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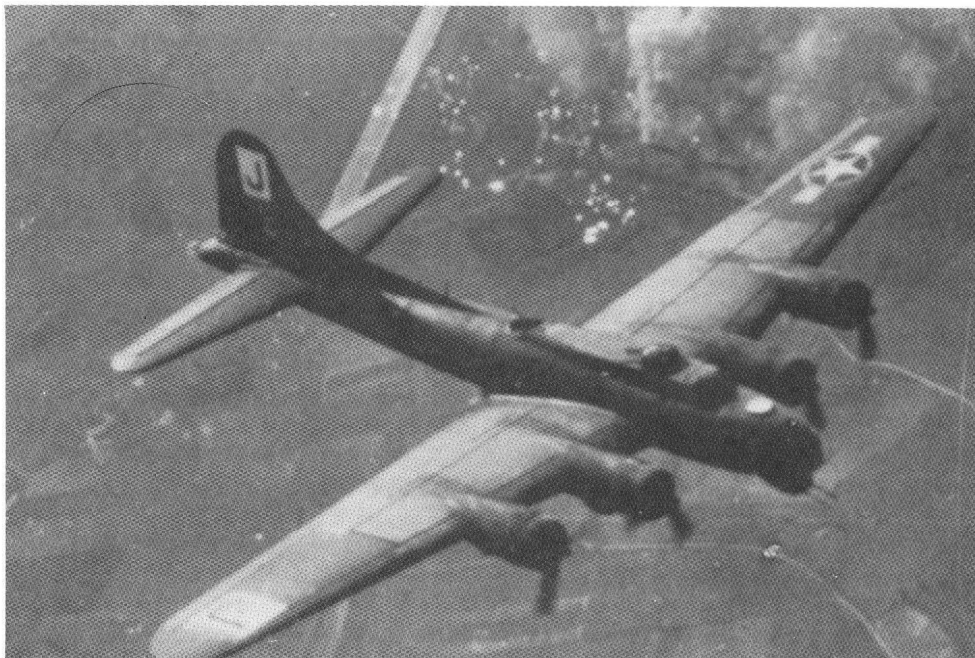
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# Young Man Behind Plexiglass

by  
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JOSEPH THEODORE HALLOCK, who has light-blue eyes and an engaging smile and is usually called Ted, is a first lieutenant in the United States Army Air Forces. Two years ago he was an undergraduate at the University of Oregon; today he is a veteran bombardier who has completed thirty missions in a B-17 over Germany and Occupied Europe. Eighteen months ago he fainted when an Army doctor examining him pricked his finger to get a sample of blood; today he wears the Purple Heart for wounds received in a raid on Augsburg, the Air Medal with three oak-leaf clusters, and the Distinguished Flying Cross. Before he got into the Air Forces, he had been rejected by the Navy and Marines because of insuffi-



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cient chest expansion; he still weighs less than a hundred and thirty pounds, and this gives him an air of tempered, high-strung fragility. When he relaxes, which is not often, he looks younger than his twenty-two years, but he doesn't think of himself as being young. "Sometimes I feel as if I'd never had a chance to live at all," he says flatly, "but most of the time I feel as if I'd lived forever."

Hallock and his wife, Muriel, recently spent a three-week leave in New York, and I met him through friends. I took him aside one morning and talked with him for an hour or two about his part in the war. I was naturally curious to know what it felt like to complete thirty missions in a Flying Fortress, but I also saw, or thought I saw, that he was eager to speak to someone of his experiences. Apparently he considers himself typical of thousands of young men in the armed forces, and he rejects any suggestion that he has done more than was specifically demanded of him. "Whatever I tell you," he said, "boils down to this: I'm a cog in one hell of a big machine. The more I think about it, and I've thought about it a lot lately, the more it looks as if I've been a cog in one thing or another since the day I was born.

Whenever I get set to do what I want to do, something a whole lot bigger than me comes along and shoves me back into place. It's not especially pleasant, but there it is.

"As a matter of fact, my father had about the same deal. He'd graduated from Oregon State and was just starting in business when we got mixed up in the first World War. He joined the Navy, and from what he says I guess he disliked the war but liked his job. He'd been trained as a radio engineer, and that was the sort of work they gave him to do, so he got to be a C.P.O. and kept on working for the Navy for quite a while after the war was over. He and Mother moved around from Mare Island to Portland, down to Los Angeles and San Diego, and so on, and they seem to have had a good enough time. Like Muriel and me, they probably didn't try to figure what was going to happen to them next. I was their only child, and I was born on October twenty-fifth, 1921." Hallock shrugged. "In a way, it's funny my being born then. I was arguing about the war with a fellow the other night, and he kept telling me what Wilson should have done and what Wilson shouldn't have done. I got sore finally. Why, hell's bells, I hadn't even been born when Wilson was

president! I don't give a hoot about Wilson, I told this guy, Wilson's been dead for years; it's 1944 I'm worrying about.

"Things must have been pretty unsettled when I was a baby, just as they've been ever since I grew up. Whatever that boom was I've heard about, I doubt if it meant anything ritzy for the Hallocks. My father helped found a company that manufactured radios—he was in on the ground floor in radio, from crystal pickup sets to those big old-fashioned jobs with all the knobs and dials— but he figured the fad wouldn't last. That was what he used to say—'Radio won't last.' Those early sets cost too much for the average guy, Dad thought, and it didn't occur to him that the prices were bound to come down someday. So he drifted into one job or another, some good and some bad, up to the time of the crash.

"Naturally, I don't remember anything about Harding and Coolidge. One of my earliest memories is of betting marbles with the kids at school about who was going to win the election, Hoover or Roosevelt. I bet on Roosevelt. I suppose my mother and father had been talking about him at home— about how bad things were and about how