

THE END AND THE BEGINNING

"Dedicated to the men of the 311th Photo Wing, Army Air Forces"

By Cpl. Irving Stein

THE MISSION

"Chart us the earth," they said.
(The work of gods)

Earth is a pebbled universe
With turrets, moats, and kings,
Earth is savages and jungle,
Bleaching desert, frowning wind,
Heat that claims the body's liquids,
Ghostly icecaps, furrowed hills,
Raging waterways with muck
For the ocean's piling bed.

Earth is dynasties decayed,
Many tongues and many hatreds,
Many tortures fixed by man,
Idol worship, foreign devils,
Ways of birth and ways of death,
How to curry sacred goat,
Which foot forward,
Whom to praise.
"Chart us the earth," they said.
(And it was done.)

TRI-METROGON

First was the skyroads
Out of one hundred octane
Came the power.
From feverish props
Came pull.
From engines of tiny discs and rods,
Came life.
The sky man climbed to an ethral buggy
And flew.
And the birds stood still.
Cameras were there,
Shuttered and lensed
To sketch the earth on a nine by nine
Called film.

Then came the Flight.
Strip upon strip
The earth was tamed.
What the centuries had squandered
In a geologic trust
Was impressed upon the membrane
Known as film.

The sky men conquered the earth.
Found mystic valleys
Long at rest,
Winged to the source of river cairns,
Thumbed at the mountain minarets
That ranged in secret strata;
Flushed the floodplain
From undulating covey,

Captured watersheds and streams,
And glacial crests.

The sky men filmed an orphaned land of earth.
A mist land.
Where water and the soil enriched each other
And only God could break the peace.
A silent land
Of islands in a sea
And twisting brooks
With neither shores nor motion.
The sky men were the Grecian myth revived
Of a sun-god in a golden chariot drawn by steeds
Across the dome of Heaven.

CONTROL

Then was the ground work
Wanders in khaki ventured that.
With 'angulators, sleeping bags, and atabrine
They left to plot the skies,
To steal from the stars
Reflections at the points men call Control.
Mercury was the fetish—
Numbers was the creed—
Control—, the goal.
They pigmied on,
Lolling at tired beaches,
Climbing footways in the forest,
Over ancient, pick-marked ice,
Along the rivers and through wadis in the sand.

They slept in tents of chieftains,
Slept in saddles, slept in forts,
They tasted food of many lands.
They traveled muleback, dogsled, steamer,
plane,
Handcar, jeep and foot.

And the nights were cloudy,
And the nights were wet,
But the single goal men called Control
Was grail for the lonely trek.

THE LABORATORY

Film!
Like jewels from fabulous Kimberly
Brought to the cutter's bench,
The film returned.
In tins, labeled to the States;
Quick hands and dim lights,
Rotary washers sloughing at emulsion,
Dryers, printers, developers, hypo,
A magical crypt where matter gets its form.
Hundreds and thousands,
The final product—, prints.
The prints are studied, sorted, boxed,
And mailed to hungry eyes
And vaults recommended to posterity.

COMPILATION

"Chart us the earth," they said:
(And the charts were made.)

Acetates and indices,
Stereos and templates,
And rectobliques and ink:
Control was harnessed to a metal frame
By stocking feet
A-pat on the earth's projection:
Some sought points
As Pass, Detail, and Tie;
Some indexed squares
That flying height and mean terrain decreed;
Some crept to absent cockpits,
Figured tip and tilt and isolines
And azimuth
And false and true horizons
And nadirs countless miles beneath the soil;
Some spelt with colored lines
The ridges, waters, railroads, and towns.

They plucked at earth with mirrors and bold
lights.

The prints, millions, were ravished
By mathematical dexterity
In a room with little folk.
They viewed in two dimensions
And imagined all as three.
They sought, "If the camera station's here,
"And the right oblique is thus,
"And the collimating factor makes it so.
"How will squares of this divided
"Equal tangents added twice?"
Which is something average man would never
know.

THE CHARTS

"Here are the charts," we said.
(And the work was done and the work begun.)

The chart is the skyway marker,
A pastel-shaded maze
Of twisted lakes and spiral streams,
Of airports, towers, lightships, beams,
Of contours, dams, and riverways.
Magnetic bearings, cities, bridges,
Tunnels, glaciers, swamps, and ridges.

The planes rolled out.
Bombardment, reconnaissance, transport,
Cargo, pursuit, attack, passenger,
Mercy missions.
The planes took off.
And the earth was small.
Here are the road makers, style New age,
Gone is macadam, asphaltum, and gravel,
Gone is the red light, detour, slow down,
Gone is the cop and the parking sign.
There's an endless vast
With an overcast
And the highway's a chart with lines,
Where ethral cars
Patrol the stars
In the heavenly confines.

END AND BEGINNING

Calcutta, Khartoum, Ascension,
Natal and home.
Sixty hours flying time
By a pulpy, prescient chart.
The earth is small!

Sweat and brains and deprivation
For the skyway trend of Nation,
For the newest age of man, AGE OF ETHER.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Secretary-Treasurer has available a rather complete stock of emblems. These emblems may be obtained from his office in the following styles, at the prices quoted:

	Pin	Charm	Button
Gold	\$6.25	\$6.25	\$6.25
Silver	1.00	.75	.75
*Bronze	.75	.75	.75

A substantial replacement stock of these emblems has recently been ordered, and will be delivered about July 1st, with the exception of the bronze emblems, which will not be delivered until about September 1st.

Orders now received for emblems not in stock will be held in abeyance until they are available.

* Will be available about September 1, 1945.