

Morning View Kentucky
24 October 1957

Hello Mr. McCarthy,

Your discussion of fantastic falls reminded me of some incredible modern ones -- though I cannot recall places or dates.

One paratrooper whose chute failed to open, plumped to safety in a large, yielding hay stack. Another, on maneuvers up North, was similarly saved by deep snow drifts.

During the war in Europe, the complete tail assembly broke away from a B 17 which had suffered a direct hit; and, with the gunner still therein, descended several thousand feet in a series of stalls into the tops of some dense trees. I believe the gunner suffered an ankle injury while getting from the tree tops to the ground. One of the service publications celebrated the event with a cartoon depicting a B 17 tail high above an airport while the gunner reported by radio, "Tail gunner So-and-So coming in for a landing."

However I think the most fantastic modern fall was the one which occurred several years ago on a construction job somewhere up East. It happened during the construction of a tall building. The usual temporary elevator was in operation, and it was many stories above the street, carrying a man with a big wheelbarrow of concrete, when it broke entirely free. Either by conscious thought process or instinct, the man did the one thing in all the world that could help him -- he curled himself up on top of the soft concrete in the wheelbarrow. The squishy stuff absorbed just enough of the impact to save his life.

Sincerely,

Benn