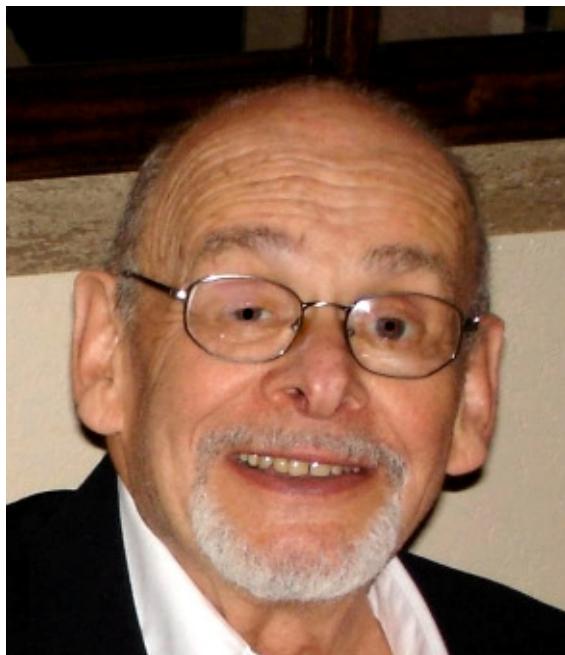




My first 20 years (1926 - 1946)

by Martin Becker



Martin Becker 2005
(all photos: private)

The early years

Martin Becker was born in Nuremberg, Germany on September 28, 1926 to Gustav and Jette Wolfsheimer Becker at Lindenaststraße 4. Martin was their third child, the only son who came after two girls, the first one being Ilse born in 1912 and the second one Anni, born during World War I, in 1915.

Gustav was born in a small village in the Hunsrück mountains called Hennweiler on September 9, 1883, to Carolina Becker, daughter of Martin Becker and Sara Vogel Becker of that same village. Gustav Becker's father could never be ascertained. He lived with his mother in his grandfather's house and kept the name Becker. Jette Wolfsheimer was born on January 18, 1887 in Weikersheim, Württemberg to Josef Wolfsheimer and Therese Kirchhausen Wolfsheimer. Jette was one of thirteen children, two of whom died at birth. They were married on February 26, 1911 in Weikersheim and shortly thereafter moved to Nuremberg, Germany where Gustav established a wholesale textile business called Gustav Becker and Company. He served in the German Army during World War I and because of that Jette, during the war years of 1914 to 1918 lived for the most part with her parents in Weikersheim. After the war ended Gustav continued his business.

He was quite successful, even during the horrendous inflation of the early 1920s, when he had the foresight to invest most of his net worth in inventory instead of leaving it in the stock market or banks where it became almost worthless overnight.

The two girls were growing up and attended private schools in Nuremberg. Ilse, the older one, was very proficient in musical things, studied the lute and piano at a conservatory. Anni, the younger one excelled in the arts. So it was quite surprising when Jette became pregnant again, at the age of thirty-nine. But imagine the surprise when the new arrival turned out to be a boy, a Johnny-come-Lately, his sisters were already fourteen and eleven respectively.

The Beckers by then were quite well off. They had moved to a small villa in the Lindenaststraße and Martin grew up surrounded by a happy family, which over the course of many years, spent four weeks during the winter in Garmisch-Partenkirchen in the German Alps, and in the summer at least that amount of time in Bad Brückenau, a spa resort where Gustav, who by then had some stomach and kidney problems, could take the cure which was the common thing to do during those years.



Martin Becker (center) with sisters Ilse (left) Anni (right) 1929

And so time went by. Martin attended what is called today Pre-K and Kindergarten and in the fall of 1932 started public elementary school in Nuremberg. He was surrounded at home, due to Ilse's and Anni's interests, but also by Jette's upbringing, with lots of music and art, much of which shaped his appreciation of these disciplines in his later years.

January 1933, Adolf Hitler came to power, but in these early years Martin was ignorant of the political goings-on around him. In December 1934, his sister Anni was married to Friedrich Leopold (Fritz) Rothschild. She left Nuremberg and her parents' home and settled in Rheinhausen, Germany, where her husband owned a successful men's haberdashery. Fritz's mother was also born in the same village as Martin's father, Gustav, and they had known each other since childhood. As an aside, Gustav was quite a religious Jew. He attended the main synagogue of Nuremberg regularly every Shabat, taking Martin, the apple of his eye, along. And, of course, one could not take any transportation, so one walked. To young Martin it seemed that these walks would never end, but he enjoyed spending every Saturday morning at services with his father.

The elementary school Martin attended was only a few short blocks from his home in the Lindenaststraße, a walk of approximately ten to fifteen minutes. He enjoyed school, studied hard and always was near the top of his class. By the time fourth grade came around, it was the year 1936, anti-Semitism had come to the foreground, and fights with gentile boys of his school while walking home after classes were a common occurrence. He and the other Jewish children were called *dirty Jews* and other vulgarities, but he was now eight years old, and for boys that age this was more like play than anything else.

In the meantime, his father Gustav had given up his wholesale textile distributorship and bought into the firm of Willy Müller and Company, a manufacturer of women's underwear, men's polo shirts and the like. Willy Müller, his partner, was not Jewish, but was a very nice man who was really a designer but had no inkling of the business facets of his organization. Gustav Becker fitted into the slot of business manager and the firm prospered as it had never before.

1936 was also the year when the elder Beckers became grandparents for the first time. Anni gave birth to her first child Margrit Rothschild who was born on January 8, 1936 at the Jewish Hospital in Fürth, a neighboring city of Nuremberg. Of course, Martin was very proud to be an uncle at such an early age.

In September 1936 it was no longer possible for Jewish children to attend the Nuremberg public schools. The Nuremberg *Kultusgemeinde* (an equivalent of the Jewish Federations) had seen this day coming and had purchased a building in the Obere Kanalstraße. The building had been a factory and was now converted into classrooms and was used as an elementary school housing grades one thru six. At the same time the Jewish communities of Nuremberg and Fürth also established the *Jüdische Realschule* located in an old school building in the city of Fürth. This school was roughly the equivalent of the American Middle School. All Jewish children, depending on their age, either attended one school or the other.

And so it was that Martin was enrolled for sixth grade in the Jewish elementary school on the Obere Kanalstraße. No more walking, but now the commute was much longer. A streetcar had to be taken both to school and to come back home. Starting with grade seven he was enrolled in the *Jüdische Realschule* and now the commuting five days per week was even longer. Again, by streetcar from Nuremberg to Fürth, and in the afternoon back home, a much longer ride which in those days took up at least two hours per day. So between the school hours, homework and the commute the days were used to their fullest.



The Becker Family: father Gustav (1884 - 1944), mother Jette (1887 - 1981),
sisters Ilse (1913 - 1942), Anni (b. 1915), Martin (b. 1926)

By now it was 1937. The Nuremberg Laws, a set of laws making Jews second-class citizens, were now beginning to be enforced. Professionals such as doctors, lawyers, teachers, professors etc. could no longer practice. And so it was that persons from the professions started emigrating to the United States, Palestine, South America etc. in increasing numbers. This was not the case with businessmen who could still run their businesses and thought that Hitler and his cohorts were just a passing thing. And so it was the case with Gustav Becker, who always thought that better days were going to come again. But they did not, on the contrary, now Jews could no longer visit restaurants, plays, theaters, movie houses, the opera, beaches etc. and finally in the middle of the year 1938 he was forced out of his business, Willy Müller and Company, his share of the firm was confiscated and there was no longer any way of making a living. It was now that he was beginning to think of how it would be possible to leave Germany for the United States or Palestine.

All this culminated with what is now considered to be the beginning of the Holocaust, *Kristallnacht* which took place the night of November 9 to 10, 1938.

The following is a short synopsis of what had happened during this night: It had all started by a low level German embassy official being shot by a Jewish youth in Paris. This was used by the Nazis as a convenient excuse to begin the pogroms that happened during this particular night.

The whole Becker household was awakened by the continuous ringing of the doorbell and unusual noises in the street below. Martin ran down the stairs from his second story bedroom following his parents and sister who also had been awakened by these unusual circumstances. By the time they were at the heavy front door made of oak and containing stained glass windows, it had already been smashed in and destroyed. About a dozen Stormtroopers forced their way into the house, knocked his father to the ground with a few well placed punches to the face, and started obliterating everything in the house. The destroyed furniture and household goods were then thrown from the first and second story windows and set afire in the street. The only furniture they were unable to ruin was the dining room furniture which was made from heavy carved oak which even axes could not completely demolish. Martin's father was arrested on the spot and dragged off to Gestapo headquarters. He had lost several teeth, the result of the punches to his face. Martin thought that he would never see his father again, but for some unknown reason he was released after two days and again returned to his family.

After that date, the family's everyday living changed. Gustav and Jette Becker now knew that Hitler was not a passing thing, or if he was, they and their family would probably not outlive him. A serious attempt was made to have Jette get her sisters in the United States to sponsor the family in order that they could get a visa. But nothing worked very fast. The United States quota for Germans, and German Jews were considered to be German, was very small, and none of the consular offices were in a particular hurry to issue visas to any Jews in order that they could emigrate to the United States. Martin's parents were also considering to get him out of Germany faster. Jette had a brother living in Lyon, France. It was not too hard to get a French visa for a twelve year old boy to enter France and so it came to pass that on February 26, 1939 Gustav took his only son and brought him to the border near Strasbourg, where his uncle Max Wolfsheimer picked him up and took him to Lyon to join his family until the Beckers could pick him up on their way to Palestine or the United States.

Life in Lyon, France seemed to be quite satisfactory for the twelve year old. Although the living quarters were quite cramped, he lived in a small apartment at 27 Rue Lalande, with his uncle Max, aunt Frieda, cousin Lieselotte, and Frieda's nephew Milton. Martin slept on a couch in the living room. He did miss his parents but knew deep in his heart that they had sent him away to relatives in France in order to save him from possible extinction.

The apartment was located on the same level as the railroad tracks which terminated at one of the two passenger railroad stations in Lyon, the *Gare De Broteaux*. All night long the trains, pulled in those years by steam locomotives, went by the room where he tried to sleep. It took weeks to get used to the constant noise, but after about a month he was so used to these sounds that they rocked him to sleep.

In Lyon he went to elementary school, was forced to learn the French language, inasmuch as he was thrown together with all the Lyonnaise children and after three months had acquired the language to such an extent that communication with the other classmates was no longer a problem.

Life was also very difficult for his Uncle Max, who had immigrated to France from Germany in 1933 and who, as a German immigrant, was unable to obtain working papers from the French government. He made a *so-so* living by furnishing many different specialties to the

restaurants in Lyon. No one could ever find out where he was able to obtain them, but it was very hard to support a family of five without working papers.

Lyon is a city located on the Rhone river, one if its industries in those years was the catching of carp, which had been bred in ponds located in the Alps, and which at a certain age were then released into the Rhone in order to purify them and which were then caught in large catch basins in Lyon and sold for food. Many a times Frieda with the two children, Milton and Martin, would go down to the river and buy carps' heads only, which was all she could afford to buy, and which were then boiled in water to make a stew.

Such was life in the spring and summer of 1939.

On September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland and the Second World War started. And if anyone thought life was tough before that, it became even tougher after that date. Uncle Max, although no longer recognized as a German by the Germans, was designated an *enemy alien* by the French and interned. To make matters worse Martin's Barmitzvah, the ceremony in which a Jewish boy who reaches his thirteenth birthday attains the age of religious duty and responsibility, had been scheduled in the main synagogue of Lyon at the end of September 1939, and though normally this ceremony is a celebration of the coming of age this was not the case at this Barmitzvah. Not only was Uncle Max unable to attend, but Martin's whole nuclear family was stranded in Germany.

Uncle Max was finally released from the detention center at the end of 1939. By that time news had come to Martin, via a contact in Holland (direct communication between Germany and France had ended because of the war) that his parents had received their immigration visas to come to the United States and would be leaving Germany in the early part of 1940. But another unforeseen obstacle presented itself. Although the visas were issued to Martin's parents, Gustav and Jette Becker, his name also appeared on these papers as their son, but the son was no longer living with them in Germany, and to make matters worse, the French also regarded the, by then, thirteen year old boy as an *enemy alien* and no longer recognized his German passport and would not let him leave the country. But finally in April of 1940, his parents had already immigrated to the United States the month before, Martin received his *Titre de Voyage*, a stateless passport from the French Government. He left Lyon by train and traveled to Genoa, Italy where he was to catch the United States Liner *USS Manhattan*. This accomplished, the ship left Genoa on April 20, 1940 with Martin aboard and landed in New York City five days later. It turned out that this was the last ship to leave Genoa before the Italians declared war on France and England.

Can you imagine the joy of the thirteen year old when he finally saw his parents again after being separated from them for over one year. And they, of course, were also delirious in seeing their youngest.

Newcomers (1940 to 1944)

Starting with this chapter, you will notice that the writer has changed his narrative from the third person singular to the first person singular. And there is quite a good reason for this. Looking back over my life covering the period from 1926 to 1940, that is before my arrival in the United States, many of my experiences occurred before I had any recollection of them, i.e. I was too young to remember them and secondly, what I do remember seems to have happened such a long, long time ago that my memory of them is more like a dream than anything else. Because of that I thought it fitting to write these memoirs in the third person singular for that particular period. However, with my arrival to these shores this all changed, everything seems so much more recent even though some of the events occurred more than seventy years ago.

Upon their arrival in the United States in 1940, my parents had settled in Schenectady, New York because my mother had three sisters living in that city, two of whom had already arrived on these shores prior to 1910. The third one was also a refugee from Nazi Germany but had come to this upstate New York community in 1936.

Inasmuch as my father and mother had arrived in this country with a total of five dollars among them we lived with *Tante* (Aunt) Elsa Goldsticker in their boarding house and tea room at 838 Union Street. This was definitely a temporary measure and after a few months my parents rented a furnished flat at 1127 Sumner Avenue where my mother earned some income by renting two bedrooms to boarders.



Martin Becker (white suit) upon arrival in USA -with parents (top row) and relatives 1940

My father started his own business, selling tailor trimmings and supplies. This took quite a bit of guts since his English was almost non-existent. He learned to drive a car, bought an old 1929 Dodge for a few dollars, and started calling on tailor shops in the Albany / Troy / Schenectady area of New York state. He also traveled to New York City every weekend to replenish his inventory and so slowly became established.

To the consternation of my mother, car repairs took quite a percentage of profits every month, but we endured. After living on Sumner Avenue for only about three months my parents decided that the time had come to start looking for their own unfurnished flat. This they accomplished and in November 1940, after having purchased some old used furniture, we moved into an upstairs flat at 521 McClellan Street, where my mother again rented two bedrooms to boarders. I slept in a very small alcove and my Dad had room to store his supplies in a shed and garage. I also was admitted to the 8th grade at Central Park Junior High School in the fall of that year, where again my proficiency in English became very good within a period of a few months.

But my father's and mother's dilemmas were just to begin. My two sisters, Ilse and Anni, were still living in Europe. Anni, with her husband Fritz Rothschild and daughter Margrit, had left Germany and settled in Turnhout, Belgium, where they were operating a retail fish store. Ilse had married Julien Herbert Sohn, a violinist, in January of 1939. She bore him a daughter, Channa, on October 29 of that same year. Neither family was able to obtain papers to emigrate from Europe. My father tried, with all his might, even to the point of borrowing money in order to obtain visas for them to emigrate to Cuba, but all was in vain.

The beginning of 1941 the Sohn family was deported from Nuremberg to a concentration camp in Izbica, Poland never to be heard from again. Anni's husband, Fritz Rothschild, was arrested while walking on the street by the Gestapo, deported on the spot to a holding camp in Gurs, France and from there to Auschwitz where he also perished.

These happenings were not known to us in Schenectady until after the war was over, but for my father the fear of the unknown, the fear of what could have happened to his other two children and their families, was unbearable. Although a happy, always joking and religious man, his personality changed drastically. He lost weight and suffered a very serious heart attack in May of 1944 from which he never recovered. He died of a worn and broken heart on July 7, 1944 never to see his two daughters and their families again.

While all these terrible things were happening I attended Central Park Junior High School, graduated from there in June of 1941 and the same fall was enrolled in the freshmen class of Nott Terrace Senior High School where I took the college preparatory course. With the shortage of money I also helped in my own small way to support the family: I was hired by a grocery store owner, who had set up his own paper routes, to deliver the Schenectady Union Star, Schenectady's afternoon newspaper, to his customers. I purchased an old bicycle for \$2.50, which surprisingly turned out to be my weekly salary for delivering newspapers even day, Monday through Saturday, approximately three hours per day for a total of at least fifteen hours per week. From the total amount of this great salary I could keep twenty-five cents; the balance I gave to my mother to keep our household going. On or about 1942 I obtained a morning paper route delivering the Schenectady Gazette where my income was quite a bit more, but again I gave most of the remuneration to my mother.

During those early years after our arrival in Schenectady every fourth Sunday afternoon was taken up by a meeting in the Union Street Tea Room belonging to my aunt Elsa Goldsticker. All the German Jewish refugees, of whom there were quite a few, attended this monthly get-together.

It was one of the few social gatherings they could attend as they had not been assimilated into the Schenectady community. The reason for my mentioning these meetings is that at one of these which took place at the beginning of March 1941, I met two new arrivals, a mother and son, who had come to Schenectady to join their son and brother who boarded with my Aunt Elsa: Hedwig Kahn, the mother, and her son Helmut had just arrived that particular week from Frankfurt, Germany. Helmut, who later changed his name to Ernest, his original middle name, was to become my best friend. He also, in later years, was to become my *best man* at my wedding.

And so the months and years passed without hearing anything from my sister Ilse and her family.

My dad had tried, through the American Red Cross and other relief organizations, to see if anything could be learned about their fate, but to no avail. We did hear from my sister Anni, who by that time was in hiding in Brussels with her daughter Margrit. At least we knew that they were still alive, but after the end of 1942 even these messages did no longer come through.

High school graduation time was rapidly approaching. I was to graduate in June of 1944. However, the month before my dad had suffered his nearly fatal heart attack, and so what was to be a happy occasion did not become one. I did graduate with honors, the graduation exercise took place in the memorial chapel of Union College, but as far as I was concerned the pall of my father's sickness hung over me constantly, and he passed away a month later.

All the boys in the graduating class knew that it was only going to be a matter of time before they were to join the armed forces of the United States, either by volunteering or by being

drafted for we were right in the middle of World War II. Quite a few had already volunteered or were drafted even before graduation. Because of that reason I took on a temporary job in the produce department located in the Central Market on Eastern Parkway in Schenectady. The produce department was a concession run by Henry Diamond. I must have been quite a good worker, because as weeks went by I was sent by him to run the produce departments in other Central Markets located in South Troy, North Troy, Mechanicville etc.

And again time passed. Finally in October I was informed to report for my physical prior to induction. By the end of that year I became a member, like millions of others, of the United States Army.



Martin Becker 1943

Army life

On December 3, 1944, a small group of inductees reported to the New York Central Railroad Station in Albany, the capital of New York State, seventeen miles east of Schenectady. There we were put on a special car which eventually brought all of us to Fort Dix, New Jersey, where we were processed into the United States Army. We stayed there for only a few days and then boarded a troop train which traveled approximately 1100 miles to the northern part of Florida and terminated in Camp Blanding, a basic training camp near Starke. This was going to be our home for about twelve weeks of basic training. The going there was tough, the life for the recruits hard, the temperature hot and humid and we could not wait for the weekends when we normally received a pass for part of Saturday and the whole of Sunday.

My favorite weekend trip was taking the bus to Saint Augustine, going into the old fort and looking over the bay where the trade winds blew in from the ocean and the air was comfortable and not too humid. I must have been there at least ten times during my stay at Camp Blanding.

The twelve weeks went by ever so slowly, but finally they were over. My orders came through to report immediately to Fort Meade, Maryland, which at that time was an embarkation assembly point for the European Theater of War. There was really not much to do there, we mostly loafed around. Our stay should not have been longer than two weeks. However, Congress now passed a law, this was around March 1945, that any member of the army who had been eighteen years old at the time of his induction could not be sent overseas unless he

had received basic training for at least six months. I fell into this category and apparently no one knew what to do with us. So our stay at Fort Meade was extended by at least four weeks.

When the weekends came along we received a two day pass which was only good for a 150 mile radius around the camp. A few of us living in upstate New York took a chance and took the train to New York City, which was as far as we were allowed to travel from Fort Meade, but then continued on to our home towns which, in most cases, were an additional 100 to 150 miles from New York City. Looking back, it now seems comical how we played *cat and mouse* with the military police that were on these trains. We had to make sure that they would not ask us for our passes and had to avoid them at all cost as our papers were not good anywhere north of New York City. I was never caught and spent at least four weekends in Schenectady with family and friends.

Finally I received orders, with others of course, to board a troop train which was to bring us to a hell hole called Fort Rucker, Alabama. Fort Rucker is located near the city of Montgomery. It seemed that the army was mad at us for not being able to ship us overseas when they had decided the time was ripe, so we spent another three months of basic training under bad conditions. It was terribly hot, awfully humid. When it rained the rain came down in buckets. Most of our time was spent in the field and we suffered under these weather conditions. But this time also passed and before I knew it we were on another troop train carrying us west to San Francisco. We arrived there sometime towards the end of June 1945 and immediately embarked on a troop ship which zigzagged, or so it seemed to most aboard, on its way west towards Asia.

After a couple of weeks aboard we finally landed in Manila, the capital of the Philippines on the island of Luzon which had been liberated by American troops a few months before, although Japanese stragglers were still being rounded up at that time. In fact, Lieutenant General Tomoyuki Yamashita, called *the Tiger of Manila* was captured just a few days after we arrived there. He was tried and executed for atrocities committed in the Philippine campaign and others in 1946.

We had received military basic training for six months, but the army needed, for some reason or another, replacements for its U.S. Army Air Corps. So I ended up on Clark Field, near the Philippine City of Angeles and joined an element of the Fifth Fighter Command which was part of the Fifth Air Force.

As an aside, here is a tale which made me believe in fate, a belief which I still have faith in today as I write this story, for it is much stranger than fiction: It happened during the summer of 1945, while I was stationed at Clark Field. For some reason or another I was sent to deliver a sealed order to an outfit stationed in Baguio, a city in the northern part of Luzon island, in Benguet Province. Baguio, by the way, is also the summer capital of the Philippines. It was a tropical, rainy day as I drove my weapons carrier north on a fairly good road. After having driven some miles I came to a crossroad and there in the rain stood an American soldier, wearing his helmet and poncho to protect him from the weather. He was hitchhiking, in the same direction as I was traveling. I stopped for him, he was also going to Baguio. As he took off his helmet and poncho I thought that I had seen him somewhere before. Imagine my surprise when, after identifying ourselves, he turned out to be Rolf Mueller with whom I had attended school in Nuremberg, Germany. He lived on the same street as I did and had come to the United States three years before I arrived there. The reunion lasted only a short time, but I have never forgotten it.

On August 6, 1945 the first atomic bomb to be used against an enemy position was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, the capital of Hiroshima Prefecture on the island of Honshu. 130,000 persons were killed, injured or missing and 177,000 were made homeless by the bombing. The total population of Hiroshima in 1940 had been 343,000 souls. The blast also destroyed

more than four square miles or about 60% of the city. On August 8, 1945 the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Russia) declared war on Japan and invaded Manchuria the next day.

On August 9, 1945, three days after Hiroshima was destroyed, a U.S. Army Air Corps plane released an atomic bomb on Nagasaki, a city located on the Japanese island of Kyushu. About one third of the city was destroyed and some 66,000 people were killed or injured.

On August 14, 1945 Japan announced its surrender and within one week we were on our way to the Japanese mainland by ship. After going through a horrific typhoon we landed in Sasebo, Japan a few days later. Sasebo was home to a very large Japanese naval base and it was strange to see many Japanese warships with spiked guns in the harbor. As we marched through the main part of the city, the Japanese that were out on the streets turned their backs toward us, not as a matter of disrespect, but as a greeting to the conquerors.

After being sheltered in some Japanese army barracks in the city of Yamaguchi for a short time we were transported by train to the city of Fukuoka, located in the northwestern part of the Japanese island of Kyushu bordering on Hakata Bay. It is the closest Japanese port to the Asian mainland with a 1988 estimated population of 1,517,000 people. Just a few miles from there and bordering on the ocean the United States Fifth Air Force established a base which was later to be known as Itazuke Air Force Base. It was to be one of the most important Air Force bases to be used during the Korean War, inasmuch as it lies just a short distance from the South Korean mainland. When we arrived there it was just an old dilapidated Japanese industrial plant, quite large and spread over lots of acreage.



Martin Becker after return from Japan 1946

It was at that time that I was promoted to sergeant with a military occupational specialty called *Administrative Specialist*. I served with the Headquarters and Base Service Squadron, 58th Air Service Group, Fifth Fighter Command, Fifth Army, Air Corps, as section head of the *Information and Education* and *Special Service* office and was in charge of eight enlisted men and four Japanese civilians. My duties were to supervise the proper running of the office, correspondence, reports etc. and all *special service activities* such as movies, USO shows and other forms of entertainment. I also supervised the publication and distribution of the base *Information and Education* newspaper. All in all it was a satisfying occupation that I really enjoyed doing. On top of this my work took me all over Japan and I saw quite a bit of it from Tokyo and Yokohama to the Japanese hinterlands that very few Americans had ever seen.

This is not the time nor the place to comment on the misery and destruction visited upon the poor inhabitants of these cities, but in retrospect had President Truman not decided to go ahead with these actions at the time that he did, I and many hundreds of thousands more, Americans and Japanese, would no longer be here today.

And again, time went on, and in July 1946 we left Japan from the port of Yokohama and proceeded to the United States. We landed in Seattle, were transported to Fort Lewis, Washington and sent by troop train to Fort Dix, New Jersey where we were discharged. I arrived in Schenectady, New York on August 2, 1946. Another phase of my life had ended.

Edited by Gerhard Jochem



Martin Becker with Grandson Skyler and daughter Diane 2013