

a light, unarmed plane.

"I was the only one from the 695th who was promoted overseas, and I think I was promoted because I volunteered for that flying duty," surmises Bob who came home with the rank of Captain. "Nobody else wanted to do it. Nobody's about to volunteer to get shot at." And he was indeed occasionally shot at. "We flew at 3,000 feet. A .22 will go over a mile. And the only reason they wouldn't shoot at you is because you can shoot back with artillery. I only knew of one shell that went past me. First you feel it in the seat of your pants and then a shell goes zipping by you. I saw it go. I felt it and saw it," he pauses and adds, "small arms, you don't know." Bob Scatchard was awarded the Air Medal with two oak leaf clusters for his service in Korea.

That meant he flew a minimum of 120 missions.

In 1952, Bob Scatchard came home for the second time and went to work for an architect. "I'm not a Beaux Arts type of guy," he growls, adding that his pay at this firm was ridiculously low. So he took a job in plant design and construction with Western Electric in New York City, right where the World Trade Center was yet to be built and yet to be blown up.

The next thing you know, Bob Scatchard is designing and building a

huge telephone distribution and refurbishing facility in Milwaukee. In 1965, the Scatchards moved to the Washington, D.C. area. He was now a building engineer for his old employer, AT&T, responsible for buildings and towers in a five-state region. They bought their lot on a lagoon at Lake of the Woods in 1968, before the lake had filled up with water.

Also in 1968, a division of AT&T, American Bell International, was recruiting people to go to Iran to build what an appreciation plaque on Bob's wall calls "a modern integrated telecommunications system." As luck would have it, the guy doing the hiring was a colleague of Bob's from Western Electric.

The Iran adventure lasted a year. "We were evacuated after the Shah left and Khomeini came in, and we lost all the stuff we took over, the stuff that we bought there was burned."

It was near Christmas time. The American Bell International employees in Iran were looking forward to a vacation; many had left already, and they couldn't get back in. It was up to Bob to pack up all their belongings

and put them in a warehouse for eventual shipment back to the states. But the warehouse caught fire and everything burned. There were only nine employees left in Iran when Bob made it to Greece with \$17 in his pocket. He invested \$12 of it in a tele-

phone call home and arranged for \$4,000 to be wired to him. He and Doris used the money to go around the world "backwards"...Bangkok, Singapore, Taipei, Japan, Hawaii, home.

Bob continued to work as a concrete and steel design architect for

1982 to go to Egypt for two years for Contel. There, they had an apartment that, "we could look out our window at the pyramids." During that time, Bob went on safari in Kenya.

Since then, the Scatchards have lived at Lake of the Woods. He used to be an active sailor until he noticed



At left, a journey through Bob Scatchard's scrap book sparks numerous tales of his experiences in two wars. Top photo, Scatchard piloted a B-17 during World War II. He helped train navigators to learn how to bomb in inclement weather using belly-mounted radar.

Photos by Phil Audibert

AT&T until his official retirement in 1980. He started building his home at Lake of the Woods in 1979, relieved to see that the dam had indeed held water and the lagoon had filled.

The house is quite extraordinary. Not particularly conspicuous from the outside, this cedar-sided structure is an engineering marvel. All post and beam construction, it features a vaulted ceiling with a fireplace and chimney rising right up through the middle of the room, separating the kitchen from the living area.

In 2000, Bob added a two-story four-car concrete garage that could probably take a direct hit from those Howitzers he was shooting in Korea.

Bob and Doris briefly enjoyed their new home when an offer came in

it was taking him away from his three children. "We were sailing on Sundays and the kids were coming Sundays, and I'd be sailing. I'd come home and they'd say, 'Goodbye.' So I said, 'sailing isn't worth that.'"

Currently, he tinkers with any number of things in his basement shop and office. Fully recovered from knee replacement surgery, he energetically bounds out of his office chair as he remembers another detail from his past and rummages through the shelves and stacks of paper.

At 83, he is frustrated by occasional memory lapses and apologizes for the mess in his office. "It's funny what you can't find after you clean up," he says knowingly.

Amen to that.



The education paid off



For Bob Scatchard, it all started with a good teacher. His name was Gordon Taylor. He taught science, and he saw something in this junior high school kid from Denville, New Jersey. "He evidently thought I was pretty good," says Bob modestly. "I never thought I was that good. I was not that good in school."

Scatchard leans back in his office chair in the house he designed and built himself at Lake of the Woods, surrounded by mementos of his experiences as a pilot in World War II, an artillery officer in Korea and

his civilian career as a building engineer for telephone companies that took him from one corner of the globe to the other. He goes back to Gordon Taylor, his mentor...how they made a model of a working power station, and built a rheostat system for the school's assembly hall using an old pump organ as a controller. "I had no opportunity to get into college," he says, "we didn't have that much money. That was the Depression and my dad was selling oranges, even."

The mentor took Scatchard and

Top photo, the guy on the left is an infantry officer in training. He hasn't a clue how to fly a B-17. The guy on the right is Bob Scatchard, currently of Lake of the Woods, and he certainly does have a clue how to fly B-17s. At left, all bundled up in leather and shearling, Bob Scatchard prepares for a training flight at one of the numerous midwest air bases that he called home in 1943 and 1944.

one of their science projects to Princeton. "While we were there, he points to these bottles on the wall and says, 'That's heavy water.'" Scatchard leans back in his chair again. "You know what heavy water is now; nobody knew what it was then. That's the process for nuclear fission." So here was this "Joisey" kid standing at the brink of the nuclear age, not far from where Einstein did his thing.

The mentor went on to greener pastures, but Bob Scatchard never forgot him. "He actually knew more about me than I know about myself," he admits. "When I went to high school I took all college-prep courses. I took as many as I could. There were some smart kids up there. I didn't come from Dover, so I worked hard to keep up with them. I didn't disgrace myself. They forced me to do better than I would normally do."

Upon graduation from high school, "I went to work for a gas station... \$18 a week, seven days a week. Then I went to work for Picatinny Arsenal as a shop boy for \$18 a week for six days a week, and then the assistant principal called up and said they were giving jobs at AT&T and was wondering if I was interested."

AT& what? Bob and his family had no idea who the communications giant was, much less what it did. But he took the job working what was then called, "long lines...long distance cable." Bob pauses a moment and reflects on modern-day communications technology. "I don't even own a cell phone," he says with a hint of pride. "My kids want me to, but then they could get me any time they want, and they're not going to get me any time they want me. We don't even like to use the phone."

Which is funny because whenever Bob Scatchard was not serving his country, he was working for a telephone company, whether it was in Iran, Egypt, New York, New Hampshire, Washington or

Milwaukee. More on that later.

"In a way, I've really had an interesting life," says Bob adding that education, whether it is at the School of Hard Knocks or an accredited four-year college, is the reason why he has done so many different things and gone to so many different places. As he terms it, "The education paid off."

Back to the story. So, here's this "Joisey" kid, working for this new high-tech telecommunications company when his younger brother up and announces he wants to become a pilot in the Army Air Corps. Bob just couldn't let that one lie. "I said 'Oh, Jesus, maybe I will too.'" Bob was sworn into the military exactly one year to the day after Pearl Harbor.

Scatchard was then sent on a training odyssey that crisscrossed the mid-section of America many times: After basic training in New Jersey, he was sent to Penn State to learn to fly, but came down with pneumonia, and was rotated out a month later without ever having seen an airplane. Then it was on to Nashville, and then Montgomery Alabama, "all the time parading with white gloves and everything like that," he snorts derisively. He still had not seen the inside of airplane! "I said I wanted to be a pilot. I had no idea whether I wanted to be a pilot or not." Ironically, his brother who had goaded him into this in the first place washed out as a pilot. But not Bob.

He finally learned to fly in an old Stearman bi-plane in Jackson, Tennessee. He must have been pretty good at it because one day his instructor asked him if he knew what a "bunt" was. Apparently, it is an extremely risky aerobatic maneuver that was developed by English pilots in World War I for shaking the likes of the Red Baron off their tails. It's an outside loop-de-loop. You dive straight down and then tilt the plane onto its back so that you are flying upside down, preferably parallel to the ground, and then slow roll right side up again.

"I decided I was going to do a bunt," says Bob determinedly. "I never did anymore than one. It was overcast and there was a hole in the sky. So, I flew up through that damn hole in the sky and I cleared myself and I headed down. And I did a bunt," he says with a mischievous twinkle. Even his instructor had never done one. "The scary thing is you're div-

ing for the ground. You're picking up speed."

Bob Scatchard earned his wings on March 12th, 1944; he turned 21 two days later. But the midwest odyssey from airbase to airbase continued: Newport, Arkansas; Blythville, Arkansas; Columbus, Ohio;

may have been Oakridge, Tennessee where they were developing the technology for the atomic bomb, possibly with the help of some of that heavy water Bob saw in Princeton.

On another occasion, they were training naviga-



Bob Scatchard (kneeling far left) picked up his flight crew in Lincoln, Nebraska. Their B-17 Flying Fortress is pictured in the background.

Lincoln, Nebraska; El Paso and Pyote, Texas. Sounds like the lyrics to an Asleep at the Wheel song.

Bob was trained to fly the legendary B-17 known as the "Flying Fortress." On one night training mission, he flew over a city that was not marked on any of his charts. "A whole damn city built out of nothing. And it was all lit up. It was a secret to everybody." It

could use radar to do the bombing." They converted a B-17 Flying Fortress into what you might call the first AWACS...a radar dome was installed where the belly gun turret would normally be.

Bob's job was to train navigators to use this system instead of a normal bombsight, and because there were so few of them, they would lead the formations on the bombing runs, hence the name,

Once rid of the bombs, Bob took a joy ride into the Grand Canyon. "I was down there until we hit a storm in the canyon and had to climb out. The guys were asleep back there. When they woke up and saw the walls going by, it kind of startled them," he chuckles.

Then there was the time the lead captain ordered Bob and another pilot to fly in formation on his wings. In retrospect, Bob thinks this was a test, because the captain flew straight into a cloudbank. Bob didn't know what to do, so, "We just stuck there, and when we came out, I was still in the same place. So, he held his position. I held my position. When we came out, it seemed like ages later, it was probably only a minute or so, but boy, that was a long time." The pilot on the other wing had peeled off and was five miles away. "As a pilot, I'm not supposed to break up a formation and endanger somebody else."

The next thing you know, Bob Scatchard is on the Ile de France luxury liner headed across the North Atlantic to England. And here's another example of where "the education paid off," because he was selected to be a part of a new bomber group that was using cutting-edge radar technology to find targets.

"Most of the time, they would go over and fly over Germany and then turn around and come back. They couldn't bomb...bad weather. They couldn't see anything. So they decided to see if they

could use radar to do the bombing." They converted a B-17 Flying Fortress into what you might call the first AWACS...a radar dome was installed where the belly gun turret would normally be.

"Pathfinders." In training, they would fly mock missions over English cities. When they approached the "target," they radioed their position, speed and altitude and then dropped metal "chaff" that would illuminate on-ground radar. "They knew the trajectory of that bomb once it was dropped. So the bombardier would say "bombs away," and they would track it and figure out where it would land in relation to where they were."

Scatchard found it fascinating work. Flying at 20-25,000 feet, "and here I am a second lieutenant and I've got a first lieutenant as a co-pilot who didn't know anything about B-17s. So what I started doing is teaching him. It kind of kept me interested. It gave me something to do."

Bob also flew four night missions over enemy territory, using radar to see how much damage had been done and to pinpoint future bomb runs. He says he was never shot at, but at that altitude, it's hard to tell. "We wouldn't know if they did, but once a V2 came right up at us and by us on the coast. That's the first I'd ever seen a rocket."

After the war was over, Bob piloted several low-level flights over France and Germany with the ground crew on board so they could see for themselves what they had prepared the airplanes to do.

Bob Scatchard came home Memorial Day, 1945. In his hands was a booklet, printed by the government: "Going Back to Civilian Life." With the wartime economy spooling down, what were we going to do with these returning servicemen, all of them looking for work?

The answer was the G.I Bill, which Scatchard terms, "one of the best things that happened to all veterans." It sure worked for him. June 10, 1949, Robert Scatchard graduated from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York with a degree in architecture in his hand and a bride, Doris, on his arm. He went to work with his father in construction.

But he also trained with a local National Guard unit that was the first in the state to be activated to go to Korea. Bob was now trained as an artillery officer, and despite pleading letters to the Army Air Corps to let him fly again, they kept him with the Howitzers. "Artillery is all engineering. So, I couldn't get out no matter what."

Next stop Korea...with an Armored Field Artillery Battalion, "and they acted as division artillery for the first ROK (Republic of Korea) division. We weren't with any Americans; we were with Koreans." Bob was Battalion Survey officer; "and since I was a pilot, I volunteered for aerial observation which isn't the nicest thing to do...a forward observer in a plane...."