

Lady

Jack Averitt

In a little mound of dirt about two miles south of Kwanghan, China, lies the remains of the best friend the 425th Bombardment Squadron ever had. Her name was "Lady" — a name that was symbolic of her character, a name that became synonymous with luck in the only heavy bomber outfit in China.

Lady was the only female in a litter of four born to one of the stray dogs that hung around the outfit when it was stationed in Kunming. Chestnut in color, she was the prettiest of the lot and immediately became the sweetheart of the squadron. When she was several weeks old one of the pilots took her on her first mission — a low altitude job that didn't require oxygen masks. That was just the beginning. Six months later, the fuzzy little pup had more combat time than the Commanding Officer.

One of the crews had salvaged an old oxygen mask and had remade it to fit Lady. It was on the first try-out of the

mask that Lady saved a man's life. She was lying down in the rear of the plane when she noticed that the tail gunner wasn't moving. His mask had somehow slipped off without his knowing it and lack of oxygen would soon bring his death. Sensing all of this, Lady ripped off her own mask and raced back to the waist gunner for help.

This was only one of her many deeds. Spoiled by the squadron, she never lost her popularity and was destined to return to the States with the outfit, had not Fate played its traditional hand on one of the last missions.

We were flying at 18,000 feet over Hankow when a piece of shrapnel ripped her body as though it were a piece of paper. She never had a first chance to recover. That afternoon the entire squadron turned out for the funeral — the burial of its best friend, Lady, Queen of the Squadron.

Purple Patch

There is nothing more pleasant than drifting through a large eddy shaded from the hot sun by a high bluff, the face of which is spotted with hardy Columbine. It is quiet. The only sounds are the gurgle of the water as the paddle is drawn slowly through it, the soft swishing of a fly line as it is cast, the gentle splash of the fly as it hits the water in among the rocks where you are sure there should be

a fish, the clear "good year" of a red bird perched high atop the bluff, the frenzied thrashing as a small mouth Bass takes the bait and breaks water, the excited voices of the other fishermen, and the distant roar of the river as it plunges headlong into a shoal.

OZARK MEMORIES

by J. Winston Martin.