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Glenn Miller Collections

TONY MARTIN



Tony Martin (Alvin Morris) (1913-2012), circa 1937

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Updated May 5, 2022**

Introduction

Tony Martin (Alvin Morris) (1913-2012) was one of the most popular male vocalists of the 20th Century. During the 1930s Tony Martin became one of the top Hollywood, radio, stage and nightclub singers of his generation. His career paused during the Second World War for military service and resumed with further success following the war.

From 1941 to 1945 in military service, Tony Martin experienced, in sequence: humiliation, recovery, further disappointment and finally, vindication. Along the way he gained perspective, humility and confidence. His was a remarkable journey. During 1943, he was a member of the Army Air Forces Training Command Orchestra directed by Capt. Glenn Miller. He is a very important part of Glenn Miller history and therefore the Glenn Miller Archive is privileged to share the Tony Martin story.



Tony Martin and Alice Faye meet Glenn Miller
Café Rouge, Hotel Pennsylvania, New York
January 1940

“The war and all my service-connected problems did me one good turn. I went into the Navy a real cocky kid. My cockiness was only natural. I was young, successful, making \$12,000 a week, and I figured the world was my oyster. They beat that out of me. When I came out, I was pretty humble. After the war, I was an entirely different person. I knew what suffering, mental and physical, was like. I had been chopped down to size” (Tony Martin, 1976)

Hollywood, 1941

During the fall of 1941, enjoying a contract at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) studios and a network radio commercial program, Tony Martin appeared to have recovered from divorce. His four-year marriage to 20th Century-Fox star Alice Faye had ended. During his marriage Martin had admitted to friends that he had grown weary of being thought of as “Mr. Alice Faye.” He had finished work at MGM on the recently released and critically acclaimed “Ziegfeld Girl.” He was dating Lana Turner but was not certain if he would simply be added to her string of conquests or if it would be a permanent relationship. In addition to his work in films and radio, Tony Martin was successful as a solo artist on records backed by studio orchestras. “Variety” reported September 19, 1941 “Tony Martin will have the singing lead opposite Eleanor Powell in Metro’s ‘I’ll Take Manila’. He will warble three production numbers.” Also scheduled for the film were Tommy Dorsey and his Orchestra. Following the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii; the Philippines and elsewhere, the title of the film was changed to “Ship Ahoy” and the plot moved to Puerto Rico.

Tony Martin would not make it to that film. “Variety” again reported November 12 that the Beverly Hills draft board had denied an appeal by Martin of his 1A draft classification. It appeared that Tony Martin would be trading in his film and broadcasting microphones for an Army rifle. While appealing his 1A draft classification, Martin conferred with his agent Nat C. Goldstone (1903-1968) about how to try and obtain a commission as an officer, possibly in the United States Navy. Goldstone made inquiries in Washington. He discovered that the officer in charge of officer procurement and applications for the 12th Naval District in San Francisco, California was Lt. Cdr. Maurice Nathaniel Aroff (1906-1974). In civilian life, Aroff was a successful and wealthy Southern California businessman with ties to the entertainment industry Martin had met Aroff socially in 1935 and Goldstone was acquainted with Aroff, a Naval Reserve officer who had been recalled to duty in 1941. During October 1941, Goldstone arranged for Martin to go to San Francisco and meet with Aroff. At Aroff’s direction, Martin submitted an application for a commission as an Ensign in the Naval Reserve. Martin applied for a commission as a publicist in the Naval Aviation Cadet Selection Board. Papers forwarded by Aroff to the Bureau of Navigation in Washington described him as “a radio and movie person of national reputation whose personal appearances would have a definite influence on the type of persons sought by the Navy as aviation cadets.” In his application for Navy, Martin listed his seagoing experience as a “round trip cruise to Hawaii.”

Meanwhile, Martin was booked for late December 1941 and early January 1942 nightclub and theatre engagements in Chicago, Philadelphia and elsewhere before beginning work on "I'll Take Manila."

Tony Martin had the misfortune of having to be registered for the draft in Beverly Hills, California. That local draft board had a reputation for "having it in for Hollywood types." Martin felt certain that he would be drafted considering the slightest hint of favoritism or special treatment for anyone from the film industry or radio would bring howls of public indignation. It was known that many Hollywood celebrities if not rank and file entertainment industry employees had been "fast-tracked" by the local draft board. Martin himself was classified 1A although he had physical issues, such as poor eyesight, that with another person might have resulted in a different classification. His peers in Hollywood were treated in a similar manner. No one could accuse the Beverly Hills Selective Service office of letting "Hollywood types" off easily. However, Martin was eager to become part of the action, so he did not mind. He also realized that there was another side to the Beverly Hills draft board story. Many entertainment industry people would go to their personal physicians before draft physicals to get pills that would raise their blood pressure and use other ruses to obtain false deferments.

He gave the draft board Goldstone's office address when he left Los Angeles for Chicago in December 1941. Martin and Goldstone understood, perhaps incorrectly, that if called, Martin could take an induction physical on the road and the results could be sent back to his local draft board.

Martin was booked at the "Chez Paree" nightclub in Chicago. After he arrived in Chicago, Martin was startled to receive a telephone call from the local F. B. I. office that an arrest warrant had been issued by the United States Attorney for Southern California on the charge of draft evasion. Martin had been called for an induction physical after all and the warrant was issued when he failed to show. Martin immediately hired a Chicago attorney to represent him. They quickly realized that his notice had been sent to Goldstone's office and no one had thought to open it. If they had, Goldstone would have replied as to Martin's whereabouts and intention to report in Chicago. But this was not until Martin was hauled into the F. B. I. office in Chicago for questioning. The press found out about the mix-up almost immediately. Martin and his Chicago attorney moved quickly to clear it up and Martin reported December 30, 1941 for his induction physical in Chicago. The U. S. attorney, William Fleet Palmer, issued an unusual statement of regret December 31, 1941 for the draft evasion charges being "mistakenly issued" and for having caused Martin "temporary discomfort." Although Martin was thus cleared, the negative publicity stuck in the public mind.

The experience made Martin determined to obtain his Navy commission. However, Lt. Cdr. Aroff got back to him with bad news. The Navy had rejected Martin's application because of a lack of college credits. Tony Martin had attended St. Mary's College, Morega, Calif. but had not graduated. However, Aroff had been able to secure Martin a rating of Chief Specialist, equivalent to Chief Petty Officer (but not a

commission). It was determined by the Navy that Martin could indeed be of some value in recruiting work.

Aroff advised Goldstone December 31, 1941 that Martin could go into the Navy right away as a Chief Specialist and then apply again for a commission once he was in the service.

Morton Downey took over Martin's spot at the Chez Paree in Chicago December 31. Martin canceled his scheduled New Year's Eve appearance at the Earle Theatre in Philadelphia. A last-minute substitution brought in Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz. Martin reported to the Twelfth Naval District, San Francisco, Calif., for duty January 2, 1942.

United States Naval Reserve, 1942

Tony Martin settled into his Navy duties as Chief Specialist reporting to Lt. Cdr. Aroff. His duties included recruiting assignments and serving as a liaison with the motion picture industry. By April 1942, the press reported that several other high-profile film industry men of draft age had joined the Navy at San Francisco, including Irving Cummings, Jr., formerly a scriptwriter at 20th Century Fox, who received a commission as an Ensign stationed at Treasure Island.

Maurice Aroff kept a suite at the Clift Hotel in San Francisco while serving in the Navy. He threw big parties with many beautiful women present who he would introduce to his friends. Aroff appears to have become deeply resented by other reserve officers stationed in San Francisco and innuendo was inevitable. He also soon became the focus of legitimate concerns by Naval Intelligence about his financial means, extracurricular activities and motives. Aroff was in the sensitive position of being responsible for officer commission applications. He received such applications from not just entertainment industry people but from the sons of business executives, professionals, entrepreneurs and numerous high-level career military officers. Aroff did not always necessarily approve commissions or appointments, including some from non-Hollywood types who he thought were unqualified. So Aroff was rubbing some people the wrong way. Another factor was that Aroff was Jewish. At the time, the Navy had an unwritten but well-understood de-facto quota system for officers of the Jewish faith. In May 1942 Aroff turned down the son of a prominent Washington official for a commission. At that point, the investigation of him accelerated. Martin was caught up in the net as Aroff's subordinate and frequent social companion. Martin was warned by others that there was trouble coming and to distance himself from Aroff.



Lt. Cdr. Maurice Aroff swears in Tony Martin, San Francisco, January 1942

When Tony Martin joined the Navy he owned three automobiles, one of which as a Studebaker that he did not use which was given to him for a Studebaker sponsored radio program. At some point, Martin either gave or sold the automobile to Aroff. As time passed it became clear Aroff was being investigated. Martin and others sympathetic to Aroff advised him to lower his profile and moderate his lifestyle. Unfortunately, Aroff had lived a high-profile lifestyle that led to jealousy and suspicion; he was apparently brutally honest about appointments, did not automatically approve commissions for the sons of high-level Navy and civilian figures and he happened to be Jewish. Tony Martin had made the error of being seen too often socially with Aroff even though Martin was not an officer. Thus a predictable drama with consequences was about to unfold.

While away on a recruiting trip, Martin read in the Los Angeles and San Francisco newspapers that Aroff had been relieved of duty pending an investigation and that he (Martin) was implicated. The Navy formally accused Aroff of accepting the bribe of an automobile (the Studebaker) to give Tony Martin a commission in the U. S. Naval Reserve. Aroff was to be court-martialed and Martin was held incommunicado as a material witness. The potential problems with the charge were that Martin had never received a commission and the automobile was reportedly sold for a price at a later date. But the damage had been done to Tony Martin's reputation. He had gone into the Navy upon the recommendation of Aroff to Washington and now Aroff was facing charges.

Martin recalled in 1976 that Naval Intelligence interrogated him. Martin remembered that an effort was made to turn him to testify against Aroff and admit what was not true. He was also asked to expose Aroff's sexual activities or if Aroff had procured women for favors. Upon the advice of Naval officers, Martin had not put down any religion when he applied for officer's training school after coming into the Navy as a Chief Specialist. The Naval Intelligence officers apparently did not know that Martin was Jewish. They may have thought they could turn Martin against Aroff, "the Jew," because they mistook him for a Roman Catholic of Italian heritage. Martin did not cooperate but was ultimately worn down. He signed a statement that he claimed later to have never read. That statement remained sealed in Navy records.

The Navy brought seven counts against Aroff of allegedly accepting bribes to facilitate appointments in the Navy. One of the cases involved Ensign Cummings and another involved Chief Specialist Martin. Starting July 28, 1942 the press reported the progress and testimony of the court-martial proceedings. During the proceedings Martin was assigned to Treasure Island and ordered to be silent. The national press covered the trial. One of even counts against Aroff was the acceptance of Martin's Studebaker as consideration for a commission. The defense sought to prove that Aroff had accepted the Studebaker from Martin as a temporary vehicle while Aroff sought to buy a Cadillac. The prosecution accused Aroff of receiving the Studebaker from Martin January 3, 1942, or the day after Martin was sworn in to the Navy. Lt. Cdr. Ray Robinson, defense attorney, said Martin and Aroff were old friends. When Aroff could not find a Cadillac in San Francisco after Martin was already in Navy, Martin offered Aroff the use of his Studebaker. "Aroff could not accept this gesture and we have this on record," Robinson said. The defense attorney went on to say that Aroff arranged to pay Martin on a time basis, turned around and sold the Studebaker for cash and used the proceeds to buy a Cadillac he had finally located. Robinson added that Aroff sent Martin a war bond with a \$375 war bond cash value as part payment. Lt. Irving Klein, chief prosecutor, announced that Martin would be called as prosecution witness. Lt. Klein reviewed Martin's records starting with the application for a commission. Klein said there was no attempt by the prosecution to prove the records was out of order but that he merely wished to place them "on the record." A defense motion to strike the records was denied.

The records showed that Hollywood figures including Louis B. Mayer and Darryl F. Zanuck, studio executives, and Jerome Kern, composer, were listed by Martin as character references in his application. By July 30, 1942, Ens. Cummings had testified for three days, and Martin was next to testify, although chief prosecutor Klein was quoted in the press as saying he considered Martin's testimony to not be as involved and might only take one day, which it in fact did. Martin took the stand August 3, 1942. He denied that he had given the Studebaker to Aroff as a gift. According to the Associated Press wire story:

"Handsome Tony Martin, screen and radio singer, told a gold-braided naval court today the involved story of his enlistment in the Navy and how he was helped by Lt. Cdr. Maurice N. Aroff. Aroff is accused of asking and accepting a \$950 automobile from Martin for facilitating his enlistment as a chief specialist. The 28-year old singer said he was referred to Aroff last fall when Martin had been classified for 1A in the draft. He said he had known the officer for more than five years. 'I saw him many times in Hollywood and vicinity,' Martin said, 'it is a small community, and one meets most any one there.' 'During the process of getting into the Navy,' Martin said, 'Aroff's kindness and being from Hollywood was very touching to me.' Martin, wearing the insignia of a chief boatswain's mate on his sleeve, continually referred to the former assistant naval procurement officer as 'Maury' until the court advised him to speak of the officer as 'Lieutenant Commander Aroff'."

Following Martin, as witnesses, were others involved in the various charges against Aroff. Several officers, including Lt. (jg) Richard C. Bergen and Lt. B. E. Burchfiel testified that Aroff had told them about accepting favors including the automobile from Martin. Their testimony was such that upon the advice of defense counsel Martin retook the stand August 5, 1942. He altered his previous testimony and now remembered a conversation that he had on January 3, 1942 with Aroff in regard to the automobile. Martin testified that this was not a gift and Aroff intended to pay for it. Defense counsel Lt. Robinson also said in court that Aroff had an understanding with agent Goldstone and Martin for the payment.

Aroff took the stand in his own defense August 6, 1942. He denied that he gave preferential treatment to Tony Martin in recommending Martin for an appointment to the Naval Reserve and confirmed that he had made payment arrangements with Martin and Goldstone (who was then called to the stand himself by the prosecution). Some observers thought Aroff was being railroaded. The Navy went to far as to call Tony Martin's mother to testify. She did so defiantly and in staunch support of her son. At one point the judges said to the defense and the prosecution that they saw no evidence of serious wrongdoing; perhaps only slight misconduct and asked if both sides would agree to a dismissal with a simple reprimand. The defense was agreeable. The prosecution refused. Ironically, chief prosecutor Klein was himself of the Jewish faith. The court-martial continued.

The press had a field day with what they had termed “The Tony Martin Case.” Many anti-Roosevelt Administration leaders in Congress believed that too many Hollywood celebrities were entering the armed services “the easy way.” This created a ripe environment for emotional statements even on the floor of the House of Representatives and in the Senate. On the other hand, celebrities who volunteered for more hazardous military duties were applauded.

The publicity only got worse for Martin when the press carried the story in September 1942 that the Federal Government was going after him for additional income taxes on his 1941 earnings.

The decision of the court-martial came November 12, 1942. The inconclusive proceeding had finally ended in a deal when Aroff agreed to resign his commission with honor. Lt. Marvin McCarthy, naval public affairs officer, announced the decision at a Treasure Island press briefing. However, the Navy declined to give out any other information about the dismissal action or to say what disposition the court-martial had made of the seven specific charges.

Tony Martin was called into headquarters December 1, 1942, told he was “undesirable and unfit” and dismissed from the Navy with orders to report to his local draft board in Beverly Hills. Navy officials stressed that the dismissal “does not carry any degradation and should not be construed as a dishonorable discharge.” Regardless, the press eagerly announced Martin’s dismissal. He could not bear to face his friends in Hollywood. A humiliated Martin traveled home inconspicuously wearing civilian clothes and dark sunglasses on a bus from Oakland to Los Angeles.

Army Air Forces Training Command, 1943-1944

Tony Martin was induced into the Army December 17, 1942 and reported for duty at Fort MacArthur, Calif. December 26, 1942. He was hazed at Fort MacArthur due to the publicity of his recent experience in the Navy. However, some Army officers and noncoms were supportive and came to his rescue. Pvt. Martin was assigned to the Army Air Forces (AAF). He was sent to Sheppard Field, Wichita Falls, Texas for basic training, where he arrived January 7, 1943. Because he had been acquainted with close order drill in the Navy he was made a drill instructor. He survived. After his Navy experience, Pvt. Martin just wanted to do his job and keep out of trouble. He was transferred to Chanute Field, Illinois where he was assigned to sing with the base band. Apparently someone in the Army Air Forces remembered who he actually was. In April 1943 he was summoned to base headquarters and told that Capt. Glenn Miller had requested him for the newly-forming AAFTC Orchestra at Atlantic City, New Jersey which was to be stationed at Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

Martin then realized who “that someone” was. He later recalled that the news was astonishing given his recent experiences. He felt as though he “had stumbled into heaven by a side door.” For Miller, the decision was straightforward. Tony Martin was the most famous radio, film and records singer in uniform. Miller wanted him, had the authority to get him (and any singer or musician in the AAF) and he cut the orders.

Arriving at the Army Air Forces Technical Training Center at Yale University and joining the Miller unit, Martin eagerly jumped into his duties onstage and off. The orchestra would begin test programs of the radio series “I Sustain the Wings” over a CBS New England regional network anchored by WEEI, Boston in June 1943. By July 1943 officials with the Army Air Forces Training Command (AAFTC) were satisfied with the trial run and approved the nationwide debut of the program over the full CBS network in July, 1943. Capt. Miller featured Tony Martin as the orchestra’s premiere male vocalist. In addition to a full complement of concert and jazz musicians, the unit included singers, announcers, actors, producers and writers (please refer to “A Portrait of Glenn Miller” for additional background information). Tony Martin is seen singing and Glenn Miller conducting in this June 1943 photo:

After working with Capt. Miller and the AAFTC Orchestra for five months, and by now a Corporal, Martin was called into Miller’s office. Miller informed him that he (Miller) had major future plans for the AAFTC Orchestra, perhaps including an overseas assignment, and that Martin was a major part of his plans. Miller felt that Martin should properly be an officer to fill the role Miller intended for him. Therefore, Miller asked Martin if he could recommend him for Officer Candidate School. Martin reminded Miller of his recent history and later recalled that Miller said to him “I know all about that. Go ahead (to O. C. S.). I want you.” Martin went before an officer’s selection board, passed the exam and interviews. He was informed that the AAF was fully aware of his Navy history and that he was being recommended for O. C. S. regardless. He left the AAFTC for Miami Beach, Florida September 13, 1943. It appeared that the Army Air Forces were giving Tony Martin the opportunity that the Navy had denied him. He would join thousands of men who trained for duty as officers at Miami Beach and studied, exercised and marched to wartime music like “The Army Air Corps.”

Following page:

Performing and signing autographs with Capt. Glenn Miller at the Yale Bowl.





Cpl. Martin at the Microphone
CBS (WEEI) Broadcast from Woolsey Hall
Yale University, June 1943

O. C. S. was a sixteen-week course. Cadet Martin was assigned to class 44-A. He was looking forward to working hard, making the grade, earning his commission and returning to the Miller musical unit. Martin would finish in the top 140 of his class of 764 officer candidates. When graduation day came, he graduated with his class. The assignments for the graduates were posted. Martin was assigned to the 2001st AAF Base Unit (Radio Production). He knew exactly what that meant and was thrilled.



AAFTC Officer Candidate Cadets, Collins Avenue, Miami Beach, Florida

The next day, an embarrassed officer abruptly informed Martin that his orders had been changed. He was being shipped out without receiving his gold bars as a Lieutenant. He and everyone else intuitively knew what had happened. The Navy had apparently insisted that it would be an insult if the AAF commissioned a man the Navy had kicked out as undesirable and unfit. Pressure had evidently been brought at the highest levels, presumably all the way from Navy chief Admiral Ernest J. King to AAF chief General H. H. Arnold. There seemed to be no other possible explanation. Martin had done everything right to redeem himself but here he was again, viciously and inexplicably penalized for simply being Tony Martin, persona non-gratia with the United States Navy. Several hundred of his fellow officer candidates signed a petition demanding that Martin receive his commission.

Someone dropped the story on Walter Winchell, who published it in his column and mentioned it on his radio program. Suddenly the AAF had a public relations problem. There was nothing the chain of command could do, including Capt. Glenn Miller. The Navy again reached out to hurt Martin. After all of his hard work, the rejection following his successful completion of officer-training almost completely broke him. Martin was sent to Seymour Johnson Field, North Carolina. The commanding officer of the base was sympathetic to Martin as were many AAF officers. They took him under their wing and bucked him up. They knew Martin had now received two raw deals. Martin was made a S/Sgt. and later became a T/Sgt. He went on to radar school at Boca Raton, Florida and then found himself on a ship headed to India.



Sgt. Tony Martin, Air Transport Command, 1944

Air Transport Command, India-China Division, 1944-1945

Tony Martin found himself assigned to the headquarters of the Air Transport Command India-China Division (ICD) located north of Calcutta. From here, inbound transport flights originating at the Miami, Florida and Morrison Field (West Palm Beach), Florida Army Air Bases arrived on C-54 transports with equipment, fuel, supplies and people for the China-Burma-India theatre of operations (CBI). The aircraft also carried Armed Forces Radio Service transcription discs and Army V-Discs that were of high morale priority. Several AFRS field radio stations were operated from this location. From there, C-46 Commando and C-47 aircraft along with C-54 aircraft flew the famed, dangerous and vital "Hump" air route from India to China over Burma and the Himalayas. In addition to the ATC, the AAF had major troop carrier, air commando, fighter and bomber operations based in eastern India to support combat operations in Burma and China.

Martin realized that he was at the end of the earth figuratively and literally. He would soon rub shoulders with Maj. Melvyn Douglas, another Hollywood refuge and Lt. Larry Clinton, the former bandleader and realize that there were very few if any entertainment types in the theatre. However, he was assigned as a radar-man to the AAF Communications Service (air traffic control) and settled in to focus on his duties.

Fate would again intervene, but this time Tony Martin would find himself of great service in his second positive military experience. It became apparent to the administration of the ATC ICD that the singer Tony Martin was assigned to them in a low-level technical job. By order of General William Tunner, Martin was transferred to Tunner's headquarters unit. Tunner was a no-nonsense leader who had turned around the "Hump" operation into a well-oiled transportation machine. He would later rescue and lead the famous Berlin Airlift operations of 1948. When Martin arrived, Tunner and his officers were dealing with the very low morale that was understandable among thousands of young men (and women) stationed in such a distant, unfamiliar, uncomfortable and dangerous part of the world. The CBI was the lowest ranking theatre in terms of global priority and the ICD was the most distant stepchild of the ATC. In terms of morale, the CBI got literally nothing. No USO troupes and only a few pickup bands or other forms of entertainment. Former bandleader Lt. Clinton was a flight instructor but led an informal band at his base. It was claimed that people were exiled to the CBI and Martin perhaps felt that way himself.



Air Transport Command Curtiss C-46A (S/N 42-96569)
"The Hump" over the Himalayas between India and China
(United States Air Force)

Tunner wanted to pick up the morale of the ICD. Martin was given the job that normally might have been assigned to an officer to find and coordinate entertainment activities for all of the CBI ICD bases in India to China. Martin was directed to use whatever influence he had to bring entertainment to the theatre and the ICD; then, to coordinate and schedule the movement of shows to bases; to help form base bands; to assist AFRS radio outlets with programming and on top of that to participate himself in the shows. It was a truly remarkable informal and sweeping portfolio that was handed to Martin. Perhaps it was a lose-lose proposition that no one thought Martin could successfully accomplish.



AAF Air Transport Command C-54 aircraft, maintenance ramp, 1346th AAF Base Unit
Tezgaon, India, June 1945
(United States Air Force)

What Martin was able to do with the complete support of his chain-of-command was to get around the lack of USO shows by identifying talent within the ICD and CBI as a whole who could be brought together. Martin scrounged around and came up with a few dozen former vaudevillians, film people, concert musicians, big band veterans and others. Some of the WAACs assigned to the CBI were also drafted into Martin's ad-hoc entertainment group. He organized and led what ultimately became sixteen different companies of entertainers from within the CBI to travel to all the ICD and other CBI bases, as well as performing for service personnel stationed at Calcutta, Delhi and Bombay. The troupes traveled to British and Commonwealth as well as American bases. CBI Commander-in-chief Lord Louis Mountbatten would commend Martin for his work.

Tony Martin came to realize that his humiliating and horrible experiences with the Navy and thereafter had actually brought him to this point in life and had prepared him to do an important job with determination, grace and humility. Martin did not have time to perform himself in too many instances because he was completely involved in his job of running CBI entertainment, or as he would recall "I was the CBI booking agent." It was not an easy job. Housing, such as it was, food, transport, equipment and many other details had to be begged, borrowed and improvised on a daily basis.

One USO group that did visit included CBS radio maestro Andre Kostelanetz and his wife, Lily Pons. In this instance, Martin did accompany the group and he performed at numerous concerts with Kostelanetz and Pons.



Gen. William Tunner awards T/Sgt. Tony Martin with the Bronze Star, 1945
(Collection of the Author)

The unit histories of the ICD airbases and the weekly ICD newsletter located in the United States Air Force records are full of references to T/Sgt. Tony Martin, his entertainment troupes the AFRS outpost stations and the base bands that were formed. By August 1945 and the surrender of Japan, Gen. Tunner would cite Martin for a job well done. Tony Martin was awarded the Bronze Star for his service. He had come a very long way from the Aroff court-martial.

Afterward

Although it would take him some months to win back his Hollywood friends and the general public when he returned home, Tony Martin was comfortable with himself and had the satisfaction of overcoming his own self-doubt and the humiliation that he encountered along the way during his military service. There is no doubt that the high points were his service with the ATC ICD and the AAFTC Orchestra. It was unfair and unfortunate that the AAF did not commission Martin as an officer when he had certainly earned his gold bars. However, if he had been commissioned, Martin would have rejoined Glenn Miller rather than fill a very important role in the CBI. Perhaps there was a larger destiny and duty that Tony Martin was supposed to accomplish.

Tony Martin went on to resume a successful career following the war. Most importantly, he discovered and enjoyed a storybook sixty-year marriage with his beloved soul mate, Cyd Charisse (Tula Ellice Finklea) (1922-2008).

The United States Navy sealed the records of the Aroff court-martial and Tony Martin passed away in 2012 without ever knowing what was concluded or why he was dismissed as “undesirable and unfit” for the Naval service.

Many friends of Tony Martin feel that it would have been considerate and fair if the Navy had advised Tony Martin in his later years why he had been dismissed and that it would be wholly appropriate for the Navy to now consider posthumously exonerating him.

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For additional information:

Glenn Miller Declassified by Dennis M. Spragg
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China-Burma-India Theatre Shoulder Patch



Air Transport Command Shoulder Patch