

## Moonlight Requisition

By  
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*"Captain, your reputation as an 'operator' is not altogether unknown in these parts. After all, you did work for us too. And your boss in Hq. 12th needs you because he knows of your 'taking ways'."*

Victorious Allied operations had finally forced the tenacious Teutonic forces out of North Africa and up into the boot of Italy, and in this rapid northward sweep the Commander of the 12th Air Force advanced his headquarters to the city of Foggia. Due to the constantly changing pattern of operations, along with shortages of personnel and equipment, Hq. 12th AF was being supported by elements of the 90th Photo Recon Wing based in San Severo, a nearby town about 17 miles to the north. This arrangement worked fairly well, but required continual communication and courier services. Another prime headache was the erratic Italian electric current that constantly fluctuated in voltage output, and played havoc with the sensitive-photo equipment. This galling situation had the Hq 12th Supply Officer climbing the wall and had him constantly on the prowl for mobile electric generators, which, of course, were in critical shortage throughout the entire combat zone.

The Luftwaffe weren't very cooperative, either, and managed to sneak a few aircraft over at night, which caused the area to be blacked out.

The Germans were most persistent in these efforts, and after the third nightly foray that had shut off his lights, the commander of the Twelfth Air Force gnashed his teeth in the inky blackness and vowed,

"THIS has got to stop right now" Early the next morning he summoned his supply officer and roared,

"Culpepper," if you don't come up with a generator like right now, you've had it!"

The harried A-4 nodded and mumbled grimly, "We had one but it was moonlight requisitioned."

The General waved him angrily out of the office, and then pressed PHOTO on his intercom and spoke softly and quickly,

"Captain, I'm tapping into your generator until A-4 gets his thumb out of his ear and gets one."

Photo came right back, "Yes Sir, is there anything else?"

"That's enough," snapped the General, "Just be damned sure I got lights, you understand?"

Again Photo came back, "Yes Sir!"

But now the General's tone grew silky, "Captain, I get the word that you are a gentleman who knows how to get things done. You think you might find a generator for me?"

The Photo man sighed audibly, "We'll give it a try, Sir." The voice in the intercom suddenly became tinged with a steel edge,

"Don't just try. FIND IT, and that's an order!"

Checking the regular supply channels was wasted effort. Later in the afternoon, the 90th Photo Recon people called to advise that a batch of prints were ready. The photo officer glanced at his

watch and then spoke to his chief non com,

"Andy, I'll take the run up to San Severo tonight and make the pick-up" The sergeant grinned condescendingly,

"Corporal De Feo won't be too thrilled about that, Sir. He's got a 'thing' going up there."

"I bleed for him," growled the photo officer in mock sorrow. "But if I don't scrounge up a generator for the Old man, I'm in deep trouble."

"Yeh," echoed Sgt. Anderson, "the word's out that he's really 'browned off' cause the 'Eyeties' blacked him out three nights running."

The Captain grinned, "Boy, it sure gets around fast. but maybe I can con those jokers up there in the 90th out of one."

"No way, Jose." retorted the sergeant, "They're running them bowlegged now."

"Yah," agreed the Captain, "but I got to give it a shot anyway. Tell Eddie I'm sorry to louse up his love life, but I'll take the run."

The sunset over the verdant Italian countryside was truly magnificent as FUZZY FOCUS, the photo jeep, sped northward toward San Severo. How rich and productive the land appeared in such a serene setting, and so far removed from the terrible turmoil of war.

This illusion was swiftly shattered as the vehicle swept past an anti-aircraft battery neatly arranged in close proximity to a heavy searchlight battalion set up in a field alongside the road.

Arriving in San Severo without further incident, he picked up the prints and then strode toward the Mediterranean Allied Officers Club.

Glancing about, he spotted the Operations Officer at the bar. Easing over, he greeted him casually, "Hi."

The Ops Officer gazed at him quizzically. "Something must be really hot when you come out to the boonies."

"What's my problem?" The Captain grinned, "Have I ever got the Old Man on my case. I need a generator."

"Can we work something out?"

The Ops Officer set his drink down very carefully. "Impossible," he snapped tartly, "We're running close to two million prints a month, and we can't run on the 'Eyeties' current either, as you know god damn well yourself. My boss would really break my nuggets if he even thought I'd let loose of one of his generators."

The Captain shrugged expansively, "So don't tell him."

Now the Ops Officer grinned toothily, "Captain, your reputation as an 'operator' is not altogether unknown in these parts. After all, you did work for us too. And your boss in Hq. 12th needs you because he knows of your 'taking ways.' We are doing most of your photo work, and he knows that too. So why don't you let me buy you another drink before we send you home."

The Captain was feeling quite relaxed when they helped him into FUZZY FOCUS. He thanked his companions as he chided them at the same time,

"You aren't as chintzy with your liquor as you are with your god damn generators, but thanks anyway for your liquid hospitality."

Steadying himself in the fresh air, he unlocked the chain