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Chapter 4B- My Air Force Overseas Duty in Turkey (1958)

My Arrival in Turkey

We landed south and west of Istanbul, Turkey on a small remote airstrip that the Germans used during WW2. A bus and truck eventually arrived to transport us a few miles to Karamursel which was the home of the USAFSS and the Navy Security Service.

The bags and cargo were unloaded, and my bag was missing. I had mistakenly assumed that the bags that we left at the counter at Rhein Main would be put on the plane. The others were told they had to retrieve and load their own bag, but I didn't get the word. The hassle of getting back on base without orders was a big distraction that morning. My head was hurting from the night in Frankfurt. All I had was my small carryon bag that in those days was called an AWOL bag. It was going to be a long time before I saw my bag again.

Karamursel was a mixture of old and fairly new construction surrounded by mud. I would be there for a week or so until transportation was set up to Samsun which is on the Black Sea and about 300 miles east of Istanbul. All I had to wear was the dress blues that I was wearing when I arrived. I scrounged around and retrieved an old pair of fatigues that had been discarded. I didn't have to report for duty, so lounged around and visited with people. I also spent a lot of time in the club which was an old left-over Quonset hut from the war. The waiters were Turkish and I had to get used to getting their attention with "Garcon". It was different as about half of the guys were Navy, half Air Force, a few Marines, and a few Army. However, we got along as we had a common mission.

Several of us got the word to proceed to Samsun and a few others on up to Trabzon. A bus took us to Yalova where we were dropped off to wait for the ferry to Istanbul. We drank tea with the locals and watched them play dominoes until it was time to board. It was a couple of hours to Istanbul where we debarked and walked to the "White Boat" that was our transportation up the coast of the Black Sea. In its previous life it was an old German passenger liner. It made the trip once a week. We had two to a cabin and it wasn't too bad. We spent most of our time in the lounge and bar. We arrived the next morning in Samsun and had to get in small boats for the trip to the pier. It was raining, the waves were high, and we got wet. I was wearing the big blue Air Force wool overcoat. It weighed about 100 pounds when wet.

We got a taxi to the Vindlisi Hotel. We would stay there until we could arrange to move in with other airman who had a vacancy, or we found a house or an apartment we could rent and set up housekeeping. We were told not drink the water without boiling it. That was a bother

and we drank the water anyway. It was two weeks of misery before the system became tolerant of it. There was no milk that you could drink.

The hotel had a dining room, small bar and a barber who I became good friends with. There were bedbugs that made life miserable. The toilets were holes in the floor. I was in the hotel about a month then found a vacancy in a house and moved in with three airmen who would be leaving in a few weeks.

My Work and Living Arrangements in Samsun

I was placed on Dog Trick and began shift work. The shift rotation was three on day shift, come back the next day for three swing shifts, then come back the next day for three midnights, then two full days off and start the rotation again. It kept you totally out of synch with the world and it was difficult to get a good night's sleep.

Each shift had about five intercept radio operator positions, a couple Russian linguists, radar people, and some analysts. The mission was mainly Russian missile launch facilities across the Black Sea and deep within Russia.

Our site was a small fenced compound on the mountain. The Turkish army lived in shacks and provided security. We had an old wooden operations building, a motor pool shack, and a small PX. The PX had a few essential items like beer, cigarettes that were rationed one carton per week, and booze that was rationed one quart per week. Strange they could get this stuff but essentially no American food. I remember some catsup came in and we were allowed two bottles per person. I was happy also to get a bar of American soap. There was an outhouse that had a great view looking out over Samsun and the Black Sea, especially in the early morning with the sun coming up. For water onsite we had a war surplus water trailer that would hold about 400 gallons. We would pour a bunch of bleach in it and our Turkish driver would fill it up somewhere in town. Who knows where the water came from. That is what the bleach was for.

On the way up to the site we would pass peasants trudging to town or back to their villages. The women and children would be carrying heavy loads and walking. The man would be riding a donkey, smoking and enjoying life.

Kids would throw rocks at us. We rode in the back of a 6x6 with a canvas top and it was hazardous. Also, cold in bad weather. The Air Force solution was to gut the back end of a hard-sided communications truck and put benches in it. At least the rocks bounced off the hard sides. Much later we got an old bus. One night we boarded the bus for the midnight shift and the locals stormed around trying to turn it over or whatever they could do to it. The Turkish army appeared out of nowhere with rifles and fixed bayonets and dispersed the hooligans. We

never knew what to expect in Samsun and appreciated the Turkish Army having our back that night.

The first place I moved into was a small white 2-story dwelling with a Turkish family upstairs. We were on the ground floor and the windows were covered with steel bars for security.

We were quite a way from the town center. One night we partied all night. Morning came and we wandered out because of a commotion in the street. A Turk was laying dead with his throat cut.

The guys I was boarding with were going home I did not want to stay in the place any longer. So, four of us that worked together on Dog Trick rented an apartment on the fourth floor of an apartment building that was closer to the town center. We set up housekeeping and after a couple of inept maids we hired a good maid, Futma, that we paid \$15 per month in equivalent Turkish lira. She had worked for an American officer in Ankara and had a written recommendation. Her husband was a drug addict in prison in Samsun and she needed to be nearby to take him food as the Turkish prison did not provide any. We found out later that he had two wives, Futma, and another one who we met one time.

We were able to buy the large American refrigerator from the house I had been in since it was being vacated. A little Turk strapped it on his back and carried it by himself up the stairs. The only trouble with the apartment was that it was directly across the street from a Mosque that started wailing at sunrise. But then you could hear them from all over town, so it didn't make much difference.

For hot water we had a tank with a fire box in the bottom. If you wanted hot water you built a fire and waited. Our cook stove used wood or coal. When we moved in the toilet was the standard Turkish hole in the floor. We managed to find a western style toilet and installed it over the hole and would flush it with buckets of water. It worked and sure beat the hole in the floor.

I had mailed my civilian clothes from Kirknewton, and they showed up shortly after I arrived, so I had civvies to wear. My bag that was left in Germany showed up five weeks later. It was mostly uniforms that we were not to wear in Samsun, so it was no big deal.

Turkey and Greece were having a dispute over an island and there were big organized protests even in Samsun. We were restricted to our quarters when off duty as the crowds were unruly. Our apartment was on the parade route and the street was completely full on and off for about two days with rowdy protestors marching by. We went up on the roof of our apartment building and watched and took pictures.

I received a per diem check every month (as I recall about \$180) and never had to cash one in the year I was in Samsun. My monthly salary (about \$150) was paid in U.S. currency, and we could get three times the exchange rate on the black market, so my salary was plenty adequate. Since we never cashed a check, or exchanged hardly any currency with the Air Force, an officer from Karamursel was sent to investigate. We never heard anymore about it after he saw the living conditions, interviewed us, and we promised to exchange a little money to make it look good.

We gave our maid 10 lire (about a dollar on the black market) a day for food that she would buy each day in the local markets. It was mostly water buffalo that was too old to work, mutton, and fish. The water buffalo and mutton hung in the front window of the butcher shop and was covered with flies. She served a nice roast one evening that was different and tasted pretty good. I asked her what it was, and she replied "kerpec". I thought it over and said "dog?" and she replied in the affirmative. We told her "no more dog". Futma took good care of us, We had sit down meals when she was there, and she did her best to make them appeal to our taste. It wasn't always possible given what she had to work with. We gave her one day off a week and made do without her.

Futma had to leave for a while and go back to Ankara for something and she arranged for another maid while she was gone. One morning she didn't have our lunches ready to take with us for the day shift. I came back down the hill later to pick them up and caught the interim maid cleaning the toilet with one of our tooth brushes. On top of that our lunches that day were fish sandwiches. She had put a fish with the bones intact between two slices of bread. I conferred with the other guys, fired her, and we did without a maid until Futma got back.

We longed for pork since it is forbidden in Turkey. About every three months our Turkish mechanic would work over our old 6x6 and we would send a couple of guys in it to Ankara and the American base that had a fully stocked base exchange. We would make up an order for our house which always had several canned hams and about three big rolls of baloney on it. The baloney rolls were about four inches across and about two feet long and we could make short work of one. It was over 250 miles through mountains and bad roads and took several days for the round trip. We were never sure how long it would take because of the old truck and the bad roads. It was a big relief and a real treat when they got back. Futma was not happy about serving pork but she did her job. We also had a variety of cans of soup in our order. After a while it would all be gone except cream of mushroom as the guys didn't like it. I got to like cream of mushroom soup when Futma was not around and I needed something to eat.

Just before I left for the states we returned to the apartment after working all night and found the place totally ransacked. Stuff was thrown everywhere. One guy lost about \$500 in camera equipment. I didn't lose anything as I kept my stuff in a metal foot locker that I kept locked. It sure shook us up.

Old Girl Friend Resurfaces

I was in Samsun about two months when I received a well traveled envelope with a card in it. It had gone to my former address at Kirknewton, Scotland but my forwarding address had expired. My old buddy George Page was still there, and still handling the mail, and had saved my address in his address book. He sent it on to me or I would not have gotten it. It was from Larue and had a Walnut Creek, California address on it. I was quite surprised and happy. I guessed that she figured I would be back in the states before long and who knows? I opened it and there was a card with a guy at one end of a long table, a gal on the other end of the table, and a candle in the middle. The wording was, "is there still a spark between us?" I thought it was pretty appropriate and answered right back. As I had heard she had gone to California to live with her sister, Loa and brother-in-law Max. She was working at the Bank of America in Walnut Creek. I assumed that since she sent the card she might be unattached. I wrote back that I had extended my overseas tour and would not be back until late December instead of August, and maybe we could get together. We continued to correspond the rest of my time in Turkey. In one of her last letters she and her sister Loa extended an invitation to come to Walnut Creek. It was looking like we would see each other again after all.

Our Mission in Samsun, Turkey

We were a detachment of the USAFSS 6933rd Radio Group Mobile but by diplomatic treaty operational units like ours were not allowed in Turkey. So, we were disguised as "Turkey and U.S. Logistics (TUSLOG) Detachment 3-2". We were merely "advisors" to the Turkish military.

My mission was to locate and copy Soviet transmissions of Morse code. The targets were deep behind the iron curtain and the other side expended every effort to obscure the transmissions under man made noise called jamming. They had reason to do so as they were conducting the early testing and launch of ICBM's and did not want the world to know. The only way to hear and copy the Morse code was to turn the volume to the maximum and work the squelch to try to hear the underlying transmission. In these extreme conditions the audio meter would peg at its maximum limit and the headsets would feel like they were bouncing. One way to reduce the trauma was to move the headset forward of the ears. This was not too successful, so the next method was to move the headset back over one ear and not subject both ears at the same time to the suffering. I usually used the right ear and when I did this it seemed to be more discriminating. However, to get better accuracy it usually required moving the headset back over both ears and getting both ears blasted. Our standard saying was that "we will probably not be able hear by middle age". How little did we know that it would be the case.

We were locked into the "Cold War" and we took our mission very seriously, so we put up with the ear trauma. I seemed to have the knack to find and copy the tough ones and became the "go to" guy on Dog Trick.

During the summer of 1958 I was transferred to Charlie Trick as the Shift Supervisor of about 25. I also manned my radio operator position. On the night shifts I had sole responsibility for the men and the operation of the site. I was an Airman First Class and was replacing a Sergeant that was not getting the job done. In that position I was privy to a lot more information. One being briefing books on the other side. I could read up on "Ivan" and his drinking habits. Some nights "Ivan" seemed to slur his dits and dahs, so what I read was accurate.

In September 1958 I was approached by our only officer, a Lieutenant, and told I was out of uniform. I could not figure how I could be as I was not in uniform. Then he handed me Staff Sgt stripes as I had been promoted. Now my pay including allowances was \$205 per month, plus I was getting my monthly per diem check. I was also advised that I should reenlist. I said I would consider it, but knew I was not going to.

We started getting short handed that fall due to the lack of replacement personnel. We got down to 12 radio operators total and went to three shifts. Each shift had four operators operating around the clock on 12 hour shifts and no days off. I don't recall how long it lasted.

Incidents Providing Motivation

The following are five incidents that made us realize how important a position we occupied in Samsun and the Cold War. They also gave us added determination to carry out our mission under harsh conditions.

1. The summer of 1958 the magazine **Aviation Week** published a feature article with photos which blew our cover. The other side then made our mission much more difficult with even more jamming and noise covering the transmissions.
2. Two U.S. Congressmen arrived on a fact-finding mission to observe in person what we were doing. I was dutifully impressed when in the middle of the night they were standing behind me observing my work that was in full progress at the time. However, I was too involved to talk with them as I was locked onto a launch count down in progress in the far reaches of the USSR.
3. The seriousness of our mission was further impressed on our minds and made us even more diligent after the tragic "shoot down" by Russia of a specially equipped C-130 (tail #60528). It was on a top secret electronic intelligence gathering (ELINT) mission out of Adana, Turkey with USAFSS Morse intercept operators and language specialists all known as "backenders". It was shot down by Russian MIG's on September 2, 1958 when it was close to Soviet Armenia,

just across the Black Sea from our location. All 17 "backenders" and 6 flight crew members were lost. The "shoot down" was not fully disclosed until remains were returned 39 years later. A monument was established on September 2, 1998 at NSA Headquarters in Fort Meade, Maryland.

I had been wanting to volunteer for these missions for the excitement, and to get flight pay, but decided that it was not the thing to do. As I was finishing up in Turkey I had the option of volunteering for flight duty operating out of Germany on these missions. It required one more year of overseas duty, but I had endured enough.

4. Our presence in Samsun, Turkey on the Black Sea annoyed the soviets and Kruschev so much that a MIG fighter buzzed our hilltop operations area.

5. The U2 over-flights of the USSR were launching from Turkey, and after I departed in late November 1958, Gary Powers was brought down over the USSR.

The Soviets were very aggressive and would fly near Samsun on occasion. We were told that if we were overrun by aggressors we would be on our own and should head for the mountains and go inland. That was really comforting. After that some unmarked crates arrived with rifles in them. Most of our guys had guns already that they ordered supposedly for wild boar and bird hunting.

Social Life in Samsun

There were no Air Force females in Samsun and there was no fraternization with Turkish women. Women were fully covered from head to toe and we were told not to look at them, and they didn't look at us. You couldn't help but notice there was some real beauty behind some of those veils.

There was one encounter that nearly caused an international incident. Four of our guys lived on the second floor of a house near the location of my first house. Across an open field was a 2-story house of a well to do Turkish family and they had a daughter who left Samsun for her advanced education. She became westernized and was a very attractive young lady. She came home to visit her family and while standing out on the back balcony she took notice of the airmen in the house across the field. They took notice also, and I can't remember his name but will call him John, hit it off with her across the open space. John and the young lady managed to rendezvous in the dark until her father caught onto what was going on. He then started aiming a rifle at the airmen's house. I got word since they were on my shift and went over to see what was going on. I walked in and they were hunkered down around the windows. Each had a rifle, shotgun, or pistol and they were ready for a shooting war. I got John out of there and hid him in our apartment. He was ordered out of the country and we put him on the White

Boat a day or so later. We heard much later that John and the young lady got together and were married. That incident could have gotten our clandestine operation and all of us kicked out of Turkey.

We had an empty lot with a big stone fence around it that the Air Force leased. We had a ball diamond and a big screen and benches for showing movies in good weather. Turks would sit on the wall smoking and watch what we were doing, and it was a little spooky at times. We also had a small NCO club on the 2nd floor of a building that was called "Hardship Haven" and had coupon books that we purchased for five dollars. I think a beer was a 10-cent coupon and I still have a book with some coupons in it. For some reason I was put on the board of advisors with the perk of receiving free beer during our meetings. We had a lot of meetings.

Once a month a Catholic Chaplain from Karamursel would come on the White Boat and stay a couple of nights until it came back through on its return to Istanbul. He spent his time in the Hardship Haven getting blitzed every night and always had a bottle of booze in his briefcase. He liked to come to Samsun. Not being Catholic I don't know if he ever conducted a service. The only place it could have been held was in the club, so I might have been there.

On our long break we would get the 6x6 and load it up with several cases of beer at the PX, whatever rationed booze we had coming, and proceed to the apartment. We had a nice Grundig stereo from Germany and a lot of albums and that was our weekend entertainment.

A couple of times we rented a Turk and his small boat to take us fishing on the Black Sea. He would not go out very far because of the "Ruskies" that he kept pointing to across the Black Sea. We got the message. We never caught anything and would stop and buy fish at the market on our way home. Futma told us we were good fishermen, but I think she was on to our act.

One long break we decided to camp on the beach. We loaded up the 6x6 with all our stuff and headed out of town about 20 miles to a secluded beach. We were having a grand time until the second day a farmer herded his water buffalo to the beach to wash them off and hang around. We loaded up and cleared out.

Our only officer, Lt. Generaux, was a good guy and liked our apartment social gatherings. He was a Yale graduate and accustomed to fraternity life, so he fit right in. He would show up in the evenings when we were on long break and party into the night. The trouble is he would get a little out of control and we would have to slow him down. and get him to behave. When he left Samsun we went out to the White Boat and spent all morning seeing him off. There are not many officers like him.

Everyone liked our apartment for parties on the long break. In a letter to LaRue I referred to them as "Group Discussions". We often had as many as 15 in attendance. It would go until the wee hour of the morning or until the beer ran out then everyone would crash on the floor.

A British freighter arrived carrying equipment for our site on the mountain and pick up Turkish tobacco and was anchored well out into the bay. We met some of the seaman who invited us out to the ship for some British beer and food which was a great treat. We then invited them to our apartment to socialize and it went well into the night. Towards morning they needed to get back to the ship, so we escorted them to the pier to find a Turk and a boat to get them back. Nobody was around so we tried starting a couple of boats with no success. We finally found a Turk with a boat to take us all out and we got the seaman delivered. On the way back to the pier we challenged one of the guys to jump overboard which he promptly did clothes and all. We got him back aboard with no loss of life.

There was a Turk that had a yellow horse drawn carriage that had a top with fringe hanging down. We named it the "Five Ten to Yuma" and would rent it for a ride around town in the evenings. We also did some hiking and exploring the outskirts of town and found buried Roman ruins that we could drop down into and look around the big rooms. The arches and design and color of the tile was amazing. We found old roman coins and lots of broken pieces of pottery.

Once in a while I would walk to the Vindlisi Hotel and have lunch and a beer or two in the bar and visit with my barber friend. One day I was there with Bob Langston from Iowa and two open cockpit biplanes came buzzing over the city and landed in a field. Bob and I and the barber took off and went out to see the airplanes. It turns out they were barnstormers selling rides. So, Bob and I rented both planes and pilots, put on parachutes, and took off. We did some stunts and flew over our operations site and got a lot of pictures. I took off my Harris tweed sport coat that I bought in Scotland to wear the parachute and I have pictures of my barber friend wearing it.

The barber invited us to come to his house for a Turkish dinner. He served the national drink Raqi which we were familiar with and very potent. It has an opium derivative in it and turns white when mixed with water. He cooked up a huge meal for us that I think we enjoyed. He wanted an American electric razor, so I ordered one through the PX. Then I worried about getting caught by the authorities and thrown in the clinker. We heard of a few airmen in the early days that were caught selling items on the black market and were beaten severely with rubber hoses and locked up.

There was an older civilian in town that said he was an American, and a tobacco buyer, and he would come around and be friendly. I think he might have been a spy trying to get information. We had been thoroughly coached that there would be Russian agents around and we never

talked business outside of the compound as our surroundings could be, and probably were bugged.

Before I got to Samsun a week of R and R leave to Istanbul was granted after six months of duty. After I arrived the policy was cancelled, and I would be there the whole year without any R and R. The Air Force got me again.

We had an incident that caused all of us some grief. One of the guys was from Boston, Massachusetts. He wrote a letter to his mother complaining about the living conditions and how badly we were treated. About a month later all hell broke loose with headquarters all over us. It turns out the guy's mother worked for a Senator Kennedy from Massachusetts. He told the Secretary of the Air Force to find out what is going on over there. It took a while to get all the answers submitted and people off our backs. Before I departed Samsun ground was broken for a new operations site complete with barracks and facilities. I wonder if that letter and the congressional visit had anything to do with it? That Senator Kennedy became President two years later.

Time went slowly. I was being bugged to reenlist and even told the Air Cadets and pilot training was an option if I signed up for six more years. I was too wise for that by now and my mind was made up to go to college and get a degree. My parents were in Guatemala and I had no home to go back to, did not know where I would be going, or what I would do as soon as I was discharged. My options were wide open. I was full of indecision and apprehension about entering civilian life and what I was going to do in the future, but my mind was made up to do it.

Some of the guys tried to persuade me to extend my enlistment and we would put in for a year at a newly opened site in a remote area. Per diem was \$11 per day versus the \$6 or so per day we were getting in Samsun, so it really had to be bad. I believe the site was in Pakistan. No thanks, I have had enough and will go home.

My Journey Back to Civilian Life

The time to depart finally came. We had a big party in the apartment that spilled over the next morning onto the White Boat.

The following dates and times are from a 5x5 scrap of paper that I recorded them on.

22 Nov 1958

1200 Dep Samsun - commercial boat

23 Nov 1958

1400 Arr Istanbul

I went to the NCO club the Air Force maintained in town and had a hamburger and even some milk as I had not had any for a year. I hit a jackpot on a slot machine and didn't even care as the money didn't seem to matter. I had to go to Karamursel the next day to process out so got a hotel room and spent the night in semi luxury.

24 Nov 1958

1200 Dep Istanbul - commercial ferry
1500 Arr Yalova
1500 Dep Yalova by bus
1530 Arr Karamursel

While processing out the next day I was given the option of staying for several days to get my discharge physical and paper work completed or wait until I reached the U.S. I opted for getting out of Turkey as fast as possible. As the following entries show I caught the ferry back to Istanbul with travel orders to depart Istanbul on November 28.

26 Nov 1958

1130 Dep Karamursel by bus
1200 Arr Yalova
1230 Dep Yalova by commercial ferry
1430 Arr Istanbul

Another guy and I got a nice hotel room and relaxed. We met some embassy people the last night that were having a party at the nearby Hilton and we were invited. We went but were kind of partied out and did not stay long.

28 Nov 1958

1045 Dep Istanbul by plane (*Turkish Airlines*)
1145 Arr Ankara
1500 Dep Ankara by plane (*Olympic Airlines*)
2000 Arr Tripoli airport (*Libya, North Africa*)
2015 Dep Tripoli airport by bus.
2100 Arr Wheelus AFB

While walking to the bus in Tripoli I saw a guy that I knew in Biloxi and exchanged greetings. After we arrived at Wheelus we were put up in transient quarters to await a flight to the U.S. It was supposed to be the next day but the Military Air Transport Service (MATS) C-121 Super Connie had an engine problem that the mechanics worked on all day. They worked on it for three days before it was given the OK to fly. Sure made us feel good.

I saw a Rolex Oyster Date wristwatch in the Wheelus AFB base exchange and bought it for \$69.50. I still have It, and also the receipt.

01 Dec 1958

0335 Dep Wheelus AFB

0900 Arr Lajes Field (local time) (*Portugese Azores*)

9hr 30min 2,196 miles

I was in a window seat and after a while went to sleep. I felt us losing altitude and woke up to see ocean and big waves out my window and very close. The seats face to the rear in military aircraft so I could not see forward, but felt sure we were ditching in the ocean. Then we plopped onto a runway. We had not been told we would be landing that soon, so we assumed it was a mechanical problem. The troublesome engine needed to be worked on. A bunch of us headed to the NCO Club to fortify ourselves and stayed until we were alerted for a 4:30pm departure. We got back on the plane and taxied and stopped. A jeep came out and a ground crewman ran out and removed the lock on the nose gear that had been forgotten. We were soon on our way but not feeling all that confident in our MATS airplane.

1630 Dep Lajes, Azores

2315 Arr Bermuda (local time) (*got off while the plane was refueled*)

8hr 45min 1,908 miles

02 Dec 1958

0130 Dep Bermuda

0430 Arr Charleston AFB, South Carolina

A big cheer and round of applause erupted when we touched down in Charleston. A Sgt came on board and made the announcement that due to the trouble in town caused by returnees like us we would be restricted to the base until discharged or sent to another duty assignment. After three years and nearly four months overseas that did not go over well with me.

A guy in the transient barracks told us of a hole in the fence nearby. So, a few of us went to town that night. It was really a treat to walk into a cafe and get good food. We managed to stay out of trouble in the bars.

I couldn't wait to call LaRue and got a roll of quarters, some small change, and found a bank of pay phones out on the sidewalk. I summoned up my courage and dialed but she was out for the evening. I tried again the next night with no success. I gave up and didn't try again as I was too scared to make the call. Her sister Loa let her know I was trying to call her however.

I was looking through the base exchange and spotted a small transistor radio that had just been introduced. It was a Motorola and about four inches high, six inches wide, two inches thick, and ran on four AA batteries. It was new on the market and such a novelty that I had to have one even if it was \$50 which was a lot of money in those days.

The food in the transient mess hall was served on plates instead of the standard steel trays. Everything was good after being in Turkey. I think the Air Force was putting on a good show for the other military branches traveling through Charleston AFB, and guys waiting for separation that might be on the fence. It didn't sway me.

Processing out did not go well for me. My blood pressure was up, and the doctor would not clear me for discharge. I had to go in every morning to get it checked. Then we would fall out for work detail. Since I was a S/Sgt I would be assigned a few airmen to police around the swimming pool. We would go a couple of blocks and I would head to the club for coffee. Same thing in the afternoon and I never did see the swimming pool. The doctor told me to lay off the booze and I tried it to no avail. So, I decided to go to town with some guys and we had a big night out. The next day my blood pressure was fine. So much for the doctor's advice.

I was discharged on December 15, 1958 after four years and three months in the Air Force. It was a strange feeling to be totally free, with no home, no job, no pay coming in, and nobody telling me what to do, and when to do it. I did not know what to do, so my instinct told me to head for Idaho, which I did.

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