

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

[www.airforceescape.com](http://www.airforceescape.com)

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*IN THIS ISSUE—*

- *2015 Reunion in Salt Lake City, UT*
- *Plaza Hotel Reservation Form*
- *AFEES Reunion Reservation Form*
- *AFEES Reunion Schedule of Events*
- *Searching for a Rescued Pilot*
- *AFEES Membership Form*
- *Congressional medal status update*
- *Meet Edouard Renière*
- *Meet Yvonne Daley-Brusselmans*
- *2014 Holiday Greetings*
- *Commemorative Hike In Honor Of S/Sgt. Francis "Bud" Owens*
- *Tsongas Faces Steep Odds In Bid To Win Award For WWII Veterans*
- *Book Reviews*
- *Folded Wings*
- *Documentary Opportunity*
- *AFEES Officers*
- *The Prez Sez*

*"I asked one pilot how many successful parachute jumps he's made, and he said, 'All of them.'"*

*--Bob Hope*

**2015 AFEES REUNION  
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH**

*By Lynn David*

Arrangements have been made for the 2015 AFEES Reunion to be held at the Plaza Hotel in downtown Salt Lake City May 6-10, 2015.

The hotel is directly across from the Mormon Temple and next door to the Mormon Genealogy Center. You will have free time on Friday afternoon to visit this area.

The hotel is approximately 12 minutes from the Salt Lake City International Airport and a free shuttle service will be available. Parking will be \$5.00 per day at the hotel.

We are getting a very good room rate of \$95.71 inclusive of taxes. Our meal expenses will be a little lower than the last two years. Reservations can be made by calling the hotel at 1-800-366-3684.

Breakfast will not be included in the room rate, but the hotel has both a buffet breakfast and the ability to order from the menu.

We will visit the Hill Aerospace Museum from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. on Friday. We have planned some great side trips including a trip to the Park City Ski area to see where some of the 2002 Olympics were held. This will include a free lunch at my cabin in Midway, Utah, which is only 20 minutes from Park City. I look forward to seeing all of you!

**PLAZA HOTEL**  
**Air Forces Escape & Evasion Society Reunion**  
**May 6-10, 2015**  
**EARLY BIRD HOTEL RESERVATION FORM**  
Please complete this form and send to  
Plaza Hotel - Attention: Reservations  
122 West South Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah 84101  
**Phone: 1 (800) 366-3684; Fax: (801) 521-8477**

**\$95.71 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 6, 2015**

**\*Please Make Your Reservation As Soon As Possible\***

**HELPERS ONLY: Send both Hotel Reservation Form and Reunion Reservation Form to:  
AFEES, c/o Richard P. 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 (Y or N)	
Visa Number:	
AMX Number:	
MC Number:	
Other CC Number:	

Name on Credit Card: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**AFEES REUNION RESERVATION FORM**

**Wednesday-Sunday, May 6-10, 2015**

**Plaza Hotel, Salt Lake City, Utah**

**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 P. Shandor, P.O. Box 254, Cresson, PA 16630**

**HELPERS ONLY: Send both Hotel Reservation Form and Reunion Reservation Form to:**

**AFEES, c/o Richard P. Shandor, P.O. Box 254, Cresson, PA 16630**

Number

_____	Registration Fee	\$35 per person	\$ _____
_____	Wed May 6: 2-4:30pm This is the Place Heritage Park	\$15 per person	\$ _____
_____	Wed May 6: (Optional) Bar Hopping / Dinner	*\$5.00 per person	\$ _____
_____	Thurs May 7: 8am-2pm Park City Tour & Lunch	*\$10.00 per person	\$ _____
_____	Thurs May 7: 6:00-8:00pm DINNER	Chicken Cordon Bleu - \$25.00	\$ _____
_____		Vegetarian - \$25.00	\$ _____
_____	Fri May 8: 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Military Day: Hill Aerospace Museum and Lunch	\$20.00 per person	\$ _____
_____	Fri May 8: (Optional) DINNER - Market Street Grill	*5.00 per person	\$ _____
_____	Sat May 9: 6-8:00pm BANQUET		
_____		Top Sirloin Steak \$35.00	\$ _____
_____		Chicken Broccoli Penne Pasta \$35.00	\$ _____
_____		Salmon Filet \$35.00	\$ _____
_____		Vegetarian \$35.00	\$ _____
	<b>TOTAL ENCLOSED</b>		\$ _____

\* = Transportation Cost

**Please Indicate Your Choice of Events**

For Reunion information, contact Richard P. Shandor, (814) 886-2735, e-mail: rshandor@hotmail.com

**NAME BADGES: List names as you wish them to appear:**

NAME (please print): \_\_\_\_\_ Service Unit \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Guest's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ (Required)

Arrival method: plane \_\_\_\_\_ car \_\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_ arrival date \_\_\_\_\_

**IMPORTANT: Emergency Contact (Name and Phone Number):**

Any Special Needs? \_\_\_\_\_

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**AFEES REUNION  
2015 EVENT SCHEDULE**

**WEDNESDAY**

WED. MAY 6	1:00 P.M.	REGISTRATION OPENS (HOTEL LOBBY)
WED. MAY 6	1:00 P.M.	HOSPITALITY SUITE OPENS (HERITAGE ROOM – LOBBY LEVEL)
WED. MAY 6	2:00 – 5:30 P.M.	TOUR: THIS THE PLACE HERITAGE PARK (SEE MORE INFO ON NEXT PAGE)
WED. MAY 6	6:00 – 8:30 P.M.	(OPTIONAL) BAR HOPPING AND DINNER AT RED ROCK BREWING CO. AND SQUATTERS PUB

**THURSDAY**

THURS. MAY 7	8:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.	PARK CITY TOUR AND FREE LUNCH
THURS. MAY 7	3:30 P.M. - 5:00 P.M.	BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING (HERITAGE ROOM – LOBBY LEVEL)
THURS. MAY 7	6:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M.	WELCOME DINNER (SALT LAKE ROOM – LOBBY LEVEL)
THURS. MAY 7	7:30 P.M. – 9:30 P.M.	(OPTIONAL) MORMON CHOIR REHEARSAL

**FRIDAY**

FRIDAY MAY 8	8:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.	HILL AEROSPACE MUSEUM AND LUNCH
FRIDAY MAY 8	2:00 P.M. – 9:00 P.M.	(OPTIONAL) FAMILY HISTORY LIBRARY 15 EAST SOUTH TEMPLE ST. – NEXT DOOR TO OUR HOTEL) OR TOUR OF TEMPLE SQUARE
FRIDAY MAY 8	6:00 P.M.	(OPTIONAL) DINNER AT MARKET STREET GRILL

**SATURDAY**

SAT. MAY 9	9:00 A.M. - 9:45 A.M.	MEMORIAL SERVICE (SALT LAKE ROOM)
SAT. MAY 9	10:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M.	GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING (SALT LAKE ROOM)
SAT. MAY 9	1:00 P.M. – 3:30 P.M.	MEET AND GREET (SALT LAKE ROOM)
SAT. MAY 9	6:00 P. M. – 8:00 P.M.	ANNUAL BANQUET (SALT LAKE ROOM – LOBBY LEVEL)

**SUNDAY**

SUN. MAY 10	7:30 A.M.	FAREWELL BREAKFAST
SUN. MAY 10	9:30 A.M.	(OPTIONAL) MORMON TABERNACLE CHOIR ( <i>DOORS OPEN AT 8:30 A.M. AND YOU MUST BE SEATED BY 9:15 A.M.</i> )

**INFO ON "THIS IS THE PLACE  
HERITAGE PARK" TOUR** (see page 5)

**Wed. May 6, 2015, 2:00pm-5:30pm**

Cost: \$15 per person.

We will arrive at 2:30pm and meet our Guide at the Visitor Center. We will be taken around on a rubber-tire train with four walking stops along the way (they will try to accommodate those needing a little extra help). Step back in time and see the West as it was in the early settlement of Utah. The full tour will be 2 to 2 ½ hours long and includes watching a Native American Dance Show.

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**SEARCHING FOR A RESCUED  
PILOT**

*By Katherine Douglass*

A few years ago, my friend Marianne discovered documents related to her father-in-law's service in World War II. Although Joe Atkinson (E&E 1367) never spoke much about his service as an Army Air Force pilot in Europe, he apparently had survived being shot down over eastern France. Marianne was anxious to learn more about what had happened to Joe, then in his late 80s, so she asked me if I could translate the documents for her. What emerged was an amazing story of survival and community.

It seems that 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Joseph Atkinson's plane was shot down in August 1944, while returning from a bombing mission. Joe was able to parachute safely from his P47 Thunderbolt, and was spotted by farmers near Authevernes, France. They were harvesting wheat when they saw both plane and parachute come down near the village. The farmers found Joe and initially took him to a wheat mill. They then loaded him into a wagon and took him to a farm, where he stayed hidden in the barn's granary for a day or less until his escape could be planned.

Fortunately for Joe, there were a number of active resistance members in Authevernes, and they were experienced in rescuing Allied pilots. However, his

spectacular arrival in the village meant that everyone came out to see him. Those concerned with his safety (including Joe himself) worried that his presence would become local news.

Majo Perdereau, the local woman who took charge of rescued pilots, soon arrived to take over Joe's escape. Joe was apparently most upset that he had lost both his plane and his leather jacket. Mme. Perdereau provided him with civilian clothing and took him to Noyers, where there were two other pilots awaiting escape. A few days later, all three were returned to Allied forces by the resistance.

Almost 50 years after the liberation of France, the people of Authevernes wondered what had happened to the big 19-year-old pilot, and whether he had survived the war. The local newspaper published an article, and located Paulette Bannier, one of Joe's rescuers, who remembered his name. The journalist was able to get in touch with the Escape and Evasion Society, who confirmed that Joe had been safely returned to Allied hands. The Society was eventually able to provide an address for Joe Atkinson, who by then was a grandfather living in Pennsylvania. Joe was thrilled to find that his French rescuers still thought about him, and they were happy to find that he had fond memories of them.

Joe Atkinson passed away not long after Marianne discovered these documents. She was grateful to be able to talk to him about his experiences during World War II in Europe.

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*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.

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**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

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:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



**VADM Norbert R. Ryan, Jr. USN (Ret)**  
*President*

March 13, 2015

The Honorable Niki Tsongas  
United State House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Tsongas,

On behalf of more than 380,000 members of the Military Officers Association of America, I am writing to thank you for your leadership in sponsoring H.R. 632, the U.S. Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society Recognition Act of 2015, which will award the Congressional Gold Medal to the Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society (AFEES) in recognition of the society's members heroic deeds.

The society was founded in 1964 by downed airmen who faced the harsh realities of falling behind enemy lines and evading capture by enemy forces. Many of them did so with the assistance of residence organizations and foreign nationals while under unimaginable pressures. The awarding of the Congressional Gold Medal is appropriate recognition for their bravery, tenacity and personal sacrifices in the defense of our nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Norbert Ryan", is written over a light blue circular stamp.

*Letter of endorsement from the President of the Military Officer's Association of America's (MOAA),  
Vice Admiral Norbert R. Ryan (Ret.)*

## **CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL STATUS UPDATE**

The Office of Congresswoman Niki Tsongas has been instrumental in increasing the number of sponsors on *Bill H.R. 632 U.S. Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society Recognition Act of 2015* (please note new bill number and year). Sanford Bishop (D-GA), Madeleine Bordallo (D-GU), Katherine Clark (D-MA), Curt Clawson (R-FL), Kevin Cramer (R-ND), Blake Farenthold (R-TX), John Garamendi (D-CA), Christopher Gibson (R-NY), David Jolly (R-FL), Joseph P. Kennedy III (D-MA), Jim McGovern (D-MA), Richard Nugent (R-FL), Tim Ryan (D-OH), Austin Scott (R-GA), Louise Slaughter (D-NY),

Patrick Tiberi (R-OH), Paul Tonko (D-NY), Niki Tsongas (D-MA), Tim Walz (D-MN), and Peter Welch (D-VT) are co-sponsors of the bill.

We are very appreciative of all the hard work of Rep. Tsongas on behalf of AFEES. If it passes both the House and Senate, this bill will award a gold medal on behalf of the Congress to the U.S. Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society "in recognition of the ceaseless efforts of American aircrew members to escape captivity and evade capture by the enemy forces in occupied countries during our foreign wars, and the brave resistance organizations and patriotic nationals of those foreign countries who



assisted them."

It is necessary to get 290 Co-Sponsors signatures in the House and 67 Co-Sponsors signatures in the Senate. You can help by personally contacting and writing to the many members of Congress. Please, reach out to your Representative and ask him/her to become a co-sponsor of **Bill H.R. 632 U.S. Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society Recognition Act of 2015!**

### MEET EDOUARD RENIERE

AFEES member Edouard Renière was invited to be a symposium guest speaker at the 2014 8th Air Force Historical Society Reunion in Nashville, TN. He presented his research on the Belgian Comète Evasion Line.

Born in March 1938 in Brussels, Edouard grew up in German-occupied Belgium. The war had a huge impact on him and his interest in the stories of courage and sacrifice grew over the years. After his early retirement and the acquisition of an Internet connection, he started his research of World War II. This initially consisted of answering queries from American veterans or their families. Many such email contacts would develop into friendships between people who would most probably never have the opportunity to meet.

Starting in 2007, through contacts with a Comète-related organization, his research began to focus more and more on evasion lines, most notably the Belgian Comète evasion network. Comète helped close to a thousand Allied airmen and soldiers, including many Americans, a majority of whom were 8th Air Force personnel.

In 2011, Edouard and three friends: Philippe Connart, Michel Dricot and Victor Schutters (all descendants of people involved with Comète) started their own website.

The website [www.evasioncomete.org](http://www.evasioncomete.org) has a page dedicated to every individual aided by the Comète Line. These pages grow daily with new information coming in from

various sources (unexploited archives, details and photos sent by veterans or their relatives, or descendants of Helpers, etc.). Through their research, Edouard and his friends have been able to help hundreds of grateful families in their search for information about the wartime past of the husbands, fathers, grandfathers, and uncles who took part in the conflict.

During the Nashville banquet, Edouard was presented with the 8th Air Force Historical Society's Roger Freeman award.

*Excerpted and edited with permission from the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force News, December 2014.*



*Edouard Renière and Yvonne Daley-Brusselmans*



*Standing: Kim Laubach, Steve Snyder, Nancy Wright, Marla Maynard, Steve Lewis, Richard Shandor, John Wand.  
Seated: Betty Binnebose Lewis, Edouard Reniere, Yvonne Daley-Brusselmans, Beverly Patton Wand*

## MEET YVONNE DALEY- BRUSSELMANS

Yvonne Daley-Brusselmans was also invited to be a symposium guest speaker at the 2014 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Historical Society (AFHS) Reunion in Nashville. Yvonne spent the years during WW2 in Brussels—most of it under German occupation. Her mother, Anne Brusselmans, was a tireless and courageous worker in the Belgian Underground who helped almost two hundred Allied airman. Yvonne insisted that she was not a speaker but a storyteller. She sat next to a small table that held a photograph of her mother, several newspaper clippings, and other mementos. Yvonne began her story, which included harrowing accounts of narrow escapes, brushes with the Gestapo, and the amazing courage of her mother. For her outstanding bravery, Anne was awarded the Belgian Croix de Guerre with Palm Leaf, along with other medals and official honors.

For one veteran in particular, AFEES member William "Bill" McGinley, Yvonne's story was especially meaningful. Bill was introduced to Anne Brusselmans after he bailed out from his burning B-24 bomber. Once on the ground he found himself quickly moving through the Belgian woods but with a gun pointed at his head as he was brought to Madame Brusselmans. She was the interrogator. The right or wrong answer to questions meant life or death. Luckily for Bill, his answers were authenticated. The Brusselmans sheltered Bill until he entered the Belgian underground and made his way back to England.

Bill kept in touch with Anne through the years. After all, he was one of "Anne's boys." He made his way very slowly up to the stage after Yvonne began taking questions. She recognized him almost immediately. The years melted away instantly and two old friends began to reminisce, sharing Bill's story with the audience.



*William McGinley and Yvonne Daley-Brusselmans*

Following the death of her husband, Yvonne immigrated to Canada and eventually moved to the United States. She is a former board member of AFEES, a board member of the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force, a lifetime member of the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Historical Society, and an associate member of the Order of Daedalians, and a former member of the defunct Royal Air Force Escaping Society.

Yvonne is the author of two books "*Belgium Rendez-Vous 127 Revisited—Anne Brusselmans, M.B.E., Resistance, World War II*" and "*Anne Brusselmans: Mission Accomplished: My Mother.*"

During the Nashville banquet, Yvonne was presented with the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Historical Society's Roger Freeman Award.

*Excerpted and edited with permission from the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force News, December 2014.*

## **2014 HOLIDAY GREETINGS**

AFEES sent out over 200 Holiday Greeting Cards in December and we thought we'd share some of the lovely messages we received in response. Please give a special thank you to Rich Shandor for all of his hard work to mail out the cards—it's quite an undertaking.

### **BELGIUM:**

From Jacques Grandjean: *To all the dear members of AFEES, wishing you a Beautiful Holiday Season and a New Year of Peace and Happiness. God Bless AMERICA.*

From L. Lardot: *Our best wishes for a Happy and Healthy 2015.*

### **FRANCE:**

From Jean Delery: *Thank you and Best Wishes to The Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society. From a French Friend who has not forgotten your fight for liberty.*

From Rosemary Grady: *Dear Members, many thanks for your wishes; after all these years you still think of me! I also wish you all a happy end of this year and the Best for 2015.*

From the Carter family: *Thank you for your card, always nice to have people remembering the past. Mrs. Janine Carter is fine in Quimper, quite hard for her to be alone. We answer back for her as she doesn't remember much. Have a Happy 2015.*

From M. & Mme. Christian Babled: *To all members of AFEES. It is always with emotion that I get your card of wishes for the New Year. It takes me back to the time when I was a kid and unconscious of the danger around. But now I know the hope came from outside and from the sky. Too many men and airmen gave their lives for our freedom. They showed us the way of courage and hope. Today other barbarians have come with masks and try to destroy the foundation of our democracy. No doubt they will fail because, once more, we have the support of great countries and first of*

*all in my heart the support of the people of the USA. May all the defenders of freedom be blessed and protected. Thoughts from France.*

From Christian Richard: *Hello, Thank you for your letters with your wishes. I hope for all members and families of AFEES, Good Health from France and a Very Nice New Year 2015. Thank you.*

From Jean Louis Blanchard: *Thank you for your card, always received with pleasure. I wish you and AFEES members a Beautiful and Happy Year 2015*

From Ann-Marie Soudet-Declercq: *Thanks for your holiday card. My family and I also wish you a Beautiful Holiday Season and a New Year of Peace and Happiness.*

From Henri Francois: *To AFEES members and family, I hope a very Merry Christmas and Happiness in the New Year 2015. Thank you for your warm welcome every time I went to attend your annual reunion.*

### **NETHERLANDS:**

From Corrie and Adriane van-Dansik-van Dam: *We wish you and all the members much Love, Peace and Happiness for 2015.*

From Margaret Albers: *Thank you for the card. To you and all the members of AFEES, my best wishes for a Happy and Healthy 2015*

## **COMMEMORATIVE HIKE IN HONOR OF S/SGT. FRANCIS "BUD" OWENS**

*By Jed Henry*

On Sunday July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1943, an American B-17 bomber (42-29928) crashed near the town of La Coulonche in Normandy, France. Three of its crewmembers were unable to evacuate the aircraft and died in the

crash. All those who managed to bail out of the plane would eventually survive the war, either as evaders or POWs, except for one man.... S/Sgt. Francis "Bud" Owens of Pittsburgh, PA.

He was hidden by the local resistance before heading to Paris, Toulouse, and then through the Pyrenees mountains in an attempt to cross the border into Spain and eventually return to the free world. He would never reach his destination. Exhausted he was unable to continue and was left in the mountains by his guide, eventually dying of exposure.

Bud Owens' story is one of many that illustrates the incredible ordeal many Allied aviators experienced behind enemy lines during WWII. But how many young men of today's generations, who never experienced the dangers and risks of a world war, can understand what these men really went through?

Normandy battlefield guide and certified translator Geert Van den Bogaert wants to give a group of French and American youngsters the opportunity to discover S/Sgt. Owens' journey during a commemorative hike from July 4th-12<sup>th</sup>, 2015 that will take them from La Coulonche, France to the Andorran town of El Serrat and finishing at the gravesite of this American hero in Belgium.

This journey will be filmed and eventually become a full-length documentary. The reason this trip is important is that it not only preserves WWII history but it also teaches history to the next generation in a way that they will always remember.

At this time the organizers of the S/Sgt. Francis "Bud" Owens commemorative journey are looking for one or two young men around the age of 18-26 who would be interested in going.

If any member of AFEES knows of anyone interested in going on this trip or is willing to contribute to this project you can contact Jed Henry with any questions at (608) 239-2228 or [henryj4123@yahoo.com](mailto:henryj4123@yahoo.com).

## **TSONGAS FACES STEEP ODDS IN BID TO WIN AWARD FOR WWII VETERANS**

*From the BOSTON GLOBE, 3/4/15*



*John Katsaros*

WASHINGTON — Haverhill's John Katsaros was an Army airman in World War II. In 1944, he broke six ribs, fractured both ankles, and cracked his skull after his plane was shot down over Nazi-occupied France. He survived for seven days in a farmhouse and escaped the German army through the Pyrenees Mountains before returning to the United States.

Representative Niki Tsongas of Lowell thinks Katsaros and other veterans like him deserve a medal, the Congressional Gold Medal, to be precise.

But that is no easy task. Pushing a Gold Medal award through Congress is one of the most grueling challenges any lawmaker can undertake.

Tsongas needs 356 legislators to help her, and the government awards only three to five medals out of 30 to 40 candidates in each two-year session of Congress. Representatives don't treat these bills with the same partisan

vitriol as they do health care or immigration reform, but the process still requires sponsors to relentlessly lobby their colleagues.

Tsongas wants to bestow the honor on Katsaros and the more than 600 other members of the Air Forces Escape & Evasion Society. An identical effort failed in the last Congress, so she's trying again.

Time is literally running out. Katsaros is the society's president, leading the coalition of mainly World War II veterans who were shot down over enemy territory and the civilians who helped them escape enemy forces.

Though he's 92 years old, Katsaros is one of the group's younger members, and membership declines as more World War II veterans die. The society holds a convention each year, but he said only five to seven members are physically able to attend.

'I've come to appreciate, as I've gotten older, how all too often those stories go untold.'

"We've been trying to get to get this done over the years, but it never came to fruition," Katsaros said of the push to get the medal. "The presidents would start it, then they'd pass away."

## BOOK REVIEWS

### ***Tom: A Life Saved – Lives Lost!***

*By Goffinet McLaren, 257 pages, 2014*

In this meticulously researched account, AFEES member Goffinet McLaren relates the 1943 evasion of her father, RAF Sergeant Tom Hutton.

McLaren takes pains to provide the wider historical context in which her father's experience unfolded. Tom Hutton, a married man with children, volunteered as a radio operator on a Lancaster bomber. McLaren helps the reader understand his decision to enlist by cataloguing Germany's repeated acts of aggression at that time.

After bombing an industrial target in Plzen, Czechoslovakia in April 1943, Sgt.

Hutton's plane sustained serious flak damage. The pilot eventually ordered his crew to bail out. Almost immediately, Hutton and a crewmate, Sgt. Len Rudkin found themselves in a bucolic moonlit scene in an unknown country. The two soon met Eugène Josephs, a Belgian farmer who had lived in Canada for many years. Not only did Josephs provide food, water and clothing, but he also summoned resistance members who placed the two airmen in safe houses and moved them on to Spain. After a brief delay in Gibraltar, the two RAF fliers returned to England on July 24, 1943.

Tom re-connected with his helpers in post-war years. He was heartsick when he learned – on the day of his daughter's birth – that Father Georges Goffinet had been arrested shortly after Tom's stay with him. After surviving almost two years in a concentration camp, the priest perished shortly before liberation.

As part of her research, Goffinet sought out the families of her father's helpers. In an especially moving tribute, she visited towns where Tom Hutton received assistance, and she installed memorial plaques in memory of those who risked all to save her father. She concludes the book with brief biographies of the underground members who played a role in Tom Hutton's evasion.

Goffinet's book is available on Amazon. You can also contact her at [goffinet.mclaren@gmail.com](mailto:goffinet.mclaren@gmail.com).

*(Jerri Donohue)*

### ***The Last Mission of the Wham Bam Boys: Courage, Tragedy, and Justice in World War II*** by Gregory A. Freeman, 218 pages, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011

During World War II, Allied airmen who bailed from stricken aircraft behind enemy lines either evaded capture or became prisoners of war. There also was a third group – the unknown number of fliers who were murdered before reaching any POW camp. (For examples of this, read Frank Heekin's obit in *AFEES Winter 2014*

Communications).

In *The Last Mission of the Wham Bam Boys*, Gregory Freeman relates the story of the 9-man crew of pilot Norman J. Rogers, Jr. The men flew the *Wham! Bam! Thank You, Ma'am*, a plane unfamiliar to them (they didn't give it that stupid name) on their first mission, August 24, 1944. An anti-aircraft shell disabled the B-24 almost as soon as they bombed the airfield in Langenhagen, Germany, forcing the crew to jump. The civilians who captured the fliers battered them, and German officers later beat the enlisted men. One man, who had been severely injured by flak, was hospitalized. En route to a Luftwaffe interrogation center, the other Americans were removed from a train because of bombed out tracks, and marched through the town of Rüsselsheim, a community that has been targeted several times by Allied bombers. Its residents were clearing damage from the preceding night's air raid by the RAF.

Erroneously assuming the *Wham Bam* crew had bombed them, two middle-aged German women urged other civilians to kill them. A frenzied crowd set upon the prisoners for over an hour, beating them with bricks, shovels, hammers and even railroad ties. Eventually, the Americans were tossed onto a cart and pulled by Hitler Youth to the cemetery. There, one of the adult attackers heard moans and realized some of the men still lived. He bludgeoned his victims' heads but was interrupted by another air raid. Two of the eight Americans had miraculously survived, and they escaped as bombs rained down. Apprehended a few days later, they never spoke about the atrocity they had witnessed, not even in POW camp.

Much of this story is truly heart-breaking: one of the murdered men had a prophetic nightmare before leaving the States in which he saw himself killed by a German mob. Many of the fliers were teenagers. During the attack, a gunner tried to run, carrying piggyback a crewmate with a broken ankle. Back in the States, parents and wives

waited while their loved ones remained MIA. In a colossal snafu, the families were not informed of the men's fate—they learned the truth from a *New York Times* article published on July 26, 1945. Although only six bodies were found, apparently nobody bothered to check POW rosters for the other two men. Therefore, neither survivor was a witness at the subsequent war crimes trials.

This gut-wrenching read is a powerful reminder of the absolute evil that pervaded Nazi Germany. Details are telling: The residents of Rüsselsheim clearly viewed themselves as members of the master race. Only 21 Germans died in the Allied bombing that triggered the bloodletting, but 177 forced laborers from other countries *or their* children also died—because they were banned from air raid shelters. The crowd singled out the Armenian-American navigator for its greatest violence, shouting that he was Jewish. Some attackers later bragged about their participation. Several of the killers eventually were hanged. They expressed no remorse, even as they went to the gallows.

(*Jerri Donohue*)



## FOLDED WINGS

**GEORGE MONG (E&E #1501, 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force, 447<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group)** died February 21, 2014.

A co-pilot, George participated in a raid on Munich on July 13, 1944. His bomber sustained serious flak damage over the target. German fighter planes attacked the straggler as it limped toward England. When they were down to one working engine, pilot R.D. Hilding ordered the crew to bail out.

Within moments, George found himself in a field of peas near Meaus, France. An elderly farmer spotted him and returned at nightfall with bread, wine, and civilian clothing. This first helper took the evader to a young couple. George sensed the wife was uncomfortable with his presence. Her husband, however, hid George and two other crewmembers in their barn. A young girl later led the men to a village in Oise. George, bombardier R.E. Wojnicz and waist gunner Emory Markham stayed with the baker, his pregnant wife and two children. The family was already sheltering an Englishman. The defiant baker delivered bread to the German garrison in the same cart he used for removing manure from his stable. Markham's arm had been shattered by machine gun fire from a fighter plane, and so the baker's wife put the American in a wheelbarrow and took him to the local doctor. George helped this fearless couple operate their massive oven and he cleaned their stable. Because he was young and very blond, his French friends feared he would be mistaken for a German deserter and kept him out of sight.

George's group later joined other crewmates in a larger safe house. Married men were offered the opportunity to reach home first, and so Hilding and Wojnicz left for Paris.

George stayed with the underground in the countryside until the arrival of an American tank unit. He then traveled by jeep to Paris, which had been liberated earlier. He walked to Orly airport and hitched a ride to

England on a C-47, arriving September 5, 1944.

Soon after the war, George saw Hilding and Wojnicz and learned that they had spent months in POW camp. A spy within the escape line had surrendered them to the Germans when they reached Paris.



George's known helpers were: **M. and Mme. Leon Taghon**, the family of **Leon Charles, André Hureaus, Mme. Gamelin** and **Dr. Henri Esnault**. (*Jerri Donohue*)

**JAMES R. MURRAY (E&E #1661, 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force, 384<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group)** died March 20, 2014.

Jim was shot down with the crew of the aptly named *Patches* on his 21<sup>st</sup> mission, October 14, 1943 after bombing Schweinfurt. The radio operator later described his leap from the burning B-17 as his most terrifying war experience.

Bombardier Willy Wilson died on the plane; the rest of the crew parachuted to safety. Pilot Donald Ogilvie and co-pilot Robert Kilmer successfully evaded for a time. After they were taken to Paris by the underground, however, a traitor delivered them to the Germans. Unbeknownst to the enlisted men, who ultimately evaded as a

group, navigator Everett Child also eluded the Germans and reached Allied lines.

Upon landing in a plowed field near Verdun, Jim hid in a culvert but a group of farmers promptly picked him up and stashed him in a granary. Before long tail gunner Louis Ratkiewicz joined him there. After being dispatched to various farms, all six gunners ended up in Verdun. Jim identified his helper there as **Madame Pothier**, an English-speaking Frenchwoman. Although situated near a German camp, her home served as a collection point for downed airmen heading to Switzerland. Eventually the Americans traveled in two groups by truck to Belfort near the French-Swiss border. After dark, a guide led them to a crossing point, where they slipped under the barbed wire as soon as a German patrol passed.

The Swiss immediately apprehended the airmen but soon released them to the American military attaché. The evaders lived in a series of hotels near Bern, in Klosters and on Lake Geneva. They whiled away their days skiing, reading or playing poker. Jim found this boring, and useless to the war effort. He yearned to regain his unit. After the Allies invaded Normandy, he and an evader from the 15<sup>th</sup> Air Force plotted to slip back into France. A young British civilian who spoke fluent French joined them. (Jim did not seek permission for his escape, but he did inform his crew.) In August 1944, the three men walked in a stream until they had crossed the border. The French underground then collected the group and took them to Annecy and finally to Grenoble. At some point the British lad joined a detachment of his countrymen. Jim and the other flier encountered an American major with a jeep who helped them get to an airfield. The two airmen flew to Corsica where Jim's companion was hospitalized with severe laryngitis. Jim made his way back to England via Casablanca.

Jim was told that the Germans had arrested Monsieur and Madame Pothier and that the middle-aged couple had perished in a

concentration camp. Jim recalled their parting: Monsieur Pothier did not speak English, but when the evaders left for the border, he bade them farewell with the words, "So long, boys." Jim realized then that he must have helped many other airmen on their way.

*(Jerri Donohue)*

**JESSE CASAUS (15<sup>th</sup> AF, 465<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group)** died April 9, 2014.

A bombardier, Jesse flew out of southern Italy on raids to Germany, Austria, Belgium and Czechoslovakia.

On his 17<sup>th</sup> mission, flak knocked out one engine of the B-24. ME-109s found the straggler as it lagged behind the formation. After the attack, the plane had only one working engine.

"The B-24 did not glide well when it lost its power," Jesse said decades later.

A cohesive group, the crew discussed their options. Nobody wanted to end up in the Adriatic Sea. Nor did they want to be swinging targets for German infantrymen if they parachuted. It was a unanimous decision to crash-land. They pitched overboard everything they could. The pilot set the plane down in a valley in northern Yugoslavia. All the men suffered cuts and bruises, but no serious injuries.

Fearful that the aircraft would explode and burn, several of Jesse's crewmates left their emergency rations behind in their haste to exit. It was December 14, 1944. Food was scarce. Because they dared not build fires that would signal their whereabouts to hostile eyes, the men resorted to eating raw fish and half-cooked possum. By day, they broke into small groups and hid behind rocks and in bushes, shady areas where the snow had not yet melted. Jesse sometimes spotted Axis troops patrolling in the distance.

The evaders traveled at night. Jesse wore flight boots, and he often slipped. Nor was it easy to move about in a bulky flak suit.

Cold, hungry and miserable, the men began to squabble. Some sergeants insulted the intelligence of their officers and



challenged their decisions. Outdoorsmen became temporary leaders.



Jesse later regretted that he and the others followed instructions to avoid General Mihailovich's troops. Their obedience prolonged their ordeal. Finally one day Jesse noticed men wearing hats sporting the red star. Recognizing this Communist emblem, the evaders identified themselves to Tito's partisans. One of men spoke Italian, and Jesse managed to communicate with him in Spanish.

The partisans fed the evaders and led them on a 2-day journey to the Adriatic. Fishermen sailed the crew to Italy. Back in Pantanella, the flight surgeon cleared Jesse for flying. One crewmember was grounded for psych reasons, but all of the others were still flying combat missions when the war in Europe ended. *(Jerri Donohue)*

**HOWARD J. "JOE" TURLINGTON (E&E #814, 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force, 384<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group) died April 20, 2014.**

On a supposed milk run to bomb the harbor in Nantes, Sgt. Joe Turlington's squadron was attacked by a horde of ME 109s.

From his perch in the top turret, Joe watched flames shoot from the left wing and #2 engine. The bombs were salvoed. A steep dive failed to put out the fire, and so the crew jumped. It was the afternoon of September 16, 1943 and the beginning of Joe's nine months as an evader.

Joe landed in the countryside near Rennes. He ran for a ditch and then a hedgerow, pausing only to shuck his cumbersome flight boots. Before long, he spotted enemy soldiers snooping around a nearby farmhouse; they had discovered Joe's parachute. After their departure, Joe continued to wait. Five other Germans returned briefly at dusk to search again. Joe later set out under cover of darkness, sometimes testing his luck by tramping on the road.

In a 2-week period, Joe covered approximately 140 miles as he tried to reach Spain. Often hungry and rain-soaked, he frequently propped himself against tree trunks to doze, unwilling to sleep on the soggy ground. He quickly consumed the chocolate in his escape kit. Using his language card, he approached individual farmers to ask for food. Occasionally they gave him a warm meal but then quickly sent him away. One man gave him only chestnuts to eat. Other times civilians refused to help the American at all or ran from him or chased him off. On a single day, four people turned down Joe's plea for help but the fifth man gave him food. Afraid of collaborators, Joe changed his route whenever he was denied assistance.

One enterprising farmer sold Joe civilian clothing for 900 francs from the evader's escape kit. The residents of a hamlet let him sleep in a cot for a few hours. When Joe awoke, he found all the local people standing along the walls, staring at him, a creepy experience that made him depart in a hurry. Yet another farmer permitted Joe to sleep in his hayloft one night but woke him before dawn because he worried his neighbor would spot the evader. One night as Joe slept in the hay, a cat had kittens at his feet. Another night, a frightened farmwife wept

when her husband gave the flier permission to spend the night in their hayloft. The Germans still governed France with an iron fist; the civilians' fear was palpable.

Still, a couple of men let Joe shave, and others pulled out maps to recommend his route. People often warned him to avoid specific areas because of enemy troops.

Joe trudged through fields and on small roads, and walked right through several small towns, passing German soldiers in broad daylight. He once sat under a tree until a long convoy of German trucks and tanks rumbled by.

Suffering from blistered feet and a swollen ankle, Joe craved rest and was grateful when a farmer named **Guillemet** sheltered him in his barn. Joe learned later that Guillemet lived in the shadow of the watchtower of a training base for ME-109s. The area teemed with Germans. To avoid arousing suspicion, Guillemet brought the evader's meals to the barn in a bucket used for feeding livestock. After a few days, he introduced Joe to his friends, **Monsieur Villon** and **Monsieur de Peretti**, the first English-speaking Frenchman Joe had met. De Peretti took him to Niort, five miles away. There the evader found refuge with **Monsieur** and **Madame Henri Denoue**, de Peretti's in-laws. Henri Denoue owned an auto repair garage. Joe helped him when there were no visitors and he chopped wood for Madame Denoue whenever possible. Joe received false identification papers and became "Alfred Savory."

**Henri Babin** operated a men's clothing store. He gave Joe (and later several other evaders) a suit, socks and toiletries. When the Gestapo launched a search- and-arrest operation, Babin hid Joe for a while. Joe had cabin fever and Babin took him for walks after dark. Babin, who was married, sometimes invited his girlfriend to join them. Joe also spent two weeks with Monsieur Villon and his son, who was dodging forced labor.

Joe's friends had repeatedly assured him that he would go to Paris to begin his trip to the Pyrenees and Spain. Later they promised him the Maquis would take him to the mountains, or that he would go to Brittany and cross the channel in a fishing boat. Each plan fell through. In December the underground cancelled all plans to cross the Pyrenees because of terrible winter weather. Joe would have to wait until spring.

Joe caused trouble for his helpers at this point. Frustrated, he became surly and threatened to strike out on his own. Denoue, Babin and de Peretti pleaded with him to remain but Joe was obstinate. De Peretti persuaded him to wait three days longer, while he summoned from Paris a resistance leader. This man told Joe that he would never reach Allied lines alone. The Gestapo would surely find him, torture him and then kill him- after he revealed who had helped him. The man further informed Joe that the resistance would never allow the evader to take this risk, and he sternly advised the American to rethink his plan to run.

Joe realized his great debt to his helpers. Madame Denoue even called him her "American son." Although depressed, he resigned himself to staying through the winter.

In late February 1944, the underground moved Joe to the village of Irais. He lived with **Madame Irene Bineau**, the town clerk, who already had two American airmen, Sgt. Maher and Sgt. Mills, under her roof. The mayor, **Roger Piet**, was a butcher and supplied their meat.

Other evaders, Lt. William Ross and Lt. Bernard Reed, now sheltered with the Denoues, and Sgt. Wladyslaw Serafin stayed with Monsieur Babin.

Because a talkative woman endangered helpers and evaders alike, Joe and some of the others moved to a series of farms in mid-April. Eventually he, Ross and Reed returned to Irais and lived in the wine cellar of **Monsieur Hullin**.

On May 18, all the "local" evaders- now numbering seven - traveled in a filthy

cattle truck to another small town where they joined two more Americans. The entire group then boarded a train for Tours where they quickly identified their escorts, a married couple and another man. Each guide led three airmen onto a second train after telling them to look for him in Toulouse. However, the Germans captured three of the Americans on the train.

In Toulouse, Joe and the two men with him followed a young girl to the second floor of a big building. They entered a large room occupied by 40 American airmen and Frenchmen and a lone woman determined to go to Spain.

In small groups, they slipped out of the building after dark and rendezvoused at the foothills. The trek over the mountains took three days and two nights. Their only food consisted of a few cans of beans until their guides confiscated a sheep from a shepherd and butchered it. The barely warmed meat was the worst meal of Joe's life.

On May 29, the guides pointed out the border and went no further. The exhausted men ran part way down the mountain to ensure they were in Spain before collapsing, completely spent from the journey. Spanish soldiers soon arrested them. When the jail couldn't hold everyone, some, like Joe, slept on the floor of the bug-infested inn next door.

Joe was moved to Gibraltar on June 25, and returned to England on June 30, 1944.

Fifty years after the war, a French historian helped Joe revisit the sites significant to his evasion. The Denoues had died, but Joe was reunited with Madame Bineau and the (now) adult children of Guillemet, Piet and Hullin.

He also met French civilians who had seen the Germans shoot his crewmates, Sgt. Marion Rogers and Sgt. Walter Sword as they drifted earthward in their parachutes. A third body was found in the plane's wreckage; Joe believed it was the ball turret gunner, Sgt. Herbert May. (*Jerri Donohue*)

**RICHARD FAULKNER (8<sup>th</sup> Air Force, 100<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group, E&E #556) died on August 29, 2014.**

On a raid to Augsburg, Germany on March 18, 1944, the formation flew into heavy flak. A stricken B-17 fell upon Sgt. Dick Faulkner's ship. Riding in the ball turret, he felt the impact and immediately found himself upside down; his aircraft had flipped. Dick managed to open the door of the turret, and despite powerful winds, hoisted himself over the side.

He landed near Haricourt. A French family pointed the direction in which he should run. The flier hid in a berry patch and heard German soldiers talking as they searched for him. After they left, he hailed a farmer who moved the evader to the middle of a field and gave him civilian clothes.

The next day, the French showed Dick the identity bracelet of another gunner, Sgt. Veryl Lund. The 19-year old American learned then that all nine of his crewmates had perished aboard the aircraft. It was their first mission.

For the next month, Dick worried about his widowed mother. She was raising five children, and he had been sending home his Army pay to help support the family.

Meanwhile, the underground placed their charge in a series of farmhouses. At one point farmers hid him in a hole in the ground for an entire rainy day while Germans conducted a thorough search and checked ID papers. Dick, who was short and slightly built, eventually received false papers identifying him as a 15-year old deaf-mute.

When a helper gave the evader a lift by motorcycle to a new safe house, a tire went flat en route. As they changed it, Dick was unnerved to hear laughing and then discovered that two amused German machine gunners were watching from their post.

A woman guide helped Dick reach Paris by train where he stayed briefly with two other Allied airmen in an apartment. Within days, a helper delivered subway tickets and instructed the evaders to exit the building at

brief intervals, one man at a time. Dick, who left first, met the guide at a designated location. The other two men did not appear. The guide escorted Dick to the subway, and from there to the train station. Dick later learned the Gestapo had arrested his two companions as they left the apartment building.

After a full day traveling by train to Brittany, Dick arrived in Morlaix and joined other evaders in a ramshackle farmhouse. That night, underground members led them to the beach. Rubber rafts ferried the men to a waiting British gunboat where they crowded into the crew's quarters. Their festive mood ended when a German e-boat fired on the vessel and killed one of its gunners. The British skipper summoned Dick to take the dead sailor's place. Although Dick complied, he felt relieved and grateful when Spitfires chased the enemy away.

Dick arrived in England on April 16, 1944. Dick Faulkner's known helpers were **J. Vergenet, Georges Dubray** and **André Lue**. (*Jerri Donohue*)

**W. BUDD WENTZ (8<sup>th</sup> Air Force, 487 Bomb Group)** died January 10, 2015.

Budd, a trained B-24 pilot, had never seen a B-17 when he arrived in Lavenham, England, a B-17 base, in late 1944. The future recipient of five Air Medals and a Distinguished Flying Cross, Budd was a quick study, however. He had a week or so of training and then flew with another crew on a raid to Berlin.

Having survived his first mission, the 20-year old pilot then took his original crew on their first mission on February 3, 1945. En route to Weimar, an engine failed. Budd left the formation, jettisoned the bombs and headed for England. But they lost another engine. When a third engine lost power, Budd ordered his men to bail out. The intercom wasn't working and only the men in the front of the plane heard him. Because he was uncertain about the others, Budd opted to crash land the B-17 in a pasture. On impact,

the bomb bay doors broke, ripping through the earth like a plow, and filling the rear of the plane with mud. As soon as the bomber came to rest, Budd discovered four gunners in the rear, almost buried in mud. He quickly dug them out.

The villagers of Rienne, who had watched the B-17's descent and crash, immediately approached. The aircraft still carried a lot of gas and Budd feared it would explode. He shouted at the crowd to stay away. When they ignored him, he thought they didn't understand English, and shouted again – this time in German. Unbeknownst to Budd, the mayor of that small Belgian town was in a concentration camp. In addition, the Germans were rumored to "plant" captured aircraft and English-speaking spies in occupied territory in their attempt to ferret out the Resistance. Because of Budd's unfortunate use of German, the Belgians seemed wary even after he and the other airmen identified themselves as Americans. Six armed members of the underground promptly appeared in a truck and when they heard from the villagers what had happened, they, too were hostile.

Everything changed when **Dr. Edgar Vandeveld**, their English-speaking leader arrived. Satisfied with Budd's account, Vandeveld sent men to retrieve the fliers who had bailed out three miles away. Meanwhile, the Americans removed boxes of rations from the plane and also the bombsight.

"The underground boys wanted the gas," Budd recalled. "They were the nasty ones before their boss got there." Budd helpfully offered them his pilot's relief tube with which to siphon the fuel. Using a suck-and-spit technique, they recovered the gasoline before any Germans arrived.

Vandeveld instructed the villagers to tell the Germans that men had abandoned the downed plane and run in the direction of France. He also assigned the evaders to various homes. Budd stayed with the imprisoned mayor's family, and he gave his binoculars to the man's little boy.

Budd did not want his parents or the crew's families to hear that they were MIA. He pressed Vandeveld to somehow inform the base that he and the men were safe. The underground leader took Budd to a mountainous cabin in the dark of night and they used a radio to contact an agency in England. The brief message worked. No loved one in the States received a dreaded telegram about Budd's crew. (Nor did fellow airmen in Lavenham presume them missing and pilfer their belongings.)

For several days, the Americans stayed out of sight because enemy patrols appeared as many as five times a day, without any set schedule. Because the Germans were already on the run, they did not conduct a thorough search of the area.

At last American troops and jeeps traveled through Vienne. Unable to take the evaders with them, the soldiers sent a truck to pick them up. Budd and the others stayed in a convent in Brussels while they waited for a flight back to England. During the day they went sightseeing and visited the zoo.

Back at their base, Budd's colonel informed him that the crew must resume flying despite their evasion experience. They had crashed on their first mission – and there was a shortage of crews. Even if they were later captured, the men would pose no risk to their helpers in the already-liberated section where they evaded.

Three times Budd returned to England in B-17s with only two working engines. On another occasion, he lost a third engine as they crossed the channel. He landed that plane at an RAF base near the beach.

On Budd's 28<sup>th</sup> mission, his plane suffered a serious jolt and the crew suspected another aircraft had crashed into it. Pieces of their B-17 fell away. Half of the vertical stabilizer disappeared, and the elevators and rudder no longer worked. Budd somehow took the plane out of the formation and the crew salvoed the bombs. As they got closer to the ground, one of the men spotted a small runway and Budd managed to land there. He

expected they would all become POWs. Instead, American infantrymen ran to meet them. The GIs had reached the field only two hours earlier and were about to push onward. The Germans had left behind a captured B-17. After determining it was airworthy, Budd and his crew flew it back to England, arriving four hours behind schedule. This time the colonel relieved the men of any further combat duty.

Decades after the war, Budd learned from a Dutch colonel that a German fighter pilot had deliberately rammed the B-17 as part of an organized operation. Soon after, a German veteran who took part in that mission contacted Budd. Because of the time of the incident, and the location of Budd's crash, the Germans were able to identify the Luftwaffe pilot who targeted Budd's plane. The man was still living.

After ramming Budd's B-17, the pilot had successfully ejected from his ME-109 although he was wounded, lost an arm, and spent months in the hospital. The German veteran cried when he learned that all of the Americans had survived the crash he caused. Budd, who corresponded with two of the Luftwaffe pilots, appeared in a History Channel documentary about the German mission.

Several years after the war, Budd returned to Rienne. The mayor's son gleefully produced the binoculars Budd had given him in 1945. Sadly, the boy's father did not survive the concentration camp.

Dr. Edgar Vandeveld died in 1962. Richard Shandor, AFEES Corresponding Secretary, helped put Budd in touch with Vandeveld's son in 2011. (*Jerri Donohue*)

**T/SGT. JOSEPH A. RHODES, (E&E#1701) Flight Engineer/Top Turret Gunner, 8<sup>th</sup> AF, 305<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group, 366<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron, Chelveston, England: folded his wings on 23 January 2012.**

Sgt. Rhodes was flying his third mission on 24 April 1944. The target of the 305<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group was the underground factory at Oberpfaffenhofen, Germany, which

was producing engines for the Me-262 twin jet fighter. On the way to the target his group was hit by ME-109s, which damaged number one engine. With this engine feathered, his B-17 #42-31816 named "Swinging Door" dropped behind the bomber formation and bombed the target by itself.

As the bomber returned to base two German FW-190s were sent to intercept the lone, damaged B-17. The two fighters raked the bomber with their 20mm cannons. The radio operator Isaac Denemy was killed and the ball turret gunner, Jim Mayfield was wounded and would die in a French hospital. After seeing the damage to the bomber five men bailed while the other four stayed in the plane until it had crash-landed near Leuze, France.

The crash-landing survivors were the pilot, Bill Lincoln, copilot, Al Pagnotta, bombardier, Milton (Mickey) Goldfeder and Joe Rhodes. **Yvonne Chauderlier** and her son **Robert** witnessed the crash-landing. Yvonne contacted her husband, **Henri**, who then delivered civilian clothes to the four airmen. Henri, **Lucien Lorriette** and **Julien Mahoudeaux**, who was the Mayor of Leuze, hid the airmen in a shed for the night.

The next day, Julian and his sons took the four to a wooded area where they stayed in a bunker, near Rocroi, where they stayed until April 30<sup>th</sup>. Julien and another man took them to the **Robert Charton** house, where the four men were sheltered until May 16<sup>th</sup>. From there they were moved to the Maquis camp near Revin.

On June 6<sup>th</sup> the four were taken to another camp near Chauny, where Victor Layton (OSS agent) and about 50 Allied airmen were staying. On June 12<sup>th</sup>, before three thousand German troops and Vichy soldiers attacked the camp, Layton and all the airmen departed the area before the battle began. S/Sgt. Peter Clark (E&E#1674), Lincoln (E&E#1919), Pagnotta (E&E#1920), Goldfeder (E&E#1960) and Joe were escorted out of the camp by **Jacques Pâris de Bollardière**.

When Joe and Clark were separated from the group, the two decided to try for Switzerland. **Marcel and Denise Leonard** aided the two airmen during this time. **M. and Mme. Jean Cordier** sheltered the pair and they attended the baptism of Cordier's son during this time.

After arriving in Sedan, a priest arranged for Clark and Joe to go to Mirecourt, where the **Sarron family** housed the pair until September 3<sup>rd</sup> when American forces liberated Mirecourt. Four others were successful evaders, Campbell (E&E#1390), Bergman (E&E#1724), Marco (E&E#1921), and Snodgrass (E&E#1922). Over the years Joe stayed in contact with **Robert Charton, Victor Layton, France Charbonneaux Bodas, Liliane Sarron Oudard, Jeanne Sarron Lotte, Francis Cordier, and Pierre Cordier.** (*Rich Shandor*)

## DOCUMENTARY OPPORTUNITY

ASA Productions ([www.asa-uk.tv](http://www.asa-uk.tv)), a film and video production company based in the UK is producing a three-part documentary based on the aftermath of World War II and is looking to interview veterans, children, civilians, etc. about their experiences in the aftermath of WWII--anyone with vivid memories of the devastation after the war, positive or negative.

The documentary will be broadcast on the BBC and Yesterday Channel. There are no expenses on behalf of the interviewees and no compensation for participating. ASA Productions will travel to meet and film participants wherever they feel most comfortable. The interview could last several hours but will be edited for the documentary. Anyone interested in participating should contact Jade McKenna, Production Researcher at ASA Productions at 07964743268 or via email: [Jademckenna20023@aol.com](mailto:Jademckenna20023@aol.com).

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### **CANADIAN REPRESENTATIVE:**

Raymond Sherk, Ontario, Canada

## **THE PREZ SEZ**

*By John Katsaros (EE #755)*

It is with a great disappointment that my wife Mary and I will be unable to attend the 2015 Annual U.S. Air Forces Escape and Evasion (AFEES) Reunion, due to a series of our family's medical issues.

Hopefully, we will once again have the

pleasure and fine camaraderie in the year 2016 that we immensely enjoyed in the past. Meanwhile, I will be willing to continue serving as your President if the AFEES Board of Directors so wishes.

Also, I am devoted to continue exerting all my efforts to work with the office of Representative Niki Tsongas, (MA-030), the members of the US Congress, and all members of the U.S. Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society to finally obtain the signatures of 290 Co-sponsors on the 2015 AFEES Congressional Bill HR 632, and have the President of the United States of America to honor us, by signing the bill and presenting AFEES the Congressional Gold Medal during a White House ceremony in Washington, DC.

Our AFEES members and I sincerely want to thank Representative Tsongas for reintroducing the AFEES, 2015 HR Bill 632, her past and present staff of Sean Duggan, Major Timothy Helfrich USAF, Defense Fellow, Thomas Temple, and for the AFEES members (along with their relatives and friends) that have been instrumental in this endeavor. Congresswoman Tsongas and staff have approached members of Congress, The Armed Services Committee and The Military Officer's Association of America (MOAA) to request their help to attain the necessary signatures on the re-introduced 2015 Bill HR 632. The letter of endorsement from the President of the Military Officer's Association of America's (MOAA), Vice Admiral Norbert R. Ryan (Ret.) is on page 8.

We should all take note on the recent message sent to the AFEES Board of Directors by Colonel Steve MacIssac USAF (Ret.) for all AFEES to read and provide participation. *"Hello all you AFEES Heroes! Based on election results, I now feel that very early Spring will be the right time to push 110% for Congressional Recognition of AFEES; I feel the Military and Vets will be held in higher regard. I know of at least 8 new members who were Combat Vets, and I am sure they will be the first of many to sign-on.*

*God willing & the Creek don't rise (2014 has been a rough year...). See you in Salt Lake! Cheers – Mac."*

Good health, happiness to all. Have a very successful reunion in Salt Lake City, Utah. We wish we were there with you!

Best, John.

*I once asked a sergeant major of a Highland regiment the age-old question, "What is worn under the kilt?"*

*"Nothing is worn under the kilt, sir," he replied. "It is all in verra, verra good condition."*

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