

THE U.S. AIR FORCES ESCAPE & EVASION SOCIETY
SPRING 2014 *Communications*

www.airforceescape.com

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March 2014

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

***LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING EVERYONE IN CHARLESTON
FOR THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION OF
THE AIR FORCES ESCAPE AND EVASION SOCIETY!***

The purpose of the AFEES is to encourage airmen who were aided by resistance organizations or patriotic nationals of foreign countries to continue friendships with those who helped them. AFEES had its first reunion in Niagara Falls, NY in 1964. Over the years, hundreds of evaders, helpers, family members, and friends have gathered each year to commemorate, remember, and honor all those who were involved in escaping and evading—both the escapers and the thousands of brave, ordinary people in occupied countries took extraordinary risks at huge cost to help these airmen.

"We Will Never Forget!"

"Our organization perpetuates the close bond that exists between airmen forced down and the resistance people who made our evasion possible at great risk to themselves and their families." Larry Grauerholz

To learn more about the history of AFEES, visit the website at:

www.airforceescape.com/history.html.

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8Th AIR FORCE REUNION

The 8th Air Force Historical Society is holding their 2014 reunion in Nashville, TN at the Music City Sheraton Hotel. The reunion theme is "Escape and Evasion". More information will be posted in May on their website: www.8thafhs.org/reunion/ and in their quarterly magazine. The dates are October 9-13, 2014

Important Notice from Richard Shandor, Membership and Correspondence Secretary:

Due to escalating newsletter printing and mailing costs, I am reducing the AFEES mailing list. Non-helper members (Escapers, Evaders, POWs, 2nd and 3rd Generation members, and Friend members) please fill out the AFEES census form on page 10 if you want to continue receiving the newsletter. Helper members please fill out the AFEES census form on page 11. If you want to receive the newsletter, a census form must be returned to me. This also will allow me to update the AFEES membership roster. Thank you for your co-operation.

THE MONUMENTS MEN

Based on the true story of the greatest treasure hunt in history, this film is an action drama focusing on an unlikely World War II platoon, tasked by President Franklin D. Roosevelt with going into German territory to rescue artistic masterpieces from Nazi thieves and returning them to their rightful owners.

At the same time Adolf Hitler was attempting to take over the western world, his armies were methodically seeking and hoarding the finest art treasures in Europe. The Fuehrer had begun cataloguing the art he planned to collect as well as the art he would destroy: "degenerate" works he despised.

In a race against time, behind enemy lines, often unarmed, a special force of American and British museum directors, curators, art historians, and others, called the Monuments Men (*AND women*), risked their lives scouring Europe to prevent the destruction of thousands of years of culture.

Focusing on the eleven-month period between D-Day and V-E Day, this fascinating account follows six Monuments Men and their impossible mission to save the world's great art from the Nazis.

Based upon the book "The Monuments Men" by Robert Edsel, the film stars George Clooney, Matt Damon, Cate Blanchett, John Goodman, Hugh Bonneville, and Bill Murray.



2013 AFEES HOLIDAY CARD

Every year AFEES sends Holiday Greeting Cards to all of our helpers. In 2013, we sent the following message to 228 helpers in four countries.

"To Our Dearest A.F.E.E.S. Friends, It is with great pleasure that we invite you to our 50th anniversary reunion in Charleston, South Carolina, May 7-10, 2014. We extend to you, our wonderful heroes, this invitation to attend. Without you and all those involved with saving our flyers we would not be here today. We do hope you will join us for this momentous occasion. If you think you might be able to come please contact: Richard Shandor, PO Box 254, Cresson PA 16630-0254 USA"

We received replies from the following individuals: From Belgium: Evasion Comete.org (Philippe Connart, Michel Dricot, Edouard Reniere, & Victor Schutters), VaderlandsI.Kring Groot-Haaltert Museum (Dirk Vijverman), Camille Bernier, Andree Dumont, Jacques Grandjean, Jean & Nelly Lamand-Guillaume, Albert Lardot & family, Germaine Sainvitu, Victor & Chantol Schutters, Andre & Francine Yernault-Brancart.

From Netherlands: Margaret Albers-Dings, Elsa Caspers, Fredrik & Coby Gransberg, Colleen Monster, Peter & Connie van der Hurk.

From the US: Curt Lowens and Marguerite Miller

From France: Paule Arhex, Jean Auvert, Christian Babled, Louis Blanchard, Jean-Pierre & Josiane Benier, M. & Mme. Robert Boher, Marcel Closset, Gilbert & Huguette Crombez, Jean Delery, Jean Deduit, Henri Francois, Rosemary Grady, Marcelle Guillerm, Marie-Therese Hallade, Denise Heches, Denise Lacombe, M. & Mme. Rene Loiseau, Jeanne Mansion, Jeannine Petit, Arlette Salingue-Deslee, and Michel Tabrant.

Please find below just a few examples of the lovely messages we receive in response:

"To you and all the members of the AFEES, best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year." from Margaret Albers-Dings

"Thank you very much for your beautiful Christmas card. I'm sorry being late but I have been away sometime. I hope all your people are doing very well and I wish you all a happy and healthy New Year." from Colleen Monster

"We wish you and your families a very Good Christmas and a Healthy New Year. This is regrettably our last Christmas card. My husband has macular degeneration, so it is not possible to write. With kind regards." from Peter and Connie van der Hurk

"Dear Friends from Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society. Many thanks for your wishes. I also send you all my best wishes for a Happy New Year 2014, and the best of health. Thank you for the invitation but unfortunately I won't be able to attend and meet you. I live on my own near Marseilles and I am nearly 92 years old. Many greetings to all of you." from Rosemary Grady

"I don't forget and send to all members of AFEES, my best wishes and my hope of a peaceful and better world." from Paule Arhex
"Thank you for your Christmas greetings. For every member of the Evasion Society, I send my best for the New Year. I'll Never Forget." from Jean Deduit

"Dear Friends, First I must thank you for your jobs and the energy to keep alive the sacrifice and courage of these heroes. You came 70 years ago to free our country. I wish you all the best for this New Year 2014. This year is the Anniversary of the Landing in Normandy, We Will Never Forget. Too many of your sons lie in our earth in Normandy or elsewhere. We are grateful, God Bless America. PS. I'm afraid I won't be able to answer your invitation on May 7th." from Christian Babled

"To members of AFEES. Last year my card was returned to me, bad address and this year

I have not received your card. I write to you with your own address. I hope you will receive it. Here it is for you all my best wishes for 2014. I hope you are all in good health. I think very often of you. Yours sincerely." from Marcelle Guillerm

"Many thanks for your card and best wishes for the New Year 2014. From Jean Delery

"Thank you for your kind invitation to join you in May in the USA. I wish I could go, but because of my age, I cannot go on such a long trip. If you want to come to France I would be glad to welcome you. All the best." From Louis Blanchard

"I wish Happy New Year to all the AFEES friends." from Marcel Closset

"To my brothers in arms. To my great friends. I never forget my 'Liberators.' To all the members of AFEES. My best wishes for New Year 2014. Have a wonderful holiday season. You always carry a little of the beauty, warmth, and love." from Jacques P. Grandjean, Helper member of the Resistance Forces

"Yes I know! I am late in answering you and the other AFEES officers. I am late but never the less this reflects the sincerity of my Best Wishes For This New Year, 2014 already well *Dented.*" from Roger Anthoine



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NOUS N'OUBLIERONS JAMAIS
VI VIL ALDRIG GLEMME!
WY ZULLEN NOOIT VERGETEN
NOI NON DIMENTICHEREMO MAI

Wishing you
a happy heart during this joyous
Holiday Season



FROM THE MEMBERS
OF THE
AIR FORCES ESCAPE & EVASION SOCIETY

May
hope and peace
be with you always

CROWNE PLAZA CHARLESTON

Air Forces Escape & Evasion Society Reunion

May 7-11, 2014

EARLY BIRD HOTEL RESERVATION FORM

Please complete this form and send to:

The Crowne Plaza. Attention: Reservations

4381 Tanger Outlet Blvd., North Charleston, South Carolina 29418

Phone: 1 (877) 503-5762, Fax: (843) 744-4472

Crowne Plaza Charleston, North Charleston, SC – \$119.18 per night, inclusive

(Check room type) One King _____ Two Queens _____

ROOM RATES APPLY THREE DAYS BEFORE AND THREE DAYS AFTER REUNION

Reunion Hotel Rates guaranteed only until April 9, 2014

**HELPERS ONLY: Send both Hotel Reservation Form and Reunion Reservation Form to:
AFEES, c/o Richard Shandor, P.O. Box 254, Cresson, PA 16630**

Last Name: _____

First Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City/State/Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Arrival Date:	Departure Date:
Number of Adults:	Smoking Preference:
PAYMENT METHOD	
Check Enclosed (Yes or No)	
Visa Number:	
AMEX Number:	
MC Number:	
Other CC Number:	

Name on Credit Card: _____

Expiration Date: _____

Signature: _____

AFEES 2014 REUNION RESERVATION FORM
Wednesday-Sunday, May 7-11, 2014
Crowne Plaza Charleston, North Charleston, South Carolina

Please complete and return this form with check or money order (No credit cards)
Your Check is your receipt.

MEMBERS: Make check payable to AFEES REUNION and mail to:
AFEES, c/o Richard Shandor, P.O. Box 254, Cresson, PA 16630

HELPERS ONLY: Send both Hotel Reservation Form and Reunion Reservation Form to:
AFEES, c/o Richard Shandor, P.O. Box 254, Cresson, PA 16630

Please Indicate Your Choice of Events

_____	REUNION REGISTRATION FEE		@ \$25	\$ _____
_____	5/7/14 Wed 4:00-8:30pm	Barhopping, Shopping, Sunset Tour	@ \$10*	\$ _____
_____	5/8/14 Thu 8:00am-12noon	Fort Sumter Tour	@ \$10*	\$ _____
_____	5/8/14 Thu 6:00-8:00pm	DINNER		
_____		Vegetarian	@ \$28	\$ _____
_____		Chicken	@ \$28	\$ _____
_____	5/9/14 Fri	Dinner at T-Bonz Grill—buy your own meal	@ \$10*	\$ _____
_____	5/10/14 Sat 12noon-4:00pm	LUNCH & tour at USS Yorktown	@ \$42*	\$ _____
_____	5/10/14 Sat 6:00-8:00pm	BANQUET		
_____		Beef	@ \$37	\$ _____
_____		Chicken	@ \$37	\$ _____
_____		Fish	@ \$37	\$ _____
_____		Vegetarian	@ \$37	\$ _____
		TOTAL ENCLOSED		\$ _____

** includes \$10 transportation fee*

List names as you wish them to appear on your badge

Name (please print) _____

Service unit _____

Spouse's name _____

Guest's name _____

Street address _____

City, State, zip _____

Arrival method: plane _____ car _____ other _____ arrival date _____

Important Emergency contact information:

Emergency contact name _____ Telephone number _____

Any Special Needs: _____

AFEES REUNION 2014 EVENT SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY

Wed. May 7	1:00pm	Registration Opens (<i>Hotel Lobby</i>)
Wed. May 7	1:00pm	Hospitality Suite Opens (<i>Room 102 and 104</i>)
Wed. May 7	4:00-8:30pm	Barhopping, Shopping, Sunset Tour

THURSDAY

Thurs. May 8	8:00am-12:00noon	Fort Sumter Tour
Thurs. May 8	3:30-5:00pm	Board of Directors Meeting (<i>Private Dining Room in Sweetgrass Restaurant</i>)
Thurs. May 8	6:00-8:00pm	Welcome Dinner (<i>Drayton Room, 1st fl</i>)

FRIDAY

Fri. May 9	Details to Come	Military Day
Fri. May 9	4:00-6:00pm	Meet and Greet (Open)
Fri. May 9	6:30pm-until...?	Dinner at T-Bonz Grill

SATURDAY

Sat. May 10	9:00-10:30am	Memorial Service (Open)
Sat. May 10	10:45-11:45am	General Membership Mtg. (Open)
Sat. May 10	12noon-4:00pm	Lunch and Tour USS Yorktown
Sat. May 10	6:00-8:00pm	Annual Banquet (<i>Drayton Room, 1st fl</i>)

SUNDAY

Sun. May 11	7:30am	Farewell Breakfast
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CHARLESTON TRANSPORTATION

The City of Charleston plans to start a new shuttle service on February 16, 2014 from the Tanger Outlet Mall across from the Crowne Plaza Hotel to the Historic Downtown Charleston Visitors Center. The shuttle cost is only \$3 per person each way.

50TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION ACTIVITIES

by Mary Shier

Welcome to the activities of our 50th anniversary reunion! Charleston has a rich and diversified history. While you are here you may venture into the history of the Civil War, visit one of the many beautiful plantations that are open to the public, take a horse drawn carriage ride, visit historic churches, partake in the delicious fresh seafood or even shop at the outlet mall across the street.

WEDNESDAY

BARHOPPING, SHOPPING AND SUNSET. We will leave our hotel, head downtown, and park near the waterfront where you may want to enjoy a libation or two. We'll provide a list of recommended drinking establishments. Afterwards we'll rendezvous on the rooftop of the Vendue Inn to watch the sun set over the harbor. Dinner will be on your own.

THURSDAY

VISIT FT. SUMTER. Come and see where the first shot of the Civil War was fired. We'll take a ferry from the maritime museum on the harbor. After a half-hour ride, we will be greeted by a park service agent and have our own private tour (*thank Lynn David's brother, Jim, for the personal touch!*)

FRIDAY

MILITARY DAY: Details will be forthcoming. Stay tuned!

FRIDAY NIGHT DINNER at T-BONZ GILL & GRILL

Prices range from \$8.95-18.95 and there is a wide selection of beer and wine.

SATURDAY

VISIT THE U.S.S. YORKTOWN (www.patriotspoint.org)

We will eat lunch on board in the officer's mess using the same trays they used during the war. After lunch, we'll begin our stroll through the moving and informative hall of the Medal of Honor recipients. Then, we'll head to the flight deck to see the navy craft displayed. I think all of you will enjoy this look into our navy history. There is an elevator to board the ship; however there are steps that must be taken to go up on deck.

**AIR FORCES ESCAPE AND EVASION SOCIETY REUNION FINANCE REPORT
 MAY 8 - 12, 2013
 CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL, TAMPA, FLORIDA**

RECEIPTS:		
REUNION REGISTRATIONS	4,828.00	
MISC.	0	
TOTAL RECEIPTS		4,828.00
DISBURSEMENTS:		
MEALS	3,165.31	
HOSPITALITY ROOM	107.66	
ROOMS/LODGING	778.40	
TOURS	1,144.07	
GIFTS	199.02	
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS		5,394.46
EXCESS OF RECEIPTS (DISBURSEMENTS)		(566.46)

**AIR FORCES ESCAPE AND EVASION SOCIETY
 CASH RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
 YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2013**

RECEIPTS:		
DUES	925.00	
GIFTS	2,350.00	
BOOKS	20.00	
MISC.	0	
REUNION - NET	(566.46)	
TOTAL RECEIPTS		2,728.54
DISBURSEMENTS:		
NEWSLETTER PRINTING AND POSTAGE	5,269.32	
CHRISTMAS CARDS AND POSTAGE	409.54	
OFFICE SUPPLIES	34.36	
POST OFFICE BOX RENTAL	78.00	
TAX FEES	625.00	
MISC.	0	
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS		6,416.22
EXCESS OF RECEIPTS (DISBURSEMENTS)		(3,687.68)
CASH BALANCE BEGINNING		<u>9,405.84</u>
CASH BALANCE ENDING		<u>5,718.16</u>

Respectfully submitted by Betty Hennessy, Elected Treasurer on May 12, 2012

AFEES Membership Census Form for non-helpers

Return this completed form to Richard Shandor, PO Box 254, Cresson, PA. 16630-0254. **If this form is not returned, this will be your last AFEES Newsletter.** To continue receiving the AFEES newsletter, either copy this form or remove this form and fill it out completely and mail it along with your membership payment if one is due.

INFORMATION FOR AFEES Membership

Circle ONE: Escaper Evader POW Widow(er) 2nd Gen 3rd Gen Friend

Member Name _____ Spouse _____ Yes or No
Is spouse a military veteran? _____

Street Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Home phone _____ Cell phone _____

Name of emergency contact person not living with you _____ phone number _____

AAF or AF# _____ unit type _____ Group# Squadron# _____ Aircraft position _____

MIA date _____ Bailout or Crash landing _____ Nation down in _____

How long evaded _____ Other Nations you evaded in _____ Nation where met Allied troops _____

Date met Allied troops _____ Date captured _____ POW camp _____ Date escaped captivity _____

Time in POW camp _____ Escape/Evasion lines or organization that aided you _____

Names of your Helpers _____

Names of your Helpers still alive _____

Relative you are related to or reason why you are a member for Widows(ers) or 2nd Gen. or 3rd Gen. or Friends _____

For Widows(ers) or 2nd Gen. or 3rd Gen. or Friends members, are you a military veteran and dates of service? _____

TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

AFEES membership dues: \$25 per calendar year

(+ an additional \$15 for a total of \$40--to cover postage—if you would like to continue to receive a hard copy of the newsletter mailed to you)

\$100 Lifetime Membership for Evaders only

Address, phone number, or email changes and checks (**made payable to "AFEES"**) should be sent to: Rich Shandor, PO Box 254, Cresson, PA 16630-2129. Phone (814) 886-2735 or email rshandor@hotmail.com.

Name _____ Amount enclosed _____

Address _____

City and State _____ 9 digit zip code _____ - _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Emergency Contact Person and phone number

Are you an Evader? YES NO

Related to an Evader? YES NO

Relationship _____

Evader's name _____

Evader's Military unit _____

Are you a Veteran? YES NO If yes, what Military Branch _____

Calendar Date of Military Service _____

Do you wish to receive the email AFEES newsletter in place of the US Mail copy? YES NO

Other comments or reasons for joining:



FOLDED WINGS

(by Rich Shandor unless otherwise noted)

2nd Lt. John M. Marr, pilot, 8th AAF, 359th Fighter Group, 368th Fighter Squadron, East Wretham, England: folded his wings on 6 August 2012.

John was flying his fateful first combat mission on January 29th, 1945. His P-51 was hit by flak over Germany and he was forced to bail out over Saint-Genis-de-Saintonge, France.

His leg was injured during his jump when it hit the tail of his Mustang fighter. As he came down in the center of town, John's parachute snagged on a telephone pole and he was left dangling outside of a 2nd story window. Several residents pulled him into the building window before the Germans spotted him.

Madame la Comtesse de Dampierre, who was involved with the French Resistance, had him taken to a hospital. This quick attention to his injury probably saved his leg.

During his time in the hospital, he traded English lessons and pieces of his parachute for champagne. About a month later when Allied forces had arrived, John was flown back to England.

In 1985 John with his son and daughter-in-law returned to France. They were to meet an elderly couple that showed them the pole that had caught his parachute. Next they took him to the place where his fighter had crashed and he recovered some small pieces of his fighter.

In later years, John recalled that the French people risked their well-being by befriending him. When they learned he was an American, they warmly welcomed him.

E&E#1300 2nd Lt. Edgar Michaels, Navigator, 8th AAF, 44th Bomb Group, 506th Bomb Squadron, RAF Shipdham, England: folded his wings on 21 July 2013.

His sixth mission was to bomb a German airfield at La Perth, France on 8 August 1944. His crew was assigned to B-24 #42-100415, which was named "My Peach".

On the return leg his bomber experienced multiple engine failures, so the bailout order was given near Epernay, France at about 1400 hours.

When Lt. Michaels jumped, the opening of his chute caused him to lose his Aids box and both of his flying boots. The loss of his boots probably contributed to the twisted ankle suffered upon his landing.

Lt. Michaels discarded his parachute and ran away in his stocking feet. Soon he made contact with Sgt. Walter Bohenko (E&E#1302), one of his waist gunners.

A couple of Polish Helpers took the two airmen to a wooden area where they meet two crewmembers, Lt. Lain (E&E#1298) and Sgt. Hulewicz (E&E#1299).

Later the Poles brought a French military officer, who spoke English. At midnight three French men took Lain and Bohenko to a Resistance camp in wooded area near La Chapelle-sous-Orbais.

The next morning, Michaels and Hulewicz were escorted to the same camp by the three French men. In this camp were two Canadian airmen, Nick Carter and Don

Palmer, William Weatherwax (E&E#1445), an unidentified American and an unidentified Englishman.

During the three weeks the nine men were there, they conducted raids with the French Resistance hitting primarily lines of communication.

On August 29, they made contact with American forces. They were given a jeep and then drove to Montmirail, where they were reunited with Lt. Bernard Komasinski (E&E#1296), Lt. Winfield Gippert (E&E#1297), and Sgt. Nelson Brott (E&E#1301).

Some of Edgar's Helpers were: Camille Rousseau, his nephew, Guy, two brothers-in-law and a champagne dealer name Pierre. Later it was confirmed that Sgt. McKee and Sgt. Richardson were captured, while Sgt. Frank Schaeffer (E&E#1369) had evaded.

William Thomas "Tom" Magee (15th Air Force, 465 Bomb Group, 782 Squadron) died September 5, 2013.

On December 18, 1944, bombardier Tom Magee returned to Blechhammer, his most dreaded target, for the fifth time. The B-24 in which he flew sustained serious flak damage almost as soon as he released its bombs. Flying on two engines, the crew tried to reach the emergency airfield on the island of Vis. In the sky above Yugoslavia, however, the aircraft rapidly lost altitude, and the pilot ordered his men to bail out. Their plane promptly crashed into the mountain.

Tom landed in deep snow. He found nose gunner Joe Dearman dangling in a tree and helped him down. A 12-year old boy wearing a cap emblazoned with the red star led both airmen to a primitive house that became the crew's rendezvous point. Ball turret gunner Harold Wamser and tail gunner Andrew Jay had landed on rocks and were in great pain from broken legs. The crew then discovered someone at the base in Italy had

stolen morphine from their emergency kits. Tom fashioned splints from wood shingles and parachute strips.

Tito's partisans evacuated the Americans on foot through the snow. The injured men rode small horses. At night, the evaders slept on straw on the floor of hovels. They lived on black bread and sour milk. One day their guide acquired rabbit from a woman cooking on an outdoor spit. Tom felt sick when he later learned they had eaten cat, not rabbit.

In Bugojno, Joe Jerick, a partisan who had worked in Detroit and spoke good English, served the crew an American-style breakfast. Tom befriended a partisan named Mlije Kaligamina who persuaded him to trade his Air Corps-issued watch for a Doxa pocket watch. Tom also saw Tito ride off in the area's only automobile.

Eventually the airmen traveled by rail toward Split. Whenever the train's wood burning engine ran out of fuel, partisans chopped trees along the tracks. These young allies roughhoused all the time, even in the cramped boxcar. This alarmed Tom, given that all of them had grenades swinging from their belts. He also wearied of their incessant singing. When the Communist youngsters demanded a song from the Americans, they sang, "Pistol Packin' Mama."

The fliers spent part of Christmas Day riding on a flat bed car in the cold and wind, and shared a single can of British corned beef. Traveling by both truck and train, they finally reached Split, filthy and lice-infested. A British air-sea rescue boat then delivered them to Vis, and a C-47 flew them back to Bari.

After R & R in North Africa, the evaders resumed flying. Pilot C.I. Eastman often flew the lead plane. Tom was not trained on radar, and so he was assigned to other crews. He was with a green crew on a mission to Vienna when flak killed the pilot and seriously wounded the co-pilot. Tom flew the crippled bomber back to base and managed a

rough landing. For this episode he received the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Tom completed 35 missions. In June 1945 he flew back to the States with a crew of strangers. Arriving in Charleston, South Carolina, the men were forbidden to use the telephone or leave base. Desperate to contact his pregnant wife, Tom waited until dark; then he scrambled over the fence. A nearby shopkeeper allowed him to call home, whereupon Tom learned he had a baby boy. This son and Tom's seven subsequent children and numerous grandkids wore a christening gown sewn from salvaged sections of Tom's parachute. (*Jerri Donohue*)

Benjamin Minkin, 14th AF, 308 Bomb Group, 373 Squadron, died October 27 in Columbus, Ohio.

Ben and two friends enlisted on December 8, 1941. Six feet tall and lanky, Ben knew he would not meet the weight requirement for the Army Air Corps. En route to the enlistment center, his group stopped at a restaurant so that Ben could stuff himself with two servings of pancakes and a quart of milk just before his weigh-in. Although still a half pound underweight, he was accepted.

Determined to become a pilot, Ben persevered even after witnessing the death of his closest friend in a training accident.

Ben received his wings and "crewed up." At first, he and his men flew anti-submarine patrols off the coast of South America. They hit a German sub, and when it didn't sink, they radioed its location to a US Navy vessel, which then captured it.

Lt. Minkin and crew eventually received orders to China, where they bombed Japanese bases, mined rivers and harbors, did sea sweeps and completed a 14-hour mission to northern Indochina to photograph a naval base.

Ben's evasion adventure occurred in October 1944 after a botched raid on a Japanese military installation in Amoy. Even

though their aircraft was equipped with radar, the men were forbidden to drop their bombs unless they could actually see their target. Heavy cloud cover prevented this, and so they headed for Luchow, their home base. At 2 a.m., all four engines failed within a minute and a half. Ben always suspected sabotage.

Still an hour from their destination, the crew bailed out over Japanese territory. Ben broke three ribs in a rough landing on a mountainside. To keep warm, he curled up in his parachute.

In briefings, the fliers had been warned that the Japanese beheaded Allied airmen, and so Ben was relieved when Chinese civilians found him at first light. They had already located the bodies of three of his gunners. Ben soon joined the survivors.

Fastened inside each man's flight jacket were an identifying number and an escape flag. Chinese guerrillas radioed Luchow with this information, and then began moving the Americans to Allied territory. Each day's travel entailed avoiding Japanese patrols. The crew stayed overnight in villages whose inhabitants somehow always managed a feast accompanied by numerous toasts to such luminaries as Chiang Kai-shek and FDR.

Ben and his crew reached Kweilin just days before it fell to the Japanese. He was touched by the stoicism of refugees fleeing the city, a scene he described as heart-rending. Ben and his crew were lucky to be evacuated by plane. Back in Luchow, they immediately resumed flying, and completed their required 50 missions.

In post-war years, Ben regularly attended reunions of the Flying Tigers. He donated his flight jacket and escape flag to Vandenberg Air Force Base for display.

Because of the war, Ben missed his college graduation ceremony. In 2005, his alma mater, Mount Union College, allowed him and two other World War II veterans to "walk" belatedly in cap and gown. The

audience gave them a five-minute standing ovation. (*Jerri Donohue*)

Former ball turret gunner **Silas M. Crase (15th Army Air Force, 97th Bomb Group, 414th Squadron)** died on January 23 in Columbus, Georgia.

S/Sgt. Crase and his crewmates jumped from their burning B-17 on August 27, 1944 after raiding the oil refineries in Blechhammer.

Si landed in a fir tree in deep woods. For several nights the evader walked in darkness. When he finally ventured about in daylight, Si came upon farmers toiling in their fields who told him he was in Slovakia. Thereafter, country folk gave him clothing, bread and boiled eggs at his infrequent stops.

Near the village of Stiavnik, Si approached Hana Mosuchova, who summoned her neighbor, Pavel Rezak. Pavel spoke English. He had lived in the States and had family there. Pavel escorted Si to underground leaders and then interpreted when they gave the American two options: make a run for Allied lines before winter or wait out the war in Stiavnik. Convinced the war would be over by Christmas, Si elected to stay.

Rezak and his common law wife, Hana Trulikova, were so poor they could barely feed their own three sons aged 5, 8 and 11. But they agreed to take in the 19-year old from Kentucky.

During the months that followed, Si joined the family for meals. As a precaution against German raids, he slept in a nearby hay storage shed instead of Rezak's cabin. When enemy patrols approached, Si fled to hiding places Pavel had devised and camouflaged in the vicinity. On one occasion, Wehrmacht soldiers sat so close to Si's hidey-hole, the evader could smell their body odor and cigarette smoke. When Germans arrived with little warning, Silas hunkered down in the hay.

In the absence of the enemy, Silas spent his days with the family, becoming close to all of them. In long nighttime conversations, Pavel predicted the Soviets would dominate his country after the war.

In the spring of 1945, the Red Army liberated Stiavnik and its environs. The underground briefly moved Si to the home of an affluent family in the town of Velka Bytca where the evader slept in a bed and enjoyed the luxury of indoor plumbing. Pavel, however, learned that the Soviets were showing an alarming interest in Silas. He arranged to take his charge to Pilsen, which was occupied by the American army. Si visited Hana and the boys a final time. Hana had used her meager resources to bake cookies for him as a parting gift. Decades later, her son recalled that Hana wept the entire time she baked them.

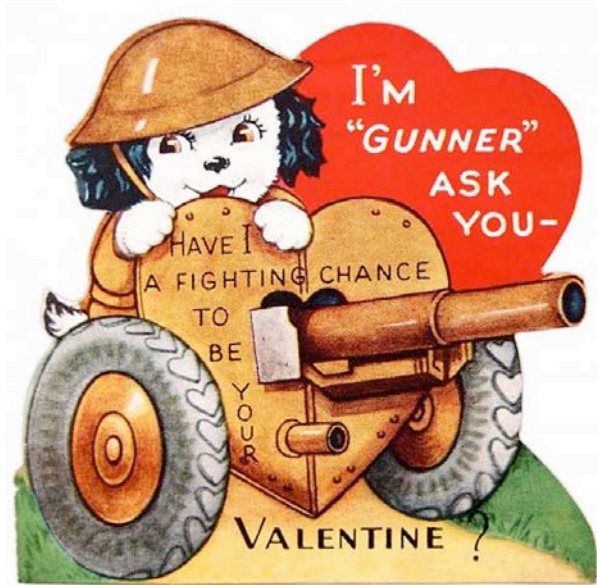
After a difficult journey, Silas and Pavel arrived in Pilsen. The Americans separated them immediately, whisking Silas away for questioning, and sending Pavel home, still toting the parcel containing Hana's cookies. Silas never saw his friend again.

Back in the States, the evader learned that his crewmates survived the war except for the co-pilot whose parachute did not open. The Germans captured all the others.

Silas himself had been missing in action so long; his Louisville high school listed him on a plaque dedicated to graduates who had died in the war.

Si sent food, tools and clothing to Pavel and Hana until the Cold War made their correspondence too dangerous for his Slovak friends. In the 1980s, however, Si saw two of the couple's sons when they visited Pavel's relatives in the States.

Si donated his false ID card and other mementos to the National Prisoner of War Museum in Andersonville, Georgia, where they are displayed in a case dedicated to "The One Who Got Away." (*Jerri Donohue*)



AFEES Communications is the official journal of the Air Forces Escape & Evasion Society. AFEES was founded in 1964 as a non-profit veteran's organization under IRS Code 501 (c) (19). 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.

AFEES LOSES TAX-EXEMPT STATUS

AFEES lost its non-profit organization status and has applied to the IRS for retroactive reinstatement of its tax-exempt status. Last year AFEES received an IRS notice, which stated the tax-exempt status of AFEES was automatically revoked because AFEES had not filed annual reporting returns (Forms 990/990-EZ or 990-N) for three consecutive years. Basically, the IRS said that AFEES is currently not a tax-exempt veteran's organization under IRS Code 501 (c) (19).

This revocation was effective on May 15, 2012 even though the notice was dated February 18, 2013. AFEES responded by submitting a 138-page document to the IRS requesting retroactive reinstatement of tax-exempt status and outlining the steps AFEES had taken to prevent a failure of this type in the future.

The IRS confirmed receipt of the AFEES application in a notice dated June 7, 2013 and stated that AFEES could "expect to be contacted within approximately 90 days." Hearing nothing further, AFEES contacted the IRS by phone on January 17 & 29, 2014 and was informed that the AFEES application is "awaiting assignment to an IRS determination specialist in the intermediate processing program for minimum development." AFEES was further informed that the IRS could give no time frame to AFEES for processing the application.

Therefore, while AFEES may accept fiscal gifts, those providing funds must be informed that their gifts are not tax deductible.

Further details: On May 12, 2012 at the AFEES Annual Meeting, Betty Hennessy was elected Treasurer. In the fall of 2012, Betty received notice that AFEES had not submitted the Texas state tax forms for fiscal year 2011. Betty immediately informed the AFEES Executive Committee, and continued to keep the Committee informed throughout.

Betty contacted a CPA tax specialist. The Texas state tax forms were submitted on September 17, 2012 and AFEES paid the \$50.00 late fee.

Betty then investigated the status of the Federal tax forms and discovered that no IRS forms had been submitted for fiscal year 2011. Betty worked with the CPA (who generously assisted AFEES without charging the organization) and submitted IRS Form 990-N, e-filing, for fiscal year 2011 on September 27, 2012. AFEES received IRS notice of acceptance of this e-filing on the same date.

The IRS then sent AFEES a notice dated November 19, 2012 stating that no IRS form had been submitted for FY 2010. Betty then worked with the CPA to file 990-EZ forms for Fiscal Years 2008, 2009 and 2010 as a search found no record that forms for these years had been filed. Each Form required a \$75 computer fee paid by AFEES. These three forms were mailed to the IRS on December 18, 2012.

The IRS then sent AFEES the letter stating that the tax-exempt status of AFEES was automatically revoked effective May 15, 2012. With the assistance of the AFEES Executive Committee and the CPA, Betty submitted to the IRS on May 13, 2013 a 138-page document to request retroactive reinstatement of tax-exempt status of AFEES. AFEES paid the required \$400.00 IRS application fee. As stated above, the IRS confirmed receipt of the AFEES application in a notice dated June 7, 2013. IRS agents further informed AFEES that the IRS couldn't provide any time frame for processing the AFEES application.

(This report was prepared for the AFEES membership by Betty Hennessy, AFEES Treasurer and Richard Shandor, AFEES Membership and Communications Secretary)

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THE PREZ SEZ

by John Katsaros (EE #755)

Thank God I am reporting from sunny and warm Florida, recovering from my second total knee replacement and away from the cold and snowy winter in New England.

To give you an update as to what progress has developed regarding our quest for a Congressional Approval and Recognition for all living and deceased WWII Escapees and Evaders, between July-October 2013, I contacted 12 US Senators and US Representatives.

In October I received a personal phone call from Massachusetts Congresswomen Niki Tsongas (widow of US Senator Paul Tsongas, an unsuccessful Democratic candidate for the office of President of the United States). Congresswoman Tsongas promised me that she would help us by spearheading action to receive the recognition we deserve. She assigned her Military Liaison E-9 Melanie Noel USAF to begin the process however, in the middle of negotiations she was transferred. Melanie advised me, before being transferred, that Congress would approve only four groups for recognition this year and that two have been approved, which leaves us with two openings.

I have had several communications with Melanie's replacement, Mr. Sean Duggan, the Legislative Assistant, who seems to be overwhelmed with his new position. We discussed that only two groups remain to be recognized and that it's important to include Escapees/Evaders during 2014 as they range in ages from 90 to 99.

On January 28, 2014, I phoned Mr. Duggan again and left him a message to call me as to what progress he has made and followed it up by e-mail? Did he complete and forward an application to the US Congress?

On January 30th I received his email. Quote, "I understand that time is of the essence with this matter and I appreciate you

reaching out to us. Our office has an internal review process that we must go through with every major decision we make on pieces of legislation. We are currently reviewing all of the information you have provided and will be following through that process with regard to your request. Please be assured that we are making every effort to move that forward with your request given our office's limited resources. I will be sure to reach out to you with further developments."

After sending Sean Duggan an email and leaving him a voice mail on February 10th, I requested, with appreciation, that he respond as to what progress his office has made. On February 13th he emailed this answer, "I am traveling in the district this week and have been behind on email. It is my understanding that you have called our office earlier today. As we have discussed previously, our office has an internal review process that we must go through when considering important constituent requests like yours. I have submitted a formal document to our office's leadership outlining your request. As there are a number of pending requests at the moment I can't give you a precise timeline for next steps, but I would think that I should hear back in a week or two at which point I will be sure to contact you. I hope this update works for your newsletter deadline." At the annual reunion membership meeting I will bring the membership up to date. If anyone receiving this newsletter has anything to report on this matter, I would appreciate if you would please contact me.

Look through this newsletter for information regarding AFEES Charleston, SC Annual Reunion. Lynn David and your board of directors have scheduled a wonderful program. Richard Shandor would appreciate if you would complete and mail him your registration form.

Until we meet in Charleston, SC from 7-11 May 2014!

AFEES CAPS AND T-SHIRTS (As a courtesy to AFEES members, Mary Shier had the following items printed. Please note this is not an AFEES fundraiser.)

AFEES caps are available in 2 styles: winged boot and parachute (blue caps w/yellow trim). Cost: \$13 plus \$3 shipping.

AFEES t-shirts are available in yellow featuring the AFEES logo on the left chest and the words "WE WALKED FOR FREEDOM" in Blue on the back. Cost: \$15 plus \$5 shipping.

T-SHIRT SIZE: S _____ M _____ L _____ XL _____

CAP: WINGED BOOT _____ PARACHUTES _____

Questions? Please contact Mary at (810) 441-7932 or via email spwheel357@gmail.com. To order a cap or t-shirt, please fill in the form below and send to: Mary Shier, 267 W. Barnes Lake Rd., Columbiaville, MI, 48421. Please make your check payable to "Mary Shier."

Name: _____ Address: _____

_____ Phone: _____

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