

December 2015



8TH AF NEWS

Volume 15 Number 4 Voice of "The Mighty Eighth"

From 30 seconds over Tokyo

to 4 days in Omaha...

B-25 "Miss Mitchell"



Special Reunion
Issue



8TH AF NEWS

Voice of "The Mighty Eighth"

OFFICERS

President

David Nowack (Lois) 2017
4878 College View Court
Schnecksville, PA 18078
Tel. (610) 799-4640
DLNowack@ptd.net

Vice President

Dr. Nancy J. Toombs 2018
5213 North Cedar Street
North Little Rock, AR 72116
Tel. (501) 681-3126
chase221@swbell.net

Secretary

Benjamin J. Jones (Krista) 2019
15115 E Jones Beach Dr.
Kent, NY 14477-9780
(585) 682-4737
LimeyBJ@gmail.com

Treasurer

B/GEN G. Dennis Leadbetter,
USAF, (Ret) (Cookie) 2018
P O Box 14248
Savannah, GA 31416-1248
(912) 210-9881
OneStarGDL@bellsouth.net

DIRECTORS

Donald E. Casey (Alice) 2016
5555 N. Sheridan Road #811
Chicago, IL 60640
(773) 878-0870
ARCDEC@aol.com

COL Edward "Ed" Wexler
USAF, (Ret) 2017
8 E Back St.
Savannah, GA 31419-3343
(912) 308-2940
EWexler06@comcast.net

CHAPTER/UNIT LIAISON

Jonathan Delgado-Levin-Turner
(Sandra) 2019
256 3rd Street – Hangar 12
Niagara Falls, NY 14303
(416) 568-3780
8thafhs.9thsr@gmail.com

8TH AFHS

NATIONAL OFFICE

Membership Director

Editor, 8th AF News

Debra Kujawa (Joseph)
PO Box 60369
Savannah, GA 31420-0369
(912) 748-8884
ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org
www.8thafhs.org

INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

UNITED KINGDOM

Gordon Richards
The Croft
26 Chapelwent Rd.
Haverhill, Suffolk
CB9 9SD, Great Britain
011 44 1440 704014

BELGIUM

Edouard Renière
Dieweg 296
1180 Brussels Belgium
Riiren.belsuo@skynet.be

FRANCE

Jean-Paul Favrais
La Haye-Ouisais No. 85
35310 Breal
France
Jeanpaulfavrais1@orange.fr

CHIEF OF VETERANS AFFAIRS & EDUCATION

Joe Garber (Joan)
46 Coquina Ridge Way
Ormond Beach, FL 32174
(386) 672-5359.
paljoe2@aol.com

DIRECTORS EMERITUS

Earl Wassom
John Pearson
Ivan McKinney

MIGHTY EIGHTH AF MUSEUM STORE

Museum Store Director

Felice Stelljes
175 Bourne St.
Pooler, GA 31328
P.O. Box 1992
Savannah, GA 31402
912-748-8888
store@mightyeighth.org

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Presidents Message	3
Editors Message	4
Betrayals, Secrets & Consequences	6-11
41st 8th AFHS Reunion . . .	12-23
Footsteps of Bud Owens . .	24-26
Chapter/Bomb Group News	27-29
Christmas in Wengen	30-31
Reunions/Chapter Meetings . .	31
From Across The Pond . . .	32-34
Pinpointing the Past (Final) .	36-37
Taking to the Skies	38-39
French Legion of Honor . . .	40-41
Mail Call	38-39
Book Reviews	40
Taps	43-45
Book Reviews	46
How About It?	47



From the President's Pen



PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

It was wonderful to see everyone who came to our reunion in Omaha. I personally think it was a very good event. These reunions are part of our present; what we are doing today to remember the Mighty 8th of years past. The reunions, 8th A F News, our wonderful website, distribution of the Roll of Honor, and efforts to secure the French Legion of Honor to all those who qualify for it are present activities designed to help us remember the past.

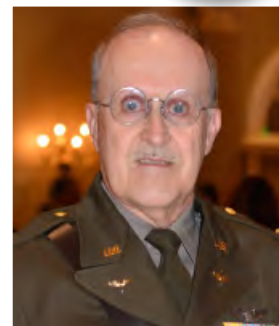
The 8th Air Force Historical Society is strongly tied to its past. Indeed, it was thousands of men who fought in that great air armada in World War II who founded the Society with the mission of perpetuating the legacy of the 8th for all generations. It is that same mission that

has been our guiding light for decades, and will continue to be so, well into the future.

Our future is challenging. We will always strive to spread the legacy of our World War II veterans, but we also know there are legions of others who proudly serve(d) in the 8th Air Force subsequent to World War II. Their stories and history are important and should also be perpetuated. Those who attended the bunker briefing at Strategic Command Headquarters and toured the Strategic Air and Space Museum during the Omaha reunion got a glimpse of the post WWII 8th Air Force. We must let this next generation of veterans know we also honor their service and encourage them to become active in the Society.

You will notice something different in this issue of the 8th Air Force News: There is ***no pull-out envelope for renewal of your membership.*** We

are trying something different this year. We will be sending out personalized membership renewal invoices. We encourage you to renew in a timely manner. If you can also recruit new members, please do so.



David Nowack
President

My best wishes to everyone for a very happy holiday season!

Dave

– Form may be reproduced –



JOIN THE 8TH AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY!

(Dues notices will be mailed *INSIDE* the December issue annually)



FIRST NAME _____ MIDDLE INITIAL _____ LAST _____

ADDRESS _____

STREET

CITY

STATE

ZIP

Telephone _____ Email _____

8th AF Unit _____ Not in 8th _____ Educator _____

In service _____ Branch _____ Dates _____ to _____

Were you a former member? _____ Member # if available _____

ALL RENEWALS AND NEW MEMBERSHIP ANNUAL DUES \$40.00 ☐

Exp _____

PAYMENT: CHECK ☐ AmEx ☐ MASTERCARD ☐ VISA ☐ CARD # _____

SIGNATURE: _____

SEND APPLICATION AND PAYMENT TO 8TH AFHS P.O. BOX 60369, SAVANNAH, GA 31420-0369 TEL: 912-748-8884

You may also apply online at: www.8thafhs.org



8TH AF NEWS

The Eighth Air Force News is dedicated to the memory of Lt. Col. John H. Woolnough, Founder of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society and Editor for sixteen years. It is published quarterly and is the official news magazine of the Society, a 501(c)3. The 8th AF NEWS is distributed to members of the Society and is not for public sale.

The home office is located at: 8 Rose Hill Drive, Savannah, GA. 31419-3358 or P. O. Box 60369, Savannah, GA 31420-0369

BEING THE VOICE

Well, the 41st Annual 8th AFHS Reunion is “in the books” and by most accounts, those who attended had a truly memorable time.

Being able to meet and/or reconnect with so many folks each year is such a priceless opportunity for everyone. We discuss new grandbabies, travel, and experiences since the previous reunion...but we also take note of so many friends who weren't able to attend—from health and family issues, to the painfully obvious reasons—we try to remember them all.

The writer, Czeslaw Milosz said, “The living owe it to those who no longer can speak to tell their story for them.” And that is the focus for us in the Historical Society: to make sure the voices of all who have served in the Mighty 8th are never silenced or forgotten.

While our mission hasn't changed over the past 41 years, the process has definitely evolved. What started as a simple newsletter, mimeographed and mailed to several thousand members, is now a 48 page full-color publication mailed to a current membership of about 4,000, all around the globe. Paper records have been painstakingly transferred into digital records and uploaded into our massive website making it possible for millions of people to learn about the heroes of the 8th Air Force. Books are still being written chronicling the stories of fathers, and grandfathers, by family members and historians who are deter-

mined to be that “voice” of remembrance. “Masters of the Air: America's Bomber Boys who Fought the Air war Against Nazi Germany,” by Dr. Donald Miller, is now in production with HBO as a 10 part miniseries which will be released in the not too distant future.

As our membership declines because of the passing of so many of our veterans, we are determined to do everything we can to stay the course and continue all of our efforts to be that “voice.”

Please watch your mail in the next few weeks for special

dues notices. Every penny we receive—whether through annual dues or generous contributions—is critical to our continued existence as a Society.

Hundreds of thousands of voices...still speaking through so many people in so many varied and different ways. This is our definitive mission. With your continued support, rest assured, we will never be silent.

*May your holidays be filled
with joy and happiness,
and may the New Year bring wonderful memories!*

Debra



Debra Kujawa
Managing Director/Editor



MERRY CHRISTMAS

from your 8th AF News Staff



Debra Kujawa, Telisha Gaines, & Donna Neely



8TH AFHS BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Benjamin Jones, Jonathan Delgadolevin-Turner, Dr. Nancy J. Toombs, David Nowack, G. Dennis Leadbetter and Edward "Ed" Wexler (Not pictured - Donald Casey)

CONTACT INFORMATION

Editor & Managing Director
Debra Kujawa
PO Box 60369
Savannah, GA 31420-0369
8th AFHS
8 Rose Hill Dr.
Savannah, GA 31419
(912) 748-8884
ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org

MATERIAL DEADLINE
February 1, 2016

We welcome all of your articles!!!
Please include photos & more!!
ALL file formats are accepted

We encourage you to send
digital images WHEN possible.

**Please mail all parcels
or packages to:**

Debra Kujawa
8th Air Force Historical Society
8 Rose Hill Dr
Savannah, GA 31419-3358

Betrayals, Secrets, and CONSEQUENCES

By "Ric" Martini

Staff Sergeant Frederic C Martini, a Brooklyn native, was the left waist gunner and assistant flight engineer on a B-17 assigned to the 551st Squadron



Fred Martini, age 25, Brooklyn, April 1944 on a layover at Mitchell Field en route to the ETO.

of the 385th Bomber Group. On 12 June 1944, he left Great Ashfield on Mission 132 for the 385 BG (407 for the 8th AF). This would be their ninth - and last - combat mission and their third plane since their arrival in the U.K. in late April. Their aircraft, 42-31762, under the command of Lt Loren Jackson, was Tail-End Charlie of the high group. It was hit by antiaircraft fire southeast of Rouen and the crew abandoned ship as it went down.

Wounded by flak, Fred was unconscious from the time he left the plane at 21,000' until he was less than 1000' from the ground. Because he deployed his chute at the last possible moment, he escaped detection by German patrols. One other crewman (SSgt Sam Pennell, the right waist gunner) also waited to deploy his parachute. He too escaped capture, although because his opened sooner than Fred's the two airmen landed several kilometers apart. Of the eight other crewmen aboard the plane, called "Crashwagon III" by the Jackson crew, one (Lt Gerald Shaffer, the navigator) was killed when his parachute streamed and the others opened their parachutes on exiting the doomed aircraft, and German patrols were ready and waiting when they reached the ground.

Fred sprained his ankle and was knocked out in a hard landing near Provement-Chauvin-

court. He was found almost immediately by a local farmer, Paul Stinkelbout, and a young associate, Henri Brown. Paul and Henri removed Fred's uniform and Henri buried the clothing with the parachute in the nearby woods. Fred was unable to walk, so the two men boosted him into an empty mule-drawn water cart and took him to the Brown family farm. Fred spent 3 days in the farmhouse, staying indoors and out of sight under the care of Victor and Henriette Brown, Henri's parents, Henri, and Eda, Henri's older sister. Victor and Henriette were members of the MEU (Mouvement Eure, part of the French

Meldung über den Abschuß eines
US-amerikanischen Flugzeuges

Abschuß-Nr. KU 2164

Abschüttung und Zeit: 13.6.44 - Bréaux b. Rennes

Abschußort: _____

Flugzeugtyp: Liberator

Meldende Dienststelle: Fl. H. Edm. Rennes

Besatzung:

Name und Vornamen: Geburtsort und -ori:	Dienst- grad	Erk.- Marke:	gef. t verw. t tot:	Verbleib: welches Lager Art d. Verwundung Grablage
MARTINI Armando A.	1/Sgt.	12130222	gef.	Dolag-Luft
MUZZEY Felipe E.	8/Sgt.	39562808	gef.	Dolag-Luft
Abschuß-Nr. <u>KU 2164</u> BLAKE Hugo Mac Kenzie			1. Nachmeldung vom 2. Lt. 0-819040	gef. 4.7.44 Dolag-Luft
Abschuß-Nr. <u>KU 2164</u> DUBSKO Theodore George	5/Sgt.	6655121	gef.	20.7.44 Dolag-Luft
JACOBSON Loren Elwood	2. Lt.	0-747421	gef.	Dolag-Luft
HAUGHE Joseph William	2. Lt.	0-71828	gef.	Dolag-Luft
PICHEL Irwin Albert	2/Sgt.	16160046	gef.	Dolag-Luft
Abschuß-Nr. <u>KU 2164</u> PENNEL Sam Columbus, Ga.	8/Sgt.	34684485	gef.	2.11.44 Stalag Luft 3
MARTINI 18.10.18 Brooklyn, N.Y.	8/Sgt.	32163997	gef.	Stalag Luft 3

Bemerkungen:

DOLAG-LUFT, den 25.6.44

S 2452/44 He. Fallschirmjäger-Verbandsarzt Dr. G. H.

German report on the downing of the Jackson crew.
The date is incorrect, as is the aircraft type.

Forces of the Interior [FFI]). Henri and Eda then assisted him down a dirt road to an intersection where a veterinarian, Marcel Daviaud, picked him up. After an 11 km ride in the trunk, Fred arrived in the small town of Hacqueville, population ~400, where he was entrusted to the care of Capt Max Raulin and his wife, Yvonne. Raulin was responsible for managing this portion of the MEU, which was headquartered in Chartres.


For the next two months Fred spent most days in the town schoolhouse - Max was the headmaster - and evenings hidden in the nearby church. While hiding in the school he played with, and was tutored in French by, the Raulin's young son Lionel. Soon his French was sufficient for him to leave the schoolhouse during the day to visit other members of the MEU in town. A graduate of Catholic school, he could travel by bicycle disguised as a young priest; if his French failed him he could give a quick blessing in Latin and move on.

Fred was not the only airman the Raulin's were sheltering at the time - they were also hosting SSgt Paul Wilson (391 BG, 574 Sq) and Sgt Alexander MacPherson (207th Sq RAF and the sole survivor of his Lancaster's crew). The three men had very different personalities - Fred was outgoing, Paul more reserved and serious, and Alex rather aggressive and short-tempered, but they managed to get along. When Wehrmacht patrols swept through the town, as they did with increasing frequency in early July, the men took shelter either in the false ceiling of the church or in a tiny concealed space above the bell in the church tower. After the 20 July assassination attempt, the town had to contend with SS patrols as well. This raised the stakes. Capture by the Wehrmacht generally meant transfer to the Luftwaffe and a POW camp. But the French, who by now were all too familiar with the tactics and morality of the SS, assured them that capture by the SS might mean summary execution for the airmen and the complete demolition of the entire town.

This made the airmen very uncomfortable - their fate was one thing, and the fate of an entire town quite another. Things were soon brought to a head by the arrival of a new FFI contact, Jacques Desoubrie. Jacques had been introduced to the MEU by trusted contacts in Paris. He had a car and a pass to get through road-

Mindsburg. Gen.

Liberated Apr. 29, 1945 By 14th Army Div. IIIrd ARMY

	Name:	Martini
	Vorname:	Frederic
	Dienstgrad:	S/Sgt
	Erk.-Marke:	8177 Kerle. d. Lw. 3
	Serv.-Nr.:	
Nationalität:		USA

10/22/44

Baracke:	22
Raum:	15

W. VII. 2877 K

Fred's kriegie ID. The photo was taken shortly after he arrived at Stalag Luft III.

blocks, and he convinced the airmen that he could provide an escape route to Allied lines. In early August the three airmen left Hacqueville over Max's objections and headed to Paris. It was a trap, and shortly after arriving in Paris on 5 August 1944 they were delivered to the Gestapo office at Avenue Foch.

Fred was "aggressively interrogated" before being sentenced to death as a spy and transported to Fresnes Prison handcuffed to Lt JD Coffman (489th BG). On 15 August 1944, 169 Allied airmen, including Fred, Sam Pennell, JD Coffman, Paul Wilson, and Alex MacPherson, were loaded into boxcars at the Gare de Pantin station. This would be the last train to leave Paris before its liberation. The passenger section carried German officers, staff, and records as well as senior members of the Vichy government. The boxcars that formed the bulk of the train were arranged so that a boxcar of 12 guards separated each pair of prisoner transport cars. Even with dense packing - 70-90 men in small boxcars designed to carry 8 horses - the train was very long, as it carried more than 2,000 French civilians in addition to the Allied POWs. Women prisoners were held in the last 5 prisoner cars. The Allied airmen were in the next three, mixed with Frenchmen. There were 27 airmen and ~63 civilians in Fred's boxcar. It was standing room only. Ventilation was provided by two small openings crisscrossed by barbed wire. There was one 20 L bucket of fresh

water for drinking and one empty 20 L bucket as a toilet. The train left Paris near midnight, with the sound of artillery thundering in the distance.

It was very slow going. The FFI was determined to stop the train before it reached German territory, but repeated ambushes were beaten back by the German troops, many of them hardened veterans of the Eastern front. Near Luzançy, a bridge over the Marne River was blown up and the entire train had to be emptied and the passengers, gear, and prisoners marched along the banks, across the river, and on to a second freight train waiting at the Nantueil-Saacy station. After the first 24 hours, the prisoners were still only 75 km from Paris.

In the early hours of 17 August, there was an escape attempt from Fred's boxcar. Five French civilians and two airmen, Flight Officer Joel Stevenson and Sgt David High, both CAF, made it out through the floor of the boxcar before the guards were alerted. The fate of the Frenchmen isn't known, although after the train stopped, gunfire was heard. High was recaptured, beaten severely, and returned to the train. Only Stevenson remained at large and made it back to Allied lines. In punishment the men in that boxcar were stripped and warned that any further escape attempts would result in their mass execution.

In Frankfurt, on 19 August, the boxcars carrying women were uncoupled and

rerouted to Ravensbrück concentration camp. When the train continued onward, the airmen started to wonder where they were headed - they had been led to believe that in Frankfurt they would be transferred to a Luftwaffe POW camp via Dulag Luft. The next day, 20 August, the train arrived at its final destination, Buchenwald concentration camp.

For the first three weeks the airmen were held in the Rock Pile, an open area of stony ground within the sub-enclosure known as Little Camp. They had been given prison garb with neither jackets nor shoes, and had only a few threadbare "blankets" to share, and lived exposed to the elements as the weather turned to Fall and the rains came. There was little food provided - chunks of hard black bread with sawdust as a major ingredient and a watery broth that sometimes contained bits of meat of uncertain origin. On their first night, the officers among the group organized into a military structure and vowed to keep the men from degenerating into the kind of animal (every man for himself) existence evident among the other prisoners in Buchenwald. The ranking officer was Squadron Leader Philip Lamason, a New Zealander, with his seconds in command being Captain Merle Larson (US-AAC) and Flight Officer Thomas Blackham (RAF). Seventeen officers were selected by Larson and Blackham, each placed in charge of a group containing 8-10 airmen. Each group would be a potential aircrew if (a) they managed to come up with an acceptable escape plan and (b) suitable aircraft could be commandeered.

Buchenwald was run by the third SS-Totenkompf division. Although the perimeter was guarded and manned by SS guards,

much of the interior organization and policing was done by prison trustees known as Kapos, who could be just as vicious as their SS masters. On the fourth day, the adjacent Gustloff Werks and the Deutsche Arms Works were bombed by 129 B-17s from the 401st, 351st, and 457th BGs. The accuracy was excellent, and the prison compound was spared, although there were prisoner casualties among the slave laborers who were forced to remain at work while the bombing was underway. There were heavy casualties among the SS staff and their families; the Commandant's wife and daughter were among the dead. In the aftermath the airmen were forced to fight fires and clear debris, despite being weak and barefoot.

The clearing work continued for days thereafter as their physical condition gradually worsened. By the time they were finally granted shelter, the men were already malnourished and suffering from

exposure. They were assigned to an overcrowded barracks hall after space was provided by the removal and execution of 400 young Gypsies.

Over the next 6 weeks the airmen clung to life and sanity while experiencing the general horrors of Buchenwald. The crematorium was processing 200 bodies per day, but it could not keep pace with the death rate among the population of almost 50,000 abused prisoners. The airmen were surrounded by death. Within Little Camp, corpses were stacked by the latrine each morning to await eventual removal by prisoner-drawn cart. Prisoners were shot in the main compound for almost any infraction; others were beaten to death in the holding cells by the front gate, strangled in the crematorium basement, hung in the "screaming woods" nearby, shot in Block 99, a converted horse stables, or machine gunned at the rifle range. Others died in bizarre medical experiments after being

exposed to typhus, burned by phosphorus, or subjected to perverse surgeries in the SS hospital.

Early in their confinement the airmen were ordered to board trucks carrying skilled slave laborers to the Mittelwerks V-2 plant. Lamason steadfastly refused to order his men into the trucks, and the SS officer probably didn't execute him only because he felt Lamason would feel differently after spending another month in Little Camp.

After two months in Buchenwald the airmen were in bad shape; two had died (Flight Officer Philip Hemmens [RAF] and Lt Levitt C Beck [US-AAC] and many



Emaciated bodies found at the liberation of Dora/Mittelwerks

US 17

Poliz. 78299 Martini Frederic

geb. N.York |USA|

Unteroffizier

20.8.44

DIKAL

Entlassen 19. Okt. 1944

Polizeihaftling

Alte Nr.: _____

Häftl. Art amerikaner Häftl. Nr.: 78299

Fam.- Namen Martini Rufnamen Frederic

Geburtsdag: _____ Geburtsort: New York

Rel. verh/led/verw/Kinder Gesch/ USA Staatsangehörigkeit USA

Letzter Wohnort: _____

Vater: _____ Beruf: Feldwebel

Mutter: _____

Ehegatte: verheiratet, keine Angaben

Nächst. Angehörigen: _____

Eingewiesen am 20.8.44 in KL Bu d. Stapo/Kripo/Sipo

Überstellt am _____ an KL _____

Vorstrafen / mal kriminell / mal politisch

Sonstige Bemerkungen: SL Sgt. Frederic Martini

20.8.1944
BDS Paris

Entlassen 19. Okt. 1944

Two file cards from Buchenwald. The first has DIKAL prominently displayed; it is shorthand for *Darf in kein anderes Lager*, "Prisoner may not be transferred to another camp". On arrival the airmen were told they would leave via the crematorium smokestack.

others were on the brink of collapse. Most had lost 30-40% of their body weight; dysentery was almost universal, as were malnutrition, scabies, lice, fleas, pneumonia, pleurisy, and deeply eroded skin ulcers. In addition, Fred had lost eight teeth, two to beatings, and against all odds he had survived a burst appendix.

In September orders came scheduling the executions of 37 British Special Operations Executive (SOE) men who had been captured after parachuting into France. These men had arrived in Buchenwald a week before the airmen arrived. The first group was executed by strangulation in the crematorium basement on the night of 12-13 September 1944. Ten more were executed, handcuffed together and shot in groups of four, on 4 October, and over the next week their numbers continued to drop. Of the 37, only six would survive; three were on an extended work detail away from Buchenwald, and the others were able to swap identities with French prisoners who died of typhus.

The Buchenwald airmen were next in line to be executed, but at the last moment they were evacuated by the Luftwaffe. The man who orchestrated their transfer was a Luftwaffe ace, Hans Trautloft. Trautloft had heard rumors that there were airmen being held at Buchenwald, and when he arrived, ostensibly to inspect the damage to the Gustloff and DAW plants, he spoke with one of the airmen, SSgt Bernard Scharf, who was fluent in German. After meetings in Berlin, a senior officer from the Dulag Luft, the main Luftwaffe interrogation center and a transfer point for airmen on their way to POW camps, arrived

at Buchenwald. Convinced of their bonafides, he arranged their evacuation by boxcars to Stalag Luft III, in Zagan, Poland. They left Buchenwald on 20 October, four days before their scheduled execution.

On arrival at SL III their condition was so terrible that they had to be deloused and their clothing replaced before they could complete arrival processing. Fred was one of 25 Sergeants assigned to South Camp to act as orderlies for the officers, although they were so weak and sick that they were of little value in that role. Their fellow POWs provided extra food and vitamins, and Luther Cox and the medical aids worked hard to heal their ulcerations, clear their infestations, and help them regain weight and strength. But the Buchenwald airmen found that their recounting of events was often met with skepticism or disbelief. With few exceptions the POWs had been treated honorably by their Luftwaffe captors; the SS executions of escaped prisoners following the "Great Escape" had been protested by the camp Commandant. So the sheer horror of Buchenwald struck the general POW population as bizarre to the point of being unbelievable. The senior officers shared that view initially, but after hearing consistencies in interview after interview they became believers. Lt Col Clark, the intelligence officer in South Camp, prepared an overview report that survived the war and makes interesting reading.

By the end of January, the Buchenwald airmen had regained some of their weight and their health had improved, but such improvements were limited by the availability of medicine and food, which was

now in short supply. On the night of 27-28 January 1945, Stalag Luft III was evacuated to keep the POWs from falling into the hands of the advancing Soviet troops. Twelve thousand prisoners would be on the move.

The men from South Camp were the first to depart at 2300 hrs on the 27th. In the first 27 hours they were force-marched 37 miles under blizzard conditions; the Geneva Convention stipulated that prisoner marches should cover less than 12.5 miles per day. The marching continued for three more days. The men were totally exhausted and disoriented, asleep on their feet. Frostbite was common. Men fell by the wayside, and those too weak to continue or to be boosted by their comrades were left behind. The death count from that march is unknown. Fred survived the march, but in the process lost considerable weight (again) and all sensation in his feet. Their marching destination was Muskau, where they boarded boxcars - jammed in like sardines as usual - for a two-day ride to the train station near Moosburg, the location of Stalag Luft VIIA. For the next three months, the sergeants were forced to clear bomb damage and repair train tracks in and around Munich. This did little to improve their physical condition. SL VIIA was liberated by Patton's 3rd Army on 29 April 1945. After liberation the Buchenwald airmen were interviewed War Crimes Investigation Unit 6824, under Major Sullivan, and by military intelligence services including the OSS. After a week of delay, Fred was flown to Camp Lucky Strike, one of the camps that processed RAMPs (Returning Army Military Personnel) headed

back to the U.S..

When Fred arrived at Camp Lucky Strike, a tent city near Le Havre, he first got acclimated by eating as much as he could hold as often as he could. A week later, he stole a .45 from a sleeping MP and went AWOL to find Jean Jacques and to learn if the Raulins and his other friends in Hacqueville had survived the war.

Fred went first to Paris, to the Piccadilly Hotel on rue Pigalle, where he learned that Louis Gianoni had been killed in the chaotic period shortly before the liberation of Paris. With that trail cold, he went on to Hacqueville. On arrival he learned that the Raulins were fine, but that they'd moved back to Chartres where Max had been placed in charge of the regional airport. His other friends in Hacqueville fed him repeatedly to satiation while they explained that (1) they knew who the traitor was and they'd take care of him, (2) they felt that the best thing he could do for all concerned was to accept a ride back to Camp Lucky Strike, get home as fast as possible, and live a good life. Fred allowed himself to be convinced, and on 22 May he was back at Camp Lucky Strike with no one the wiser. On 25 May 1945 Fred boarded a troop transport that headed for Boston by way of Southampton. He arrived in the US on the night of 11 June. You might expect that the story ends with Fred arriving home to Brooklyn and living out his life as an honored veteran, but that was not the case. Fred arrived home with severe PTSD, evidenced by anxiety attacks, nightmares, and sudden rages, peripheral neuropathy that made it difficult to stand or walk, escalating blood pressure, gum disease that claimed another 12 teeth, kidney problems, and episodic abdominal pain. Fred was discharged in October 1945.

When he reported to the VA for pension evaluation, Fred's recounting of his wartime experiences was met with skepticism and disbelief that only increased when the Army reported that they had no information to support his version of events in the ETO. The official US position was codified when Congress published a report on German concentration camps that explicitly stated that no Allied POWs had been held in concentration camps. So the VA awarded Fred a long-term pension of 10% for psychological problems, among them alleging to have been in Buchenwald. He appealed this

ruling repeatedly, but to no avail.

Other agencies were no less skeptical. In 1947, the prosecutor at the Buchenwald War Crimes trial was unable to provide the names of any Allied POWs held at that camp. In 1951, the War Claims Commission refused to pay Fred \$1.50/day in POW compensation for his time in Buchenwald because there was no evidence he had been there. Unbeknownst to Fred, the other Buchenwald airmen were having the same problems with the VA and other government agencies. What was going on?

On 11 April 1945, a few weeks before Patton's troops reached the gates of Stalag Luft VIIA, American forces liberated the Dora concentration camp and found piles of emaciated corpses. There were also dying slave laborers who were too weak to be marched away by the SS but too numerous to kill before the site was abandoned. While War Crimes teams interviewed survivors and took photos, intelligence teams explored the Mittelwerks, and Tiger Teams roamed the area looking for German scientists and engineers and their technical documents. The former were difficult to trace and the latter had simply vanished - either burned or buried in unknown locations. Later that day, Buchenwald was liberated and the camp records, including those of the Buchenwald airmen, secured and recorded.

By the time SL VIIA was liberated there was a complete security blanket over the Nordhausen area. At the Mittelwerks, former slave laborers were being paid to help the Army pack up and ship out the ~100 completed V-2 rockets plus as many of the spare parts and components as they could remove before the entire area was turned over to the Soviets. But over that period few key German personnel had been located or interrogated. That was because most had left the area well before the liberation of the Mittelwerks.

Several hundred German staff had been evacuated to SS-General Kammler's HQ in Oberammergau in March. A subgroup, including the brain trust for the rocket program, then slipped away to enjoy the last days of the war at a mountain resort at Oberjoch, a comfortable 600 km from the horrors at Nordhausen.

On 2 May 1945, seven senior V-2 engineers and technicians, including Wernher von Braun and Walter Dornberger, surrendered to Americans. Although most were military or paramilitary personnel

- von Braun was an SS Major and Dornberger an Army general - they arrived in civilian clothes. They expected and received the welcome usually associated with visiting dignitaries.

What followed was a devious intelligence operation predicated on the belief that Germans - not their documents, notes, equipment, parts, and completed rockets in hand - were the key to defeating Japan. When VJ-Day arrived unexpectedly early, the justification became preparation for a future war with the Soviet Union. Thus not only was the Mittelwerks and its contents classified, but the backgrounds of the German engineers and technicians became Top Secret as well. In what would be known as Operation Paperclip, the US public, Congress, the Department of State, the Department of Justice, and the Executive branch were assured that these were apolitical ivory tower intellectuals who were, if not anti-Nazi, at least remote and uninvolved in Nazi war crimes. The truth was very different; the 750 Germans brought to the US to work in rocketry, the aerospace industry, and medicine included a significant number of men who would otherwise have stood trial for war crimes. For the next 40 years investigative reporting would be suppressed or disparaged as the OSS/CIA, FBI, and Joint Chiefs played Whack-a-Mole with information that challenged the official story line.

Over this 40-year period a security blanket also remained in place regarding the histories of the Buchenwald airmen, who had narrowly avoided working for the rocket team. The fact that Allied airmen had been held in Buchenwald was not revealed to the Congressional committee, who were instead given the impression that concentration camps and POW camps were totally distinct. Even the Prosecutor at the Buchenwald War Crimes trial did not have the details or identities of the Buchenwald airmen.

Whether or not the Germans brought to the US under Operation Paperclip were actually essential to our national security is open to debate. But the fact remains that Fred and the other Buchenwald airmen were horribly abused by the Nazis during the war and then shabbily treated by their own government after they returned home. And at the same time Fred was awarded a pension of just \$13/mo, former SS-Major and rocket baron Wernher von Braun was given a contract paying \$863/mo, a sum

equivalent to \$10,000/mo today.

Wernher von Braun died in 1977. In the 1980s, the declassification and release of a handful of documents concerning the Buchenwald airmen helped the surviving veterans reconnect. This led to the realization that they'd all been experiencing similar problems with the government and especially the VA.

The KLB Club was formed during the first few days the airmen were in Buchenwald. By the time Fred was contacted by the reactivated club he was very ill and nearly housebound. He died in

1995 while his tenth VA appeal was still being evaluated. In the last few years of life, Fred worked with the other KLB Club members to get the Congress to correct the official record. Joint Congressional Resolutions introduced in the 103rd, 104th, and 105th Congressional sessions were approved in the House but died in the Senate Judiciary Committee for unknown reasons. Most of the Buchenwald airmen are now dead and their survivors discouraged; it seems unlikely that further attempts will be made.

1 Possibly through messages from the SOE leader and SL Lamason, smuggled out of Buchenwald.

2 When his wife and son visited Hacqueville years after his death, they learned that of the dozens of airmen sheltered in that town during the war, Fred was the only one who came back to check on them soon after hostilities ended. As a result, he was well-respected and remembered.

3 The Commission finally paid for that period after 5 years of appeals, but only because they claimed to have found evidence of his 5 August 1944 arrest and felt that this indicated he'd been in German hands. But they never acknowledged any linkage to Buchenwald.

4 Konzentration Lager Buchenwald...

Author's note: This project started with two large boxes of paperwork and correspondence found among my parents' effects. It has taken 6 years to obtain the documentation needed to tell the story properly, with the assistance of multiple organizations, government agencies, and archivists in the US, UK, and France. This article is an overview of the resulting book-length manuscript.

When his wife and son visited Hacqueville years after his death, they learned that of the dozens of airmen sheltered in that town during the war, Fred was the only one who came back to check on them soon after hostilities ended. As a result, he was well-respected and remembered.

The Commission finally paid for that period after 5 years of appeals, but only because they claimed to have found evidence of his 5 August 1944 arrest and felt that this indicated he'd been in German hands. But they never acknowledged any linkage to Buchenwald.

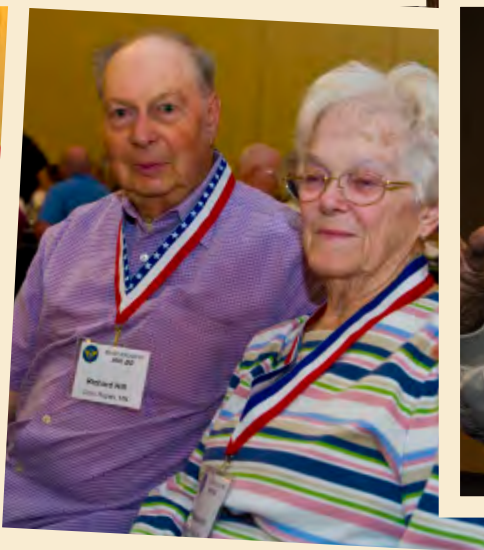
KLB - Konzentration Lager Buchenwald



*One of the many rejection letters received from the VA.
Note the statement about his head injury and shell fragment wound.*

8th Air Force Historical Society 41st Annual Reunion Omaha, Nebraska



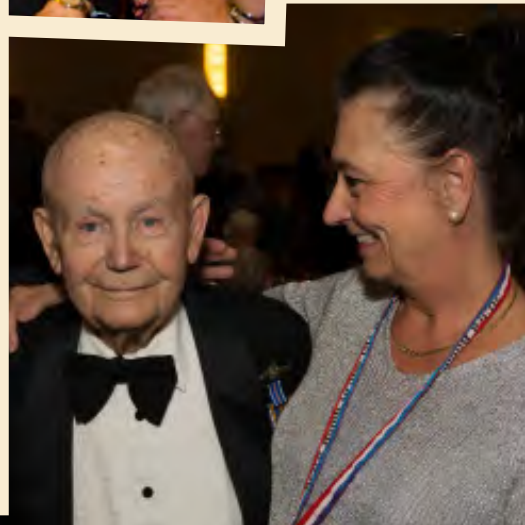
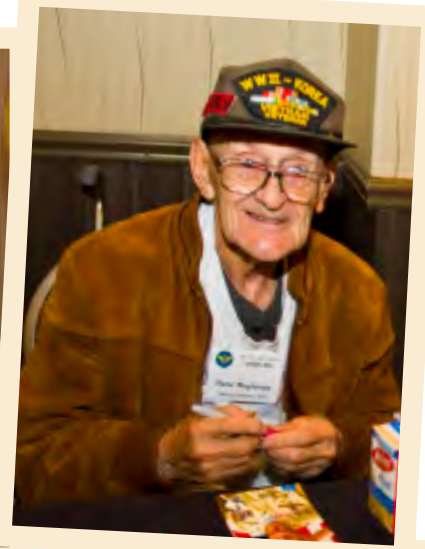
















Over 50 Veterans



466th Bomb Group



Guests in Attendance



303rd Bomb Group



493rd Bomb Group



385th Bomb Group



392nd Bomb Group



96th Bomb Group

“IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF BUD OWENS”

Jerry McLaughlin

Geert Van den Bogaert reports from Normandy that the filming of “*In the Footsteps of Bud Owens*” project that we have reported on previously was conducted in July and is now in its post-production phase. What follows is the story of events that occurred this past July, as well as some history of the 1943 story that inspired Geert’s project.

Sgt. Francis “Bud” Owens was a B-17 waist gunner in the 533rd Squadron of the 381st Bomb Group, stationed in Ridgewell, England in 1943. Bud’s B-17 was shot down in a running battle with Luftwaffe fighters on July 4, 1943, coming down near the town of La Coulonche while on a mission to bomb a target near La Mans, France.

Through the efforts of Belgian battlefield guide Geert Van den Bogaert and his American partner, Jed Henry, the Emmy Award winning owner of Recon Productions, located in Middleton, Wisconsin, the documentary tells the story of a single American airman, Bud Owens, through the eyes of his great niece, Hayley Hulbert, age 20, and Louis Hatet, age 19, great-grandson of French resistant Andre Rougeyron, who helped Bud in 1943. Both followed Bud’s footsteps during a 10 day journey from France to Andorra, Spain, and finally to Belgium, where Bud Owens rests today, as an example of the conditions that US and British aircrew had to endure when they chose not to surrender and worked to evade capture after surviving the loss of their aircraft on bombing missions against German targets in France and Germany. Both the 8th Air Force Historical Society and the Society’s Birthplace Chapter, located in Savannah, Georgia, are providing financial support for this important historic recording of an Escape and Evasion chapter of the Eighth Air Force in WWII.

A brief description of Bud Owens’ 1943 escape and evasion story in occupied France:

Bud and his pilot, Lt. Olof Ballinger, were brought together by French Resistance members after having safely parachuted from their fatally damaged



S/SGT Bud Owens – 1943



Memorial to the Ballinger crew in La Coulonche

B-17 on July 4, 1943. Three of the Ballinger crew were killed during the air battle and subsequent crash. Two crew members were captured, imprisoned by the Germans as POWs, and survived the war. Co-Pilot Lt. John Carah, navigator, Lt. Paul McConnell and tail gunner, S/Sgt. William Howell were hidden by a separate group of Resistance fighters and eventually crossed the Pyrenees Mountains and returned to England in February of 1944.

By the summer of 1943 the French Resistance had organized several “Escape Lines” that brought rescued British and American aircrew to Southern France, where they were formed into groups and escorted across steep and dangerous trails through the Pyrenees Mountains into neutral Spain, where they were transported back to England. Owens and Ballinger were involved with one of these Resistance group lines and were moved slowly from Normandy toward Paris, where they eventually were hidden in several primitive, but safe, Paris locations. In late October, 1943, arrangements were completed to move Owens and Ballinger, with other evaders, to Toulouse, France, from where they were to be escorted over the Pyrenees Mountains into Spain.

The documentary project, entitled “*In The Footsteps of Bud Owens*” went into its production phase on July 3, 2015, when a team consisting of Geert Van den Bogaert, Jed Henry, descendants Hayley Hulbert and Louis Hatet, camera assistant Sam Soderberg and USAF active duty personnel Captain Luke Oman and Sergeant Troy Cahoon from Bud’s 381st Bomb Group, (which is now a training unit stationed at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California), gathered

in La Coulonche, France. The documentary team's mission was to follow the footsteps of Sergeant Bud Owens from his parachute landing in France on July 4, 1943, until his tragic death in the Pyrenees Mountains on October 25, 1943.

Filming began in the town of La Coulonche, located near the crash site of the Ballinger crew's B-17. The team interviewed several eye witnesses to the crash of the bomber, including two sisters from the Duval family who, as very young girls, watched their mother treating the wounds of the Ballinger crew's engineer and upper turret gunner, T/Sgt. Byron Gronstal, until German soldiers appeared and took Gronstal into custody. (Gronstal was eventually sent to the legendary Luftwaffe POW camp, Stalag 17B, and was liberated on May 2, 1945.)



Filming in La Coulonche, Normandy

Bud Owens' fellow waist gunner, S/Sgt. Bauscher was killed by 20mm cannon fire from an attacking German fighter. The attack also set fire to the radio room and seriously injured the radio operator T/Sgt John K. Lane. Bud Owens saved Lane's life by pulling him from the burning radio room. When the bailout order was given, Owens put a parachute on Lane, dragged him to the waist hatch, and pushed the unconscious radio operator out of the airplane while pulling the release on Lane's parachute. Lane lived through the parachute descent and was taken prisoner. He was given medical care by the Germans and survived to be liberated from a POW compound in Poland in 1945.

Another French national interviewed in La Coulonche was Jeanine Geslin-Gandeboef. Jeanine's father, Andre Geslin, despite the grave risk, had hidden Bud Owens and Olof Ballinger in his barn from July 8th until the end of August 1943, when the Resistance started the airmen on their clandestine journey to Paris.

On July 4th, 2015, the 72nd anniversary of the day the Ballinger crew were shot down, the documentary team attended a very moving ceremony, conducted by local supporters of the Bud Owens project, honoring the Ballinger crew. After filming the ceremony the team traveled by train to Paris, just as Owens and Ballinger had in 1943, to

record the next segment of Bud Owens' story. Arriving in The City of Lights they met with Michele Agniel, a Resistance member during WWII who worked with what became known as the Burgundy Line, assisting Allied fliers to escape from Occupied France. Michele took the group to the final safe house where Bud Owens and Olof Ballinger were hidden in late October of 1943 immediately prior to departing for Saint-Girons to prepare for their ill-fated trip across the Pyrenees.

The documentary team departed Paris on July 7th for the town of Saint-Girons, where their first stop was at the Freedom Trail Museum, an organization that honors the French Resistance members, Allied airmen, and the guides who accepted the daunting task of making the physically dangerous trip across the Pyrenees to Spain. After conducting interviews with several Saint-Girons natives who were familiar with the WWII events in the town, the team stayed at the hotel where Bud Owens and his fellow evaders had been hidden on their last night in France.

When Owens and Ballinger arrived in Saint-Girons, they met the group that they would be traveling with on their dangerous journey: five fellow 8th Air Force evaders and six French Army officers who were attempting to join the Free French Army in North Africa.

On July 8, 2015, the documentary group began walking the trail taken by Bud Owens and his group on October 23, 1943 from Massat to Port de Lers. That evening the group was introduced, at dinner, to Alix Brenac, the grandson of Emile Delpy, the guide who had led the Owens evader group.

The following day, July 9th, the documentary team, led by Jacky Souquet – a WWII era friend of Emile Delpy – visited the barn where Emile Delpy had placed Bud Owens and the other evaders after their first full day of arduous walking.

At this point, on the first day of the journey, Olof Ballinger dropped out and was left under the protection of a local family with the expectation of being picked up by the guides upon their return. Ballinger was forced to leave the home where he was being hidden to escape a German patrol that was in the area looking for evaders, and made an unprecedented solo crossing of the mountains into Spain during a period of good weather that allowed him to navigate his trek using the stars to steer his course through the mountains.

The next morning a current professional Mountain Guide, Paul Williams, led the team on the exact journey that the evaders had taken into the mountains. In spite of the high elevation and long

distance covered on that first day, Geert and the documentary team did well. The team was well aware that they were making the difficult climb in favorable July weather, not in October with snow, high winds and below freezing temperatures, and that they had enjoyed excellent food and slept in comfortable beds the night before the journey began. The third, and final, day of the trip was the dreaded climb across the mountains over the Port d'Arinsal (almost 9000 feet above sea level) into Andorra on the other side of the mountain. Geert described that final day's effort, which lasted for 11 hours, as "challenging" for all of the physically fit documentary team, each of whom were constantly thinking of the circumstances that eventually overwhelmed Owens, and two other evaders.

The luck of the Owens group continued to deteriorate when another member, Lt. Harold Bailey, collapsed from exhaustion. Bud Owens and a third evader, S/ Sgt. William Plasket, carried the officer for several hours as the group had to move quickly and detour from German patrols. Eventually, during an unexpected major snowstorm, Owens and Plasket fell to the snow covered ground, utterly drained by their ordeal. Their lack of adequate clothing and poor

physical condition due to four months of a minimal diet and no exercise, when combined with the effort of carrying Bailey, required more strength than they could muster. The guides made several attempts to induce the three airmen to continue, but their attempts were unsuccessful. It was the policy of the guides on evader trips across the mountains that when travelers were unable to continue, the group would carry on with those who were physically able to resume the march. The safety of the group was primary! As a result, Bud Owens, William Plasket and Harold Bailey were left behind and perished in the location where they had finally collapsed. Shepherders found the bodies when the snow melted in the spring of 1944 and buried them in the churchyard of a nearby town named Arinsal. In 1950 an American Graves Registration team recovered the remains. Bud Owens was reinterred in the Ardennes American Cemetery in Belgium.

Geert reports that all of the documentary team members were physically and emotionally spent upon their arrival in Andorra. They received a wonderful welcome from the people of the Andorran town of La Massana, who were following the progress of the project, but were

very aware of the tragedy and heartbreak of what had happened to Bud Owens and his fellow evaders on the trail that the team had just traveled.

Both the story of the original American evaders and the 2015 team, consisting in part of a grandniece and serving members of the 381st Group, are amazing stories that will come to life in the coming year with the release of the documentary. The team is currently conducting a fundraising effort to enable them to complete their post-production efforts. You can assist with completing the project by contacting Geert at budowens381@gmail.com.

Geert suggests that readers interested in the story of Bud Owens and the Ballinger crew will also be interested in the following resources that started him on his research of Bud Owens' saga: *Agents of Escape* by Andre Rougeyron (Rougeyron assisted the Owens party in August of 1943), and *Attention! Attention! The Flying Fortresses Are Coming*, by Warren Carah, the son of the Ballinger crew's co-pilot, Lt. John M. Carah, who successfully evaded and reached Switzerland in August of 1943. Readers can find more details on Keith James' website, www.conscript-heroes.com.



The "In the Footsteps of Bud Owens" documentary team at the grave of Bud Owens in the Ardennes American Cemetery, Belgium

NY State Southern Wing

David Levitt

The 8th FHS- Southern NY State Wing Chapter had a successful luncheon led by chapter President Joseph 'Pat' Patrick Keeley on June 5th at the Holiday Inn at Plainview, Long Island, NY. A contingent of nine British War Veterans brethren from Long Island joined us to celebrate the anniversaries of the 70th V-E Day and 71st D-Day. Of the 24 attendees, four were 8th AF veterans with ten new comers.

Pat and our treasurer, Antonio 'Tony' Capobianco, gave a moving candle lighting ceremony. 8th AFHS national member, Bruce Nocea spoke about the 351st BG Association (his father's bomb group) and the high interest of the second and third generations inquiring about their deceased 8th AF veteran relatives. Bruce stressed the need to transform their interest to joining veteran groups.

Chapter member Si Spiegel, 490th BG, gave a gripping account of flying a B-24 from the States to England as an inexperienced pilot and his crew struggled with weather and mechanical difficulties.

Following a scrumptious buffet lunch served by a superb staff, chapter member David C. Levitt (father 448th /491st BGs) gave a touching talk on the close relationship between the 8th AF and the British. The 8th AF and the RAF shared aircraft and navigation/radar/landing systems. During the three years of the friendly invasion, many close American-British personal relationships were formed.

By the end of the luncheon, Bruce liked the camaraderie, the program and cuisine so much, he joined our chapter!

Several chapter members went



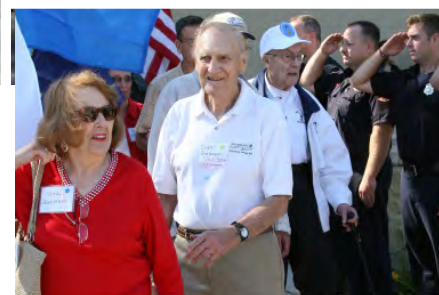
to the 8/29-30 Stewart Airport NY Airshow in Orange County, NY.

Check back for an update from our November luncheon held on Long Island, NY. We celebrated V-J Day and Veterans' Day with several multinational air, land and sea WWII veterans who won WWII. Contact Pat Keeley at (973) 495-3404 or fxe84@optonline.net. Also, visit our website: blogs.ny8thswcafhs.org.

Wisconsin Chapter Fly for Freedom Soars Again! Cindy Drehmel, President

Tuesday, September 15, marked our 4th annual Fly for Freedom event, coordinated by the Wisconsin Chapter, 8th Air Force Historical Society to honor veterans of Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marines of Wisconsin and Illinois.

The event began with a Badger Bus Freedom Ride with vets being treated to sandwiches and pastries donated by Jimmy Johns and Starbucks-Franklin. Local veterans of the Kenosha area, southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois met the bus at the Civil War Museum in Kenosha. The museum provided a free VIP tour to the sixty vets and their families in honor of their service. The tour included a 360 degree reenactment movie, a VIP guided tour of the Museum, and viewing of the Veterans Gallery honoring veterans of all conflicts.







Upon exiting the museum, veterans were honored by a flag salute from the American Legion Riders, District 1, Kenosha police and fire departments. This was followed by a six mile motorcade led by police and cycle squad as well as members of the “Riders” and flanked by Kenosha fire engines.

Vets were greeted upon arrival at Hob Nob restaurant by an honorary line salute. After being treated to a wonderful dinner, vets enjoyed dessert in the form of a special “Fly for Freedom” cake courtesy of Pick N Save, Kenosha. Merle Hayden [95], 5th Air Force, Racine, WI, and Donald O’Reilly [94], 8th Air Force, Aurora, IL, served as special cake cutters!



Special thanks goes to Aldi’s-Oak Creek, Badger Bus, The Civil War Museum, Hob Nob Restaurant, Home Depot-Franklin, Jimmie Johns, Kenosha Fire and Police Departments, Pick-N-Save-Kenosha, and Starbucks-Franklin.

A note of gratitude to the 8th AFHS Fly for Freedom committee for their assistance with all the details: Ralph Anderson, Russ Collins, Chet Gardeski, Tom Hansen, Bill Krueger, Dick Laske, Paul McCarty, Kathryn Ratenski, Jeff Spritka, Bill Streicher, Paula Theisen, and Paul Tutas.

The Heritage League of the Second Air Division (USAAF)

Proudly inducts Elmo Maiden into the **Heritage League Hall of Fame, Class of 2015.**

The Hall of Fame was established to recognize valuable and unstinting service by individuals over many years to veteran organizations of the USAAF 8th Air Force of World War II.

Inductees have practiced the honoring and remembering which is the core activity of the League, and more- over have inspired and encour-

aged others to serve effectively, with dignity and grace.

For many years now, Elmo, you have been a participant, leader and supporter in veteran groups, welcoming others as long-serving Treasurer and Secretary in your own 466th BGA; helping with program- ming and even funding, of the long-running Southern California Second Air Division Luncheon; and regularly participating in the venerable, if less formal, “Wings Over Wendy’s” monthly meeting of flying veterans in southern California.

Your gentlemanly comportment has been a fine example to people in your own and following generations, and reminds us—we sometimes need it!—that effective volunteer work can also be fun. We join so many of your colleagues in the organizations, in thanking you for your steadfast ‘honoring and remembering.’



CHRISTMAS IN WENGEN

By George Michel



*George W. Michel
Radio Operator/Gunner
392nd Bomb Group 576th Bomb Squadron
Wendling, Norfolk England*

As Christmas approached and we heard more and more the tough economic conditions that many Swiss families were experiencing in the Wengen area as the result of the lack of tourists, it suddenly dawned on me that normally around home at that time of the year, Christmas baskets would be being put together for those in need. So why not here in Wengen?

After all, we were uninvited “guests” of the Swiss but better to be an Internee (the classification of a P.O.W in a neutral country) than having to have gone down in Germany or Austria as we limped away from Munich with #3 and #4 engines out...#3 smoking and trying to burn

and #4 with a propeller that had a mechanical failure and was “free-wheeling”, shaking and vibrating the entire plane. To watch the rest of the formation heading for home and realizing that we couldn’t keep up with them, develops a strange feeling in the pit of your stomach.

But let’s get on with what turned out for me to be an experience that very few individuals have ever had. So where to start? I was billeted in the Regina Hotel in Wengen. The Swiss, with a mind for using facilities and money wisely, had decided that rather than build barricades and stockades and basic housing for their internees...and knowing that the tourist business was pretty much at zero...simply picked a couple of out-of-the-way villages in ski country...Adelboden and Wengen... and designated some older little used hotels in those villages as “barracks”.

I discussed the Christmas basket idea with buddies at the Regina and there was plenty of support. Know-

ing that, I went to see Herr Gertsch who owned the local sport and ski equipment store and explained the idea of what we wanted to do. He was very understanding, willing to help, and asked me to come back the next day and then he would have selected a family from the several most in need...right there above almost the end of the Latterbrunnen Valley in Wengen and almost in the shadow of the famous Jungfrau, Monk, and Eiger Mountains.

I hurried back to the Regina and before supper was served that evening, explained to my fellow internees what was on deck. And with George Hedrick helping me, then and there, the immediate response was a collection of enough Swiss Francs to make it a GO project (we were being paid while we were interned...and flight pay at that) which was a definite approval of the idea. I took the money to Herr Gertsch the next morning and he did a whale of a job in making the collected money...well let me put it this way: HE

DID WONDERS!! Certainly much better than we could have done and it was ready that evening...23 December 1944, with the family selected and their address noted.

I contacted the Sgt. who was in charge of the guards who tried to make sure that we didn’t escape and he promised to have a guard at the hotel at a given time to go with me and Joe Burdette (asst. engineer on our



Regina Hotel - Wengen, Switzerland

crew...a Georgia gentleman as was our pilot, Sig Robertson). It was all that Joe and I could do to lug this huge laundry basket full of food and small presents (glad that we were able to pick it up at the store in the center of the village and didn't have to lug it all the way from our hotel). We carried the basket between Joe and me and went to the north end of the village where, in front of the old Bellevue Hotel, the guard started to carefully pick his way down the side of the slope toward the Latterbrunen Valley and, after what seemed like an eternity, he stopped by a chalet... not exactly the brilliant and beautiful kind that you see in tourist brochures about Switzerland...and knocked on the door with the butt of his rifle.

By now, it was totally dark and the man who answered the door only saw an armed soldier standing there and he was scared to say the least... he had every reason to wonder what in the dickens was happening. With the German that I had acquired to help when I was going to try to escape, I moved up to the door and explained that we had some gifts for his family and he motioned us to come in. So far so good. It was

a very dark interior with a ceiling which was not much more than seven feet over our heads. Obviously no electricity in the chalet as there were two oil lamps adding what light they could to the room but much of the light was coming from a very cheerfully burning and crackling fire in the fireplace that the far end of the room. The air in the room also gave an indication that, in another part of the chalet, one or more animals (probably cows) were being kept.

The man of the house, who had answered the pounding on the door, had calmed down and he seemed to understand my explanation of how Joe and I as well as the rest of the internees appreciated what the Swiss had done for us and were keeping us safe. We all wished him and his family a very Merry Christmas. He was very patient with my German and, from his reaction, seemed to understand and certainly was excited about the basket full of "things".

Suddenly, he walked toward the fireplace and motioned to us while saying..."Bitte, kommen sie hier"... as I remember it. There in front of the fireplace, where the warmth just radiated all around, was a manger (cattle feed box, very much in keep-

ing with the animal smell that I had noticed when we came in) set up on a couple of small saw horses. Our new friend beckoned us to come even closer and then pointed into the manger and there, all wrapped up in blankets...on a bed of straw...was a new born baby boy. I was unable to say anything for a few moments as I kept thinking "But this is like baby Jesus in a manger so many years ago in Bethlehem." It was a wonderful moment for me and Joe. No, were weren't Shepherds from the fields nor were we Wise Men from afar, but we had been given a "gift" that we would never forget. I did find out later that the baby was probably 3 or 4 days old when we saw him but that makes little difference to me.

I have tried all the ensuing years to locate the man that that baby grew up to be but have had no luck whatsoever. I still have hope that Roger Anthoine may be able to discover some "trail" for me.

As we flew our first mission on June 11, 1944 (it was still my 20th birthday back in my home town of Saginaw, MI when we were taking off from Wendling) and ended up in Switzerland on July 11, 1944 on our tenth mission,

Reunions Chapter Meetings

Please send all REUNION updates to:
ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org

401ST BG

May 11-14, 2016
San Antonio, Texas.
Josie Navarro 253-988-0966
401bg.org
The 401st will be holding a mini-reunion during the 41st Annual Reunion of the 8th AFHS in Omaha, NE October 14-18, 2015. We will have a

dedicated hospitality room so please make plans to join us!

490TH BG (H) MEMORIAL DEDICATION

Station 134 Eye. Suffolk.
England
May 28-29, 2016
Keep an eye on Facebook Pages
490th Memorial Project or

490th BG (H)
<http://www.490th.co.uk/>.
We have now raised the initial funds needed to erect the long over due memorial to the 490th Bomb Group (H) and we wish to tell anybody who is interested in it what is happening.
I am the current 490th BG (H) Historian / Archivist
eric.490thbg@btinternet.com

398th Bomb Group

August 10-13, 2016
Norfolk, Virginia
Holiday Inn
Contact: Ken Howard
815-238-3691
KenHoward@hotmail.com
www.398th.org

FROM AC

Their Spirit Lives On

Brian Francis

Daventry is a town located in Northamptonshire England. It is a small rural market town that played a very important part during WWII by having a series of radio beacons (antenna masts) on the hill overlooking the town, as well as a Gee Mast transmitter that was used by the eastern chain of command for their navigation system. This was used by the Allies for their air defense system for tracking enemy aircraft. The system had a range of 100 miles and played a key part in the defeat of the Luftwaffe in the Battle of Britain.

In this small town, on August 23rd—some 70 years later—the locals, town council officials, a U.S. Air Force Lt Col, and veterans along with representatives of all religions gathered to pay homage, respect, and gratitude to the crew of the B-17 Flying Fortress #43-38973 of the 305th BG/422nd BS who perished on 12/15/44.

The weather and visibility that day was very poor; the crew was returning from a raid on Kassel Germany. The ill-fated B-17 was flying alongside another 305th ship as they approached Daventry. They came in low just over the main street in the town, but owing to poor visibility unbeknown to the two crews ahead lay Borough Hill, where on its highest point were the transmitter masts and also the Gee mast. B-17 #43-38973 collided with the masts and cables causing the plane to crash into the field a short distance away. The local people could not describe the noise of when the cables caught in the props of the doomed plane and next the explosion of the impact. The other B-17 also collided with the mast but managed to gain lift and keep on flying. It landed at Chelveston 20 minutes later, much to the amazement of the crew and ground crew as the transmitter cables were caught in the fuselage and trailing behind the aircraft.

The service was very emotional. In attendance was the son, Peter Searle,



Rebecca Saywell with her grandfather, Peter Searle.

and grand-daughter, Rebecca Saywell, of crew member S/Sgt Robert Burry, ball turret gunner, who never had the joy of seeing his son, born to the local girl whom he fell in love with.

S/Sgt Ignacio Sanchez sent his heartfelt words to all involved this day in a letter which was read during the service. In it, S/Sgt Sanchez remembered his fellow comrades and acknowledged the people of Great Britain for what we have done to keep the memory alive for these young warriors of the skies.

The memorial is placed at the base of our local war memorial, in a way joining hands with those they never knew but fought for a common cause. It is placed in view of Borough Hill and the solitary transmitter mast that still stands there giving out its signal.

Thanks to all the members of the Daventry Town Council, and special thanks to Mr. Jackson and Mr. R. Adams for, without their help and determination, this memorial would not have happened nor the crew remembered.



In Memory of the Crew of 43-38973

1st Lt Finis E Harris, F.O. John A. Griffin, 2nd Lt Robert L. Mason, 2nd Lt Lavern D. Ridge, T/Sergeant Clifford B. Melton, T/Sergeant Hershel L. McCoy, S/Sergeant Robert L. Burry, S/Sergeant Charles W. Nordland, S/Sergeant Willie L Barnes

ROSS *the Pond*

Memorial Honors “San Antonio Rose” Crew

by Co de Swart, Dutch researcher Airwar WWII ETO



Standing (L-R) Morris R. Marks - Pilot, Frank W. Derenberg - Co-Pilot, Delmar A. Decker - Navigator, George L. Amberg - Bombardier
Kneeling (L-R) Charles W. Barnthson - Top Turret/Engineer, Barclay W. Glover - Waist Gunner, Harold E. Cook - Radio Operator, Sgt. Hewitt - Ball Turret Gunner, William M. Gray - Waist Gunner, Arden L. Miner - Tail Gunner
Photo was taken in U.S. during training.

In October, 13 US family members of the crew of B-17 42-3462 “San Antonio Rose” (95th BG/336th BS) crossed the Atlantic to the Netherlands at the invitation of the Dutch “Zegveld B-17 Group.”

They stayed in Holland for a tour, visiting relevant places like Musea, Margraten US Military Cemetery and ended their visit attending a Memorial Day service and unveiling of a monument on Oct. 8-2015, dedicated to eight members of the ‘Marks Crew’ KIA there on February 21-1944. Many Zegveld residents, VIPs and the US Embassy represented by Captain USAF Ben Garoutte gave ‘acte de presence.’

On that cold WWII-1944 winters’ day, 71 years ago, the “San Antonio Rose”, with pilot 2LT Morris Marks and co-pilot 2LT Frank Derenberg at the sloppy controls of the B-17, desperately tried to keep up with the formation returning to the base after having been heavily damaged by FLAK over the target for the day, Brunswick, Germany.

For a while, low clouds helped the sluggish plane remain invisible from German fighters, but over Holland their luck gave out and the already crippled B-17 became a ‘sitting duck’ in a clear winter sky for several attacking Luftwaffe Me-109 fighters. Their chances to survive were reduced to zero.

Dutch Zegveld citizen Mr. Thijs van Doorn, 89, witnessed the attacks and crash 71 year before and attended the Memorial Day event. He recalled, “Working in the fields around the village I saw only two parachutes coming down from an enormous plane on fire, heard the weapons of attacking fighters strafing and forcing the damaged bomber down and crashing

before my eyes. It was horror and I’ll never forget.”

Postwar Zegveld residents planned a monument for the young Americans killed there in a Dutch frozen meadow, realizing they lost their lives for Dutch freedom.

At last Mr. Wout Verweij took the initiative, assembled a group of people to form an organization and designed the monument. He found Mr. Jeroen v.d. Kamp, an archaeologist, researcher, and a welcomed specialist to locate and inform family members of the crew of the “Rose” in the US and invited them to come over.

Oct. 8, 2015 nearly at dusk, two of the Americans unveiled a wonderful memorial in a small Zegveld-canal in Holland. National Hymns and Last Post confirmed an emotional event where many tears were wiped away.

Lengthy conversations lasted long into the evening and helped to create new bonds of friendship and gratitude forever between the Dutch and Americans. War and Remembrance: “Let us never forget.”

Eight young Americans were KIA in 1944, they were honored and are not forgotten in Holland today.



FROM ACROSS *the Pond*

Calling All 381st BG Veterans, Families and Supporters

By Alan Steel



Anthony Wallbridge with
Monica and Alan Steel

Here in the UK at The Ridgewell Airfield Memorial Museum we are trying to get the museum in shape as a place to honor the men and women who served here at station 167.

The Museum was started by a man named Tony Ince. He was always on the airfield with the Americans in WWII. His collection of artifacts grew and he wanted to show them to others. A few years later part of the base hospital building became available to him. Three years ago we managed to get the whole of the building so a lot of effort and time needed to be put into getting the museum somewhere to honor our airmen. Unfortunately, Tony passed away before he could see it opening. I

started helping at the museum about 14 years ago. Volunteers have been looking after it ever since.

New windows are to be fitted and lots of other things to be done. The original ceiling panels were falling apart so we began replacing them at great cost.

To help with this we have begun cutting out wooden bomb plaques and painting them with 381st veterans' names who are nominated by yourselves at a cost of £5 (pounds) per plaque. The plaques will then be placed onto the ceiling panels when finished, much as they appeared in the war time photo. Work will probably take a couple of years as funds allow.

I serve as the membership secretary for the 381st BG here, in the UK, so if

anyone would like to become a member at £10 a family per year please contact me: a.steel@btinternet.com
Cheers!



Interior View Of The 381st Bomb Group Officers' Lounge At 8th Air Force Station 167, Ridgewell, Essex County, England. 30 December 1944.

The Heritage League of the 2nd Air Division (USAAF)

Is delighted to announce we enjoyed a very special speaker at our Annual Meeting on Friday, October 16, 2016...

Charlie Stump is a fifth grader at Discovery Elementary. He was a California State History Day finalist in 2015 for his research project is entitled "Edsel Ford's Arsenal of Democracy:



Charlie Stump with mom Jillian and sister

His Leadership and Legacy Willow Run and the B-24 Liberator That Helped Win WWII". Charlie did extensive research interviewing B-24 Liberator pilots, collaborating with the Henry Ford Museum, and A.J. Baime the author of *The Arsenal of Democracy*.

Charlie shared a presentation on his research, describing how at the start of WWII, the US and its Allies had a shortage of heavy bombers. President Franklin D. Roosevelt called upon American industrial leaders to help create an arsenal of democracy. Edsel Ford stepped forward to lead, creating Willow Run to mass-produce, for the first time in history, B-24 Liberators on a one-mile long assembly line producing 8,800 bombers and a legacy that helped the Allied Forces win the war.

In 1941, Edsel Ford had launched the most visionary and ambitious war-time industrial project in history. With his leadership, Edsel Ford transformed the Ford family car manufacturing business into a bomber plant -- the largest industrial building ever constructed -- producing a new B-24 Liberator every hour. This legacy of Edsel Ford is historically significant because the availability of these long-range war planes -- the biggest, heaviest, and most destructive bombers -- turned the tide of the war in favor of the U.S. and its Allies. Edsel Ford's leadership in the face of obstacles like family dissension, racial tensions, union worker disputes and personal illness, helped to defeat Adolf Hitler and transform America into a military superpower.

Beverly Baynes Tomb
President, Heritage League of the
2nd Air Division (USAAF)
Secretary, 466th Bomb Group Association
Governor, 2nd Air Division Memorial Library Trust

Veterans Museum Welcomes New Exhibit Joe Garber

The Veterans Museum & Education Center in Ormond Beach, Florida is the first museum to receive the 8th Air Force Historical Society's unique and powerful exhibit: *The 8th Air Force Roll of Honor*. It was created to perpetually memorialize the names of over 26,000 American airmen who lost their lives during WWII.

"We are honored to have been chosen to be the first organization to receive the replica of the Roll of Honor in the United States. It will be given a prominent place in our Museum and we look forward to displaying it," stated John A. Brinkley, president of the Veterans Museum & Education Center. "Thank you for choosing our organization for this display!"

The Roll of Honor book is handsomely bound and rests atop a custom designed lectern, beautifully hand crafted from select woods and covered with protective Plexiglas. The entire exhibit is designed to fit within even the smallest house museums. Overall dimensions are: 37.5" H, 38" W, 14" D.



There is absolutely NO cost involved in adding this piece to a museum's collection. We have produced a limited number of these exhibits and simply ask the curator to agree to the following stipulations:

- Display the ROH in a suitable place within the museum affording optimal visibility for visitors with a one year minimum [no maximum] commitment to exhibit
- The ROH exhibit must be displayed as a unit—the book and stand must not be separated
- We would ask once the ROH is placed in the museum, it is photographed and those photos along with any comments from museum staff and/or visitors are shared with the Society
- If, for whatever reason, a museum no longer wishes to display the ROH exhibit, we ask that it be crated and returned to the Society within 30 days of its removal as an exhibit, so that the Society can place it with another museum

If you would like more information on the 8th Air Force Roll of Honor, or how to obtain this exhibit for your museum, please contact the 8th Air Force Historical Society at 912-748-8884 or ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org for additional information.

Pinpointing the Past: The Third and Final Part

by Samantha Misa

So far, my missions to Moon Mountain in Bovina, NY where trainee pilot Robert B. Clark lost his life in an accident with a Texan Trainer have all yielded results. The first two trips resulted in the discovery, thanks to a handy metal detector, of several interesting piles of wires. The third and most recent trip revealed the most interesting find: two distinctive gears found farther below the surface.

Ray LaFever, the Bovina town historian, had sent photos of the wires to aviation mechanics Ed and Richard Davidson of California, who were able to discern that they were in fact from an aircraft. On their annual visit to Bovina, the crew that had made so many treks to Moon Mountain were able to get together with the Davidsons and allow them to see and handle the artifacts in person. One of the gears that we had found, pictured below, had caused some confusion when the Davidsons viewed it from a photograph. Being able to handle the object Richard remarked:

“This I thought was a castellated nut, but I can see now that it’s not. It looks more like a grommet you’d use to put through a bulkhead.”

The wires, which from the photographs were assumed to be control

cables, were determined to be electrical when given a closer inspection. “These wires look like they had other wires wrapped around them. They were probably electrical wiring instead of control cables. There were control cables running from the control stick in the cockpit. The front cockpit had a stick and the rear cockpit has a stick, and you also had rudder pedals. But if these were control cables they would have been much lighter. But these planes had all sorts of wiring, wiring to the lights and for all the radio equipment,” remarked Richard.

Chris Ingvordsen, the filmmaker who has been documenting the Moon Mountain missions, noted how neatly stacked the wires were when we found them. Richard said that, according to the look of the wires, it appears as though they were piled and burned to remove their insulation.

Both Ed and Richard were now able to agree on what we had found, but what was most remarkable was that I was able to interview Ed Davidson about his service during WWII. The following is his history:

“I was born in Bovina in 1923, and graduated Delhi High School in June of 1941. We couldn’t afford college, so I went to Elmira Heights Aviation Ground School, and out there I got a chance to go out to the airport, so I sent a letter to my dad telling him to “send me all my savings,” which was about 75 bucks, and I blew it all on flying lessons. So by September of 1941, at the age of 18, I was flying. Then Pearl Harbor happened. My buddies and I were going to go to Canada because they would take 18 year olds into the flying service up there. Here, it was 2 years of college and 20 years old to get into the American Aviation Cadet program. They had cautioned me to wait and see what would happen, and then the US lowered the age to 18 with a high school education. I went to New York City in April of 1942 and enlisted with the cadets.

In June of 1942, I went to Maxfield,

Alabama for training and then primary flight training at Decatur, Alabama and then to basic flight training in the BT13s at Walnut Ridge, Arkansas. I went into advanced training with both engines at Georgefield, Illinois and graduated from there in May of 1943. Went to Columbus, Ohio and transitioned to the B17s and was a qualified B17 pilot at the age of 19. And then we went to Washington State, around Spokane, for more transitional training there. It was combat crew training. We got a crew together and from there went to Grand Island, Nebraska where we got our equipment. Part of the crews that went through there flew their aircrafts across to England but we went on a train and went to Fort Dix, New Jersey and then on the ship Queen Mary and went across the Atlantic. There was no escort for the Queen Mary because they couldn’t run all the submarines. We got to the 96th Bomb Group in England in November of 1943 and flew my first mission in December of ‘43. My last mission, my 7th mission, I got shot down over Bordeaux, France. My copilot was killed. Four gunners in the back bailed out because of the burning airplane. They couldn’t contact me in the front because our communication system was shot out. We finally landed in the water, we called it “ditching.” We climbed out of the airplane and got in our life rafts, us five survivors, and paddled for about four hours until the Germans came out in a flying boat and landed beside us. They took us prisoners of war.

I spent the night in Bordeaux and the next day we went to Paris, France and then into Frankfurt, which was where the interrogation center was. I spent a week there in solitary confinement. We had daily interrogations, and of course the German interrogator spoke very good English, but we would only give name, rank, and serial number. The interrogator said, “Well, I can’t waste any more time with you,” so he pulled out my dossier and told me when and where I graduated high school, where I went to



One of the gears found on Moon Mountain, first thought to be a castellated nut but later determined to be a grommet for a bulkhead.



From left to right: Samantha Misa, Richard Davidson, and Ed Davidson.

flight training, then he said “did you see any submarines when you came across on the Queen Mary?” Of course, this was top secret you couldn’t divulge that information. And then he told me who our squadron commander was in England because I’d never met him I hadn’t been there long enough. We went through Berlin and were locked in boxcars, 40 of us in 8 boxcars. We were in the Berlin freight yard which the RAF came over and bombed that night. Of course, all the German guards left, but they left us locked in the boxcars. Fortunately, we were not hit.

The next day we went on up north to Barth, Germany where Stalag Luft 1 is. We went in there by train and got off at the train station and marched maybe a mile and half to the prison camp. Of course, all the old kriegies were at the fence greeting all of us newcomers, and there at the fence were two guys I went all though cadet training with: Jim Bellingham and Fred Kenny. Jim Bellingham’s now passed on; Fred Kenny’s a year older than me and he’s still living in San Diego. I spent sixteen months in the prison camp. I had my 21st birthday there. April 30th, actually, two weeks before that, we could hear Russian artillery and guns coming from the East. And April 30th, all the Germans left to go to the British lines, which was about 40 kilometers west. They didn’t want any part of the Russians. They all left the camp; by midnight all the Germans were gone. May 1st the Russians came in

and liberated the camp and we sat there for another 13 days before we evacuated the camp. We were one of the fortunate groups of prisoners of war because they had gotten in contact with the 8th Air Force in England and flew B17s in from England and landed them about a mile and a half south of camp. They put 30 POWs on each B17 and took off for Camp Lucky Strike in France. We processed through back into Allied military control there, then I went to England, because I hadn’t gotten a chance to go to London, so I spent a week there. I went to Liverpool and got on the Santa Paula, and went back across the Atlantic.

I got back in the states June 1st, 1945 and got 30 days leave at home. I went to Atlantic City for processing, and then down to Seabreeze, Florida and got requalified to fly a B17 in Japan. The war ended before I got a chance to be shipped over, so there was a big reduction in force. I could stay in as a sergeant in the 8th Air Force I was a first lieutenant. I elected to go out and go to college. I did 2 and a half years at Cornell for mechanical engineering, transferred out to St. Louis University, graduated from college and got recalled for Korea. I flew C46’s and C119’s based in Japan, which we flew back and forth to Korea for resupply. I got back from Korea in 1953 and started working with American Airlines in 1955 and spent 28 and a half years with them. During the Vietnam war, America got a military contract to fly supplies to Vietnam, so I jumped on that.

I was based in New York and would head out to LA, fly out to Anchorage, and when the Americans started the program we had one airplane so there would be a 48 hour layover in Anchorage, next time we would take it to Tokyo for another 48 hours, down to Vietnam and back to Tokyo and then nonstop back to LA. Eventually we got three airplanes on that, so it cut down the layovers quite a bit. Age 60, retirement was mandatory in the airlines; for the next 20 years I worked as the simulator instructor at Dallas and Fort Worth. I later worked on DC10’s. Then we got a contract with the international guard Air Force reserves flying the KC135 tanker, which my brother is very familiar with. I work for the next 19 years at that and finally retired at the age of 80 in 2000, and now here I am at age 92.”

Talking with Ed and Richard Davidson was amazing; if anyone has any further questions or comments, I welcome emails at slm19@geneseo.edu.



*“LITTLE GIRLS,”
Ed Davidson’s B-17.*



TAKING TO THE Skies Over Omaha

Hands down one of the many great highlights of the 41st Annual 8th AFHS reunion was the “Buzzing the Bluffs” mini-airshow held at the Council Bluffs airport. Over 200 attendees enjoyed blue skies, great food, and a step back in time experiencing five (5) vintage warbirds up close and personal: B-25J “Miss Mitchell”, P-51 “Gunfighter”, P-51 “Barbara Jean”, and two (2) Texans.

The B-25 placed itself in World War II history books on April 18, 1942 when 16 of the medium range bombers launched from the deck of an aircraft carrier in the Pacific Ocean and bombed mainland Japan. Led by Lt. Col. James “Jimmy” Doolittle, America had begun to turn the tables on the Japanese.

The B-25J “Miss Mitchell” served in the 310th Bomb Group, 57th Bomb Wing of the 12th Air Force in North Africa and Italy completing over 130 missions. Its legacy of no crew fatalities during all of its missions was a rare accomplishment. Prior to taking command of the 8th Air Force in Europe in 1944, the 12th Air Force was under the command of then Brigadier General Jimmy Doolittle.

After a 12 year restoration by the Minnesota Wing of the Commemorative Air Force, “Miss Mitchell” took her first flight on April 18, 1992 ~ exactly 50 years to the day of the daring Doolittle raid.



A few words from those who went up in “Miss Mitchell...”

“An honor to fly on living history with living history.”

Michael Carr



“I am a Vietnam veteran and my uncle was a gunner on a B-17s during WWII. I have flown on several B-17s in the past, but this was a chance to fly on a twin engine bomber and it was great! I got to sit behind the pilot during take off!”

Ken Henschler

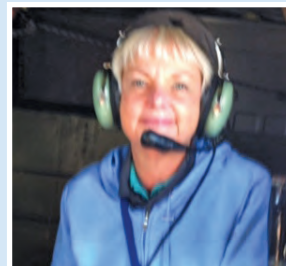


“It was a new experience for me to fly on a 2 engine bomber, it had so much movability it was like flying in an overgrown fighter. Experiences like this don’t come along very often, so I took advantage of a great ride, sitting right behind the pilot.”

William C. “Bill” Toombs

“Flying on Miss Mitchell was a wonderful experience for me. It was a fabulous ride on an awesome warbird. I loved it!”

Anne Marek



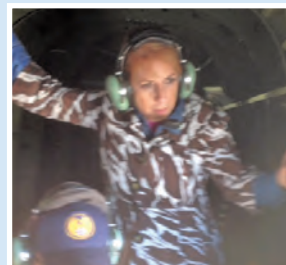
“I now fully appreciate why Doolittle picked this aircraft for the Tokyo raid. It’s tough and sturdy like a bomber but nimble and agile like a fighter. What a great experience!”

Nancy Toombs



“I was surprised how much more the plane moves around in flight, compared to the heavy bombers.”

Clay Toombs



“I didn’t realize how much smaller it is inside compared to the B-24 and the B-17, but I did manage to get to the tail gunner’s position, quite a view!”

Cindy Baumann

“Rupy (Peter Ruplenas) had to be boosted up into the back of the plane, and once in his seat by the right waist gunner window, spent almost all the time looking straight out of the left waist gunner window. At the hotel the next day, while he was manning his booth in the Memorabilia Room, I asked him what he was thinking of while he was gazing out that gunner’s window. He said he was thinking of all the others who had sat there and had never come back. I love that guy.”

Helen Jordon

“I was thrilled to have the chance to fly in the B25. I flew in the rear portion and was happily surprised the tail gunner position was fairly

easy to get into, as opposed to the B17. It was a thrilling ride and would love to go back again and fly in the front portion. I was surprised at the difficulty the crew members had to get from the rear to the front with that large section between them. Thanks to the Society for the opportunity to have such a thrilling ride!” - Jeannette Batton





"This was a very special ride for me. In the early 50' my Dad was a B-25 instructor at Foster Field in Victoria Texas. I loved it, I got to sit behind the pilot and it was great!"
David Smith



"Here I am, sitting behind the pilot and copilot of Miss Mitchell, and next to Bill Toombs grinning ear to ear with a pair of headphones on . . . could it get any better than that! I don't think so! How exhilarating to slide down the tube to the nose cone imagining what it must have been like to be 20 years old and freezing and under fire. These guys are my heroes! Need I say more?"
William Craig Dubishar



"An incredible moment I will never forget. The entire "Mitchell" crew was phenomenal the way they created our experience—it was so much more than a flight. Another checkmark off my bucket list!"
Debra Kujawa



"It was a dream come true... flying in the B25 Miss Mitchell 70+ years later."
Peter Ruplenas

"We thank the generous patrons of GOFUNDME for making this happen. God Bless all the supporters and God Bless America!"
John Ruplenas

A HUGE thank you to all who made the day an amazing, unforgettable success!

Jeff Hutcheson, B/Gen Reg Urschler, and members of the Great Plains Wing of the Commemorative Air Force
For the appearance of "Gunfighter II" and "T-6"
Jim Gilmore, the Flight Crew & Staff and the Commemorative Air Force-Minnesota Wing
For the appearance of B-25J "Miss Mitchell"
Harry Barr for the appearance of P-51 "Barbara Jean"
Roger and Margaret Schlueter and Gary Snider
For the appearance of SNJ-5 Texan
Ron Rauert, Helping U Barbeque—grill master
Todd Simon—Omaha Steaks



FRENCH LEGION OF HONOR

Stewart Ackerman	303rd BG	Thomas L Creekmore	305th BG	Rudolph "Rudy" Guerrero	493rd BG
Ed Anderson	453rd BG	Howard Croner	452nd BG	Carl Gustafson	453rd BG
Richard Andrews	379th BG	John F Curcio	458th BG	Russell W Gustafson	452nd BG
Albert Audette	385th BG	Steve de Pyssler	VIII Bomber Command	Paul C Haedike	452nd BG
George W Bachmann, Jr	306th BG	Eddie Deerfield	303rd BG	Percival L Hanson	305th BG
Willis Barney	379th BG	Harold L Dietz	466th BG	Haas M Hargrave	493rd BG
William Becker	492nd BG	Norman R Dunphe	448th BG	Alfred B Harris	390th BG
Richard L "Dick" Bedford	353rd FG	Peter Durso	493rd BG	Robert B Hastie	95th BG
Caesar J Benigno	452nd BG	Stanley Edleman	351st BG	Walter Hendricks	452nd BG
Nelson Berger	100th BG	Joseph Fischer	94th BG	Robert H Hitchcock	303rd BG
Leo S Bielinski	44th BG	Joel Friedman	34th BG	Don Holmes	458th BG
William D Bodiford	487th BG	James E Frolking	479th FG	Dewey A Holst	448th BG
Carl F Brown, Jr	4th FG	Joseph Garber	96th BG	Theodore C "Ted" Hood	306th BG
Dudley Brown	94th BG	Ted Gary	493rd BG	James Howell	447th BG
Donald Casey	379th BG	William Gerecitano	388th BG	Jake Howland	Unknown
Clarence F Cherry	100th BG	Albert Gese	20th FG	Jack C Hubbard	306th BG
John Chopelas	452nd BG	Reuben Glazer	445th BG	Albion Kenneth Hutcherson	95th BG
Samuel Christiano	18th Weather SQ	Hewitt B Gomez	492nd BG	Bennie L Jefferies	306th BG
Murray Codman	447th BG	Sidney Grant	493rd BG	Perry Kerr	466th BG
Myron Cohen	91st BG	Charles J Greenough	379th BG	Michael D Kindya	385th BG
Marbury L Councell, Jr	96th BG	Robert Gross	34th BG	Ralph J Kurka	93rd BG



RECIPIENTS*

Herbert J Kwart	381st BG	LaVerne Peters	389th BG	John Roger Swihart	388th BG
Mathias J Leupold	385th BG	Stanley Peterson	96th BG	William M "Bill" Thorns	96th BG
Donald D Levine	453rd BG	Anthony W Pircio	7th PRG	William C "Bill" Toombs, Sr	493rd BG
Richard B "Dick" Lewis	493rd BG	Michael H Prestia	452ndBG	William "Bill" Varnedoe	385th BG
George R Leyva	351st BG	Vincent J "Bill" Purple	379th BG	Jay Walker	384th BG
Robert M Littlefield	55th FG	Walter "Mike" Quering	487th BG	James H Walston, Jr	466th BG
Robert "Bob" Livingston	351st BG	Albert Rapvano	466th BG	Douglas J Ward	305th BG
Hugh McGinty	379th BG	George Roberts	306th BG	Charles Warren	351st BG
Jay McIntosh	94th BG	William L "Bill" Roche	452nd BG	Earl E Wassom	466th BG
Russell Madsen	100th BG	J Warren Roundhill	379th BG	Lawrence Wolfson	493rd BG
Elmo Maiden	466th BG	Bradford Saivetz	305th BG	<p>* List current as of press time...</p> <div> <p>If you or someone you know has received the French Legion of Honor, but is not on this list, or if you would like information, please contact:</p> <p>Dr. Nancy Toombs (501) 681-3126 or Chase221@SWBell.net</p> </div>	
David Marshall	381st BG	Carmen Schiavoni	447th BG		
Walter M "Boots" Mayberry	388th BG	Robert Schuberg	306th BG		
Julius M Micek	381st BG	Horace Shankwiler	445th BG		
Charles Mills	492nd BG	Marvin Silbersher	447th BG		
E E "Mitch" Mischler	94th BG	Taffe Simon	445th BG		
Kenneth Moulden	448th BG	Heber H Smith	94th BG		
Clayton A Nattier	306th BG	Samuel W Smith	303rd BG		
William J O'Leary	384th BG	Colin D Storey	94th BG		
Allen G Ostrom	398th BG	Herman Stroupe	390th BG		
Frank D Perez	401st BG	John S Swarts	351st BG		



THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE is erecting a large **American Flag** in the Museum's Memorial Garden facing Interstate 95.

To donate to the **American Flag Project**, please send your check* to:

**The 8th Air Force Historical Society
P O Box 60369
Savannah, GA 31420-0369**

*Please specify **"American Flag Project"** on your check. If you are making a donation in honor or memory of an individual or group, PLEASE specify clearly in your donation. Donations will be accepted through January 31, 2016

All donors (individuals and/or groups) contributing \$500 and above will be recognized on a memorial plaque accompanying the flag, but ALL donations will be appreciated.



Durgin, George Meade Jr., a resident of The Carriage House Retirement Home in Oxford, Fla., passed away at Cornerstone Hospice on Saturday, Nov. 7, 2015. He was 92.

He was a bomber pilot in the Army Air Corps with the 493rd BG during World War II, and continued in the Air Force reserves until 1968. George married Phyllis Burr Durgin on Oct. 1, 1949.

Elisco, Morris, 453rd BG Highly decorated WWII Veteran. Member of Air Force Escape and Evasion Society. Loving husband of Harriette nee Cohen. Passed away Aug 9th, 2015.

Gelb, Howard H. Age 96 of St. Paul, passed away peacefully September 1, 2015. Attorney and businessman, he served in the 8th Air Force during WWII. Survived by wife, Eunice.

Hawkinson, Eric V., 92, passed away August 25, 2015. Served in the 325th Photographic Wing of the 8th Air Force stationed at High Wycombe. He assisted in the collection, evaluation, interpretation and distribution of information of enemy and counter intelligence activities, and safe guarding of military information. He was also affiliated with the 25th Bomb Group, 7th Photo Group, and the 27th recon squadron.

Eric participated in the Ardennes, Rhineland and Central European campaigns—he was an intelligence courier. On D-Day, he was driven to Greenham Commons in Southern England where he gathered intelligence information—photo negatives of bomb damage from air strikes—and brought it back to HQ at High Wycombe. He also parachuted into France and Germany to obtain photos of bomb damage. He remained in Europe for a time after the war where he continued gathering intelligence with assignments in Scandinavia, France, Luxembourg, and Germany.



Edward Kastanek

Kastanek, Edward James, age 98, passed away at his home in Rio Rancho, New Mexico, on Saturday, October 24, 2015. He met the love of his life, Evelyn Vlasak, in 1941 at her cousin's wedding dance. They were married on May 4, 1944, and celebrated over 58 years together before Evelyn's death in 2003.

In June, 1942, Ed enlisted in the Air Cadet Program (Reserve) before being called to active duty in February, 1943. During his time of military training in the United States, he attended the University of Nebraska and the College of Mines and Technology in Michigan. He was deployed in August, 1944 from New Jersey and sent to England to be assigned to the Eighth Air Force 493rd Bomb Group. While on active duty during World War II, Ed was a 1st Lt. Navigator on a B-17 Flying Fortress in the Eighth Air Force. He completed 35 missions over Germany, with a total mission flight time of 253 hours. Ed received the Air Medal with three Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters and a Silver Oak Leaf Cluster.

Kuest, Leroy, died Saturday, February 21, 2015. In 1942 he joined the Army Air Corps. Throughout World War II, he was stationed in England near Bury St. Edmunds, where he was a crew chief maintaining B-17 bombers and a member of the 331st squadron of the 94th Bomb Group. At a dance in London, he met his future wife, Margaret McCurdy. They were married in Odessa Sept. 15, 1946. Throughout his life, Leroy helped to keep alive

the history of the 94th Bomb Group by sharing his memoirs and collection of photographs from the war. He was also active in organizing reunions of former servicemen from the 94th. He and Margaret returned to England more than once and in the 1990s

were present for a ceremony dedicating a rose garden on the abbey grounds of Bury St. Edmunds to the 94th Bomb Group servicemen who had been stationed nearby at Rougham Air Field. Leroy was preceded in death by his wife Margaret in 2005.



William McGinley

McGinley, William, age 93, of Sardis, passed away Friday, Oct. 2, 2015. He was born Aug. 21, 1922 in Little Rock, Ark. Mr. McGinley served in the U.S. Army Air Force with the 392nd BG. He was a Staff SSgt on a B24 as a tail gunner that was shot down over Brussels, Belgium and had to stay



William (Bill) McGinley was featured with Yvonne Daley-Brusselmans, on our 2014 December 8th AF News Front Cover.

underground for nine months with the help of Mrs. Anne Brusselmans until she could get him to safety. The last of the Americans to be saved by Madame Anne. Mr. McGinley was a member of the 8th Air Force Historical Society and the Sardis United Methodist Church. He retired from the Insurance Business. Mr. McGinley was preceded in death by his parents, Connel and Lily McGinley; son, William "Billy" McGinley Jr.; brother, Harold McGinley and a sister, Shirley McGinley Evans. He is survived by his wife, Bonnie McGinley

Psota, John William, 91, of Millsboro, DE and formerly of Salisbury, MD died peacefully on October 17th at Atlantic Shores in Millsboro, DE. During WWII, he was a B-17 toggler in the 8th Army Air Corps., 303rd "Hells Angels" Bomb Group, and completed many missions over Europe. After the war, he owned AA Taxi in Smithtown, NY before entering the Cambridge School of Broadcasting in NYC, NY. In 1953 he married Sylvia Helen Pearson and they then moved to Salisbury, MD in 1958. He is survived by his wife, Barbara, of Salisbury, MD. He is preceded in death by his loving wife of 61 years, Sylvia.

Sadler, Major General Thomas M., 90, died Sept. 7, 2015 in Mount Pleasant, SC. He entered the Army Air Corps in Aug. 1943 and was assigned to the 8th Air Force's 92nd Bomb Group. General Sadler flew 35 combat missions as a nose gunner and was discharged in December 1945. He attended the University of Alabama and returned to active duty with

the Air Force in Oct. 1948 and entered the Aviation Cadet Program in Waco, Texas. He graduated from Advanced Flying School and was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in Sept. 1949. His first operational assignment was with Tactical Air Command's 50th Troop Carrier Squadron at Stewart AFB, Tenn. as a C-119 pilot. General Sadler earned a bachelor of Science degree

from Syracuse (NY) University in 1965 and a master's degree from George Washington University, Washington, DC in 1970. He also completed Squadron Officer School at Maxwell AFB Alabama, and the National War College, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, DC. General Sadler spent 37 years in the Air Force and was the only active duty general to fly 400 combat missions in three wars, WW II, Korea and Vietnam.

General Sadler retired in 1983 and moved to Charlotte, NC to run an aviation company. In 1991 he became something of a folk hero during the Persian Gulf War analyzing war tactics in his Alabama twang on a popular radio talk show. He found his greatest passion running the Speedway's Children Charities at Speedway Motorsports Inc. for 25 years, raising millions and helping more than 300,000 needy children. His wife, Mary, died in 2008.

Walker, Wayne A., 91 years of age, of Beatrice passed away at Southlake Village in Lincoln September 3, 2015. Wayne served his country in the United States Army Air Corps from January 27, 1943 until September 30,

1945. He was a member of the 8th Air Force, 458th BG, and was a Flight Engineer on B-24 bombers including Gene Gabriel's crew, 'Lassie Come Home' that flew 35 missions over France and Germany. He and Patricia A. Martin were married on March 28, 1945 in Marysville, KS.

Wiegand, Arthur Herbert (Nov. 4, 1917 - Aug 25, 2015) age 97. Born and raised in the Bronx, New York City. Living in Sebastian, Florida. He was the last of seven children of Isabelle and William W. Wiegand. Spent his early years in an orphanage in NYC. During the Depression his upbringing was regulated by economic conditions until January, 1942. Drafted 1-A, he enlisted in the US Army Air Corps as a B-17 pilot in the 385th BG, 550th Squadron, 8th Air Force serving at Great Ashfield, England. Severely wounded on his 5th mission and was medically discharged. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, Purple Heart and other medals for valor. Re-assigned to Langley, VA and San Antonio, Texas until 1946 when he received his honorable discharge. He started a 32 year career at Northwest Air Lines in Minneapolis, MN. Married in 1946 to Mary Lou Dasher, an Army nurse, and had three sons.



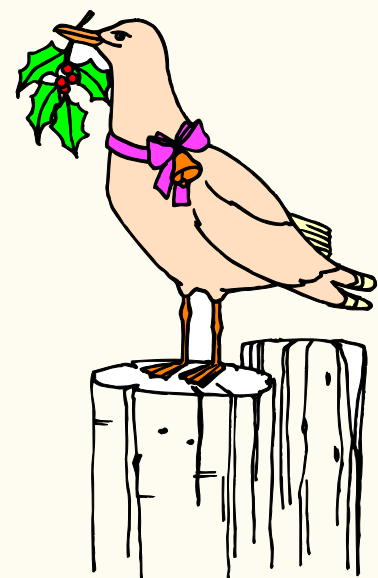
John Psota



Thomas Sadler



Wayne Walker



THE LOST AIRMAN

A True Story of Escape from Nazi Occupied France

By Seth Meyerowitz

Hardcover: 320 pages

Publisher: Berkley (January 19, 2016)

Language: English

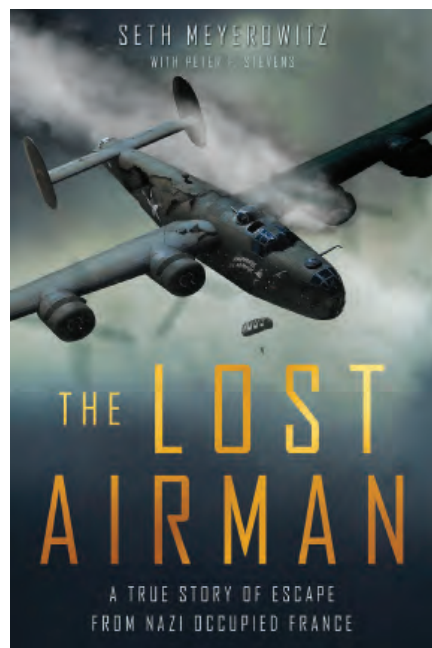
ISBN-10: 1592409296

ISBN-13: 978-1592409297

For fans of *Unbroken*, the remarkable, untold story of World War II American Air Force turret-gunner Staff Sergeant Arthur Meyerowitz, who was shot down over Nazi-occupied France and evaded Gestapo pursuers for more than six months before escaping to freedom.

Bronx-born top turret-gunner Arthur Meyerowitz was on his second mission when he was shot down in 1943. He was one of only two men on the B-24 Liberator known as "Harmful Lil Armful" who escaped death or immediate capture on the ground.

After fleeing the wreck, Arthur knocked on the door of an isolated farmhouse, whose owners hastily took him in. Fortunately, his hosts not only despised the Nazis but had a tight connection to the French resistance group Morhange and its founder, Marcel Taillandier. Arthur and Taillandier formed an improbable bond as the resistance leader arranged for Arthur's transfers among safe houses in southern France, shield-



ing him from the Gestapo.

Based on recently declassified material, exclusive personal interviews, and extensive research into the French Resistance, *The Lost Airman* tells the tense and riveting story of Arthur's trying months in Toulouse—masquerading as a deaf mute and working with a downed British pilot to evade the Nazis—and of his hair-raising journey to freedom involving a perilous trek over the Pyrenees and a voyage aboard a fishing boat with U-boats lurking below and Luftwaffe fighters looming above. With photographs and maps included, this is a never-before-told true story of endurance, perseverance, and escape during World War II.

"The *Lost Airman* tells the suspenseful story of a truly remarkable American, shot down over enemy occupied territory in WW2, who amazingly managed to stay a step ahead of the Nazis for over six months and get back home. A terrific, thrilling tale you won't want to miss." —Alex Kershaw, New York Times Bestselling Author of *Avenue of Spies* and *The Liberator*

"The *Lost Airman* is a deeply researched, finely wrought gem. The story of Staff Sgt. Arthur Meyerowitz's harrowing struggle to escape from Nazi-infested France across the snow-bound Pyrenees to Spain will haunt you long after you've put this riveting book down. The courage, quick wits, and sheer guts displayed by Meyerowitz and the men and women of the French Resistance who gambled their lives to help him are simply extraordinary." —Jack Cheevers, Author of *Act of War*, Winner of the Samuel Eliot Morison Award for Naval Literature

The *Lost Airman* is available through multiple booksellers including Amazon.com.

ODYSSEY OF A BOMBARDIER

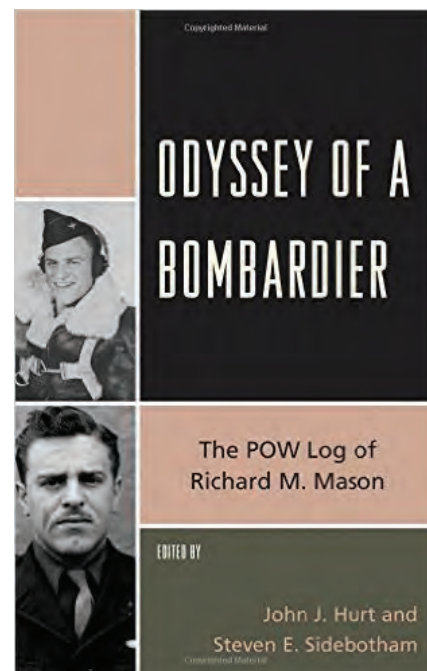
The POW Log of Richard M. Mason

By Richard M. Mason

Hardcover: 315 pages

Published: 09/26/2014

Richard Mason enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1943, completed officer



and bombardier training in 1943-44, and flew fifteen combat missions with the 351st Bomb Group, based in Polebrook, England. His B-17 crashed in eastern France on September 8, 1944. Three crewmen died in the crash, and Richard suffered a broken ankle. He spent the rest of the European war as a German prisoner, confined at the famous Stalag Luft III in what is today western Poland and then at Stalag VII-A, at Moosburg, near Munich, where he was liberated.

This book consists of a reproduction of Mason's prison diary or log, as he called it, and the illustrations depicting prison life which, a gifted artist, he drew in captivity. The log describes the September crash, his interrogation and medical treatment, and the routine of the prison experience. Conditions at Stalag Luft III were acceptable, but the extended captivity at Moosburg was very difficult. Readers will come to understand how the prisoners, largely British and American at SL3 but more international at Moosburg, coped with their captivity and will gain a new appreciation for the Red Cross. Mason seldom complained about anything, even when times were tough, and kept himself in the background. The deaths of his comrades troubled him, of course. His joy at seeing the Statue of Liberty is deeply moving.

An introduction describes the air war in Europe and Mason's military

career from the time he enlisted until his return home, using a range of sources to round out the story. The resources of the Roger A. Freeman Center at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum and the Eighth Air Force Archive at Penn State contributed to this well-researched introduction. The description of the crash and its immediate aftermath is particularly detailed and draws upon eye-witness accounts from French civilians, whom the editors interviewed. A valuable accompanying transcription makes the Mason log easily readable. The editors have included Mason's letters and postcards and two autobiographical poems he composed in captivity. Several valuable appendices add to the book.

Readers will gain new respect for the skill and sacrifice of members of the Mighty Eighth and for the courage and endurance of Air Corps prisoners of war. Anyone interested in the air war should read this book.

John Hurt is professor emeritus of history at the University of Delaware, and Steven Sidebotham is professor of history there.

Available from Amazon.com, the University of Delaware Press, and the Rowman and Littlefield Publishing Group.

ICE CREAM IN MY FREEZER
WW II Memoir of James E. Hunter
Former Prisoner of War

ISBN: 978-0-9787761-9-0
Published by: Mountain Ministries
Written in Collaboration with Melynna Hewitt
The 78 page hardback book is avail-



able at First Baptist Church in Lexington, Oklahoma.

Hunter, now 91, was a young 20-year-old radio operator during World War II when his B-17 bomber was shot down over Germany on Oct. 17, 1944. He would spend the next six months a prisoner of war.

Lexington, Oklahoma residents know James Hunter as the long-time agriculture teacher at Lexington High School. But a new book released Monday details his experiences in World War II, including six months in a German prisoner of war camp after the B-17 bomber on which he served as radio operator was shot down.

What follows is author Melynna Hewitt's account of how the book, *"Ice Cream in my Freezer,"* came to be: One Sunday morning last July, James and Geri Hunter stopped me after church and asked if I would consider writing his World War II memoir.

I knew Mr. Hunter had shared bits and pieces of his experiences as a prisoner of war in Germany with his former students but to my knowledge, he had never shared the entire story because it was too painful.

I was both humbled and scared at

the same time. Humbled because he was willing to hand me his treasure chest of memories and the lock that had been closed for more than 70 years. And scared because I knew I was not qualified.

Instead, I told Mr. and Mrs. Hunter I would be honored to do it. Then I went home with a huge responsibility on my shoulders.

I met with Mr. and Mrs. Hunter on August 17 for the first time. He gave me a scrapbook from his teaching days. It was made by Donna Giroux Deskin, his first female member of FFA, 41 years ago.

The scrapbook touched the highlights of his teaching career with a small section in the back about his military history. They also gave me the torn flap of an envelope that had some notes about the prison camps he was in, one sheet of paper that had been typed on a manual typewriter many years ago and a few thoughts jotted down in single phrases that would jog his memory if and when he ever sat down to write the memoir himself. Then he talked and I listened and my journey began ...

Purcell resident James E. Hunter has finally written the story his friends and former students have begged him to share for more than 70 years.

All the proceeds above the cost of printing will go to mission work supported by the First Baptist Church.

Copies of the book can be obtained by contacting First Baptist Church in Lexington at 405-527-6758, Melynna Hewitt of Lindsay at 405-756-7302 or Teresa Bonner at 405-834-5656.

 **Merry**
CHRISTMAS **and Happy**
New Year

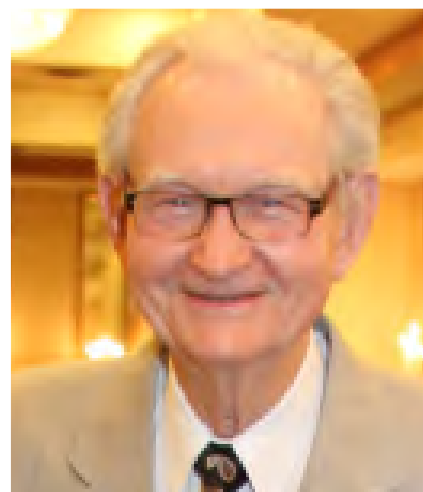
THE Rx FACTOR

Preservation is a characteristic that is sought after by just about everyone. Even back in Biblical times, it was a subject for which people prayed. Such as Paul the Apostle who prayed for the people in a particular church in the city of Thessalonica. He asked the Lord to help these folks in a number of ways. You can read the entire content of his concern in his letter in I Thessalonians 5:14-23. We will paraphrase a few of his concerns. He said: (1) warn the unruly, (2) comfort the feeble-minded, (3) support the weak, (4) be patient, (5) don't render evil for evil, (6) follow that which is good, (7) rejoice evermore, (8) pray without ceasing, (9) give thanks for everything, (10) quench not the Spirit, (11) hold fast to that which is good, (12) abstain from the appearance of evil, and (13) in summation ".....**and I pray to God that your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.**" (I Thessalonians 5:23 KJV). There it is again...the word and concept of PRESERVATION. This points out that man possesses three characteristics: a **spirit**, a **soul** and a **body** and Paul is praying that all three of these be preserved in man "**until the coming of the Lord.**" Without exception, every human being possesses all three of these characteristics, **body, soul and spirit.**

The **spirit** is the intellect, the personality, the persona, the visible person we are. Remove the spirit from a man and we know the result. We have a corpse on our hands. The person is gone! The shell is there but it is non-responsive. Where did the person go? Is it preserved? Yes! Here is how. The second characteristic, the **Soul**, which is eternity bound and is the part of God's creation that lives forever. It is eternal and God in His infinite wisdom, His love and His compassion has made provision for the soul to live forever. The **body** is the housing that God has given

for the Spirit and Soul. Humankind, whether conscious or unconscious of this fact, spends almost of his time caring for the body, often to the neglect of the other two, the spirit and the soul. Now, without question, the body is important. Regardless of age, an individual is attending to the task of preserving his body. A good night of rest is the result of a great mattress. One must brush teeth, shave, shower, take medications, lotions, ointments, tests for sugar and blood pressure.....a breakfast with an unconscious effort to consume the correct daily vitamins, proteins, fats, juices. This is just the start of day. Preservation is a 24 hour endeavor and does take a lot of time and effort.

Almost always conversations start out with "how are you doing?" In trying to establish a schedule, the medical considerations usually take precedence over everything else. The appointment with the doctor, the dentist, the visual center, the hearing clinic, the laboratory, the pharmacy, always come first in our quest to 'stay well'. This is not an old-age phenomenon. We have baby, childhood, adolescent doctors, women specialists as well as psychological (shrinks) and all kinds of specialists in our hospitals and clinics. This is a national and global endeavor in the art of preservation. Health care is a 'hot-button' for politicians. The financial considerations are immense. Women, in a life-time spend \$15,000 on cosmetics. Health-care and related spending is reported to be 2.9 trillion dollars annually. People who are obese spend 190 billion dollars every year on weight loss. These figures give a broad sweep financially of humanity trying to keep body and soul functional. With all of this necessary attention to caring for the body, one must not neglect the development of the body. Also one must not neglect the development of the spirit. With proper care, the intellect, the ambition, personality, the persona can become a beauti-



Earl Wassom

ful self. It is the responsibility of the individual to develop the spirit. Preservation of all three (body, soul and spirit) starts with the individual. Certainly, work on the soul and develop a relationship with God that your soul may be preserved blameless. This should be our primary goal. Caring for our body is always a challenge. Ordinary tasks often turn out to be extraordinary. As we grow older small frustrations become monumental. The diabolical packaging of bottles of pills in containers in so-called 'child proof caps', or those mediations encased in clear plastic stronger than the walls of a safe, or instructions printed so small that proper lighting and a magnifying glass are insufficient tools to read simple instructions. Age may be a deterrent but it should not become an excuse. Keep pressing toward the goal to "**become blameless until the coming of the Lord.**"

Earl Wassom
466th Bomb Group
Chaplain, 8th AFHS





8th AF News
The Eighth Air Force Historical Society
P.O. Box 60369, Savannah, GA 31420

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Savannah, GA
Permit #136

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

