

GOD IN THE COCKPIT

One evening, a young Air Force captain at Wheelus Air Base in Tripoli, Libya, came striding into the Protestant Men's banquet very late.

The crowd was all but finished with the meal. The captain was still in his flying gear, and his face bore the marks of weariness and strain. He was president of the Protestant Men.

He walked to the front of the room and rapped on the podium for attention. After thanking everyone for coming, he apologized for being late.

In a voice laden with emotion, he said, "Men, it has been a hard day. Flying out of Turkey, I had difficulty with the radio, and finally lost it altogether. Then, when I approached the landing field here, the gear would not go down. I circled and circled and circled, but still the gear would not go down.

"As I contemplated what I should do, something told me to circle the field once more. I did, and the landing gear came clear. God was in the cockpit with me tonight."

The strength of this man's testimony causes me to appreciate even more fully the words of the Air Force song always sung at the close of a chapel service: "Lord, guard and guide the men who fly."

The prayer voiced in these lyrics should be on the lips of all Americans – asking God to guard and guide our men and women in uniform in every branch of our Armed Forces. They voluntarily put their lives on the line to protect the freedoms we hold dear in this nation.

We are approaching the 70th anniversary of the attack by the Imperial Japanese Navy against the United States naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on Dec. 7, 1941. Among the results: four U.S. Navy battleships were sunk, 188 U.S. aircraft were destroyed, and – the worst part – 2,402 men were killed and 1,282 were wounded.

We must never forget the lesson of Pearl Harbor: to be vigilant against those who would mount aggression against our nation and to have a military that is strong and prepared to defend our way of life. We thank those who put on the uniforms of our country.

May God bless them every one.

– Beecher Hunter