shoot where I met my younger brother Flt/Lt. Khalil who was posted there as ATCO. We shot a few birds but had to walk a lot. In February, a duck shoot was arranged by the late Pir Mahfooz, a leading banker and popular figure in Karachi. This was at Shajawal lake belonging to Mir Ijaz Ali Talpur. It was very well conducted and proved to be the best shoot I ever had. We shot about one hundred ducks of different kinds between the six to seven guns. I flew the Air Marshal in a 2-seater Cherokee 140 aircraft and used the Plant Protection improvised Airfield near the lake. We were presented a sackful of ducks mainly the Mallards which were about one hundred pounds of weight. I had to reduce the number of ducks to half, as I knew that I had only consumed one hundred lbs. Of fuel weight, while coming to Shajawal. Even than I took off with some difficulty due to the short length of 'Katcha' runway.

My prayers and good wishes are always with the Air Marshal as I feel I would have not achieved much without his blessings and patronage, although some senior officers were jealous and did not like my guts.

1961-1968

Short Notes on a few V.I.Ps. Visits to Pakistan

February 1961 - Visit by Queen Elizabeth-II And Duke of Edinburgh

It was the first official visit of the Queen of England and her husband the Duke of Edinburgh in Pakistan. They were flown to Lahore to see the historical city. At the Airport my son Masood and daughter Fauzia were present to give flower bouquets to their majesties. Next day the Royal couple was the guest of honour at a dinner given by the C-in-C PAF at Peshawar Air Base. My wife and I were also required to be present.

A Bristol Freighter which was coming from Karachi on its way to Chaklala was detailed to drop us at Peshawar. On the way we were supposed to pick up the ceremonial dinner jacket belonging to Air Commodore M. Akhtar A.O.C. No. 1 Group from Sargodha. Thirty miles before Peshawar we encountered a few scattered clouds, the pilot decided to divert the aircraft to its home-base at Chaklala. Before the Cherat hills the sky was clear and the ground visible. I suggested to the Captain that we should descend here from where we could safely proceed to Peshawar below the clouds. The Captain, who was once my second pilot did not agree as he would have to stay an unscheduled night at Peshawar due to the inclement weather. He had already flown about six hours and looked tired. I did not blame him for this decision. He was rude to some passenger when we landed for which I admonished him.

We had our dinner in front of a log fire in the Chaklala mess instead of at Peshawar with the Queen and Duke. I don't know how the A.O.C. managed to attend the Dinner without the proper mess Kit.

In Peshawar, the Royal party was shown the famous Khyber Pass and other important places.

April 1962 - Visit by Jaqueline Kennedy

The elegantly dressed first lady of an incumbent President of the U.S.A. arrived on a short visit to Pakistan. She was an honoured guest of Pakistan's President Field Marshal Muhammad Ayub Khan, and flew to Lahore in the Presidents Viscount aircraft from Delhi. I was officially introduced to her as the Base Commander after the Punjab Governor Malik Amir Muhammad Khan of Kalabagh.

There was a big crowd waiting to cheer and welcome her. I noticed that she had a strange twitch in one of her eyes. One typical Lahorite from the spectators passed a loud remark in the Punjabi Language meaning "she is winking at us". I was glad that she did not understand our vernacular dialect. She was taken around to see the historical monuments and given a customary and seeing her off tea party at the Shalimar Garden. After a few days of welcoming her at the Lahore Airport, I received an official photograph signed by her and President Kennedy standing together at the White House, Washington D.C.

She was also flown to see the famous Khyber Pass. When she arrived at Peshawar she was wearing a 'Kara Kuli', Afghan Cap belonging to President Ayub Khan. The story went around that in the aircraft she told him that he was looking very smart and handsome in the Jinnah cap. He immediately obliged her by presenting his own head dress and reciprocated her flattering remarks when she put it on her head. I wonder, if this cap was also auctioned along with her other personal belongings after her death in 1994.

Millions of dollars were collected from the sale which were given as a charity according to her will. She was a charismatic lady who was buried in full honour by the side of her first husband, President Kennedy. In spite of her second scandalous marriage, to a billionaire ship owner, O'nassis of Greece.

April 1968 - Refuelling Stop by President Lynden Johnson of the U.S.A.

The President of America made a refuelling stop at Karachi Airport on his return flight from the Far East. Field Marshal Ayub Khan specially flew from Islamabad to receive and see off President Johnson, despite his indisposition at that time. In those days, the Security of Airports was under the direct control of Airport Managers. I remember, having taken the maximum possible security measures for the occasion. A lunch was also arranged at the V.V.I.P. room.

Mr. Johnson was a very tall and heavily built person, much taller than the Field Marshal. In those days the relations between our two countries were estrained due to the conflict of policies on Viet Nam and China. Later in the de-briefing on the visit my Security Officer informed that both the Presidents had heated arguments on some issues.

I also noticed that Mr. Johnson was not very courteous to our President, I think that was the start of poor relations between the two countries. The ice was broken only when the Republicans, came into power. President Nixon and Reagon, openly started courting Pakistan because of their own global changed interests.

It was in 1971, Henry Kissinger and President Nixon made clandestine trips to China with the help of Pakistan. Subsequently, the U.S.A. acknowledged the greatness of that mighty country. After the disintegration of Communist Russia, the yellow race in progressing very fast and one day, supposedly will conquer the whole world. Although it seems to me greatly doubtful, especially, when the Jews have reconquered the Arab land after being condemned in the sea for ever by prophet Noah.

October 1968 - First Business Visit by Sheikh Zayed the President of U.A.E.

In the mid sixties Sheikh Zayed showed a lot of interest in Pakistan because of its proximity to the United Arab Emirates and his shooting sprees in our deserts. The Government of Pakistan was not happy with his frequent trips. One day while playing golf with Mr. Rashid Habib the President of Habib Bank requested me for an Airport Pass to receive Sheikh Zayed at the tarmac. The next day he came to my office and explained that the Government was not providing official cars and the Habib Bank wanted to take that responsibility as they intended to open their business in Abu Dhabi.

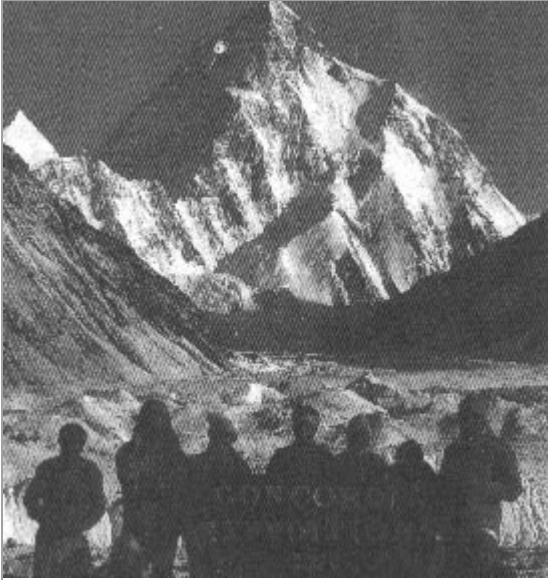
The following day Mr. Hassan Abidi, President of United Bank also desired to see me urgently. He said that the Habib Bank had no 'modus operandi' to get an apron pass as they had no contacts with the Sheikhs in U.A.E. I told Mr. Hassan Abidi that I had already given instruction to issue the apron pass to Mr. Rashid Habib and it would not be correct and fair to give another one, to his rival. I also came to know through my Security/Intelligence that there might even be a clash between the receiving groups of two banks on the tarmac.

Mr. Hassan Abidi was a great negotiator and convessor, promised that he himself would be present at the tarmac to make sure that there would be no trouble at the Airport. He also said that he had spoken to Mr. Rashid Habib and both agreed to let Sheikh Zayed sit in whichever bank's car he preferred. Mr. Hassan Abidi's staff was clever and they made sure that the chief guest sat in their vehicle. Other

members of his party used the Habib Bank cars. The main banking business of Abu Dhabi was won by the United Bank and a beautiful high rise building, the first of its kind was built in the United Arab Emirate at Abu Dhabi.

When the Government of Pakistan realised that the Sheikh Zayed President of U.A.E. did not only come here for bird shooting, they started giving him full and proper protocol since then.

Picture Gallery III



Concordia Expeditions - K2



Essa and Jehan with their grandfather.



Fauzia after the presentation of Ph.D. degree at Boston University.



Jamil receiving M.Sc. (Civil Engineering) degree in Texas.



President Bayar at Government House, Karachi



President Nasar with Pakistan Military AIDES.



Prime Minister Kosygin of Russia at Karachi Airport - 1968



President Tito of Yugoslavia at Karachi Airport - 1969

APPENDIX 'A'

Remains of the Past

Interview by Shehar Bano Khan Published in the "Frontier Post" in 1995

Only a few people can claim to have the honour of meeting the 'Father of the Nation', Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. And those few, at the moment, are either dead or forgotten to describe the joy of seeing Jinnah. At the age of 70, Wing Commander S. M. Ahmad, is a picture of health and discipline. Apart from a servant, his constant companions are the unforgettable memories as a pilot. Sitting in his living room, recalling the peak of his youth in the Pakistan Air Force, is a novel occasion for him. "Most of the people are not interested in the life of another person", says Ahmad regretfully. No doubt people seldom show interest in the frayed past of others. In Ahmad's case it is different. During his assignment in the PAF, he experienced some unforgettable moments.

Among the various incidents seasoning his career, he vividly remembers flying the Quaid to his last destination in Quetta. "Yes, I remember Mr. Jinnah's last flight to Ziarat. Luckily, I was a second pilot in that aircraft," a tinge of pride is evident as he speaks.

Wing Commander Ahmad joined the Indian Air Force in 1945 and retired in 1970. In 1951, he became the Air Force C-in-C's pilot. Flying dignitaries and VVIP's was one of his nominal credits. In the flying log book, he was awarded the 'Green Endorsement' by the then C-in-C of the PAF Air Marshal Asghar Khan, for flying 2000 hours in multi-engine aircraft, from 1951 to 1959. Without an accident. An astonishing 33 years of his life have been spent in aviation and logging about seven thousands hours of flying. Not in the least bit sounding arrogant, he said, "For my services in Kashmir, in 1948/49, I was mentioned in despatches and appreciated on record by the President of Pakistan."

In his library Wing Commander Ahmad suddenly gets up and walks to the Almiras full of pictures and a frame full of medals. A young Ahmad standing beside Ayub Khan, Colonel Nasser of Egypt, Mrs. Roosevelt and several other Heads of States. Nostalgia reflects from his face as he looks at the photographs, perhaps trying to visualise the various occasions when they were taken. Walking back to the chair,

shaking his head, Ahmad fights hard to remain in the present. A rueful expression spreads across his face as he says, "It is difficult to imagine most of those people are dead. Time move so fast. It seems, only yesterday I flew the Quaid to Quetta to recuperate".

On July 26, 1948, S. M. Ahmad was detailed to fly a VIP passenger. But the destination was not disclosed to him, neither was the identity of the passenger. Being the second pilot, the flight was kept a secret till the last minute. Except for the Captain, none of the other crew members knew where they were heading and who the VIP passenger was. "At four in the morning, I remember a solitary figure wearing a combination of 'Chooridar pajama', an 'Achkan' and a 'Rumi topi' covering his greying hair. It was none other than Khawaja Nazimuddin, the President of the Muslim League. He had come to see off the 'mysterious passenger' at Mauripur airfield, which was also the first Air Headquarter building of the Pakistan Air Force. Little did he know, the VIP passenger was Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the figure in 'Achkan' was the next Governor-General of Pakistan. A feeling of anticipation was welling up inside me about the identity of the passenger. Khawaja Sahib relieved me of my curiosity and asked at what time the Quaid's aircraft will take off for Quetta."

Taking a deep breath, Ahmad squints his eyes to look back at the passage of time. "After the briefing and clearance from the control tower when we went to the aircraft we were surprised to see a temporary arrangement of white bed sheets had been hung up on either of the door". Apparently, all necessary measures were taken to conceal the identity of the ailing passenger. Even the hanging of the white bed sheets was so designed to provide access to the ambulance between the make shift screen and the entrance. Employment of utmost secrecy was surprising, keeping in view the condition of Mr. Jinnah. "I did not see any dignitary on the tarmac, not even Khawaja Sahib, who was perhaps the only one to know about the departure," noted Ahmad surprisingly. Jinnah, leader of Muslims of India for a separate homeland, was ushered into the aircraft devoid of any ceremony.

Understandably, the whole affair was organised to avoid the anguish of Pakistanis. But a lack of proper observance of protocol to Jinnah came as a rude shock to Ahmad. Not even a single Air Force Officer was present to see the Quaid's last flight to Quetta. Only a few Air Force ground personnel were present

to remove the purdah at the entrance to the aircraft. "We went to the cockpit. I hoped at that time the Captain would confide to us, but he too was secretive about who our sick passenger was."

In order to avoid turbulent weather, Ahmad and the crew took off for Quetta with the rising of sun. "We were instructed not to enter the passenger cabin during the flight and not to use the toilet situated at the rear of the aircraft." To reach the toilet from the cockpit, the crew had to pass the area where the 'mysterious passenger' was lying on a stretcher surrounded by his medical attendants and personal staff.

On arrival at Quetta, the same kind of arrangements were provided for the illustrious passenger by the army personnel. As soon as the aircraft landed, a screen was placed on either side of the ambulance which rushed to the entrance. When all was clear, after about 15 to 20 minutes, Ahmad and his crew were allowed to leave the plane. "We came out of the aircraft and realised that our great passenger was indeed the Quaid. In a desperate attempt by his doctors to cure the disease of tuberculosis, Jinnah was taken to Ziarat". Till today, Ahmad remains mystified about the secrecy of Jinnah's flight to Quetta.

"Much later I came to know, while returning from Quetta, the ambulance carrying the Quaid to the Governor-General's house, broke down in the foul smelling area of Keamari, inhabited by the fishermen for drying fish in the sun. All I can say is, I wish I could have seen him on the flight to Quetta." Wing Commander Ahmad sits up to say something, but the rush of emotions prevents his speech.

That is not the end of Wing Commander Ahmad's life as a PAF pilot. It was a beginning of his career. "There are innumerable incidents and if I start relating all of them, you could perhaps publish them as my memoirs!" exclaims Ahmed giving into a hearty laughter. Before taking a trip to the memory lane, he insists on a tea break. Putting aside the teacups, his face lights up as yet another anecdote flashes through his mind. "Do you remember the assassination of Liaquat Ali Khan? Oh! Excuse me. You were not even born at that time," a sheepish grin shows his unimpaired sense of humor despite the age.

On October 16, 1951, Pakistan was wracked by yet another tragedy: Liaquat Ali Khan, the first Prime Minister of Pakistan was assassinated. "I remember that

fateful day very clearly. It was about 7 pm, I was summoned to the Commander-in-Chief's office for an urgent mission." The acting C-in-C, Air Commodore Muhammad Asghar Khan asked Ahmad if he had heard the news of the assassination of the Prime Minister. Seeing his blank expression, Asghar Khan told him that the PM was killed at Rawalpindi and his body had to be brought to, in the C-in-C's aircraft. "I got airborne at 9 p.m. No other co-pilot or auto-pilot was available, so I had to do the job on my own. "Judging the mood of the nation, the night was dark. Except for the stars and the occasional late night glitter of a few en route towns, nothing was visible. Ahmad's aircraft landed at Chaklala airfield at 1.15 a.m. "The ADC to the Governor-General was waiting on the tarmac and asked me how many seats did the DC-3 have. I told him it could accommodate eight VIP seats and two sleeping cabins" Ahmad was informed, a change of plans which had taken place.

"The Governor-General, Khawaja Nazimuddin had decided to travel in his aircraft, whereas, the PM's body would be sent in his Viking. Khawaja Nazimuddin boarded Wing Commander Ahmad's aircraft and Sardar Abdul Rab Nishtar, a Minister in Liaquat's Cabinet volunteered to accompany the coffin, as a mark of respect for the dead Prime Minister. The Viking took off at 2 a.m. And soon thereafter, my aircraft got airborne. You can't imagine how tired I was at the prospect of flying manually for another four hours". Karachi was covered in thick fog, visibility was at its minimum for landing. "The Viking had already landed, ahead of us, at 5.30 a.m. I had the option of diverting the flight to Nawab Shah, an alternate airfield a 100 miles away, but decided against it, and descended the aircraft safely at 6.30 a.m. Light was so bad, that I could barely make out the acting C-in-C waiting on the tarmac to receive the VVIP."

"Usually, the crew of a VIP flight leave their seats after the dignitaries have alighted from the aircraft. So, after what I considered a reasonable waiting period. I along with my two crew members left the cockpit." Crew of DC-3 were taken aback to find the Governor-General still in his seat talking to someone. Upon seeing a quizzical expression of Ahmad's face, one of the crewmembers told him, the man Khawaja Nazimuddin was talking to, was Secretary General Chaudhry Muhammad Ali. Evidently, he boarded the aircraft after the entrance door was opened by the ground personnel. "We, therefore, retreated our steps into the cockpit and waited for another 15 minutes before the G.G. disembarked." Khawaja Nazimuddin went on to become the Prime Minister of Pakistan. But a

year and a half later Ghulam Muhammad, the succeeding G.G., ousted him from power.

"Had Khawaja Sahib not agreed with Ch. Muhammad Ali that fateful morning, to become the Prime Minister, he might have remained the G.G. for life"
Muhammad Ali Bogra, the Pakistan Ambassador to U.S.A. replaced Nazimuddin as P.M. Wing Commander Ahmad's library gradually and partially sinks into darkness. Through the window of the room, the sun is bidding farewell to the afternoon.

"It's time for my exercise," he gets up swiftly, regardless of his age. Old habits die hard, just the way old memories are impossible to shake off."

APPENDIX 'B'

One who Flew for the World's Elite

An Interview by Ken Scar Published in the Mountain Mail of Colorado, U.S.A. on 28th June, 1996.

You never know who you're going to meet in this town. Here we are living 8,000 feet up in the middle of the Rocky Mountains, hundreds of miles from the nearest shopping mall, and a million miles from the metropolis way of life.

For instance, I was recently invited to a barbecue party at my friend Masood Ahmad's house. Masood (pronounced "Massoot") is probably the only current resident of Buena Vista who is a native of Pakistan, which is interesting, but Masood also operates an unusual business here after his long banking experience in New York. He runs guided trips for people deep into the Himalayan mountains, to a place called Concordia. Concordia is a valley where several of the world's highest mountains bury their roots, including K2, the second-highest and arguably the most terrific mountain on Earth. It so happens that my father is on one of those adventures right now. At the very minute I am writing this, my Dad is in Pakistan trekking up one of the most majestic glaciers in the world, led by one of Masood's guides. You may be asking yourself, what is a man like Masood doing in Buena Vista, of all places? That's another question I've asked myself many times this year.

Now Masood, obviously, is a very fascinating character, but I actually met somebody even more engaging than him at his barbecue. It was Masood's father, retired Wing Commander Lanky Ahmad, who was here all the way from Pakistan to visit his son. When I arrived at Masood's little get-together I found everyone out on the back porch, gathered around Mr. Ahmad, their attention riveted to him as he spoke softly and eloquently about his life. Turns out Mr. Ahmad flew DC-3's and Bristol Freighters for the Pakistan Air Force for nearly 20 years, including five years as a V.I.P. pilot for the rulers of Pakistan. In that time, he was also ADC to no less than four Heads of State, and had the incredible opportunities to know many of the most influential people of our time. It didn't take me long to figure out why the gathering was centered around this man.

"This is incredible!" I said to Mike Bullock, the esteemed editor of this very paper, who was standing next to me at one point. "Are you going to do an article about this guy? I think people would enjoy reading about him."

"I like the way you think, Ken," Mike said. "Write it up and have it on my desk as soon as you can. We'll give you a byline and everything. Two weeks from Monday would be fine."

"Uh," I said.

"With pictures," said Mike.

And so the next Monday I found myself sitting down to do my first bona fide journalistic interview with Commander Ahmad. We talked for nearly two hours, and he held me spellbound the entire time.

Kings, queens, presidents, cultural celebrities ... most of us only read about such people, but Mr. Ahmad, or 'Lanky' as he is called, knew them all. Pakistan is one of the most remote countries in the world, but as a V.I.P. pilot for the Pakistan Air Force, Lanky came to know everyone from Eleanor Roosevelt and Queen Elizabeth, to Pierre Cardin and Arnold Palmer. Eleanor Roosevelt, especially, became fond of him and he talked warmly about her during my time with him.

in 1952 Mrs. Roosevelt visited Pakistan during one of her UNICEF world tours. She stayed for ten days, and Lanky was assigned as her personal pilot and assistant. On one particular flight, Mrs. Roosevelt asked Lanky if it would be possible to see Nanga Parbat, another one of the most spectacular mountains of the world that rises from the floors of Pakistan. Lanky said that he knew that area very well, had even flown supplies over it at night during the first war with Indian in 1948. He warned her that they would have to fly at a much higher altitude, and would be 45 minutes late for arrival at the Walton airport, from where she was flying to New Delhi, India. She said that would be fine, and Lanky invited her to sit in the cockpit with him so she could have a better view of Nanga Parbat and the other snow-capped mountains with a community as they flew over. She was very much thrilled by Lanky's gesture, and invited him to visit her in the United States whenever he could. On her return to New York, she sent him a letter of thanks and a signed portrait of herself in a beautiful silver frame, which is still one of his most cherished possessions.

Unfortunately, Lanky Ahmad did not make it to the United States until 1964, on a US-AID tour as a guest of the Federal Aviation Agency. Eleanor Roosevelt had died two years earlier. Luckily, he remembered the name of Mrs. Roosevelt's secretary, Maureen Corr, and decided to call her from Washington D.C. She was very happy to hear from him, and arranged a meeting with James Roosevelt, the eldest son, at the Senate House. She also took him to Hyde Park, where F.D.R. and Eleanor are buried, and afterward they had dinner with John Roosevelt, F.D.R.'s youngest son. He also saw the family archives, where all of Eleanor's "My Day" columns, which she wrote everyday until her death, were kept. The Archivist showed Lanky an article in which Eleanor had written about her trip to Pakistan. He was thrilled to see that she had mentioned him by name in it. "I felt proud and happy that at least the name of a Pakistan Air Force Officer would always remain in the Roosevelt Archives," Lanky reflected. "For many years I wondered why I was given such a wonderful treatment by that family, twelve years after I flew Mrs. Roosevelt over Nanga Parbat. I am sure, now, that it was because she liked me and my country. The people of Pakistan honored and admired her while she was there. She went to India as soon as she left Pakistan, and they didn't even give her government plane! Can you imagine that? She had to fly coach!"

Lanky has memories of another first lady, on the opposite end of the spectrum from Eleanor Roosevelt. Her name was Jacqueline Kennedy, and she arrived in Pakistan in November of 1962. There was a big crowd waiting to cheer and welcome Mrs. Kennedy, who was very elegantly dressed, as usual, and very obviously the product of a high-society lifestyle. "There was a big difference between those two ladies," says Lanky, who happened to be the Base Commander at the airfield where she landed. As he was shaking her hand he noticed something a bit peculiar about her. "She had a strange twitch in her eye," he says, "and one of the people in the crowd passed a loud remark in the Punjabi language, meaning 'she's winking at us!' I was glad that she did not understand our vernacular language!"

I wonder how many people in this world are able to compare the two greatest First Ladies, first-hand, like Lanky can? He's also met Queen Elizabeth, the Duke of Edinburgh, the Prime Minister of China, Chou-en-Lie, several Presidents like Egypt, Turkey and King Jordon and Iran and more princes and princesses, I'm sure, than he can count. As we talked, Lanky showed me picture after picture of him

standing next to one important figure or another. Many of the men in those pictures have since been assassinated, some of their countries don't even exist any more. Picture after picture fell to the floor, tossed aside by Lanky until they made a pretty impressive pile at my feet. I couldn't help feeling a bit alarmed by that pile. What if I accidentally spilled my coffee on it? What if somebody carelessly stepped on one of those truly fascinating photos? Everyone of them was a historical treasure, as far as I was concerned. But Lanky was not so concerned about them. I think the memories of those moments were much more important to him than the photos. The things he's learned in his seventy years, the peace he feels, and his continuing journey are all that truly matter. That is the Pakistani way. It is no wonder that Eleanor Roosevelt was so taken by that place.

When I left my interview with Lanky, my mind was swimming with images and recollections of Kings, Queens, Kennedy's and Roosevelt's. I felt like I had come just a step away from meeting those people myself. It was a very rewarding two hours.

And all of this from a sweet and gentle old man whom I met at a back porch barbecue party right here in Buena Vista. At one point I mentioned to him that his incredible, Forest Gump-like life should be put down in print, and indeed Lanky is writing a book about his life. It is titled "A Lucky Pilot" Memories of Retired Wing Commander Lanky Ahmad. A simple title for a simple man. I can't wait to get a copy.

After our interview, the most unanswered question was still gnawing away at me: "What crazy chain of events led Mr. Ahmad to be here, in Buena Vista, of all places on Earth?"

Lanky's answer was quite simple. Masood loves the terrain of Colorado which is like our own country. "Ken, the first thing I taught my children was that they should strive to be good citizens of the world, not just good citizens of Pakistan."

It is a lesson that his son, obviously took to heart. When Masood was old enough, he left Pakistan and plunged into the turbulent currents of a global life. Somehow, by-and-by, he landed here in our small community, made a bunch of friends like me, and then one day his father came to visit and now there I am writing about it

with a signed portrait of Eleanor Roosevelt given to him sitting on my desk in front of me. Personally, I think that's pretty darned cool.

Masood have a lifelong association with the Himalaya and Karakoram. His father, a pioneer of Pakistan Air Force explored the unchartered valleys and flying routes through these awesome mountains soon after his country came into existence in 1947.

APPENDIX 'C'

To K-2!

By Masood and Published in the Chaffee Country Times, Colorado on 21st Nov. 1996.

"Allah Akbar!" God is Great! The Balti porters cry out in unison as they move out in a single file onto the Vigne Glacier.

It is 2 a.m. and a moonless night. We are at 17,000 feet in the heart of the mighty Karakoram Range of Northern Pakistan.

Our goal is the 19,000-foot Gondogoro La (pass). This pass connects the most imposing mountain site in the world, Concorida, with another valley south of the second highest mountain in the world-K-2.

We are in a wonderland of lofty pinnacles, jagged mountains and the longest glaciers outside the polar regions of our planet.

Our party consists of ten Balti porters, three Hunza guides and three American clients who are on the adventure of a lifetime!

The warmth of the fire from our campsite is now long gone. In this absolute stillness, all we hear is the cranking of the metal from our ice axes as we venture into the icy void.

There is a faint path that our head porter is able to discern even in the dimming light of his lantern. We try to keep up with him with our flashlights.

There is a danger of hidden crevasses here and we keep our eyes fiercely focused on the next step. There is only one wish in our hearts: let there be light.

By the time the crystal clear sky turns crimson, we have made it to the base of the formidable Gondogoro La. We find ourselves surrounded by immense ice walls not unlike a white fluted gown of a young bride.

Our guide has fixed ropes with ice screws on the steep sections and we proceed to put our crampons on.

The climb begins.

We gasp for oxygen in this rarefied air.

We have to reach the top of the pass before 8 a.m. as there is danger of rock fall later in the day when the sun frees the frozen earth.

One by one we emerge into the bright morning sunlight, finally finding ourselves on the crest of Gondogoro La. What a view: K-2 (28,250 ft.) Broad Peak (26,400 ft.), Gasherbrum IV (26,000 ft.) jutting up beyond an endless ocean of pinnacles, points and fantastic peaks.

"This had to be the greatest mountain spectacle on our planet!" exclaims one of our clients.

On the other side of the Gondogoro La a huge avalanche thunders down from a massive ice peak next to us. The white cloud envelopes the entire valley thousands of feet below us.

A little farther down we see the beautiful pinnacle of Laila Peak. We are in the throne room of the mountain gods.

We have to descend immediately before the sun rises too high. Again ropes are fixed and we rappel down over scree and snow slopes. The constant danger of rock fall is over present in our minds and we somehow avoid a huge barrage of them.

At 2 p.m. we stagger, exhausted, into our heavenly campsite under the beautiful Laila Peak. We pitch our tents on a warm sandy beach surrounded by green meadows full of wild mountain flowers.

Later, we realize that we joined a handful of humans on this planet that were as high as us on that September day. Needless to say, the past 12 hours of our lives have been unforgettable.

