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TH AF NEWS

Volume 22 Number 4 Voice of "The Mighty Eighth"



48th Annual 8th Air Force Historical Society Reunion
Washington, D.C. ~ Arlington, VA
PHOTO EDITION!



8th AF News

Voice of "The Mighty Eighth"

December 2022

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THE 8TH A F 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 in 1975, and Editor of the "News" for sixteen years. It is published quarterly and is the official news magazine of the Society, a 501(c)3 not for profit corporation..

The 8th A F News is distributed to members of the Society and is not for public sale.

National office is located at:

**68 Kimberlys Way
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EDITOR'S NOTES



First of all, I immediately was sick to my stomach when I saw the video. I was transfixed in watching it over and over...as if in doing so, I felt the outcome would somehow be different. I was overwhelmed with grief in the realization that people died—suddenly, without warning, and their friends and family were helpless spectators.

I am referring to the deadly mid-air collision and crash during the Wings Over Dallas Air Show on Saturday, November 12, 2022. The two planes were a P-63 Kingcobra, and a vintage B-17 called “Texas Raiders” owned by the Commemorative Air Force. Craig Hutain, the son of a 446th BG pilot, was the lone occupant of the Kingcobra. Terry Barker, Kevin Michels, Dan Ragan, Leonard Root, and Curt Rowe were on board the ill-fated Fortress.

Sadly, this was the third fatal crash involving a warbird in the past 4 years.

The Collings Foundation’s B-17, “Nine-O-Nine”, crashed on October 2, 2019. Ernest “Mac” McCauley, Michael Foster, David Broderick, Robert Riddell, Gary Mazzone, James Roberts, and Robert Rubner were killed in a fiery crash landing—six others survived.

Fredericksburg, Texas, November 17, 2018. During a reenactment flight organized by the National Museum of the Pacific War, another warbird, a P-51 called “Pecos Bill” crashed. Pilot/owner Cowden Ward, Jr. and WWII veteran, Vincent

Losada (487th BG) died. Only weeks before, I had the privilege of getting to know Vince during our reunion in Dayton that October.

Fifteen souls. Gone.

Were all these men doing something they loved? Absolutely.

Having flown in both the B-17 ‘movie’ “Memphis Belle” as well as the B-25 “Miss Mitchell”, are moments I will never forget.

Restoring and preserving these incredible flying machines for generations to come is certainly a noble and worthy cause. It has allowed thousands of us to be transported back in time; to go beyond photographs and narratives, and physically understand—to some extent—what our fathers, grandfathers, and hundreds of thousands of young men went through during WWII.

Our hearts and prayers go out to all of those who perished in these tragic crashes—their families, friends, and crew mates. Whatever the future holds for these organizations, we are grateful for having had the experience.

With love always,

Deb



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Eighth Air Force Historical Society TODAY!!!**



First Name: _____ Middle Initial: _____ Last Name: _____

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Membership Annual Dues: \$60 or £30

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By renewing or requesting membership in the 8th Air Force Historical Society, I hereby grant permission for the Society to hold and maintain my information as contained herein, indefinitely, with the stipulation that my information not be shared nor be made public to any other entity without my expressed written permission.

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PRESIDENT'S BRIEFING

Paul W Tibbets IV
President



Greetings Society Members!

Thanks to everyone who joined us in Arlington for our 48th annual 8th Air Force Historical Society Reunion in October. It was a blast! Of the 325 people who attended, approximately 100 were veterans, including eight from World War II. The tours were fantastic, allowing us to see so many of the museums, monuments, and historic places around our Nation's Capital.

A huge shout out to Maj Gen Andy Gebara, Commander, 8th Air Force, who joined us Saturday night as our Gala speaker. He brought along his command chief, CMSgt Steve Cenov, and six Airmen who did a wonderful presentation about today's 8th Air Force.



Also, many thanks to Sandra O'Connell of the Udvar-Hazy Center for setting up the fantastic tours, and Beverly Tomb of the Daughters of the American Revolution for the treat bags for the veterans.

At the General Membership meeting, for the continued financial health of our Society, we agreed to:

- Eliminate printing and mailing 8th AF News beginning in CY2023, and
- Modestly raise dues from \$40 to \$60 a year

We will continue to provide a printed magazine to all World War II veterans free of charge and allow other members to purchase a yearly subscription for \$25.

It is an honor to serve this next year as your President! At our first Board Meeting following the elections, we put together five Focus Areas for the next year. These include:

- Strengthen 8 AFHS relationship and communication with current 8 AFHS bombardment groups/organizations
- Expand 8 AFHS to include post-WWII 8th Air Force organizations
- Strengthen 8 AFHS presence on social media
- Strengthen 8 AFHS relationship with the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force
- Develop corporate sponsorships

We look forward to reporting back to you on these areas.

Wishing everyone a joyous and relaxing holiday season, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Paul

Respectfully,
Paul Tibbets
President, 8 AFHS

TREASURER'S LEDGER

Anne Marek
Treasurer

Greetings everyone –
The 8th AFHS had their 48th Annual Reunion this October in Arlington, VA. The Board of Directors met on Saturday, October 22, to elect the officers who will serve for one year until our Reunion next year. Paul Tibbets was elected President, and I was elected Treasurer. We are working closely together to affect a smooth transfer of all financial records in the coming months. In this issue, I am reporting on the financial position of the Society through the third quarter of 2022 ending in September. Those reports are printed here. While we did incur a loss of approximately \$46K, the increase in dues to \$60 per member per year beginning in 2023 which was ratified by the membership will greatly help reduce this shortfall. Member contributions and donations have totaled \$14K so far, and we are extremely grateful for the continued generosity of all our members. If any of you have any questions regarding any of our financial statements, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. My contact information can be found on page 2.

Wishing you all the
*Happiest of Holidays and a
Prosperous New Year!*

Anne
Anne A. Marek
Treasurer, 8th AFHS



8th Air Force Historical Society Profit and Loss January - September, 2022

	Total
Income	
4000 Income/Miscellaneous	
4001 Amazon Smile	140.18
4005 BOA Rewards	8.17
4010 Member Dues Annual	36,460.42
4019 Member Contributions/Donations	14,307.42
Total 4000 Income/Miscellaneous	\$50,916.19
4050 Investment Income	
4058 Portfolio Dividends & Interest	3,141.83
4059 Realized Gain/(Loss) on Invest	0.00
4060 Unrealized Gain/(Loss) on Invest	-88,030.18
4061 Investment Management Fees	0.00
Total 4050 Investment Income	-\$84,888.35
Total Income	-\$33,972.16
Gross Profit	-\$33,972.16
Expenses	
5100 National Administration Expense	
5102 Officers/Directors Gen Expense	443.00
5108 Web Site Expense	12,740.00
5111 Corporation Charges	70.00
5121 8AF History Projects	293.72
Total 5100 National Administration Expense	\$13,546.72
5200 Magazine Expenses	
5210 Printing Expenses	13,411.53
5220 Postage Expenses	7,795.79
Total 5200 Magazine Expenses	\$21,207.32
5300 National Office Expenses	
5303 Telephone/DSL	565.05
5304 Supplies	219.36
5305 Abila Software/ Computer Exps	1,914.49
5307 Office Rent	900.00
5308 Insurance	1,204.89
5312 FICA-8AFHS portion	2,495.81
5313 Payroll/ Office Management	32,725.00
5315 Postage & Shipping	315.64
5316 Bank Charges/ Returned checks	89.90
5317 Dues Collection Expense	791.15
5323 Merchant Account Usage Fees	1,496.61
5326 Payroll processing fees	475.00
Total 5300 National Office Expenses	\$43,192.90
Total Expenses	\$77,946.94
Net Operating Income	-\$111,919.10
Other Income	
6550 Annual Meeting Revenue	
6551 Event Registration	74,330.36
6552 Other Charges/Rebates	-359.37
Total 6550 Annual Meeting Revenue	\$73,970.99
Total Other Income	\$73,970.99
Other Expenses	
7100 Annual Meeting Expenses	
7101 Supplies & Items for Sale	133.55
7104 Tours/Transportation	7,887.60
Total 7100 Annual Meeting Expenses	\$8,021.15
Total Other Expenses	\$8,021.15
Net Other Income	\$65,949.84
Net Income	-\$45,969.26

8th Air Force Historical Society Statement of Financial Position As of September 30, 2022

	Total
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	
1017 Oppenheimer & Co	200,386.98
1040 Bank of America Checking Acct.	57,043.38
1042 Bank of America Savings Acct.	1,332.43
Total Bank Accounts	\$258,762.79
Total Current Assets	\$258,762.79
TOTAL ASSETS	\$258,762.79
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Other Current Liabilities	
2050 Payroll & Taxes Payable	
2051 Payroll payable	2,896.57
2052 FICA & withhold taxes payable	9,230.97
Total 2050 Payroll & Taxes Payable	\$12,127.54
Total Other Current Liabilities	\$12,127.54
Total Current Liabilities	\$12,127.54
Total Liabilities	\$12,127.54
Equity	
3200 *Unrestricted Net Assets	292,604.51
Net Income	-45,969.26
Total Equity	\$246,635.25
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$258,762.79

NOTEWORTHY



2022 REUNION POSTER NOW AVAILABLE!

Many thanks to our own, Andy Steigmeier, from Savannah's 8th AFHS Birthplace Chapter, for creating another stunning reunion poster this year!

If you are interested in having your own poster printed, just email:

managingdirector@8thAFHS.org

and we will email you the pdf file which is ready to print. Most office supply companies such as Staples, Office Max, Office Depot, etc., can easily print for you.

The file is sized for a 24" x 36" poster.

Enjoy!

**Mark your calendars for
October 18-22, 2023
Ontario, California!
49th Annual 8th AFHS Reunion!**

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<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/59-1757631>

*Please submit ALL articles, etc. at least 45 days PRIOR to the date of the next issue of the 8th AF News to reserve space; content must be received 30 days prior to publishing date!

*Remember: submission does NOT guarantee publication.

*Due to size constraints of the magazine, I am very limited in publishing non-solicited material, however, I will review for consideration.

*Please submit materials via email [preferred].

*Written text MUST be TYPED and sent as a WORD.doc, with hi-res photos attached in jpg format.

*NEVER send originals--they may not be returned.

*If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me. I appreciate your help immensely. DDK

Remembrance Day~Cambridge American Cemetery



The inscribed Wall of the Missing includes four representative statues of servicemen, sculpted by American artist, Wheeler Williams. The wall records the names of 5,127 missing servicemen, most of whom died in the Battle of the Atlantic or in the strategic air bombardment of northwest Europe. Jeff Hawley (4th from left) and Paul Bellamy (5th from left) represented the Society by laying the wreaths.



Forget me not...

By Brian C Rittmeyer
Tribune Review



Christine Siess holds a photo of her uncle, Norman Frank Kajut, who died before she was born.

Christine Siess has never forgotten the uncle she never knew.

Thousands of miles and an ocean away, Aldwin van der Velden also remembers Siess' uncle. Norman Frank Kajut, a New Kensington native, is among the thousands of American World War II service members van der Velden and his fellow Dutch citizens still honor as their liberators.

Siess, 74, of Lower Burrell was born more than four years after Kajut died Feb. 10, 1944, when the B-17 bomber on which he was a radio operator was shot down over the Netherlands. Kajut was 23. Siess learned about her uncle from her mother, who kept his photo in their home.

"She always got emotional," Siess said. "She said he was the best brother." Van der Velden, 50, lives in Waalwijk, a city about 60 miles south of Amsterdam. Three times a year — on Kajut's birthday, the anniversary of his death and Memorial Day — van der Velden makes the nearly two-hour drive south to the American cemetery in Margraten where Kajut is buried.

"They must not be forgotten," van der Velden said. "They paid the highest price for our freedom. The least I can do is honor them by visiting their graves."

Called to serve

Kajut was born on Dec. 11, 1920. He was the only son of Frank and Cecilia Tuchnowski Kajut. The family's home, at 832 Second Ave. in New Kensington, is no longer there.

He had two sisters — Siess' mother, Irene D. Paladino, who died in July 2010 at 91, and Geraldine Helen Wierzbicki, who was 79 when she died in August 2004.

A third sister, Eleanor, died shortly after birth, Siess said.

A student of New Kensington High School, Kajut grew to 6 feet, 1 inch tall and weighed 161 pounds, according to his Selective Service registration. He had blue eyes and brown hair.

He worked for Alcoa and then Union Spring, a spring manufacturer, before being drafted in July 1942.

Siess, who was born in 1948, learned of her uncle not only from her mother but also from more than 100 letters he wrote to his family while in training in the U.S. and overseas. On the back of most of the envelopes he sent while in training, he wrote, "Forget Me Not."

"He was very dedicated to his family. He loved his



family. He loved his parents and his sisters,” Siess said. “He had a girlfriend and thought about getting married.”

In one of his last letters, dated Feb. 4, 1944, six days before his plane was shot down, Kajut wrote about having been on pass and visiting a small town where construction of a cathedral started in the 11th century was just being completed.

“These people still have them old fashioned ways and I laughed when I saw how old their ways are,” he wrote on the tiny letter called “V-Mail,” the “V” standing for victory.

“I’m tired as hell and I want to get some rest so till tomorrow,” is how he ended the letter. “God bless you all. I love and miss you all very much.

‘Bail out, hit the silk’

A technical sergeant in the Army Air Corps, Kajut was the radio operator on a B-17 nicknamed “*Hell’s Belles*.” It was returning to base in Knettishall, England, from a bombing mission over Brunswick in Germany when it was attacked by German fighters and crashed in a field near Uitgeest, a town about 20 miles north of Amsterdam.

Kajut was one of four from the 10-member crew who died in the crash. The remaining six were captured by the Germans and held as prisoners of war. They eventually returned home.

The co-pilot, 2nd Lt. Samuel C. Gundy, was among the POWs. He described the crash to Siess in a September 1999 email. The last surviving member of the crew, he lived in Reading and was 92 when he died on April 23, 2010.

Gundy said their B-17 was attacked by a large force of German Focke-Wulf 190 fighters.

“It seemed they had all picked out our plane,” Gundy wrote. “We were badly crippled, fell out of formation and Jim (pilot 1st Lt. James Robert Feeney, killed in action) and I were struggling to keep the plane in the air, but the effort was futile.”



Gundy said he made a check, and every man was OK.

“We knew we were going to have to bail-out eventually, but the port wing began to tear open at the wing root,” he wrote. “Then flames spewed out of the tear in the wing, Jim kept trying to hold the plane, and I told the crew to ‘Bail out, hit the silk, we are on fire and she’s going to blow.’”

Gundy said the craft went into a “terrible spin,” the force making it impossible to move. “Then, thankfully, the plane exploded, blowing us out,” he said.

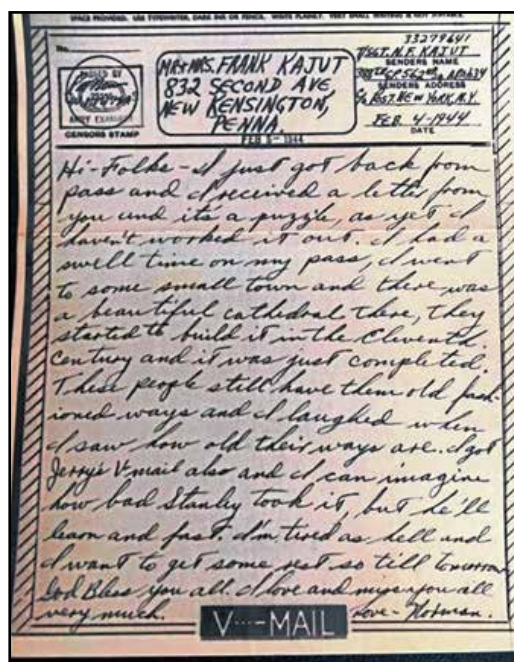
In his report upon returning to the States, Gundy said that, just before the crash, Kajut told Feeney he was going to send out an “urgency call” in case they had to ditch. He last saw him in the plane.

“It is my belief that Sgt. Kajut was sending out a call at the time the bail out order was given and did not hear the order to bail out,” Gundy wrote in his report.

Gundy said he believes that Sgt. Joseph Francis Smith, a waist gunner who was among the POWs, tried to get Kajut out but could not open the radio room door.

Kajut’s family was first told he was missing before receiving word in a Western Union telegram more than a month later that he had been killed in action. The report came from the German government through the International Red Cross.

News of his death made the front page of *The Daily Dispatch*, New Kensington’s newspaper, on March 30, 1944.



At rest overseas

According to a September 1946 letter from the War Department to Frank Kajut, his son originally was buried in a temporary cemetery established near where he died and later “moved to a more suitable site where constant care of the grave can be assured by our Forces in the field.”

His remains were then known to be buried at the U.S. military cemetery in Margraten.

Frank Kajut was given the opportunity to have his son brought home for burial. Siess believes that, after her

grandmother had died from cancer at age of 52 in May 1944, it was too much for her grandfather to deal with, so he chose to leave her uncle buried in Margraten.

Frank Kajut was 80 when he died in April 1968.

The cemetery was constructed in November 1944 for the U.S. Ninth Army. In 1949, the Army turned it over to the American Battle Monument Commission, which manages all overseas cemeteries.

Today, Netherlands American Cemetery and Memorial is the resting place for 8,301 American service members who died during World War II. In addition, there are 1,722 names on its walls of the missing — those whose bodies were never recovered.

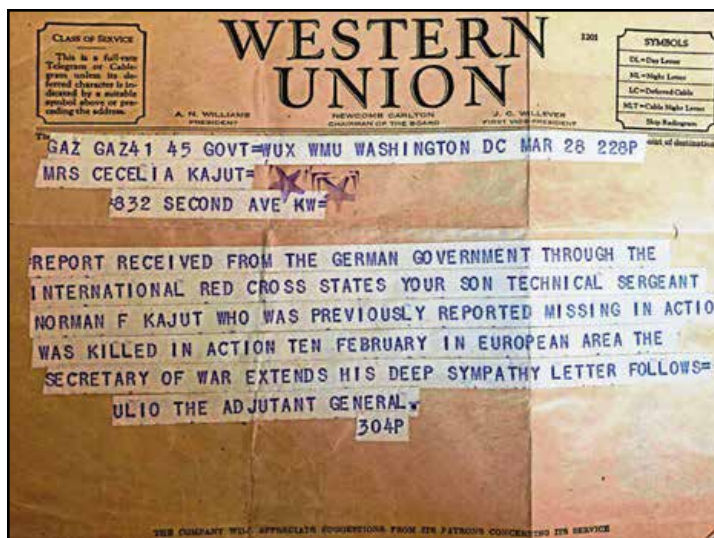
Siess is the only member of her family to visit her uncle's grave. She was there in February 2001, a few days after participating in the unveiling of a monument to her uncle's B-17 crew near the crash site on the anniversary of the crash.

A plaque on the monument lists the names of all 10 members of the crew and says, in English, "Let us remember."

She spoke with people who remembered seeing her uncle's plane go down.

"It was pretty emotional," she said. "The people there in the Netherlands are so very nice. They're just very grateful the men were there and they were liberated. They're free because of the Americans."

Never forgotten, always honored



The only American war cemetery in the Netherlands, Netherlands American Cemetery also is unique for its grave adoption program, which dates to 1945. Adopters were supposed to regularly visit the adopted grave and, if welcome, keep in touch with the next of kin in the U.S.

Every grave was decorated with flowers for its first Memorial Day in 1945. A year later, all graves — 18,764 at the time — had been adopted.

Currently, every grave is adopted and there is a waiting list, according to the [Foundation for Adopting Graves at the American Cemetery Margraten](#), which succeeded the original citizens committee. The names of the missing also are adopted.

[Stichting Adoptie Graven Amerikaanse begraafplaats Margraten from Evisual on Vimeo.](#)

A 2012 book by Peter Schrijvers, "[The Margraten Boys: How a European Village Kept America's Liberators Alive](#)," provides an extensive history of the adoption system.

Siess said she knew of the cemetery's adoption program when she visited in 2001 but didn't inquire more about it, having been fairly overwhelmed by the trip.

Van der Velden said he adopted Kajut's grave and two others — Robert B. Youngs and Leon J.

Engle — in 2005. He has not been able to find any information on Youngs and Engle.

Van der Velden said he adopted one for himself and



one for each of his daughters: Sanida, 27, and Morrison, 21.

He did so, he said, “to honor the American fallen heroes for our freedom.”

Van der Velden’s parents had taken him to the cemetery when he was a boy.

“I saw the white crosses and the names on the walls from the still missing young heroes. This was so impressing to me. My father told me about their sacrifices for our freedom,” he said. “That moment, I decided to become a soldier so I also could fight for the freedom of other people.”

Van der Velden served from 1993 to 1994 in the Bosnian War with the United Nations as a peacekeeper, one of the “Blue Helmets,” he said. He is unable to work because of post-traumatic stress disorder.

“Although I struggle every day with PTSD, I never regretted the choice I made,” he said.

‘An extension of us’

Siess said she did not become aware that someone had adopted her uncle’s grave and that it was possible to know who had done so until finding that information online in 2021.

Van der Velden said a member of the cemetery board called him in June 2021 about someone being interested in learning who adopted her uncle’s grave. He agreed to share his contact details, and he and Siess began writing to each other.

“His emails are so touching,” she said.



In August 2021, Siess sent van der Velden a booklet of information about her uncle and the other crew members.

“I noticed that one of the crew members, Louis Martin LeFevre, also was buried in Margraten. So, every time I go to the cemetery, I’m bringing flowers for him also,” he said. “That’s the least me and my family can do. They are not forgotten.”

Siess said she would like to go back to the Netherlands.

“But with the war (in Ukraine) and Covid and my health issues, it may not happen,” she said. “I certainly would love to go back, and especially meet

Aldwin, too.”

Siess said that when van der Velden visits her uncle’s grave, he brings yellow roses, representing connectedness.

“It’s just so thoughtful. Our family so much appreciates that,” she said. “I feel Aldwin is an extension of us. We can’t get to the cemetery. It’s nice he can be there.”

Photo above: Aldwin van der Velden (center) visits Norman Frank Kajut’s grave with his mother, Ria (right), and daughter, Morrison, on Kajut’s birthday, Dec. 11, 2021.

Crew plaque (left) shows 4 KIA with 6 captured and held as POWs.

Photos courtesy of Christine Siess.



Brian C. Rittmeyer is a Tribune-Review staff writer. This story was reprinted with permission of Trib Total Media/TribLIVE.com. You can contact Brian at 724-226-4701, brittmeyer@triblive.com or via Twitter .

CHAPTER NEWS



Bert Campbell in 1965 (left) and today.

Oregon Chapter 8th Air Force Historical Society Interview of SFC E7 Bert Campbell by Tom Davis

7 May 2022

Edited and photos by
Joan E. Hamilton

Our May 2022 presentation was an interview of 8th AFHS, Oregon Chapter President SFC E7 Bert Campbell by Tom Davis. SFC Campbell served in Vietnam as a member of a LRRP team (Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol). Editor Dwight Gruber wrote in a *Flight Lines*, “The Vietnamese knew the LRRPs as ‘The men with green faces.’ Camouflaged, silent, and very deadly, the LRRPs were inserted deep inside hostile territory to observe and report the movements of NVA and VC forces, in order to bring down the US military’s overwhelming firepower on their positions, and to perform highly dangerous raids and ambushes. A breed apart from the regular infantry in Vietnam,

these shadow warriors became some of the conflict’s most feared units.” Here are excerpts from SFC Campbell’s interview.

According to SFC Bert Campbell, “In 1965 at age nineteen, I joined the Oregon National Guard where they had the M42 Duster, a twin .40 mm anti-aircraft device. The agreement with my dad was, I’d finish high school then go to basic which I did at Fort Campbell, Kentucky where I also decided to go full regular Army. After basic, I went to Fort Sill, OK. and trained as a cannon cocker on a 105 and 155 [mm] Howitzer. After Fort Sill, I went to Fort Riley, KS. and was put into the 1st Infantry. In December, 1965, I was sent to An Loc in South Vietnam, northwest of Saigon, and spent the next year there as an artillery-spotting forward observer. I returned home in December 1966.

Twice Charlie (VC) tried to get inside our wire. The first time, we completely stopped

him. The second time, he got inside but didn’t hold it, but I got hit with the butt of an AK-47 which busted my nose pretty bad and closed up my sinuses which I had surgically repaired at Madigan Army Medical Center in the Seattle area. I went back to Fort Riley, KS. and re-enlisted. I did demolition at Fort Leonard Wood, MO; survival at Fort Polk, Louisiana; Jump School at Fort Bragg, NC; and Ranger School/ Sniper & LRRPS School at Fort Benning, GA, where they assembled our group and shipped us back to Vietnam in January of 1968. At the age of twenty, I volunteered to be a LRRP, Long-Range Reconnaissance Patrol. The forward observation team was two people: one designated as the forward observer and the other as the RTO, radio/telephone operator. In January of 1966, I went through training as a Buck Sargeant. When we formed our LRRP team up, we all had one year of combat behind us, but I had the most training and was the

CHAPTER NEWS

team leader. We had a ten-man squad that was intended to break down into two five-man teams and occasionally broke down into five two-man teams.

When I went back to Vietnam the second time, I was stationed at Tan Son Nhut Air Force Base which had concrete barracks with hot-and-cold running water and air conditioning, but that was only our mailing address where I spent maybe five or six weeks in two years when we weren't out in the field. After having an open forum discussion, we left for each mission knowing what we were going to do. Also, before a mission, we'd shower with non-scented soap and didn't use deodorant, aftershave, or toothpaste. We stunk, as did our Vietnamese Kit Carson scout. When we landed for a mission, if we didn't need to get away from the landing area quickly, we'd sit for an hour or so until everything was real quiet and then start walking real slow so as to be as invisible as we could. The shortest mission was twenty-seven hours and the longest one was six weeks."

Interviewer Tom Davis listed what LRRP team member carried which included six M26 fragmentation grenades, two CS grenades, two Claymore mines, three strobe lights, two signal panels and signal mirrors, three lensatic compasses, three smoke grenades one poncho, on average five days of rations and five quarts of water. The rucksack weight averaged 100 pounds or

more.

When asked about weapons, SFC Campbell said, "I was one of the snipers and my rifle was a 700 Remington 30-06. That was single-shot, bolt action 10-power Redfield with infrared-type capabilities and removed



Bert Campbell (left) and Tom Davis (right).

flash suppressor so it was a silencer. I was issued an M16 and also carried a .45."

Tom Davis mentioned that it was important for team members not to make any noise. SFC Campbell said team members would cut a toe out of a pair of socks and slip it over the canteen, so it didn't shake and rattle with the canteen cup.

SFC Bert Campbell related, "If you had C-rations, sometimes you'd get a little candy bar, but they'd always give you two Chicklets and four cigarettes: Camels, Pall Malls,

Lucky Strikes, or Marlboros.

We'd make our own ghillie suits by putting grass in slots we cut into our fatigues. We wore black and two shades of green grease paint. We were so invisible that I had VC come within 18 inches of me without detecting my presence."

Tom Davis read that they slept in a wheel formation with their feet touching and heads facing out like the spokes of a wheel which SFC Campbell described as a way to have "full 360-degree observation."

SFC Campbell's first LRRP mission was in February 1968 and lasted twenty-seven hours. They took a circuitous route to their destination, a square building in Phnom Penh, Cambodia occupied by VC officers. Upon arrival, he said, "Five of us went down one side. Five of us went down the other side. In each group, there was one each 10-pound sledge and a guy walked up and BAM hit the door and it blew open.

On either side, there was a guy who sprayed a full magazine of M16 ammunition in there and stepped back and then a second guy did that. The next guy up threw a pair of grenades in. They went BOOM. Then four Willie Pete grenades that had extended fuses on them because the fuse wouldn't light off for like ten minutes were thrown in and we walked over behind the truck and disappeared. I think there was like twenty Viet Cong officers in there and our purpose was to eliminate them."

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Wisconsin Chapter 8th Air Force Historical Society Quarterly Meeting September 6th, 2022

We convened at 10:00 hours. It was a beautiful day as we came together again at the historic Hose Tower in Greendale, Wisconsin. We enjoyed the camaraderie of the social hour and registration. Thirty-five (35) members turned out. Our meeting began with a prayer and the pledge of allegiance.

We then noted our book/library display of historic and political topics and recognized one of our WWII heroes recently identified by his remains. He was a B-17 pilot, Lieutenant Roy Harms, KIA over Romania. We heard minutes from our June meeting, and recognized several dates in September e.g., September 1st Germany invades Poland; September 2nd Japan surrenders; September 17th was the US Constitution birth; September 18th the Air Force birthday (75 years); and the WWII Market Garden battle. We also recognized several birthdays including Don O'Reilly at 101 years old.

We announced the National Conference in DC in October



Chris Henry pictured above.

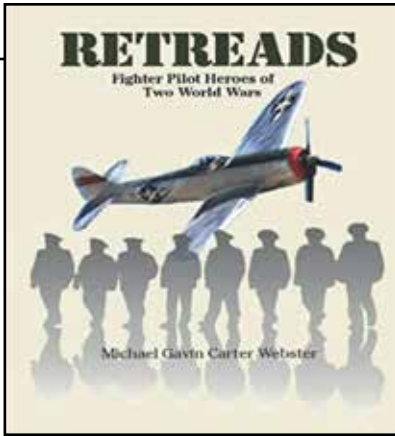
and noted the National dues increase and financial problems. Our chapter election of a Board of Directors will occur at the December meeting.

We adjourned for lunch (ham or roast beef) and then had our raffle and main program, speaker, Chris Henry, Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) Museum Programs Director at Oshkosh, Wisconsin. He spoke on some of the stories from the attendees at this event in August, notably Colonel Bud Anderson, a triple ace in WWII Europe. He was well received, an excellent presentation.

We adjourned at 14:10 hours.
Contributed by Don Hilbig.

Don O'Reilly pictured below.





Col. William Howard Stovall was born on his family's cotton plantation in Stovall, Mississippi on 18 February 1895. He went on to graduate from Yale in 1916. He served in the 13th Aero Squadron during WWI. Between 1 August and 23 October of 1918, Stovall was credited with downing 6 enemy fighters. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. After the war ended, Howard returned to the plantation. But five days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, he served once again, joining the US Army Air Forces as a major. After helping bring over the first 180 airplanes for the 8th AAF, 1st FG, 97th BG, 60th TCG in the Bolero Movement, Howard became the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, A-1, for the Eighth Air Force in Britain under a WWI comrade, Brigadier General Frank O'Driscoll "Monk" Hunter; the two of them worked for another WWI companion, General Carl Spaatz, who had flown in the 13th

PS (WWI), and Stovall became DC/S for the USSTAFE under Spaatz. Both men would remain lifelong friends until Stovall's death in May of 1970. Howard Stovall was but one of a group of seasoned, combat aviators, aka "**RETREADS**", who also knew a little something about leadership. Most were in their late 40s or early 50s, yet they contributed to the war effort in ways that could not be measured simply by length of military service. Howard was one such man. And he was **Michael Gavin Carter Webster's** grandfather. After having met Howard Stovall, Sy Bartlett, a writer at 20th Century Fox, began a collaboration with Beirne Lay in 1946, which resulted in the 1948 publication of the novel "*Twelve O'clock High*." The character of Harvey Stovall was modeled after Howard. The film was released a year later.

Stovall's son, William Howard Stovall, also served in the Army Air Forces in the 56th FG/62nd FS; he saw his father in England during Christmas 1944 before the younger Stovall was killed in action on 31 December 1944 while engaging seven enemy aircraft over Bergsteinfurt, Germany. He had to bail out of his battle-damaged plane after a 50-mile running combat and he was too low; his chute did not deploy properly. He still had managed to down two of the seven planes in combat.

Stovall would resume contact with all 5 of his WWI Flight Instructors again during certain periods of WWII. He would make key decisions about the placement of personnel in different sections and units that would help them to their ultimate success in WWII. He had a bittersweet relationship with his oldest son who wanted more than anything to be a fighter pilot just as his father had been in WWI. It would be tragic for the elder Stovall and for the many friends he would lose during the war. His greatest heartbreak would be all the young fighter and bomber pilots he would know only to see them die in a terrible conflict that affected so many. Stovall witnessed first-hand the tides of war and the toll it exacted on those around him. It would be something that a father would hope never to do again.

His letters tell of the decisions made in war and at home as his wife would keep their farm running to support the war effort. It is a story that is told from someone and others who served twice for their love of country; men who understood what was needed during the great calamity of the 20th century.

Publisher : Bowker (September 22, 2021)
Language : English
Hardcover : 144 pages
ISBN-10 : 0578992477
ISBN-13 : 978-0578992471
The book is available on Amazon and online.

Elaine Balsley shares the life and letters of her Uncle Billy, SSgt. William James McQuoid, Jr., a tail gunner on a B-17 Flying Fortress in World War II. She confessed her desire to do a book about his life, not only to honor him but also to pay tribute to all the thousands of men and women who didn't come home from that terrible war, and the ones that followed. Elaine never got to know her Uncle Billy, but through these "*Letters from the War*," we all now have the privilege through this book to say a heartfelt "thank you for your service" to those who have given their very best for their country... then, and now.

Prose is sprinkled throughout the pages:

*"Speak to me of chocolates and caramels
 Fudge melting on my tongue.*

*Aromas of home-cooked meals that tease my nostrils,
 Imagination stretching as far as it will go.*

I won't tell you of the business of machine guns and explosives,



and details of accidents that come with learning to kill.

*I won't worry you about my worries,
 nor the fear that lies beneath
 my carefree words.*

*Keep writing your homespun stories,
 dear sister..."*

Filled with period photographs, documents, and of course, deeply personal letters, this book will connect with your soul—you will not so much be "reading" it, but "feeling" it...deeply.

Publisher : Reformation Publishing (December 2, 2020)

Language : English
Hardcover : 230 pages
ISBN-10 : 1643381180
ISBN-13 : 978-1643381183

The book is available at Amazon and online.

THANKS, FOR T 48TH ANNUA OCTOBER ARLINGTON, VA ~ V



WWII veterans
L to R: Clarence Kooi 486th BG; T
Cervantes 100th BG; Tony Pircio 7
Zesch 34th BG (seated); Melvin
Don O'Reilly 44th BG; W
Photos courtesy of W



Maj General Andrew

THE MEMORIES AL REUNION 19-23, 2022 WASHINGTON, D.C.



Guests in attendance:
 Teddy Kirkpatrick 379th BG; Henry
 [Name] PRG (standing); Edward "Earl"
 [Name] Hurwitz 493rd BG (standing);
 William Hennessy 447th BG.
 William Craig Dubishar

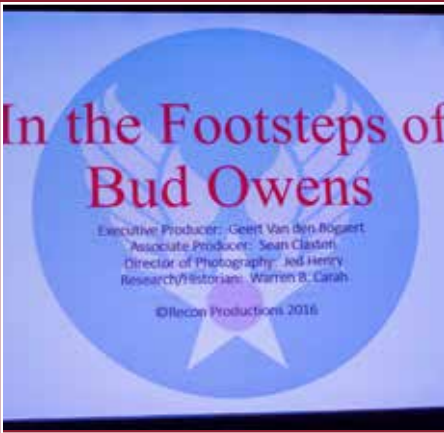


[Name] Gebara (at podium)











Carl Ulrich's Nightmares Came True at Merseburg:

...was my best friend at Molesworth pitchforked to death?

By Jim O'Leary
pilot, 303rd BG/427th Squadron

For 55 years, I've been searching for answers about how he died...

About two weeks before the mission to bomb the Luena synthetic oil refinery at Merseburg, Germany on 21 November 1944, I was in my room writing a letter to my wife, Barbara, when someone knocked. In came my good friend Carl "Twicky" Ulrich, bombardier on Pete Cureton's crew. Carl and I had both married our respective fiancées before departing the states for the UK. We stayed on base most of the time living an insular existence compared to our single peers.

I did a lot of slow timing of new engines, and Carl would ride in the right seat where he could take care of raising and lowering the gear and flaps and get himself some stick time as well. Carl was also an accomplished musician and made a hobby of collecting military songs which were popular during WWII. Carl taught me lyrics and music to some of the old timers like "Shag O'Reilly's Daughter," "Roll Me Over in the Clover," and RAF songs such as

"There was Flak, Flak, Bags of Bloody Flak, O'er the Ruhr, O'er the Ruhr." We both listened to Radio Bremen to hear "Der Bingle" and the limericks sung by the Germans. But my fondest musical memory was being awakened every morning by Sgt. Monahan's AFN theme, "Opus Number One," by Tommy Dorsey.

Carl was adept at shooting craps, so we'd go up to the Officers' Club where I would watch him and the 427th Squadron Surgeon, Doc Anderson, manipulate the cubes. I did not play, since I had learned my lesson in the Caddy Pen at the local Country Club in Des Moines, Iowa, where sharpies would cheat me out of my hard-earned Class "A" Caddie's fee of \$1.85 for an 18 hole carry. When rolling the dice, Carl did not use phrases like "Fever in the Southland" or "Sixty Days," but such winners as "Jump Up," "Hawgmouth," and "Bite 'em in the ass!"



We were both voracious readers who would make forays into Kettering, Northampton or Cambridge looking for good authors. We would then swap our favorites back and forth and give away the "also rans."

But on this morning as he entered my room, Carl was very sober. As he paced the floor, I laid aside my letter and asked him, "what's on your mind?" He sat down and finally got around to telling me that he had had a dream the night before that was terrifying in combat reality. When he told me that he had dreamed the same dream three other times, I had a hollow feeling in my gut. I remember thinking... "he is going round the bend." I then asked him to describe the dream to me.

Carl said that in his dream the CQ awakens him to tell him that he is flying that morning as Deputy Lead Bombardier. In his dream he gets up and dresses, goes to combat breakfast, and then to his bombardier briefing. The target

is Merseberg. After take-off in the early morning gloom, they form up for assembly over the buncher. They then head for the Channel coast. Crossing the Channel, they transit France and enter enemy territory. After opening bomb bay doors, they turn on the IP and proceed down the bomb run. They are below planned altitude and begin to encounter heavy flak. Their number 3 engine receives a direct hit, there is a loud report and a flash of fire, and the aircraft starts a right rollover.

Carl then sees himself salvoing his bomb load, which is thrown out of the bomb bay in an upward cluster. Their B17 dives toward the undercast and rights itself before entering the clouds. Carl sees no chutes. That is all...end of the dream.

I thought of Carl Ulrich as a brother and almost the only person, besides my original crew, that I got really close to during my tour at Molesworth. I have wished many times down the years that I could have commiserated with Carl and shared his trouble, but I was too young and inexperienced at that sort of thing. It gives me some solace to think that maybe his telling me helped ease his concern.

On 21 November 1944, I was flying the Merseburg mission as leader of the numbers 3 and 4 elements in the 427th Low Squadron. My co-pilot, Lou Reed and I were at the controls of "Earthquake McGoon," one of our favorite B17s. Our 41st Combat Wing-B Air Commander was the Operations Officer from the 359th, W.C. "Bill" Heller.

We knew that he was a cool and determined leader and as anxious as all of us to destroy the Luena Synthetic Oil Refinery, a major



source of fuel for the German war effort. Our intelligence also knew that it was defended by several Luftwaffe Gruppen, which contained FW-190A and D-9 Sturm Jagdgeschwaders. The Luena works were also defended by a ring of radar-sighted "Flak Artillerie" consisting of up to 750 guns including both 88mm and larger calibers. Our major problem on this day though, was the lousy weather. I overheard our Wing Leader talking to the two weather scouts, Blue Boy High and Blue Boy Low I remember that he wanted to know the condition of the weather over the target. One of the scouts replied (as I remember) that the weather was clearing over the target. Bill Heller pressed him for exact details. The scout replied that the weather was clear at 16,000 feet over the target but that the flak was intense. The 303rd Group was flying between a solid cloud overcast and a broken cloud undercast that were separated by several thousand feet. Our planned bombing altitude for the Lead Squadron was to be 28,000 feet. The 427th Low Squadron was

to bomb at 27,500 feet. The High Squadron was to bomb at 28,500 feet. I listened as the Wing Lead again quizzed the weather scouts stating that he was "ready to start Climbing," or words to that effect. Bill Heller decided to continue the run on Merseburg although we were gaining very little altitude. It was a tough call for our Wing Lead. I believed then and now that based on the weather scout's reports he made a right decision.

Later, I determined that the 427th Low Squadron was at 18,100 feet when we finally approached the target. It was the heaviest flak bombardment I had ever been through. We were hit so many times that it sounded like rocks being thrown against a wash-tub. Our cockpit was full of floating Kapok as flak punched through the quilted lining. I was busily ducking when I glanced over at my co-pilot, Lou Reed, and saw him bobbing up and down. Our eyes met and we grinned at our heroic antics. Unknown to my crew or myself large numbers of Luftwaffe were assembling directly below us.

Before we reached the target two things happened: First I looked up through our cockpit skylight and saw our Deputy Lead aircraft, piloted by Pete Cureton with Carl Ulrich as his bombardier, take a direct hit on the right side of his aircraft. There was an explosion and the Deputy started to turn turtle to his right. A clutch of bombs then emerged from his open bomb bay going upward. The Deputy then went into a steep dive toward the undercast, and my gunners reported seeing two chutes

leave the falling B17. Cureton and co-pilot Red Raley then appeared to regain control as their B17 entered the cloud cover below.

Then, immediately after the 427th Deputy went down, two fighters—an element leader and his wingman—split-essed out of the overcast several hundred yards ahead and came straight for us. Our bombardier, Bob Lyda, instantly fired a long burst from his chin turret at the approaching fighters and I saw pieces flying off the wingman. Both fighters separated immediately and dove down out of sight. As they banked steeply, I saw that they were our own P51 escort fighters usually took great umbrage with bomber crews who fired upon them, but we heard nothing from those lads after the mission. They had to realize that they were making a hostile move on our formation. Bob Lyda had been raised on the Kansas prairie and had honed his shot gunning skills on fast flying game birds. Bob was both a dead eye bomb dropper and gunner.

Later that evening as I undressed in the QM hut I realized that I had witnessed Carl's dream. It really shook me and still does at this late date. For the next few weeks, I bugged HQ wanting to know if they had heard anything from the Swiss Rd Cross, who kept teams moving among high priority targets in Germany looking for infractions of the Geneva Convention. I specifically requested information regarding the Cureton crew and Carl Ulrich in particular.

One day I was given a message from 303rd HQ that they had received word from the Swiss Red Cross in London. The Swiss Report said that three Cureton crewmen had been pitchforked

to death by German civilians after landing in their chutes. The only man named was Benjamin F. Dubois, the Deputy Lead Navigator, who had come into the 427th Squadron as the navigator of the Stewart Ackerman crew. There was no mention of my good friend Carl Ulrich.

I didn't learn the fate of Carl Ulrich until October 1993. My wife's cousin, Fleming Fraker, who did military research for author Herman Wouk and others, contacted John F. Manning, Chief, Mortuary Affairs Branch, Casualty and Memorial Affairs. Manning produced Xerox copies from declassified German records that listed the following dead: Peter Cureton, Benjamin DuBois, Carl Ulrich, Joseph Burford, Donald Bourlier, Lewis McCormack, R. Celichowski, and an "unknown" who later proved to be Stonewall "red" Raley. There was nothing in the report to explain how the men died. The ninth member of the Cureton crew, radio operator/gunner James Ellis, was blown from the ship when it exploded in the undercast. His backpack chute was open when he regained consciousness as he descended badly wounded. The German Wehrmacht gave him good treatment and transferred him to a POS hospital near Leipzig, Germany.

According to "Might in Flight," all 303rd squadrons missed clobbering the target. The Low Squadron showed no bursts on their strike photos in the target area. The High Squadron was in and out of the clouds during the bomb run, and salvoed their bombs after leaving the target area. Four 303rd aircraft were lost during the mission.

In addition to the Cureton crew loss in an unnamed B17,

another unnamed Flying Fortress piloted by A.R. Virag of the 359th was lost during the bomb run when Virag's right wing was hit and the right aileron was knocked off in a collision with "The Duchess's Grandmother." Virag's B17 was last seen going down about 5 or 6,000 feet below the formation. Ten or 15 minutes later, after losing altitude and having difficulty maintaining control, the B17 was jumped by ME109s. The pilot then ordered his crew to bail out. All jumps were safely made and the entire crew became POWs. This would have been the Virag crew's 35th and last tour mission. "Heller's Angels" piloted by A.F. Chance of the 359th, was another downed B17 with a crew on its last mission. The pilot and five of his crew were made POWs, and three of the crew were killed in action. "Lady Alta" piloted by LeRoy Glass was the fourth 303rd bomber to be down. The entire crew became prisoners of war.

My final attempt to access International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) World War II records was made in the fall of 1999. In its response, the ICRC did not tell me what I need to know—how my best friend Carl Ulrich died on that mission of horrors to Merseburg.

Below: Carl's headstone.



Story originally published in Hell's Angels Newsletter, November 2000. Reprinted with permission.

The month of December has three pertinent anniversaries for the Eighth Air Force. The December 24, 1944, mission to help stop the German advance during the Battle of the Bulge was the largest single mission ever with over 2,000 heavy bombers and 1,000 escort fighters. Long range strategic bombing was crucial in defeating the Nazis during WWII. However, there would not have been a U.S. Army Air Force without the invention of the airplane.

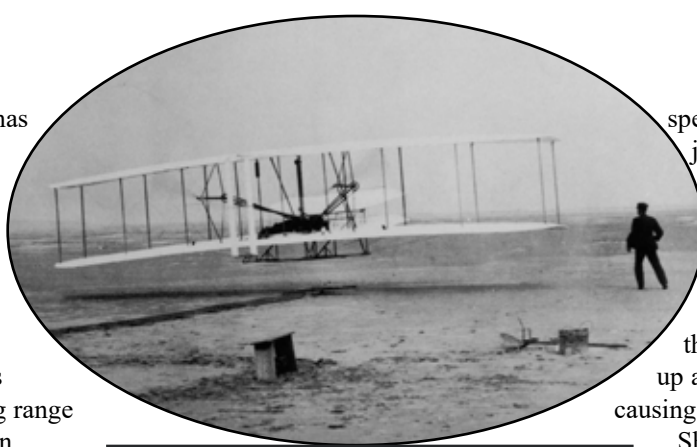
On December 17, 1903, the first flights occurred for a powered fixed-wing aircraft.

Four years later, on December 23, 1907, the U.S. Army made a formal request for a heavier-than-air flying machine. We have the Wright brothers, Wilbur, and Orville, to thank and remember for inventing the first powered airplane and the first military aircraft purchased by the U.S. Army.

In the early 1900s, the Wright brothers were unique. All their competitors who sought to achieve powered flight in a “flying machine” that was heavier than air, and capable of carrying a man, were developing aircraft powered by strong engines with little or no aerodynamic flight controls. The “pilot” was just “along for the ride.”

The Wright brothers’ methodical approach was first to perfect a glider which the pilot would have complete control over, then master the challenge of powered flight. In 1900, they built a glider that could carry a man only in very strong winds. Their 1901 glider, with a different wing design, was sadly no better. The brothers realized the formulas their predecessors spent decades developing had inconsistencies. Without adequate lift, powered flight would be impossible.

Devastated, the brothers nearly gave up their dream. They decided however, to take up the challenge anew. They started over from scratch, building a six-foot-long wind tunnel to test nearly 200 wing and propeller shapes. Hundreds of hours of tedious, methodical testing revealed that a long wingspan with a narrow wing and optional wing curvature provided substantially more lift



The Wright Stuff December 17, 1903

by David Levitt

than a broad wing with a short span.

The Wright brothers’ 1902 glider was a winner. Not only did it produce sufficient lift, it gave the pilot complete control of the aircraft in the air. The brothers’ 1906 patent for a flying machine that details its flying control mechanisms was on this 1902 glider, not on the more well-known 1903 powered Flyer. All WWII and modern-day aircraft can trace their flying controls to this 1902 glider.

Having mastered control in the air, the Wright brothers now turned to achieving powered flight. When they could not obtain an automotive engine that met their weight requirement, they designed their own engine and had their mechanic, Charlie Taylor, make it. That four-cylinder, 12 horsepower, 3.3 liter engine was one of the first to utilize an aluminum crankcase. This gave a substantial weight savings over the cast iron typically used in engines of that era. In addition, the propellers developed by the Wright brothers were more than twice as efficient as those of their competitors.

By the beginning of December 1903, the Wright brothers were coming down to the wire in a heated competition with Professor Samuel Langley and his aircraft, dubbed the “Aerodrome,” to be the first to achieve powered heavier-than-air flight.

On December 17, 1903, Orville was lying prone in the pilot’s position on the Flyer’s lower wing. Three days earlier, Wilbur had crashed attempting take off. Just as the brothers predicted, the Flyer rose off the launching track at 30mph air

speed. Air born, the Flyer’s nose jumped up and down. After 120 feet, a down swing forced the aircraft to land.

The Flyer flew three more times that day with the longest flight being over 850 feet. On the last flight, the Flyer oscillated up and down for the last 50 feet, causing the aircraft to land on its nose. Shortly after that minor crash, a strong wind gust upended the airplane several times, seriously damaging it. The 1903 Flyer never flew again.

It took the Wright brothers two and a half years of numerous crashes on three different Flyers to tame the pitch (up and down) instability. Enlarging the front elevators (small wings that pivot up and down) and rear rudders, then doubling their distance from the wings on the 1905 Flyer III did the trick.

The brothers then contacted the U.S. Army immediately, attempting to sell the Army a flying machine. They were turned down. A second attempt at convincing the Army also failed. Determined to eventually make a U.S. Army sale, they turned their efforts to soliciting sales from European governments and aviation enthusiasts.

Kevin Kochersberger flew a 1903 Wright Flyer replica in 2003 for three short flights—crashing twice. He commented that, “Only the Wright brothers had the skill and experience to master flying the early Flyers.”

History has proven the Wright brothers were brilliant, creative, self-taught engineers who invented the technology needed to achieve sustained, powered, controllable flight. The scientific methodology and types of test equipment they developed, are still cornerstones of aeronautical engineering today. We have them to thank for laying the foundation and additional contributions that led to aircraft capable of long-range strategic bombing.

Stay tuned for part two of “The Wright Stuff” in the June 2023 issue of the 8th A F News, when the Wright brothers develop a military aircraft, then struggle through a tragic incident to convince the U.S. Army to purchase it. dl

The 'Specialness' That is Spetchley

By Sandra Lawrence

During the mid-1930s, as war loomed, the British government started looking for emergency bases, should London need to be evacuated. In Worcestershire, Spetchley Park, a grand Palladian mansion just outside Worcester, was considered as a base for Winston Churchill.

In the event, Churchill's 'alternative' war rooms ended up in Dollis Hill, just outside London, but Spetchley was requisitioned anyway at the start of hostilities. On 1st June 1944, the house became a rest hotel for USAAF pilots, recuperating between missions. Here they would wear civilian clothing (uniform for dinner) and relax, hosted by women from the American Red Cross. And that's about as much as we know.

I am an author, who has been working on a completely different aspect of Spetchley Park's history, a book about an Edwardian gardener, who died five years before World War II even broke out. Her life, however, has become entangled with that of

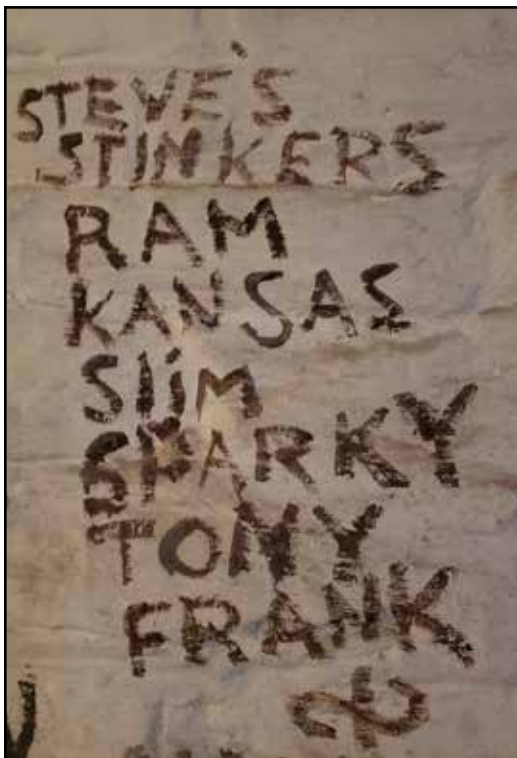
the Mighty Eight, and as the layers of her world peel away, so the history of Spetchley during WWII has begun to fascinate me.

When Ellen Ann Willmott died in 1934, her papers and personal possessions were bundled into trunks and taken to Spetchley, the home of her nephew, Mr. Robert Berkeley. The cases were stored in the cellar. Ten years later, the GIs needed to make as much room as possible, and moved those trunks, deep into the furthest recesses, where they became forgotten. In 2019, I worked with Mr. Henry Berkeley, Spetchley's current owner, and Karen Davidson, the Berkeley Family Archivist, to retrieve them. They were damp, rotting and covered in mold but absolutely extraordinary. We have been working to recover them ever since.



As we worked, the walls around us were covered in graffiti, scrawled by the young GIs who had labored down there to make as much storage room as possible. Tex. Slim. Sparky. Frankie St Louis. Huey 'Frisco. Steve's Stinkers.

Who were these boys, so full of life and hope? To be honest, we don't know. We don't know who left his GI helmet behind, either. No written records remain of life at Spetchley while the "Yanks" were "Over Here", and we would love to find anything at all that will tell us more. We have found a couple of photographs, sent by a chap called Frank E. Thompson, on which he



Juliet Berkeley, but I do not believe she made any notes and sadly she has now passed away. We know about some home movie footage by 'Doc' Furniss (he accidentally identifies the scene as 'Bushy Park in Wales' but it is Spetchley

Bomb Division or any other part of the Eighth. I would especially like to hear from any of the women from the ARC who may have worked there. We have a big gap in the estate's history for the war years, and would very much like to fill it...



has marked himself, and his commanding officer, Major Smith. He and his friends are larking around on an MP motorbike, or posing for a group photograph by the portico, but we have no idea who any of the others are or, indeed, who Frank Thompson himself might be.

In 2017 Donnie Anderson of the 401st visited Spetchley Park Gardens, which is now open to the public. He had tea with Miss

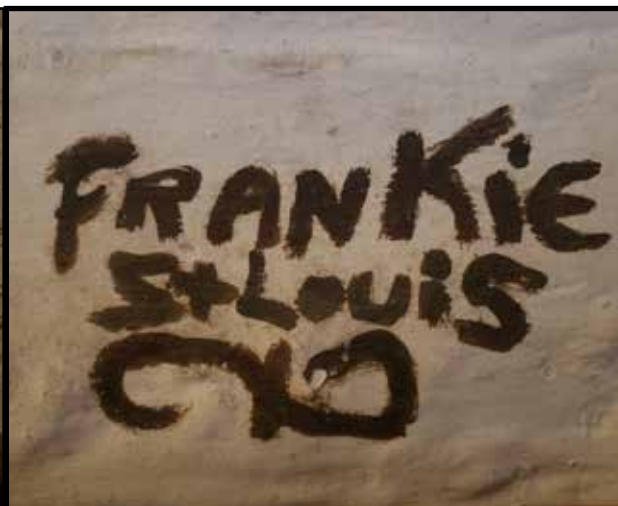
Park, without a doubt) and I found a postcard on eBay, but we are scraping barrels here.

We would love to hear from any veterans – or veterans' families – who may have spent time at Spetchley during World War II. They may be from 1st

Do please feel free to contact me at sandra@sandralawrence.com

The GI pics are courtesy of the Berkeley Family and Spetchley Gardens Trust.

The pictures of the basement are by Sandra Lawrence.



TAPS

Doolan, Robert "Bob", 105, passed away peacefully early on the morning of October 5, 2022, after a short period of declining health. Bob was a lifelong resident of the Cincinnati suburbs. He was born March 21, 1917, to William and Florence Doolan.



He was preceded in death by his loving wife of 71 years Dolores "Sannie" Ann and his sister Ruth Bruns. He is survived by his son Thomas (Marlene) Doolan, of Knoxville, TN; daughter Patricia (John) Schoborg; and daughter Mary (Jim) Lance all of Cincinnati, OH.

Bob joined the U.S. Army Air Corps in December 1942. After graduation from B-17 navigator training he was assigned to the 327th Bomb Squadron of the 92nd BG out of Alconbury, England. His first assignment was to pick up 12 new YB-40s and deliver them to Alconbury for operational combat testing in Europe. The YB-40 was an experimental version of the B-17F, converted to a heavily armed gunship to support long range bombing missions. (Bob wrote an article on the YB-40 for the September 2011 8th AF News.)

After he had flown seven combat missions in the YB-40, the testing was determined to be unsuccessful, and he was transferred to the 326th Bomb Squadron in July 1943 and began flying combat in the B-17F with the Lt. Hans C. Johnson crew. On his thirteenth mission, they attacked the rail yards at Gelsenkirchen in the Ruhr Valley; the area known as Flak Valley. The target was obscured by clouds, so they attacked a target near Bochum, about 7 miles to the southeast. After their bomb drop, they turned for home. They had seen at least two aircraft from the flight go down. Then they were hit by flak themselves. The back of Bob's flak vest was blown off and he had assorted shrapnel injuries below the waist. The number four engine was hit by flak but was successfully feathered without a fire.

The back of the aircraft was badly shot up. Bob could not reach anyone on the intercom and the oxygen system was damaged. They were not able to keep up with the formation on three engines, and eventually fell behind and were attacked by German fighters. Lt. Johnson dove to a lower altitude only to receive further damage from anti-aircraft and small arms fire. Four of the crew, without an intercom and believing the aircraft out-of-control, bailed out.

By this time, they were running out of fuel over Holland with two German fighters flying alongside. The decision was made to prepare for a crash landing in a large farm field. Bob wrote in his journal, "*Johnson made a hell of a landing, holding off until the last minute and flaring just right.*" The aircraft remained mostly intact during the wheels-up landing. All six of the remaining crew survived the landing but were eventually captured at different times and places. With assistance from sympathetic civilians and the Resistance, Bob evaded capture for 21 days until he was knocked over the head, and out, entering a compromised safe house by a waiting member of the Schutzstaffel, the SS. He spent the next month being interrogated and shuffled around between assorted military facilities, Federal Government houses and prisons where he encountered many Jews destined for concentration camps. As he was in civilian clothing, provided by the resistance, he was threatened with a trial and death as a spy. Not surprising, it was a difficult time for him. He wrote, "*...so close to freedom, it was as if the whole world had stopped...I prayed that I would not do or say anything that would harm any of... (those who had helped me).*"

Eventually Bob was processed as a prisoner of war and arrived at Stalag Luft III where he would become a librarian for the Center Compound. He would remain a POW for 20 months.

The year 1944 came and went, but the POW's hope for the war's end remained. Rations and living conditions had become very poor. As the Russians were approaching from the west many unsavory rumors circulated as to how the POWs would be treated by the Germans.

On the evening of January 27, 1945, the more than 10,000 prisoners in Stalag Luft III were alerted to prepare to march out of the camp. A heavy snow was falling, and it was one of the coldest winters of record. Bob and his fellow POWs began their march at 03:00 on January 28. They would be seven days marching to Spremberg without adequate food, water, rest, or shelter. But the worst was yet to come. The men were tightly packed in small box cars for a three-day rail journey with even less food, water, and a wholly inadequate bucket in each car for sanitary needs.

February 7, 1945. When the POWs arrived at Stalag VII-A, near Moosburg, Germany the camp's population swelled to over 76,000. Some estimates go much higher. Many were living and sleeping in the open,

subject to cold rain and snow. Food was in short supply and the rustic sanitary facilities were overflowing, but lice and fleas were plentiful. Sickness was common. They would live in these conditions for three more months until elements of General Patton's Third Army entered the camp on April 29. Patton himself entered, made a brief speech, and left to chase down more Germans. As Bob recorded, "*An American tank broke through the fence. Someone pulled the German flag down and the American Flag went up. Hard to keep from crying, most wonderful sight of my life. There was no way to describe our feelings. It was not so much a celebration. It was as if a heavy weight had been lifted not only for us, but off the whole world. Men wandered around in groups, or alone, some with a vacant look, as if they could not comprehend the whole thing. I can't remember ever going to bed.*" For his brave service and sacrifice he earned the Purple Heart with oak leaf cluster, the Air Medal with oak leaf cluster, the European Air Offensive Medal, the EAME Campaign Ribbon with battle star, and the Prisoner of War Medal.

After the war Bob returned to Salina, Kansas where he had met Dolores Ann Abbott during his military training. They married in November 1945 and by January 1946 he was discharged from the U.S. Army Air Corps and the couple returned to Cincinnati. While attending the eighth grade he had won a competitive four-year scholarship to St. Xavier Catholic High School. He went on to graduate from St. Xavier as valedictorian of the class of 1935. He was soon hired by the Earls-Blaine Insurance Agency from which he would retire after many decades of employment as Vice President and Fire Insurance Engineer.

He went on to found the Boy Scout Troop at his parish, St. Antoninus Catholic Church, where he served as a Scout leader for thirty years, influencing and mentoring untold numbers of young boys and men. He led several different Scout groups on sixty-plus mile backpacking expeditions at the Philmont Scout Ranch in the mountains of northern New Mexico, often helping the boys to earn the money to pay for their trip. He was sixty-eight years old on his last expedition.

During his long-life Bob had an undiminished and large appetite for life and learning. After his retirement he and Sannie both loved to attend educational travel programs across the country. His other interests included, but were not limited to, reading, hiking, bowling, tennis, wood carving, short-

wave radio, photography, and designing, building, and flying model airplanes. He was a Renaissance Man.

In his later years he found his voice, becoming a soloist at age 92. He and Sannie sang with a senior group entertaining in nursing homes, schools, church groups, service organizations and for anyone else that might ask. He enjoyed giving, and was frequently called upon, to give lectures on the war, Cincinnati history, his life experiences, and to guide bus tours around the city. Bob was laid to rest with full military honors including the traditional rifle salute, a military bugler, a Scottish Piper and a missing-man formation flyby conducted by local Cincinnati military aircraft owners. Bob had a deep and unrelenting love for his family, his country, and his Savior. He would often say, *"The Lord's been good to me."*

Karpin, Jay Herbert, 98, died Monday, September 12, 2022, at The Bradley House in Brattleboro, Vermont. Born on June 23, 1924, in Bronx, NY, Jay was the son and eldest child of David J. Karpin and Sophia B. (Weiner) Karpin. He was the husband of Florence



Baker Karpin whom he met by chance while on military leave, both out for celebratory dinners, each with their respective families. They were married on April 5, 1947, in Massapequa Park, New York and enjoyed 67 years of marriage, until Florence's death in 2014.

Jay graduated from Hicksville High School in Hicksville, NY on his 18th birthday in 1942, the day before he enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps. He served in WWII as a distinguished bombardier navigator from 1944-45 and flew more than 35 combat missions, plus numerous sorties, 12 missions in the B-24 Liberator and 23 missions in the B-17 Flying Fortress, all with 100% bombing accuracy. At age 19, Jay's very first combat mission was aboard one of the first crews over Omaha Beach on June 6 during the D-Day invasion. He was assigned to the 493rd BG of the 8th Air Force. Jay achieved the rank of First Lieutenant. He would go on to train new bombardiers on the B-29 and helped to develop groundbreaking in-flight refueling capabilities and vastly improved flying range for the F-84 Thunder Jet and F-105 Thunder Chief.

For his war service, the U.S. Government awarded Jay the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with 4 oak leaf clusters, the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with 4 service stars, a Presidential Group Citation from Franklin D. Roosevelt, and a personal citation from General Jimmy Doolittle. In 2016, at the age of 91, Jay was awarded the French Legion of Honor, the highest award given to a non-citizen of France, for his part in the liberation, and he received a Resolution from the Vermont House of Representatives, congratulating him on his appointment as a Chevalier (Knight). He was honored to be featured in the U.S. Air Force's Veterans in Blue program at the Pentagon. In 2018, Jay also was bestowed with the Quilt of Valor by the Deerfield Valley Chapter.

After the war, Jay worked with his father in the cosmetics industry, Singer Sewing Machines, and did some fashion modeling. He was then employed at Republic Aviation Corporation in Farmingdale, NY. On a family vacation in 1957, Jay and Florence fell in love with Vermont, and they moved the family to Grafton in 1958. Jay was employed by several Springfield Vermont firms and was especially proud of his co-invention of the computer disc memory drum at Bryant Grinder Company. In the mid-1960s Jay started his own company in his barn, Vermont Precision Products, where he trained 60 young machinists right out of high school. Eventually the business expanded to a new building in Bartonville. Jay later worked for Ludlow Blue Seal Feed and Grain, the Horizon Inn, Holiday Inn, eventually serving as Senior Safety and Environmental Health Consultant for Jay H. Karpin Associates. He was also Director of Risk Management for Merriam Graves, Plant Engineer at Vermont Tap and Die/Vermont American, and a founding member of Vermont Safety and Health Council. In recent years he served as Co-President of Brattleboro AARP.

Some of his many civic accomplishments included Boy Scout Leader, Selectman, and Town Health Officer. He served on the Town Planning Commission. Jay was honored to lead the Grafton Memorial Day Parade for several decades--doing so as recently as May 2022.

Passionate about many hobbies, Jay especially loved all things aviation and flying. He first became a pilot at age 15 and enjoyed his small private Cessna during the 1970s. He took more flying lessons and renewed his pilot's license when in his

90s. He was an avid book, magazine, and newspaper reader, so much so that we would have to hide all reading materials, at times, to get his full attention! He had a passion for horses and his vegetable gardens. And we can't forget how he liked to sing along to the tunes of Frank Sinatra.

Jay was predeceased by his wife Florence, brother Ivan, and sister Audrey (Karpin) Fishkind Golub. He is survived by daughters Janis Broom and Jennifer Karpin, and his son Gary Karpin; grandchildren Jasmin Field Evans (Nate), Mischa Field (Lori), Gary Karpin II (Jessica), Emily Karpin, Priscilla Karpin-Crow (Nate), and great-grandchildren Paige, Elsa, Nathan, Piper, Nathaniel, Adrianna, and Parker; his special friend Barbara Spencer; and several nieces, nephews, and cousins.

Jay was dearly loved by family and his numerous friends – 1,897 on Facebook, as well as his fellow veterans at the VFW Legion breakfasts. He was an affable man and was comfortable talking to anyone. He made friends in diners with passing strangers. And he was a real-life WWII hero with enthralling stories. We will never forget his bravery, his service to his country, his humor, tenacity, and spirit. As he was recently quoted in The Commons, while reflecting on his life - *"it's been a fantastic ride."*

Leasure, George M., 99, went to be with the Lord on Saturday, June 25, 2022. Born in Connellsville, PA on April 27, 1923, George was the third son of the late Chester A. and Ethel Crise Leasure. Serving in England during WWII in the U.S. Air



Force, George was awarded the Soldiers Medal (Distinguished Flying Cross and Silver Cross), for bravery. While stationed in England, George met the love of his life, Dorothy Ivy Vickers. George and Dorothy were married before he returned to the states. Dorothy followed him to the U.S. where they began life together in Connellsville. They moved to Belle Vernon in 1961 and remained there the balance of their lives. George was a lifelong member of the First United Methodist church in Belle Vernon, a 32nd degree Mason and held the title of Past Master. George worked for American General Life Insurance (formerly Knights Life) for 35 years before retiring. He and Dorothy began their entrepreneurial

TAPS

experience together starting G&D Leasure Truck Hauling. George retired from the trucking business in 1987 to enjoy life with Dorothy. Their travels together included visiting family and friends across the U.S. and in England and Germany. George is survived by six children, Mary Leasure of Los Angeles California, Penny (Glenn) Sparrow of Newport News Virginia, Alan (MaryAnn) of Cambridge Ohio, Chet (Dagmar) of Mainz Germany, Rodger (Karyl) of Rostraver Township, Susan Owens of Belle Vernon. Grandchildren include Wil Ambrose, Robbie Leasure, Alicia Ambrose, Brenda Allen, Becky Spiker, Larissa Bowling, Alan Leasure Jr., Gina Owens, Shawna Mittelsteadt, Sam Cooke along with twenty great grandchildren. In addition to his parents, George was predeceased by his wife Dorothy in 2011, brothers Chester, Edgar, Ernest (Pete), and nephews Marlin and Thomas.

Stafford, George W., Jr., 97, died on



October 14, 2020, in Scottsdale, Arizona of natural causes.

He started his military career in the South Dakota National Guard at 16 years old. He went on to serve in WWII with the 447th BG, the Korean War,

and Vietnam retiring as a Major from the Army. He was very proud of being a B17 Turret Gunner in WWII earning his wings and being crew in the Flying Fortress. He received over thirteen military medals, the latest being the Peace Medal from South Korea. After retiring from the Army he and his wife, Pat Campbell Stafford, moved to his hometown, Huron, South Dakota the place of his birth. In 1968 George and Pat moved to Scottsdale, Arizona. After enjoying several businesses ventures in Arizona he volunteered for 25 years with the Scottsdale Police.

In 2019 he took a final flight in a WWII plane with the help of Grounded No More Charity in Phoenix, AZ, who assist veterans in taking a flight in the plane Amazing Grace, a Fairchild PT 26 aircraft. It was a highlight of his life.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Pat in 2014. He is survived by his daughter, Gloria Stafford of Fort Worth, Texas, grandchildren, Carina Menaker (James) of Fairbanks, Alaska and Matthew Lopez (Jennifer) of Houston, Texas and five great grandchildren.

Zographos, James, 102, of Westborough, MA, passed on May 10, 2022. With his family at his side, Jim left this earth as he lived, with dignity and grace. Not only was he a gentleman's gentleman, he was a gentleman. He had a quick wit, loved a good joke,



and would often mail hand-typed notes and funny quips to family and friends. Raised in South Boston, Jim was born on July 23, 1919, in Springfield MA to Anthony and Sophia (Madamas) Zographos. He was the older of their 2 sons; his brother Peter, predeceased him in 2001. Widowed in her 30's, Sophia did all she could to provide a stable and loving home to her boys through many lean years and the depression. In turn, Jim and his brother did what was necessary to support their mother. As a proud Greek woman and mother, she was able to witness her sons become successful business owners in their own right.

Jim graduated from the MA College of Pharmacy at 20, working to fulfill his career as a pharmacist. Drafted in 1942 he was assigned to the infantry in the US Army. Soon after he would transfer to the Army Air Corp where he trained to be a pilot before becoming a bombardier on board the B-17. Rising to the rank of first lieutenant, he was assigned to the 388th BG, flying 50 missions over France and Germany and was wounded twice in combat. Among his numerous medals and citations for his service to his country, Jim received 6 Oak Clusters; the Distinguished Flying Cross; European, African, and Middle East Theater Medals; 6 Bronze Stars; and a Purple Heart Air Medal. In 2002, he was presented with the Jubilee of Liberty Medal by Congressman James P. McGovern. In 2014, he was presented with the France's Legion of Honor Medal by the French Counsel General at a special ceremony in the WWII Museum, in Natick. He was a member of the American Legion - George K. Menichios post #324. On his 100th birthday, Jim received the Quilt of Valor.

In his later years Jim would become actively involved in his 388th BGA, attending several reunions across the country and proudly served as its director-at-large since 2013. During one of his furlough's home, he met the love of his life, Eugenia Jovelakis. They married in 1945. They enjoyed traveling both here and abroad and most especially loved cruising to include several trips to Greece, South America, Aruba, and

other islands of the Caribbean. They loved seeing the USA and enjoyed trips to include California, Hawaii, Florida, New Orleans, and Nashville just to name a few. Together, they were a couple to be admired. They loved entertaining, hosting many parties and family events at their home always with food, drink, and music. Jim and his "sweet-heart" were married for 53 years before her passing in 1998.

Jim's career as a manager for the Liggett Rexall Drugstore Company is what brought him and his family to Worcester in the late 50's to manage and eventually acquire Liggett's Chatham and Main Pharmacy. Affectionately known as "Mr. Z", he loved serving his customers, whether it was the local business regulars, his fellow church parishioners who relied on him for his expertise in their prescriptions or the indigent that came in knowing they could get a cup of coffee or a sandwich without judgement. Deeply spiritual, Jim was devoted to the church and to his God. He served on the church board at St. Spyridon's Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Worcester in his younger years, was a member of the Order of AHEPA and the American Legion.

"Was it fate or was it faith?" is something he would quote throughout his life, whether it was during his military years and why he lived to come home and so many did not, or in times of joy or great sorrow. Often, he would say "we don't know the answers, but someday we will."

Jim was an optimist. He loved life and loved being an uncle to his many nieces and nephews; his four grandchildren were his pride and joy. He will be forever missed by his three daughters, Antoinette, Joan and Paula James.

We are NOT automatically notified upon the death of our veterans or other members.

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A MOMENT IN TIME

Bottle Butts Buggy

Part III~ The Wolf's Lair

JM Pittman, Next Gen 466th BG

Editor's note: John Pittman has written an amazing and riveting article which we are presenting here in three [3] consecutive installments. This is the final installment.

Nestled in the dense forest of the Taunus Mountains, seven bunkers had been built. '... constructed of concrete walls 3 feet thick, the second storey included fake dormer windows with flower baskets under a sloped tiled roof'. Underground tunnels connected the complex with Rundstedt's Headquarters in Ziegenberg Castle. This was Adlerhorst. From its bunkers and conference rooms the Fuhrer himself was directing the battle.

Barely two weeks into the offensive, euphoria had been replaced by foreboding. While gains had been made, the advance was stalling. Casualties were heavy and supplies running low. Frozen bodies and blood-stained snow gave stark testimony to the ferocity of the battle.

As the skies cleared on December 24th, the true extent of American Air Power made itself evident. Transport aircraft dropped supplies to encircled ground troops. Fighters strafed tanks, trucks, and trains. Medium bombers attacked bridges, railways, and airfields.

As tactical aircraft blanketed the battlefield, B-17s of the 3rd and 1st Division formed up and began the slow climb to 22,000 feet. After crossing the North Sea, they wheeled southwest at the Belgian coastal town of Ostend and headed for the Ardennes. Split into two strike forces, they would attack Luftwaffe airfields supporting the German offensive. At Adlerhorst, Hitler and his secretary Christa Schroeder, "stood under the trees in the open watching the great formations of Allied bombers heading into the Reich..."

Northeast of Liege Belgium ME-109s and FW-190s circled, waiting to pounce on the approaching Tera Fleigers. Suddenly an opportunity presented itself. As if

it was 1943, a group of bombers was approaching their target without fighter escort. Fw.

William Hopfensitz flying

a FW-190 made his way to the rear of the formation.

Diving on the outer bomber on the starboard side he unleashed a torrent of canon fire. With the bomber spiraling out of control, he circled back for a second pass. Descending through the formation, his aircraft shuddered violently as fifty caliber bullets slammed into his engine. Immediately catching fire, it seized and stopped. Opening the canopy, he unbuckled his harness and jumped from the burning fighter.

As the magnitude of the American attack became apparent, every Luftwaffe fighter was vectored to intercept the bombers. Rising to defend his airfield Oblt. Stark quickly fell victim to a circling Mustang. "On his way down, he could see his base at Rhein-Nain under a torrent of bombs as he hung in his parachute." At Babenhausen, Horst Tharann watched as over 100 bombers headed for the airfield.

Everyone ran for cover as bombs rained down, rendering the airfield "one hundred percent useless."

As the battle raged, on the ground and in the air, B-24s of the 2nd Division were arriving at the Belgian Coast. In cooperation with the IX TAC, they would hit rail and communication centers supporting the Nazi offensive. The 466th and 467th Bomb Groups would hit the marshalling yards at Gerolstein Germany.

Nestled at the base of a narrow canyon, its rail and road networks connected the small town with Frankfurt, Cologne, Euskirchen, Trier, Prum, Koblenz, and St Vith. In early December, the 9th and 167th Volks Grenadier

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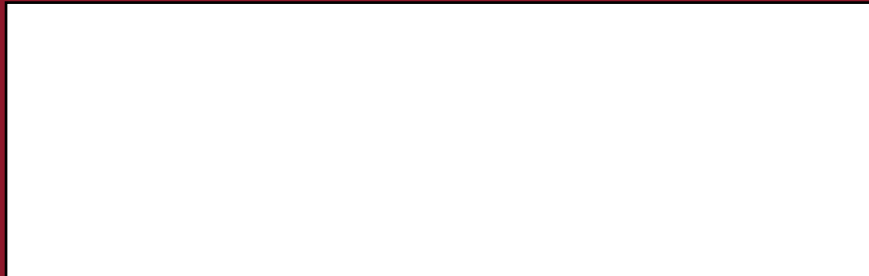




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Divisions had hidden in the dense forests south of town. With the battle in full swing, a continuous stream of troops and supplies moved west as boxcars filled with GIs moved east on their way to POW camps deep in the Reich.

Passing the Group IP, LT Wassom nudged Bottle Butts Buggy a little closer to the right wing of Duffy's Tavern. LT Bohan set the bombs to drop in a staggered release and opened the bomb bay doors. Tension mounted as a flight of ME-262s circled above the formation. As gun turrets swung to meet the threat, the Nazi jets disappeared as quickly as they had arrived.

At 14:27, 500-pound bombs from 59 Liberators cascaded toward the marshalling yard below. From the tail SSGT DR Miller watched as smoke and dust engulfed the entire town. Flashes of light pierced the swirling debris with each exploding bomb. Banking right the Group headed for the safety of the North Sea.

Back over the English Coast at 16:19 LT Wassom entered the pattern at Attlebridge, landed, and taxied to revetment 37. At debriefing the crew recounted the mission. Except for Wassom clipping the trees with the propellers on takeoff, it was a rather routine mission. Radio operator SSGT Billy Wolfe reported seeing ME 262s for the first time. All crew members reported good hits on the target.

As the sun dropped below the western horizon, 8th AF Headquarters compiled the day's statistics. 2,034 bombers had dropped 5052 tons of bombs on 18 Luftwaffe airfields and 14 transportation targets. 853 fighters had escorted bombers, attacked targets of opportunity, and shot down 125 enemy fighters. The

largest, most complicated air battle of the war had just been completed with minimal losses. They had come a long way since the days of Eaker's Amateurs.

At the XXIX TAC, Gen Nugent reported: "Shortly before noon, Eighth Air Force heavies came on board and all German fighters were rallied to attack them. This uncovered the German columns on the road, as completely as though they had their clothes stripped from them. As a result, my fighter bomber squadrons have been having a field day." 156 armored targets, 786 motor transports, 5 ammunition dumps and 85 AAA gun positions had been destroyed. 31 rail lines had been cut and 167 rail cars destroyed.

At Adlerhorst, Hitler listened as the reports came in. Over thirty-four cities and airfields had been bombed. Over one hundred Luftwaffe fighters had been shot from the sky. More importantly, 85 pilots were dead or missing in action. Field Marshall Rundstedt reported, "heavy air attacks made impossible almost all day-time transport, either troops or of their supplies. Even regrouping of troops in occupied positions was rendered extremely difficult by the bombardment."

While the fighting would rage on for weeks, the handwriting was on the wall. Convinced his iron will, his intuition, and his ability would always win the day, Adolf Hitler had thrown his last reserves into the Ardennes. As Christmas morning 1944 dawned clear and bright, the only one who still believed Germany could win the battle was the Fuhrer himself.

J M Pittman

Photo on preceding page: Gerolstein, Germany