

THE U.S. AIR FORCES ESCAPE & EVASION SOCIETY
WINTER 2012/13 *Communications*

www.airforceescape.com

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Rochester, NY 14609

January 2013

AFEES 2013 REUNION

May 8-12, 2013

Tampa, FL

We are looking forward to a wonderful 2013 reunion at the Crowne Plaza-Tampa Westshore. The hotel opened in April 2009, looks and feels very new, and has received many awards for superior customer service. Thanks to **Lynn David** for finding this great venue!

CROWNE PLAZA – TAMPA WESTSHORE

5303 West Kennedy Boulevard

Tampa, FL 33609

Phone: (813) 289-1950

Fax: (813) 288-7343

**Please NOTE: All reservations must be made by calling the
PASSKEY Reservation Center at (888) 233-9527
Our Group Code is “AFE”**

DO NOT call Central Reservations

\$112.00 per night, inclusive

Room type

One King or Two Doubles

ROOM RATES APPLY THREE DAYS BEFORE
AND THREE DAYS AFTER REUNION
Reunion Hotel Rates guaranteed only until April 24, 2013

**HELPERS ONLY: Send both Hotel Reservation Form and Reunion Registration
Form to: AFEES c/o Richard Shandor, PO Box 254 Cresson, PA, 16630-0254**

Features of the Crown Plaza-Tampa Westshore include:

- Free Wi-Fi in the rooms and throughout the hotel
- Totally nonsmoking everywhere within the hotel
- Wonderful breakfast buffet (6:00AM-11:00AM) that includes eggs cooked any way you like them
- New pool and cabana area
- Free parking
- Free airport shuttle (8-10 minutes) (Taxi cost \$20)
- Excellent Business Center with two workstations
- Good exercise room
- Complimentary *USA Today* newspaper
- Free shuttle to any location within 3 miles of the hotel
- Private room for our free Farewell Breakfast
- Starbucks coffee bar in the lobby
- Grab and go quick food bar in the lobby
- Pillow top mattress
- Refrigerators will be available at no additional cost, but must be requested at the time your reservation is made
- Live music in the lounge Friday and Saturday evening at 10:00pm
- Cost for the Thursday Welcome Dinner only \$28, cost for the Saturday Banquet only increased \$2 to \$37.

Mary Shier has done some great research to figure out interesting places to visit and great places to eat. In addition to the great choices Mary lists on page 3 some interesting side trips in Tampa could include Adventure Island, Beaches, Bayshore Boulevard, Busch Gardens, Florida Holocaust Museum, Henry B Plant Museum National Historic Landmark, Lowery Park Museum, Salvador Dali Museum, Tampa Museum of Art, Westshore Shopping Plaza and the Ybor City State Museum. **If you have any other suggestions, please let Mary know by January 30th.**

NOTE: The Reunion Registration Form and the Hotel Reservation Form will be in the March 2013 AFEES newsletter (mailed out around March 15th). It will also be posted on www.airforceescape.com by March 1st.

Forms also can be requested from **Richard Shandor** at the above mailing address, or by calling him at (814) 886-2735 or emailing him at: rshandor@hotmail.com.

ACTIVITIES IN TAMPA

Dear Tampa Reunion Attendees,

This year rather than having an immediate set agenda I thought I would let the attendees have some input into our activities. The following activities are only suggestions. I will wait for your input before assigning dates and times.

The March newsletter will have the sign up sheet. Please e-mail me, call me or use regular mail to send me your thoughts and ideas. I will need your ideas no later than January 30, 2013. This reunion is for you and I will do my best to provide the fun!

POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES

All highly rated

_____BIG CAT RESCUE

(<http://bigcatrescue.org/>) rescued cat sanctuary, guided tours. \$30.00pp

_____FLORIDA AQUARIUM

(www.flaquarium.org) one of the top 10 aquariums of the nation with over 20,000 aquatic animals, \$16.00-\$20.00pp

_____TAMPA BAY RAYS are here

during our stay either Blue Jays or Padres \$20.00-\$120.00pp (I'd find the best seats for the least amount)

_____LOWRY PARK ZOO

(www.lowryparkzoo.com) one of the best in the nation, \$20.00-\$25.00pp

_____ARMED FORCES HISTORY MUSEUM-WWI THRU VIETNAM (www.armedforcesmuseum.com) new displays are being built for Iraq and Afghanistan, Free to \$19.00pp

_____MOSI-Science and Industry Museum-IMAX, hands on museum, planetarium, \$18.00-\$22.00pp

_____CANOE ESCAPE 2-6 HR (www.canoescape.com) Canoe or Kayak through a nature preserve \$50.00-\$70.00 depending on time and number in party

POSSIBLE FRIDAY NIGHT DINNER VENUES

All highly recommended

_____SKIPPER'S SMOKEHOUSE

oyster bar, specialty smoked dishes, near the university, \$10-\$20

_____HULA BAY CLUB

(www.hulabayclub.com/) specialty fish dishes, on the bay, \$10-\$20

REMEMBER: These are only ideas, please give me your ideas too. Due date January 30, 2013. Thank you!

Mary Shier

e-mail: spwheel357@gmail.com

cell phone: 810-441-7932

267 W. Barnes Lake Rd.

Columbiaville, MI 48421

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photo by Jerri Donohue

**TOM ADDRESSED LAST
REUNION OF 5TH ARMORED
DIVISION VETS**

by Jerri Donohue, AFEES Friend Member

Evader Tom Oliver was a featured speaker at the 66th and final reunion of the 5th Armored ("Victory") Division on Saturday, June 16, 2012. For the bittersweet occasion, four generations of Tom's family traveled to Bangor, Maine to represent General Lunsford Oliver, the Victory Division's commander and Tom's father. In post-war years, Tom often accompanied his Dad to Victory Division reunions.

The 5th Armored Division vets asked Tom to share stories of their general. He related an incident that occurred while Tom was a cadet at West Point.

During a visit, General Oliver revealed that he had occupied the same dorm room decades earlier. He immediately identified a loose brick in the wall, behind which both father and son apparently had hidden items forbidden to cadets.

Tom disclosed that the legendary General George Patton disapproved of Lunsford Oliver's habit of wearing overalls during the European campaign. Ever practical, Lunsford Oliver ignored him.

Perhaps because Tom proudly wore an AFEES cap during his speech, a local woman urged him to relate his evasion experience. Tom explained that flak and fighters damaged his B-24 on May 6, 1944, during a bombing raid on Ploesti. A subsequent encounter with an unmarked flak battery sealed the plane's fate. Tom, the 21-year old pilot, ordered his crew to jump over Yugoslavia. General Mihailovich's soldiers quickly picked them up and then whisked them to safer locations. Tom soon learned dozens of Allied airmen were hiding throughout the countryside, including his West Point roommate, Leo C. Brooks.

General Mihailovich authorized a Chetnik radio operator to transmit a plea for help in a code Tom devised with fighter pilot Jack Barrett. Laden with slang, it would baffle any Germans who intercepted it. To this day Tom is grateful to the Royal Air Force

radio squadron who picked up what they described as a "curious message" but passed it on to the 15th Air Force anyway. Back in Bari, American airmen deciphered it. Soon the OSS launched its Halyard Mission, sending a team to Yugoslavia to orchestrate the evaders' rescue. Tom and his crew were among the 250 fliers retrieved by C-47s in the initial evacuation; the operation ultimately returned over 500 men to Allied lines.

The evader acknowledged that his adventure was harder on his parents than it was on himself. General Oliver was in England awaiting the invasion of France when the Army Air Force listed Tom as MIA. The general obtained the missing aircrew report, which erroneously claimed Tom's plane had gone down over Ploesti with 10 parachutes sighted. Because the Serbs transmitted radio messages intended for family members of Americans stranded in Yugoslavia, Mrs. Oliver eventually received word that her boy was with Chetnik guerillas. She and her husband assumed Tom had somehow made his way to Yugoslavia from Romania. "Think of the time he's having!" Tom's mother wrote to General Oliver in a letter Tom saw years later. "And I thought, 'what a brave lady!'" Tom said.

Unbeknownst to his parents, Tom traveled on horseback across rugged terrain, wore lice and flea-infested clothes, and lived without electricity or running

water. He attended the moving funeral of two American fliers, listened to forbidden BBC broadcasts with Serbian soldiers and shared numerous glasses of Rakia, a potent plum brandy, with his poor but generous helpers. During his 96-day evasion, he grew a beard that made him resemble American general Ulysses S. Grant more than General Lunsford Oliver.

His mother was right. Tom did, indeed, have quite a "time."

AS AMERICA HONORS ITS VETERANS: U.S. OVERLOOKS AIRMEN WHO EVADED CAPTURE

*by Jerri Donohue, AFEEs Friend Member
This article originally appeared in the Cleveland Plain Dealer on Veteran's Day 11/11/12.*

Clifford "Don" Fisher, an airman from Ohio, bailed out of a crippled bomber in April 1943. He landed in a French grain field, paused to comfort a mortally wounded crewmate, and then dashed into nearby woods. Fisher found refuge with a family, but the collapse of an escape network left him stranded in France for a year. During that time, he was declared dead and his fiancée married another man.

Don Fisher is one of approximately 4,000 Americans who successfully followed orders to evade capture after being shot down or forced to land in

German-held territory during World War II. On the other side of the globe, a much smaller number dodged the Japanese. In both theaters, the enemy squandered time and manpower pursuing them.

As a volunteer for the [Library of Congress Veterans History Project](#), I interviewed Don Fisher and dozens of others who evaded capture in Europe, China and New Guinea. Their courage, resilience and resourcefulness astound me.

Some witnessed the violent deaths of crewmembers before they themselves made the terrifying leap from a flaming or damaged aircraft. Others ran from would-be captors despite wounds received in combat or injuries sustained when they landed. In Europe, they sometimes wandered for weeks before encountering anyone with underground connections, usually completely alone in enemy-occupied countries; few spoke the local language. They risked being shot as spies if apprehended wearing civilian clothes. They suffered from hunger, exposure and the unrelenting anxiety of the hunted.

Once settled in safe houses, the men worried about their families, who did not know whether they were living or dead, and they feared for the kind souls helping them, who would be executed or sent to concentration camps if discovered.

Hundreds of evaders undertook the harrowing trek over the Pyrenees where many languished in Spanish jails before they reached Gibraltar and flew to England. Others navigated minefields in total darkness for evacuation from French beaches. In New Guinea, fliers hacked through jungle in torrential rain to rendezvous with an American submarine.

Those who regained Allied lines were sworn to secrecy about their experience, a precaution necessary to protect the helpers they left under enemy rule. Because they kept this promise, the veterans' own grueling adventures remained largely unknown.

Don Fisher's ordeal inspired Rep. Peter DeFazio, a Democrat in Fisher's adopted state of Oregon, to co-sponsor House Resolution 925 with Rep. Cliff Stearns, a Republican from Florida. Stearns had proposed a similar bill more than a decade earlier. House Resolution 925 acknowledged the "service and sacrifice" of downed aviators from any war and from any branch of service who eluded the enemy, or who escaped after being captured.

The bill further urged secretaries of military branches to consider "appropriate recognition."

In March 2010, the House of Representatives unanimously passed the bipartisan bill, but neither the 94-year-old Fisher nor any other evader has received a medal.

Decorations are issued for our current conflict, of course. The Department of Defense even authorized a service medal for military personnel who assisted as briefly as a single day during flood relief in Pakistan in 2010. In recent years, Congress has belatedly awarded medals to WASPs (Women Airforce Service Pilots), Montford Point Marines and other worthy World War II veterans. As long ago as the 1980s, Congress approved a medal acknowledging former prisoners of war. It is baffling that such honors are withheld from those who eluded the enemy.

While our nation overlooks them, evaders offer us a lesson in gratitude. In 1964, they formed the Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society (AFEES) to reconnect with their wartime helpers, hundreds of whom they hosted at joyful reunions throughout the decades. At their annual meeting held in Albuquerque, N.M., in May, veterans in their 90s and late 80s honored one woman and two men who aided airmen trapped in France, Holland and Belgium. Their war ended 67 years ago, but evaders stand by their motto: We Will Never Forget.

Isn't it time we remembered them, too, with the medal they deserve?

AFEES CAPS AVAILABLE

Dear Friends,

Once again I have AFEES caps available-in 2 styles: the winged boot and parachutes on each side of AFEES. Both are blue caps with yellow trim.

The cost of each cap is \$12.00 with \$3.00 shipping and handling for a total of \$15.00. If you know that you will be attending the Tampa Reunion you can save on shipping by reserving a cap that I can bring to you. Please make your check payable to "Mary Shier."

If you have any questions feel free to contact me via email spwheel357@gmail.com or phone: 810-441-7932

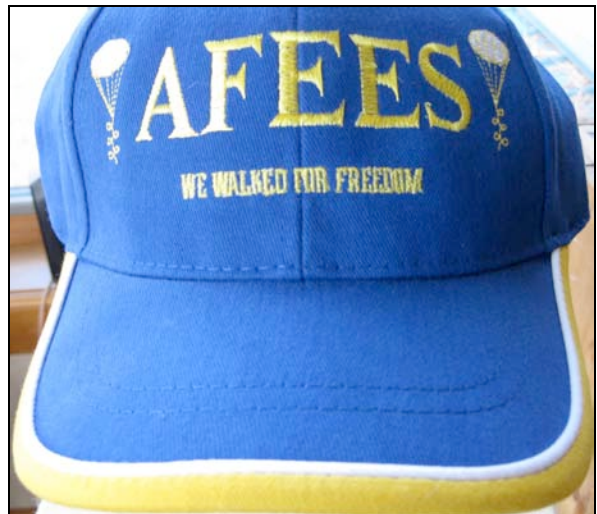
Fill in the form below and send to Mary Shier, 267 W. Barnes Lake Rd., Columbiaville, MI 48421

Name: _____

Address: _____

WINGED BOOT _____

PARACHUTES _____



MILITARY DAY

In keeping with longtime AFEES tradition, Friday May 10th will be "Military Day." Col. Steve MacIssac, AFEES liaison in all things military, is arranging a visit to the U.S. Coast Guard station in Clearwater that will include a tour and lunch with the USCG airmen.

Estimated departure time is 9:00AM with a 3:00PM return to the hotel. This outing has been a huge success in previous reunions held in Tampa. *Stay tuned for details in the next newsletter!*

FOLDED WINGS

An expanded “FOLDED WINGS” section will appear in the March 2013 newsletter.

ROBERT J. GRACE (E&E #1599) died peacefully in his daughter’s home on December 28, 2012 at the age of 91.

Bob’s P-47 received a direct hit on May 29, 1944, forcing him to bail out near the German-Belgian border. He fled deep into the woods but two enemy soldiers spotted him. Unlike many fighter pilots, Bob opted to carry his Army-issued pistol. In desperation, he shot and killed both Germans, an act that made him sick to his stomach. After he walked for hours, an elderly farm couple took in the exhausted American. They fed him and put him to bed. Bob awoke hours later to see the familiar face of Clark Gable smiling at him from a photo on the opposite wall. It was a rare, amusing moment in an otherwise harrowing evasion adventure. For a while, Bob lived in the Ardennes Forest in a primitive dugout with Dmitri Dremuluk, a Red Army POW who had escaped the Germans. Belgian Nazis later apprehended Bob as he followed an underground guide on bicycle to a safer location. Because of their ineptitude and his own quick wits, Bob soon got away. After that, Father Ambrose Watlet sheltered Bob in the Abbey of Maredsous.

One morning, SS soldiers stormed inside, forced the monks and schoolboys outdoors and then searched the buildings. Horrified, Bob watched from the belfry as they discovered and beat to death two escaped political prisoners in the courtyard below. The underground subsequently placed the evader in a series of safe houses. Bob and navigator Robert Cleveland were staying with Angele Hubot, a widow in Flavion, when American tanks rumbled into town in late October.

For the rest of his life, Bob treasured the American flag Angele sewed to celebrate their liberation. In post-war years, Father Ambrose visited the Grace family many times in the States and even baptized Bob’s grandson, William. As a young man, William, like many of the Graces, visited Father Ambrose in Belgium. The priest introduced him to Bob’s surviving helpers and helped him retrace his grandfather’s 1944 route.

Bob Grace was buried with full military honors at the Ohio Western Reserve National Cemetery.

THE PREZ SEZ

John Katsaros EE-755

Upon our thoughts and reflection this newsletter is dedicated to Larry "Inky" Grauerholz, the AFEES Newsletter Editor for serving in this important capacity these past many years.

Just imagine the time, effort, and fantastic ability it took for "Inky" to formulate so many important news items about our WWII Escapers, Evaders, Helpers their families and friends.

Then, he put it into print and personally mailed over a thirty page quarterly edition to every member. It had to be such a challenging job.

Those of us who receive such information from the many military organizations we belong to such as, Bomb Groups, etc. receive their quarterly letter but "Inky's", was head and shoulders, **the very best!** Let's remember he continued to serve as President and Editor well into his 90's.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and all our AFEES members, THANK YOU "INKY." **May your retirement continue with the best of Health and Happiness!**

Larry will continue to serve as an AFEES Board Member. He has also agreed to serve as an advisor to Elizabeth McDade who has assumed the duties of the 2013 Newsletter Editor along with the generous assistance of Jerri Donohue and Rich Shandor.

The next newsletter will be mailed around March 15th along with informa-

tion regarding our annual reunion at Tampa, Florida, where we will all meet again 8-12 May 2013.

A note from your co-editors:

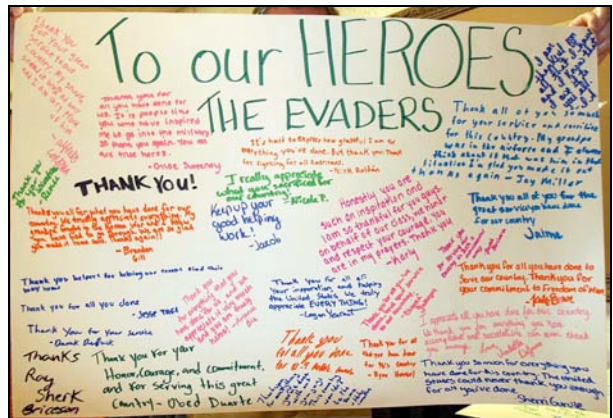
Hello! Last Fall Larry "Inky" Grauerholz asked Jerri Donohue, Rich Shandor, and I to take over production of the AFEES newsletter. We were honored to take on the enormous task of providing information, sharing stories, and creating an "archive" of an important part of our country's history. While no one can fill Inky's shoes, we will do our best to avoid making him regret this request!

Sometimes transitions have hiccups and we have had our fair share. So, please accept our apologies for the lateness of this issue, but please know that we are on track for March! If you have photos or ideas for articles, please feel free to contact Jerri, Rich, or me. The best way to reach me is via email:

emcdade@frontiernet.net or call me on my cell phone at (585) 576-3130.

We look forward to doing our best and trying to get somewhere near the bar set by Mr. Grauerholz. Thanks again for your patience!

More photos from the 2012 Reunion!



photos by Elizabeth McDade



AFEES Communications is the official journal of the Air Forces Escape & Evasion Society. AFEES is a tax-exempt veterans organization under IRS Code 501 (c) (19). It was founded in 1964. The Society's purpose is to encourage members helped by resistance organizations, or patriotic nationals, to continue existing friendships or renew relationships with those who helped them during their escape or evasion. Eligibility requires that one must have been a U.S. Airman, must have been forced down behind enemy lines and avoided captivity, or escaped from captivity to return to allied control. In addition to regular membership, other categories of membership are Helper Members and Friend Members.

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