



**BY WALTER DRAGICH**

November 6, 1995

HI Walt,

Your story about the "UNINVITED" is outstanding. I'm sure that you could get it published in some magazine, say "The New Yorker." Maybe even a "movie."

At least now I and the rest of our crew know the debt of gratitude we owe you for saving our aircraft and possibly us.

Here's what happened "up front": When the shrapnel cut the main ELEVATOR CONTROL CABLE, the nose of the airplane dropped and my pulling back on the control yoke had no effect. Remembering that the autopilot had separate control cables, I engaged it, praying that these cables hadn't also been cut. Sure enough, with the autopilot I was able to bring the nose back up. I continued to fly the airplane using the A.P. while you did your repair work on the "main" elevator control cable.

Walt, I would not have been able to land using the A.P. because "lowering the flaps" would have changed the pitch of the plane enough to "override the A.P." and knock it off. Making a "no-flap" landing on our short runway using the A.P. was out of the question.

Yes, indeed. When we came in to land and I knocked off the autopilot, our lives did depend upon your repair work!

Walt, you did an outstanding job and all of us owe you a lots. Thanks from the bottom of my heart.

Best regards,

*Dan McGeary*

Dan McGeary, pilot, "The UNINVITED"

# Preface

An article in "Air Force" (May 1945), the official service journal of the U.S. Army Air Forces, prompted me to write this story about our mission to Moosbierbaum on Feb. 7, 1945. The article reads as follows:

"Up in the air, when FLAK or gunfire severs a bomber's control cables there is usually very little that can be done to repair them, and, in most cases, the plane has to be abandoned.

To provide an effective remedy for such emergencies, Major Jesse Wright and his assistants, S/SGT. Howard Yancey, SGT. William Yuran, and CPL. John L. Speer ransacked scrap piles of tubing and cable of the engineering section at their Air Force Service Command and came up with a device for repairing cables in flight.

The contrivance required no tools, and consists of two lengths of cable with a turnbuckle in the center. On one cable the male end of the turnbuckle is clamped, while the female end is fastened to the other.

In each of the three holes in the turnbuckle a six-penny nail is inserted with its point flattened to prohibit removal or loss. The outside end of the cable is equipped with a "U" bolt clamp and has an ordinary hex nut on one arm, but the other nut is on a T-shaped extension to permit tightening by hand without interference.

As used in an emergency control cable repair, the severed line is located and the new portion is clamped to the broken portion with as tight a tension as possible. Then, holding the nails in one hand, the other nails in the turnbuckle are tightened until the correct tension is achieved. Such a procedure can be performed by any crew member and enough cable is carried as standard equipment to enable a splice made around pulleys, if this procedure becomes necessary."

The above cable repair kit was not carried on our bomber, "The Uninvited". Neither I, nor anyone else in our squadron or group heard or knew about this procedure. Nevertheless, the cables were repaired on "The Uninvited" and we came back to base, as you will see in the story.