Chapter 17

Bye, Bye, Project Long Shot

Back in Anchorage, we closed all our records, shut down the project, and dissolved our office – thus eliminating our jobs.

Certain personnel matters were in order for all the employees of Project Long Shot. Everyone who completed the project received a letter of commendation, and certain personnel (including myself) received awards. I accepted mine with gratitude and, was able to designate to useful purposes the increased pay I received along with the award. Other awards were not as easily accomplished.

My Industrial Property Assistant was on TDY from another Corps of Engineers District. We initiated the paperwork for an award for him (which he definitely deserved), but his home District refused to follow through, and would not give him the award. To make a long story short, a loophole was found, and we were able to give him his well deserved award from the Alaska District. After this episode he attained a transfer to the Alaska District, then later moved on overseas to an assignment in Korea. I lost contact with him after this.

It's now again December, and time to return to Oklahoma. Once again I expected that I might never see Alaska again, but boy was I wrong.

I had almost an uneventful trip home, but one incident made me a little nervous. On my flight from Portland to Denver, something peculiar happened to our plane. This was out over the Rocky Mountains somewhere near the "point-of-no-return", so on to Denver we went.

On this flight our airplane, a DC-9, seemed to be sliding through a gravel bed periodically. The weather was smooth, so there was no problem there, but every ten or fifteen minutes, a sound similar to dragging a piece of tin through loose gravel would persist for about a minute. A vibration accompanied the sound. I waited after each episode for our pilot to come on the public address system and soothe our nerves, but no such word – all the way to Denver. Perhaps what he would have told us would make us more nervous.

I was due to change flights in Denver, and I was very glad. I had about an hour layover between flights there, but just as I was boarding my flight on to Wichita and Tulsa, an announcement was made throughout the airport that the flight I had come in on was cancelled (it was to have proceeded on to Washington and New York). The announcement continued that a decision would be made shortly as to whether they would resume that flight with another airplane or if passengers would be re-routed on other flights to their destination. I left on my flight shortly thereafter and never learned what happened.

Next stop Tulsa, Oklahoma.