

# THE AIR FORCES ESCAPE & EVASION SOCIETY

## Fall 1999 Communications

VOLUME 13; NUMBER 3

WICHITA FALLS, TEXAS 76307-2501

AUG. 27, 1999

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---Photo by Ralph K. Patton

Early on the morning of last July 8, a group of Americans joined an international contingent at a ceremonial bridge in Saint-Girons, France, to begin a commemorative walk across the Pyrenees Mountains into Spain. "Operation Home Run," as it was called, retraced one of the evasion routes used by many Allied airmen and French patriots during World War II.

Five members of the U.S. contingent were forced to drop out at various stages of the four-day hike, but 13 completed the crossing.

### With the American flag at the bridge:

Seated, left to right: Stephen Leavel, Gordon McCoy, Elizabeth Wand, Bette Patton, Claudette Naggs and Sue Ellison. Standing, same order: Michelle Nahas, Jean Pena, Mary Grauerholz, Christopher Wand, Lynn David, Bill Ross, Beverly Patton Wand, Sarah Ross, John Wand, Arno Hausman, Geoff Patton, Sherri Ottis.

**U.S.  
AIR FORCES  
ESCAPE/EVASION  
SOCIETY  
Communications**

*Published Quarterly*  
**WE WILL NEVER FORGET**



Volume 13 -- Number 3

August 27, 1999

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AFEES COMMUNICATIONS IS THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE AIR FORCES ESCAPE & EVASION SOCIETY. AFEES IS A TAX-EXEMPT VETERANS ORGANIZATION UNDER IRS CODE 501 (C) (19). IT WAS FOUNDED IN 1964 AND IS CHARTERED IN THE STATE OF GEORGIA.

THE SOCIETY'S PURPOSE IS TO ENCOURAGE MEMBERS HELPED BY THE 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, HE MUST HAVE BEEN FORCED DOWN BEHIND ENEMY LINES AND AVOIDED CAPTIVITY, OR ESCAPED FROM CAPTIVITY TO RETURN TO ALLIED CONTROL.

IN ADDITION TO REGULAR MEMBERSHIP, OTHER CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP ARE HELPER MEMBERS, AND FRIEND MEMBERS.

## Columbia, Mo. to host AFEES in May 2000

COLUMBIA, Mo. -- The 3,050 volunteers and committee chairmen of the Salute to Veterans Corp look forward to hosting the Air Forces Escape & Evasion Society at the Memorial Day Weekend Celebration, May 25-29, 2000.

Conference hotel headquarters will be the Ramada Inn (I-70, Exit 127) in Columbia. Room rates will be less than \$50, with a full breakfast buffet included.

Columbia is midway between Kansas City and St. Louis. Ozark Airlines provides non-stop jet service from Dallas and Chicago. Tiger Express has shuttle van service from St. Louis and Kansas City airports to the hotel.

Registration opens on Thursday, with the welcoming buffet that evening. On Friday, two optional day trips will be offered, with the helpers' dinner to follow.

On Saturday and Sunday, the focus will be on the Salute to Veterans Airshow, featuring more than 50 vintage military aircraft on the ground and in the air.

At mid-day, AFEES members will muster and join the Parade of Honor, a short distance to stage central, where they will be introduced and honored as a group.

In late afternoon, shuttle buses will take attendees back to the Ramada to dress for the Salute to Veterans Honored Guests Banquet with music, prime rib, wine, USO show and military memorabilia auction.

The AFEES own Gala Banquet is scheduled for Sunday night.

A Memorial Day parade is scheduled for Monday morning. Members of AFEES will be on their own float(s). After the 9 a.m. parade, dismount from the floats at the Boone County courthouse for a military ceremony, with wreath-laying, 21-gun salute, and Taps.

The ceremony will end by noon. An optional post-reunion trip to Branson, the country-music capital, is a possibility.

For AFEES members who can arrive early, the committee would welcome them to participate in the Living History program by speaking to area school children on Thursday and Friday.

Reunion reservation and hotel reservation forms will be included in the December issue of *Communications*.

# 'Operation Home Run' a smash hit

## *U.S. hikers take part*

By RALPH K. PATTON  
AFEES 'Home Run' Coordinator

Twenty-six members and friends of AFEES traveled to southwestern France in early July to participate in the ceremonial crossing of the Pyrenees Mountains from Saint-Girons, France, to Esterri d'Aneu in Spain. Details of the experience will be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

For nearly two years, I have been in communication with Roger Stanton in England and Scott Goodall in France, the organizers of *Operation Home Run*. The complete cooperation of these two individuals made our participation possible. Roger stimulated our interest and Scott made it happen!

Thank you Roger, for encouraging U.S. participation and for not misleading us about the difficulty of the climb. A special word of thanks goes to Scott and Judy Goodall -- without you it would not have been possible. You spent many hours taking care of details and answering questions.

We look forward to the opportunity to reciprocate your kind hospitality in the U.S.A.

When I first mentioned Operation Home Run to the AFEES directors, I thought that perhaps as many as five might be willing to try it. By the time 35 people had expressed an interest, it was too late to back out. I had bought myself a major project.

Several interested members were unable to make it this year, but 26 Americans made the trip to France. What an outstanding group of Americans they were! They represented our country with dignity, with class, with perservance, with courage and with humility. They were a terrific group.

They arranged hotels and airline passage and bought hiking and camping gear, all on the strength of a few letters from people most of them had never met.

Eighteen AFEES members, children, grandchildren and friends started on the *Chemin de la Liberte* (The Freedom Trail) and 13 completed the crossing into Spain. Those who were forced to drop out should have no regrets and need make no apologies. Those who made it were glad they did -- but most of them do not want to repeat it!

This was, by far, the most rugged, yet the most rewarding trip I have ever been associated with.

While others struggled with the rugged Pyrenees Mountains, I endured the luxury of the Hotel Echeynne in St. Girons for four days. There I had the pleasure of spending some time with Michou and Pierre Ugeux and Nadine and Gustave Antoine of the Comet Line, Denise Heches of the Francoise Line and with Dr. Gabriel Nahas of the Dutch-Paris Line.

Dr. Nahas' book, *La Filiere du Rail*, has been translated into English as "The Network to Freedom." It soon will be available to AFEES members.

### PARTICIPANTS IN OPERATION HOME RUN July 8-12, 1999

Saint Girons, France, to Esterri de Aneu, Spain

#### AMERICAN CONTINGENT

Art and Lee Beltrone, Keswick, Va.  
Clayton and Scotty David, Hannibal, Mo.  
Lynn A. David and Jonathan, Sunset Hills, Mo.  
Sue Ellison, Boulder, Colo.  
Mary Grauerholz, East Falmouth, Mass.  
Larry and Ruth Grauerholz, Wichita Falls, Tex.  
Stephen Leavel, Alamo, Calif.  
Gordon and Janet McCoy, Linden, Calif.  
Claudette Naggs, Port Arthur, Tex.  
Dr. Gabriel and Marilyn Nahas, New York, N.Y.  
Michelle Nahas and Arno Hausman, Ridgewood, N.J.  
Sherri Ottis, Clinton, Miss.  
Ralph and Bette Patton, Pittsburgh, Pa.  
Geoffrey L. Patton, Washington, D.C.  
Jean Pena, York, Pa.  
William Ross and Sarah, Toledo, Ohio  
John and Beverly Wand, Chris and Eliza, Madison, N.J.

#### THE BRITISH CONTINGENT

Maurice and Dorothy Collins, Chelmsford, England  
Scott Goodall, Rimont, France  
Rupert Lewis, Paris, France  
Alex Lewis, Brockenhurst, England  
Samantha Lewis, County Sligo, Eire  
Tim Lewis, Warwick, England  
Michael Murphy, Couiza, France  
Roger Stanton, North Yorkshire, England  
Malcolm Collins, North Yorkshire, England  
Boris Spence, Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, England

#### THE DUTCH CONTINGENT

Ellen van Gilst, 1471 CJ Kwadijk, Holland  
Albert Schaafotra, Ede 6713 KB, Holland  
Mary Yonker, 1862 BK Bergen N.H., Holland  
Gert Overeem, 3892 BB Zeewolde, Holland  
Jaap Overeem, 1403 BV Bussum, Holland  
Ben Rijkensberg, 1441 GR Puvnerend, Holland  
Jan Pieter Rijkensberg, 1444 AM Puvnerend, Holland  
Heere van den Engel, Castet, Ariege, France

#### THE BELGIAN CONTINGENT

From Brussels, members of the Belgian Air Force:  
Eddy Lievrouw, Johan Samyn, Filip Windels,  
Bob Croes, M. Leroy, Pascal Herman, M. Gilot, Alain Anckaer.

*Including the French contingent who joined the group for the final two days, the number of walkers was 147.*

*Also present at the opening ceremonies in Saint Girons were Andree Dumont ("Nadine" of the Comet line), and her sister, Mme. Ugeux ("Michou"), also of the Comet line. Both women were highly decorated by the British and American governments for aiding downed airmen during World War II.*



*Air Chief Marshal Sir Lewis Hodges lays a wreath on behalf of the Royal Air Forces Escaping Society at Eden Camp Museum during the annual service at Eden Camp Museum. A wreath was also placed by representatives of AFEES.*

## Escapers take look at past

**From the *Yorkshire (U.K.) Post*, May 17, 1999**

The setting was Eden Camp modern history theme museum, which makes a living out of re-creating wartime scenes.

But to the hundreds of former prisoners of war from all over the world who congregated there on Saturday (May 15, 1999), it was far from pretence.

Men and women who risked their lives during the Second World War relived those days.

They were there for what was said to be the biggest international gathering of its kind. The Malton museum's third Evaders and Escapers weekend was organized to pay tribute to those who tried to free themselves from enemy forces and those who helped them.

They included the FANY girls, members of the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry, the uniformed transport corps which manned European escape lines.

Many were ex-public schoolgirls, enlisted for their excellent language skills, who became radio operators or took up other positions as agents in France and Belgium.

Also attending were members of the Colditz Association, the Royal Air Force Escapees Society, the

Army POW Escape Club, the Monte San Marino Trust, the Special Forces Club and the MGB Association. Representatives came from all over Britain and abroad, including France, Belgium, Denmark and Holland. (Also, the U.S.A.)

They began at noon, with a short service and wreath laying ceremony around the war memorial, and continued with the unveiling of two plaques, one dedicated to the FANYs, the other to members of the Colditz Association.

Veterans then viewed exhibitions dedicated to escape lines, the Great Escape, the wooden horse escape and Colditz, kept in huts which make up the museum. A dinner was held in the evening at the Monk Bar Hotel in York.

The events started three years ago after a suggestion from a former military man and POW historian Roger Stanton, of Harrogate.

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*Chairman Ralph Patton and President Richard Smith represented AFEES at the Eden Camp Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance. They placed a wreath in honor of our Helpers at the memorial stele at the camp entrance. (See Page 14, Summer Communications.)*

## Welcome, Ami!

# Ralph, Dick are thanked by French

From *La Presse de Armor*  
Plouha, May 27, 1999  
(Translation)

*The Shelburn network is a strong point in the local history and even the youngest folks know that a handful of Resistants made it possible to send back home 135 Allied airmen during the last war.*

At the heart of the network, the memory remains vivid and it's the same on the side of the Allies, as last weekend's visit of Ralph Patton and Dick Smith of AFEES proved.

During their trip to Europe, those two expressed the desire to meet their helpers and other members of the Shelburn "Web." Friday the two Americans went to Kergrist where Ralph Patton's plane had crashed. He spent many weeks in a school in Plouay, went to Langanet, Guingamp, then to the House of Alphonse in Plouha before returning to England in a Corvette in March '44.

Dick Smith crashed near Paris and was taken in charge by the Shelburn network January '44.

Saturday Dick and Ralph were welcomed at City Hall, accompanied by many former members of the network. Jean Trehiou, president, told them, "We helped you, but you were our liberators" and Mayor Jean Derrien was bursting with pride to be able to welcome these two Americans and to thank them.

A reception was held afterwards.

From *Le Telegramme*, Plouha,  
May 26, 1999

Before their friends left for the USA Monday morning the Shelburn members organized a dinner at the Lucotel to honor Dick Smith and Ralph Patton. After the cocktails, president Trehiou gave each a painting of Bonaparte Beach, the place of their escape.

Ralph Patton told of how he has



## AT PLOUHA --

**Jean Trehiou, Ralph Patton, Jean Derrien and Dick Smith**

returned many times to Plouha, where true bonds of friendship were woven. He thanked everyone in both their names.

Jean Trehiou reminded everyone that thanks to the intransigence of its leader, Dumais, the network had no arrests, no deportations and that its eight operations went without incident. The mayor, who was a young boy at the time, said the new generations must not ignore that part of history.

At this dinner was also Gordon Carter, also sent back to England and whose heart has stayed in the region since he married a "Bretonne" and now lives in Ploubazlanec. He had with him a wing

piece from his plane, presented that very morning by the wildest coincidence.

During dinner Freddie Breizirland sang the Shelburn ballad and a Far West America song. It was in this convivial ambiance that the prune-stuffed chicken was appreciated by all 22 guests.

*Gordon Carter, RCAF, was evacuated from Brittany by gunboat on April 7, 1943. French historian Francois Cadic picked up a relic from Gordon's crashed Halifax at a farm near the crash site a couple years ago and presented it to Gordon when they met at Plouha on May 23.*



**Gordon Carter, RCAF, with a piece of his Halifax bomber**

# France to London: a 3600-mile trip

From "The State," Columbia,  
S.C.

Thursday, May 1, 1997

By ANDY PHELAN  
Staff Writer

As journeys go, the 3,600-mile path 1st Lt. James Kendall took through Europe and North Africa in 1944 can only be described as circuitously ironic.

Kendall's story is like many others' dealing with survival, bravery and luck. But it's also about strange circumstances that led Kendall, a pilot, on an odyssey through history.

As a member of the 371st Army Air

Forces Fighter Bomber Group, Kendall began his adventure near Bournemouth on the south coast of England in May 1944.

"About a month before D-Day, my group was stationed there, and we were flying missions across the English Channel," he said, sitting in his home at Yacht Cove on Lake Murray.

Old photographs and maps lay before him while he reminisced. Though these events took place more than 52 years ago, his memory is clear.

Kendall flew P-47 Thunderbolts, attacking railroads, bridges, airfields and convoys in occupied France to "soften" the Germans for the coming invasion.

When more than 156,000 men landed for Operation Overlord June 6, 1944, Kendall's job was to help U.S. forces take Utah and Omaha beaches.

"We flew about four missions that day, patrolling the beaches, looking for German aircraft and dodging barrage balloons," he said, taking a deep breath and closing his eyes. He paused to let the memories rush back into his mind.

Kendall and his unit moved to Sainte-Mere-Eglise, about six miles inland, and continued to fly missions out of a makeshift airstrip. In late July, the Allied forces broke through at St. Lo and Avaranches, opening the flood gates into the heart of France.

Fighter-bombers were crucial to the war effort, according to Paul MacKenzie, teacher of military history at the University of South Carolina.

"Tactical air power was imperative for Allied success before and after D-Day," he said. "Fighter-bombers knocked out roads, tanks and motor transport, forcing the Germans to move mostly by night. Enemy communications were almost completely wiped out and rail support rendered useless."

Supporting Patton's army as he pushed farther south, it was on Kendall's 51st mission that his travel plans changed. Returning from a mission in east-central France, Kendall and his flight leader spotted a German airfield outside Dijon.

"We decided to dive-bomb it and took a hell of a lot of flak on the way down, but he got two planes, and I caught two on fire too," he said. "While getting away, I saw a gun firing at 90 degrees. Just when I thought he couldn't catch me, he shot off my canopy and caught my engine on fire."

Kendall pulled up to 1,000 feet and bailed out. Shot in the leg after he landed, Kendall surrendered and was taken to an old bastille near Dijon.

Two weeks later, the train transporting Kendall to a German prison camp was attacked by P-47s in Dole, France. During the chaos, Kendall escaped, freed by the distraction of 50-caliber guns bearing down on the rail cars.

"I climbed over a wall and found



**In 1944, Army 1st Lt. James Kendall survived a strange journey by plane, truck and on foot through Europe and North Africa after being shot down over France.**

myself in the town square," he said, his voice quickening and his pitch higher. "I told a girl I was American and asked for help. She took me to her house and told me to get under the bed."

Dressed in clothes provided by the Resistance, Kendall lived with a mortician and his wife for a month until the town was liberated.

"If the Germans came to the door, I was supposed to hide in a casket and play dead," he said. "I didn't like that idea too much."

He left Dole with an American hospital unit because they told him otherwise he'd be AWOL, but they had little use for a pilot at the front.

"They didn't know what to do with me. I stayed with them for about a week before they let me leave and find a unit I could join up with."

Because parts of France were still occupied by the Germans, Kendall hitched a ride to Marseilles on the south coast of France where he caught a B-25 bomber to Naples, Italy.

"There, they cut orders for me to report back to England," Kendall said with a wry smile. "To do it I had to fly from Naples to Algeria, Casablanca, around Spain, back to London."

In London, the Supreme Allied Intelligence Group gave Kendall the coordinates for the 371st. He flew to Paris just after liberation in late August to look for the unit. Not until he got to Paris did he reach the point they gave him in St.-Mere-Eglise.

"I knew my unit wasn't there any more. The command center at Versailles didn't know where they were either, so I partied in Paris like everybody else."

A few days later, Kendall got the word. The 371st was in Reims that day, but they were moving -- to Dole.

"I couldn't believe it," he laughed, his face getting brighter with each chuckle. "I picked up a P-47 in Reims and flew it down to Dole. What a circuit! It was great to see the guys and the look on their faces when I told them I had lived there a month. After all I had been through, it hit me how glad I was to be alive and not a prisoner."

Kendall returned to the United States in December 1944 and spent the next 21 years in the Air Force, retiring as a lieutenant colonel in 1963.



**SECOND GENERATIONERS** -- Present for the Mesa reunion: from left, Richard Shandor, Carol Goldfeder and Larry Rogoff. The young folks are always welcome at AFEES reunions!

## Passing on the torch . . .

It is always a pleasure to have the sons, daughters and other relatives of members attend the annual AFEES reunion. There is no better way to pass along the history of escape and evasion than to have the next generation involved in the Society.

It is no secret that many WWII veterans groups are becoming victims of the calendar. The result is that it will be up to future generations to perpetuate the traditions and heritage of the men who served their country with honor and with courage.



**THE YOUNGER SET** -- Those attending the Arizona reunion last April also included this group. From left: Rodden Marco, Stephanie Lincoln-Biorn, Peter Shields, Lynn David, all children of members.



**THE BELGIAN BUNCH** --Belgian Helpers and some of the men they helped posed for this picture at the AFEES reunion in Mesa, Ariz., in April. From the left: Jerry DeChambre, Frank Caubergh, Reginald Winssinger (Belgian Consul in Phoenix), Bill Kosseff, Yvonne Daley, Bob Grimes, Yvonne Files, Gil Shawn and Clayton David.

## Group studies Normandy crash sites

Association Normande du Souvenir Aerien 39/45 (The Normandy Association for the Air Remembrance 39-45) was

organized in 1996. It now has a membership of more than 100 historians, dedicated to preserving the history of

wartime aviation in the area.

Due to its geographical position, especially during the days before and after June 6, 1944, Normandy was the scene of intense aerial activity.

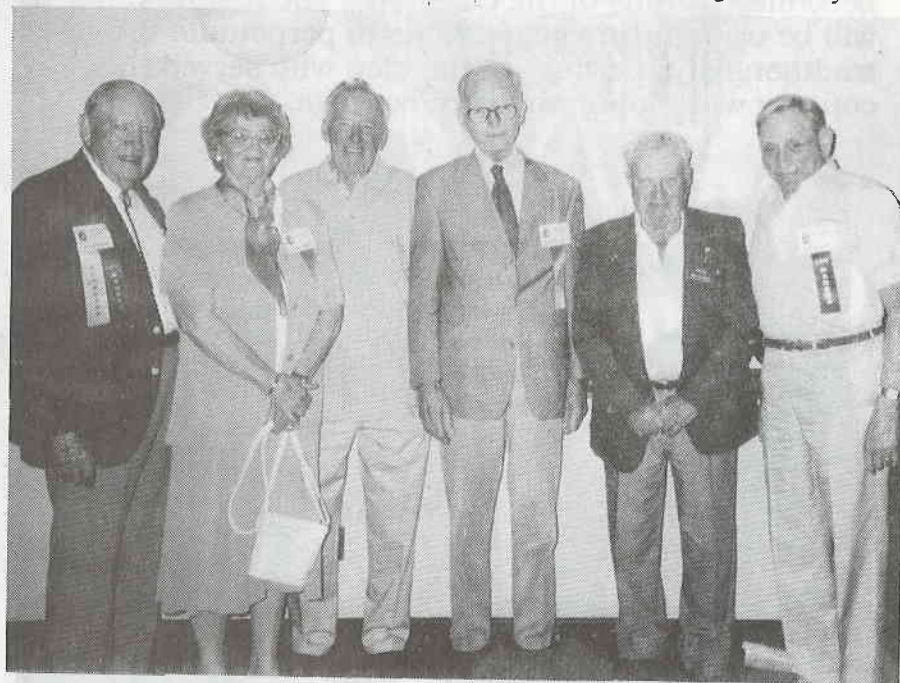
The association works with landowners and farmers, as well as with authorities, to carry out excavations of crash sites with metal detectors and shovels, to pay tribute to the airmen who liberated France.

Some airmen have been honored by a remembrance stone near the site where they met a heroic death.

After locating a crash site, the association seeks to learn what happened to the plane's crew members, or their escape route if there were Allied airmen. Survivors or their families are contacted and often are invited back to France for a visit and perhaps be presented with a part of the plane recovered.

The A.N.S.A. can be contacted at 18, rue des trois cornets, 27190 ORMES, Normandy, France. The phones are: 02.32.67.23.37 or 02.32.39.04.48; FAX 02.32.39.04.86; e-mail: ansa@infonie.fr

The association's news bulletin is published in French, English and German.



Some of the airmen who were aided by Joke Folmer and Jacques Vrij in Holland during the war got together for this picture at the AFEES reunion in Arizona. From the left: Clayton David, Joke, Harold Killian, Jacques, Max Palencia and Bill Kosseff.



*Yvonne Daley-Brusselmans, at left, visits with some long-time friends, AFEES Chair Ralph and Bette Patton, at the reunion in Mesa, Ariz., last April.*



*Mary and Robert Sweatt of Burton, Tex., seemed to be having a good time when the photographer came by during the Mesa convention.*



*The Mesa reunion was a time for friends to get together. Here, from left: Manny Rogoff, John Rucigay, Thelma Loring, Dorothy Rucigay and Bud Loring chat it up a bit for the camera.*



**TRADITIONAL SERVICE** -- This group was in charge of the Memorial Service which concluded the AFEES reunion in Mesa, Ariz., in April. The ceremony is dedicated to the memory of loved ones and former comrades no longer with us. Members and friends were given the opportunity to light a candle in memory of a special person. From left: Thelma Loring, Herb Brill, Francene Weyland, Margaret Smith, Dick Smith, Dorothy Lashinsky, Margaret Fricke, Dorothy Rucigay and Leah Feingold.

## Phoenix, Ariz., Sunday Banquet, April 25, 1999 Message from Albert Postma, Dutch Helper

Both Fred Boogaart and myself can assure you that we are very proud to be here in the midst of this very distinguished and unique party of American and some Canadian aircrew who miraculously survived that cruel WW2, many aided (after your agonizing experience leaving your crippled plane) by members of the Resistance.

We will remember forever the emotional stories we can only exchange at an AFEES reunion like this. The same friendship we shared during the war-time years, that same friendship we experienced during this AFEES reunion.

Now I would very much like to bring to the stand, up front, and in the floodlight of this wonderful evening, my cousin Mia Lelivelt. In 1943, hardly a teen-ager, but doing a man's job, Mia took care of a full house of American, Canadian and British aircrew and Dutch students, also taking care of her mother and her two younger brothers. Mia did the washing, the cooking, the careful collecting of food for such a big and different kind of family. During those many strained months, Mia taught the

men to ride a bike, walk in wooden shoes, taught them the Dutch phrases the men needed later on their way to the South. Never smoke an American cigarette outside the house, ignore the names of the Helpers. The less you know, the better. Get used to false-paper names.

After the downed aircrew were brought by the Resistance men to her family home, Mia looked after the men who mostly were wounded and in a state of shock, and took care of them through the medical care of the family doktor, who could be fully trusted.

The most important information to the men came from Father Martien, who together with Mia, was responsible for strict security rules. Both carried the heavy load of total responsibility, both realizing the price they had to pay when caught by the Nazi oppressor while harbouring an everchanging number of Allied aircrew and students.

A tragic and dramatic day: 20 April 1944. A Dutch collaborator had done his devilish work. Father Martien and three of his Resistance comrades fell

into the hands of the Nazis and all four, including Father Martien, died for their good cause in front of a firing squad, leaving the families, in a completely desolate and hopeless situation. My cousin Mia, as young as she was, carried on, looking after her dear mother and her two younger brothers, at the same time taking care of all her present Allied aircrew and the Dutch students, none of whom was found by the Nazi search party. For weeks, Mia's home stayed under strong control of the Dutch-German inspection teams.

\* I bring my salute to a very brave young lady, my cousin Mia Lelivelt, who in times of great danger did her duty, regardless of the great risks involved.

\* I bring my salute to all American aircrew who did not come home; Lest We Forget.

\* I bring my salute to all AFEES members who survived WWII.

\* I bring my salute to all young men and women, who just like you in WWII, risk their lives in the Kosovo war.

**Fate, fortitude and friendship brought us together in World War II; let's go on doing just that!**

## A fighter pilot with the Maquis tells his story

**M.I.A. (Missing in Action),  
written and illustrated by H.  
Phillip Causer, La Cruces, N.M.**

This is a story of escape and evasion, of how the author, after being shot down by ground fire while strafing an enemy aerodrome, evaded capture, fought side by side with the Maquis (Free French) and finally after one unsuccessful attempt, made good his escape back to England and his fighter squadron.

He admits that his book is no award winner, and that no one, even in a fit of kindness, will ever refer to it as being well written, but it is an unusual story, and fortunately a different part of the war than most experienced.

On the day he was shot down, the Maquis, who had been fighting an underground war since the fall of France, received orders from General DeGaulle that they had been impatiently waiting for, to rise up with arms against their German conquerors.

The story was written shortly after the author's return to England while on R. and R. A few portions of the story have been rewritten for the sake of continuity and clarity, but great care was taken not to disturb the words, thoughts, and impressions of a young fighter pilot at that time and during those years.

Names and places were changed back then for reasons of security and the protection of the individuals and their families.

This is but one story, by one person, of the many that still remain unwritten.

He mentions, that only if the French took the time to speak very slowly, and sometimes at his request to repeat themselves, was he entirely certain of the daily game plan. Without a clue, he knew that picks, shovels, and a pile of dynamite in the back seat of their Citroen meant they were going to blow up a bridge. However, at other times when he thought he had it hacked, it did come as a bit of a surprise when they wound up in the brothel of the town he thought they'd come to liberate.



*The author in his 'Thunderbolt'*

During the author's 40-some years of flying, he has logged several thousand hours in every type of aircraft from homebuilts to jet fighters and heavy multi-engine.

He has trained Dutch, French, British, and American pilots, served as fighter pilot, engineering officer, and test pilot.

*To order M.I.A., call 800-430-0980.  
All credit cards accepted. Price is \$14.95,  
plus \$2.50 for mailing.*

## Names hidden in the garden

Peter Van Den Hurk, an AFEES member/helper living in Meppel, Holland, would like to contact airmen he aided during the war.

With his wife Mimi and other members of his group, they helped 90 Allied airmen escape. Peter does not have many names of men who were helped because one of the men hid a can with the names in the garden, but became frightened and disposed of it.

Men who got in touch with him after the war were Harry Penny, RAF, the late Harry Dolph (former editor of Communications), Howard DeMallie of Rochester, N.Y., Howard's friend Bishop, now deceased, Victor Ferrari of San Antonio, Tex., and Clyde Martin of Mackinaw, Ill.

One of the airmen was arrested with Peter and Mimi and all were to be executed on Christmas Day 1944, but Resistance groups broke them out of jail and hid them until Meppel was liberated by the British on April 13, 1945.

Peter and Mimi, who fell recently and broke her hip, would like to hear from any of the airmen they aided. Their postal address: Deken vd Ackerhof 71, 5431 DP CUYK, the Netherlands.

## NEW MEMBERS

**JAMES P. CRUISE**  
32 Grant Ave.  
Brockton, MA 02301-6936  
Ph.: 508-586-7705  
13th AF, 51st TCG Air Evac.  
Wife: Kathryn

**CLYDE S. HATLEY**  
4065 Highway 601 W  
Salisbury, NC 28147  
Ph.: 704-633-5258  
Swiss Evader  
8th AF, 492nd BG

**L. HARVEY HEWIT "L"**  
237 Cheswold Lane  
Haverford, PA 19041  
Ph.: 610-896-0292  
15th AF, 455th BG  
Wife: Brenda

**JAMES W. WHITESIDE**  
12535 W. Seneca Dr.  
Sun City West, AZ 85375  
Ph.: 623-584-3991  
15th AF, 460th BG  
Wife: Esther

\*\*\*\*\*

## It's McWar in France!

*(From the Wichita Falls (Tex.) Times,  
August 25, 1999)*

PARIS (Scripps) -- French farmers vow to step up their campaign against McDonald's fast food outlets after their violent protest over U.S. sanctions against French luxury foods was supported by the Communist and Green parties.

The demonstrations, so far restricted to southern France, are likely to become national. Activists are planning a mass march this month in Paris.

In the southeast, tons of rotting fruit was poured on the entrance at a McDonald's in Martigues, while six tons of manure blocked doors at one in Arles.

\*\*\*\*\*

# Filipino helpers ready to die first

By **JOHN M. WYLDER**  
Seal Beach, Calif.

I was the bombardier of the crew of the B-24 "Lil Jo Toddy" on an ill-fated mission to the Alicante Airdrome at the northern tip of Negros Island, P.I., on Nov. 1, 1944.

It was a beautiful day and flying along the west coast of Negros, I saw the first paved road since Honolulu. At 18,000 feet, we couldn't see our target due to cloud cover, so our flight circled around and dropped down to 17,000 ft.

On the bomb run, all hell broke loose. About 20 Japanese Zeros and Tonys were in the sky, with more on the runway taking off. On the first pass at our plane, No. 3 engine was shot out. It began smoking with oil streaming over the wing and running away.

One by one, our engines were shot out and our plane caught fire. I saw a Zero shoot out No. 4 from about 50 feet away, so close that I could see the pilot's face.

About that time, Sgt. Dennis Jones got the rear door to his turret open and said that we should bail out. As I began my free fall, there was no sensation of falling. My whole life didn't pass in front of me, but I did think that my



**LT. JOHN M. WYLDER**  
In the Philippines, 1944

family would never know how our crew had done the best job they could.

I delayed pulling my rip cord until I was about 500 feet above the water. The chute opened with a jerk and then the water slapped me in the face as I went under for a few feet and then popped back up like a cork.

Survival training came back to me like hearing a tape recording of what to do. First, get out of your parachute, be calm, and keep all your clothing and shoes, as you will need them. Don't fight anything in the water.

Shortly after cursing my fate, I saw something floating on the water a long way from me. It was my nose gunner, Sgt. Jones, who got out with his life raft. It must have been several hours before he came alongside me; the two of us getting into the one-man raft.

A little later we saw an outrigger coming in our direction with what appeared to us as two civilians wearing short-sleeved shirts and short pants. They stopped paddling and one of the men stood up and looked our way. I yelled out "Americano" and they began to paddle toward us. Then they picked us up. We were both on the floor as they start to paddle away from Bacolod.

I asked Jones what he thought of these two. He said that the one up front with me looked OK, but the one back with him was questionable, as he had a mean face and wore a Japanese aviator's helmet. One of them, Salvador Lopez, spoke out in English and said, "Sir, I have only been to the fourth grade, but when I get you on shore, some of the people have been to Stanford and they speak English."

Soon we were greeted by a sail boat with a crew who told us that they had seen us bail out and had prayed that they would find us. We sent them to look for other members of our crew while Lopez and his companion paddled us to shore on Guimeras Island.

Before we got out of the canoe, several hundred men, women and children were wading out to greet us, saying "Happy New Life." I asked them where we should hide, because we were worth \$10,000 dead or alive and that they would

be killed if they helped American fliers. One of the Filipino elders said that if we had come half way around the world to save their country, the least they could do was die for us.

"We will all die before we let you get captured," they said -- and they meant it.

After eating fresh eggs for a change, we were taken to a coconut grove that had been ripped apart by Lil Jo Toddy, with engines, turret, wings and tail strewn between knocked-down trees.

During our travels on the Island of Panay, we spent most of the time on foot with a few boat trips. We figured that we walked about 150 miles over a period of some 20 days.

Often we stopped to get something cool to drink. Everybody in the village drank out of the same coconut-shell dipper. We were their guests and we could not refuse to drink.

One day we were so hot and sweaty that we asked our guerrilla guides where we could get a bath to cool off. We were told in the next town was a river in which we could bathe. Upon our arrival, we were taken by canoe to a sand bar across the river. We proceeded to disrobe, with our backs to the town folks who lined the opposite shore.



**JOHN M. WYLDER**  
Mesa, Ariz., 1999

Suddenly the townspeople came over to our side of the river and we were being introduced to the mayor, his family, other officials and the rest while we were stark naked.

The Filipinos didn't worry about modesty. Often we would be bathing and women would come down and wash their clothes only a few feet away. People were always around watching as we were the first white people they had seen in three years.

No movie star ever signed more autographs than Sgt. Jones, Sgt. Clyde Whitting, Sgt. Don Mix and I. All the time we were headed north; not knowing why or where we were going.

Our Filipino helpers wouldn't take a dime for the help they rendered. In fact, they gave us Filipino money to spend.

After two more days, we walked northwest to a place called Libertad. There we met a number of Navy and Marine fliers and eight Filipino fliers from Luzon who were flying P-36s with only two .30 cal. machine guns for armament.

Libertad was called Halsey's Harbor as U.S. submarines came in with supplies every now and then, making the area secret. A coast watcher, with a radio transmitter located in the hills, kept in contact with headquarters. Each day they wanted to know condition of the men, serial numbers, birthplaces and other information to ascertain our identity. We were informed that after an elaborate sequence of signals which could be seen through the periscope, that a sub would surface just as the sun went down.

We were taken aboard a large sailboat: 17 Americans, 8 Filipino airmen and 2 civilians who needed medical help. Just as the sun set, up came that gray looking sub -- what a welcome sight!

After being identified, we were taken aboard the U.S.S. Hake (SS256). We were in the harbor about 45 minutes

### **Selman Field Museum receives \$165,000 grant**

The museum project at the former Selman Field at Monroe, La., has been approved to receive a state grant for \$165,000.

For more information, contact the Aviation Historical Museum of Louisiana, Inc., 3310 Concordia, Monroe, LA 71203.

while supplies for the guerrillas were unloaded and then we were underway.

We were on the surface unless being attacked. Next day we were in the Macassar Straits, where the British lost two battleships, the Prince of Wales and the Repulse.

Upon approaching the Lombok Straits in Java, we were submerged for 16 1/2 hours, coming up at night to surface.

Finally we came out into the Indian Ocean and headed for Perth, Australia.

Upon arrival at Perth Harbor, the admiral came aboard by pilot boat, bringing fresh milk for the crew. After being introduced to us refugees, he said, "I guess that you fly boys will tell your buddies not to bomb any subs; just let the Navy know where they are and we will take care of them."

## **'Hams' invited to QSO party**

Amateur radio operators, or "hams," from around the globe will celebrate the 52nd anniversary of the Air Force with a worldwide radio "QSO or radio contact party" which begins at 12:01 a.m. on Sept. 18 and ends at 11:59 p.m. Sept. 19, Universal Coordinated Time.

The QSO party has become an annual event with participants around the world, including many Air Force members and retirees.

For details, e-mail Col. Bernie Skoch (amateur radio call sign K5XS) at [k5xs@compuserve.com](mailto:k5xs@compuserve.com) or write to 8437 Wesley Sunset Blvd., Ct.apeake Beach, MD 20732.

## **U.S.S. HAKE**

**JOHN M. WYLDER, 2nd Lt., 5th Bomb Group, 13th AAF**

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Know ye, that the above named Zoomie did, on a certain date, in a certain area, while hedgehopping and flathatting about in the wild blue yonder, in a flying machine, well knowing said machine to be of an unsafe and dangerous nature, allow himself to be most ignominiously and thoroughly shot down by the enemy, thus bathe in the ocean, being out of uniform the while; not was it even yet Saturday night.

Thus, with feathers wet and wings temporarily disabled, he did so lower himself from the usual high plane occupied by Airdales to use such lowly means of transportation as the sailboat, the dugout, the horse, and even in times of extreme stress and under the utmost duress, his own two feet, in order to reach a certain heaven, where he did hide in the bush and upon the ground licking his wounds and soothing his injured vanity, while awaiting rescue.

Brother Birdmen being neither of the nature nor in the vicinity to save the above clipped fowl, word was sent to the gallant men of the SUBMARINE SERVICE, in particular, to the men of the MIGHTY U.S.S. HAKE, of the sad plight of their allies, the aviators. Undaunted by the untold dangers of their mission, the men and officers of the HAKE rushed boldly to the rescue.

After many great hardships and untold narrow escapes, too numerous to mention here, the HAKE succeeded in effecting the safe recovery of this aforesaid Zoom-Boy.

Be it recorded, however, that the above named Fly-Boy did, though unwillingly, serve, after a fashion, on board a Submarine of Uncle Sammy's Underwater Fleet, namely the U.S.S. Hake, in enemy-controlled waters, from 5 December 1944 to 16 December 1944 inclusive, and did acquit himself well; that is, as well as one might expect a clipped sparrow to acquit himself if forced to live in a sardine can immersed in a fish bowl.

# Some reflections on the 1999 'Great Escape'

By SCOTT GOODALL

Please allow me to thank each and every one of the American participants who helped make the 1999 *Chemin de la Liberte* such a resounding success.

It is no easy task for such a diverse group of people from all over the U.S.A., the young and the not-so-old, to fly thousands of miles to take part in what Ralph Patton so wisely called "an uncertain mountain experience" with an equally diverse bunch of Europeans.

But take part you did. And how! It was a strange international mix that actually worked. My thoughts during the long march were many and varied, often confused but always positive. My memories are positive too and will remain so. The quiet dignity and fierce determination of Gordon McCoy, so ably backed up by his wife. The fortitude of Bette Patton, walking steadily toward her goal—one helluva lady! So, too, are her family.

Quiet John Wand who took it upon himself to free-fall down a vertical grass slope toward la Cabane de Subera at the end of day two. "I thought Dad had lost his pack," said young Christopher. "Then I saw two legs sticking out and realized he was under it." In the midst of this minor chaos, the Wands' 11-year-old daughter seemed to be more concerned about the effects of a nettle sting on her finger than the soaring flank of Mont Valier (9000 feet), which she had to climb the following day. And climb it she did!

Unforgettable, too, was wild-eyed Jean Pena, arms windmilling in dismay as he swore in fluent French and English over the loss of a few rolls of film. The Gendarmes were alerted; word was passed to every local dignitary between Saint-Girons and Seix. "Find Pena's films!" Well, found they eventually were, safe in Jean's suitcase back at base. Thanks again for that marvelous framed picture taken from the nose of the *Memphis Belle*, Jean. That's one thing I won't lose.

Serious Lynn David, marching along with his ever-turning video camera, talking quietly, apparently to himself but in fact recording the route as a tribute to his father, Clayton. The more dangerous the trail became, the more understated became Lynn's remarks. "This descent into Spain is now extremely steep. People are falling. Just a few cuts and bruises, though, nothing serious so far."

And, of course, a special thank-you to Claudette Deloney who (with an expression of intense relief on her face) pushed her sleeping mat into my hands. "Have it," she said fiercely. "I will never, never use this thing again!"

Another memory, too, of Arno Hausman, who with quiet persistence was trying to reduce the weight of his rucksack by giving away all his Stateside energy bars. I personally ended up with 14. They must have weighed all of eight ounces!

And what can one say about the irrepressible Art Beltrone and his wife Lee? Journalistic professionals to the core, enthusiasm pushing from every pore (or was that just good old-fashioned sweat, Art?), articulating, interviewing, photographing—cramming



Scott Goodall

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Lescure  
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five years of wartime history into four days and hiring a plane for aerial shots of the weary evaders clawing their way towards the Spanish frontier. Pity the pilot couldn't find us, Art! But there's always next year.

And the unflappable Stephen Leavel, who would approach steadily, almost grimly, stare fiercely into my eyes and say, "Scott, I have a question for you!" He certainly did—quite a few in fact! Stephen's main concern was that he didn't want to stop. He just wanted to keep walking. Whether it was in the wrong direction or not didn't really seem to matter just so long as one leg kept going in front of the other. Still, Stephen made it to the end of the trail. At least, I think he did. Maybe he's still up there somewhere.

Finally, I must mention "my" three girls! The smiling trio of Sarah Ross, Sue Ellison and Mary Grauerholz. They wanted to stay close, to dog my footsteps in the hope that if they followed *me*, all would be well. Not a bad theory, I suppose, except that every time I raised my weary head I seemed to be following *them*!

Okay, nuff said! From Judy and Yours Truly, our very best wishes and warmest regards. My home town of Aberdeen in Scotland bears the words "Bon Accord" on its official Coat of Arms. The words mean simply: "Happy to Meet...Sorry to Part...Happy to Meet Again."



Some of the camping gear delivered to "Home Run" hikers in a remote area of the Pyrenees arrived by Donkey Express.



The neighbors must have been watering the pets and the house plants during the second week of July, because practically all the Patton clan was wandering around somewhere in the Pyrenees Mountains.

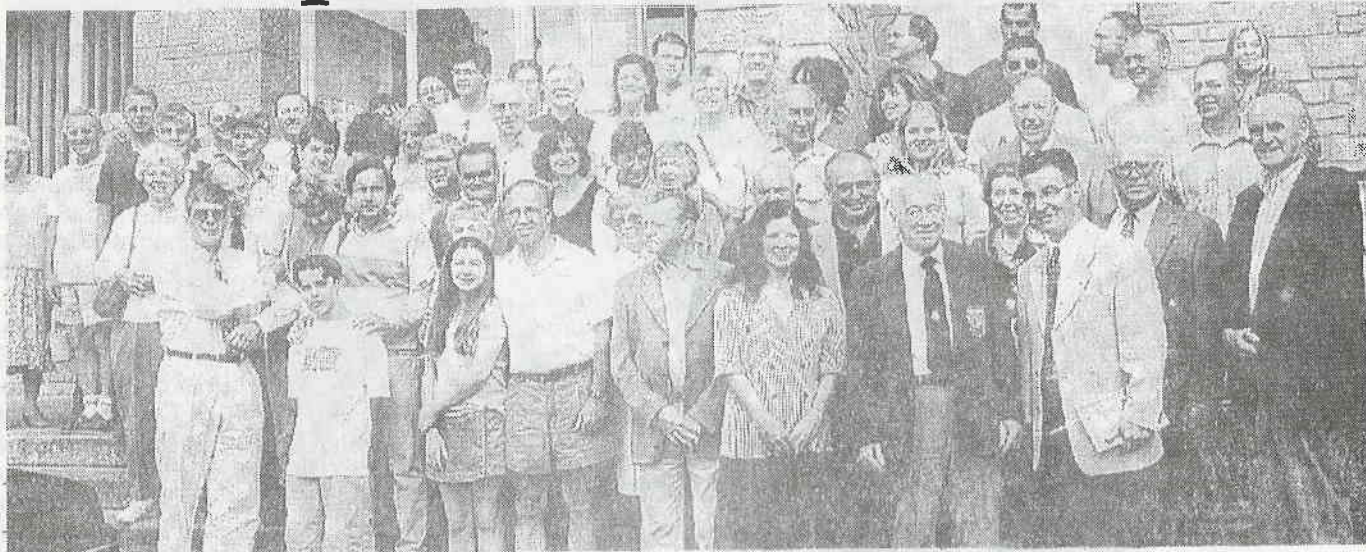
Three generations of the Pattons completed the Freedom Trail walk from Saint Giron, France, to Esterri de Aneu, Spain. Bette Patton, at a vibrant 78, received a special award for being the eldest person ever to complete the hike. Liz Wand, at age 11, probably had more energy after the hike than most of the hikers began with.

The Ralph Patton family, lined up in Spain after completion of the four-day hike: John (son-in-law) and Beverly (daughter) Wand, grandson Christopher Wand, son Geoffrey Patton, granddaughter Eliza Wand, and Ralph and Bette Patton.

## Hagar



# Cap sur Esterri de Aneu



**Les delegations ertrangeres ont ete recues officiellement, avant leur depart, a l'hotel de ville de Saint-Girons. —Photo "La Depeche", J.-P.C.**

**(The foreign participants were officially welcomed, before their departure, at the Town Hall in Saint-Girons).**

**From "La Depeche," Toulouse  
July 9, 1999**

Ils sont 147 dont une cinquantaine d'etrangers en provenance de cinq pays, pour traverser les Pyrenees, sur les traces des passeurs. Une randonnee montagnarde qui associe le sport et le souvenir.

Pour la sixieme annee consecutive, des hommes et des femmes ont choisi de partir sur les traces des anciens passeurs et des Evades de France.

Ceux qui, hier matin, a 6 h 45, ont pris le depart pres du Pont de la Liberte qui enjambe le Salat, a Saint-Girons (et ceux qui les rejoindront demain matin, au col de la Core), ne prennent sans doute

aucun risque, si ce n'est celui tres mesure encouru habituellement par les montagnards, avec la certitude d'attraper une "belle suee" pour couvrir la distance qui les separe d'Esterri de Aneu, dans le Haut-Pallars. Ils y termineront leur balade, dimanche soir. Il en etait tout autrement, bien sur, pour celles et ceux qui ont franchi ces memes montagnes, au cours de la derniere guerre mondiale, et qui devaient jouer a cache-cache avec les embuscades meurtrieres. Leur souvenir sera omnipresent pendant ces quatre jours, en particulier la memoire de ceux qui ont laisse leur vie dans ces expeditions dangereuses.

L'association que preside le colonel Guy Seris et qu'anime le devoue Noel

Faur, l'initiateur du Chemin de la Liberte., connait le succes. Cette sixieme randonnee, qui associe le sport et le souvenir des patriotes et resistants, se joue, une fois de plus, a guichet ferme, puisqu'on a refuse du monde. Les 143 premiers inscrits, ont, seuls, ete retenus: "C'est le maximum que pouvait recevoir le site des Estagnous, au pied du valier, ou aura lieu demain soir, le bivouac. C'etait une question de securite", confie Guy Seris, qui aurait bien voulu ouvrir plus large.

Une place a ete faite, bien sur, pour nos amis etrangers (anglais, canadiens, belges, hollandais et americains). Ils sont une cinquantaine, accompagnes de trois equipes de television. La municipalite de Saint-Girons les a recu officiellement mercredi soir, les porte-drapeaux des anciens resistants et deportes, sont venus les saluer, hier matin, avant le depart, les autres randonneurs les rejoindront, demain matin, sur le sentier qui conduit a la Subera. Cette ramdonnee France-Espagne se terminera dans la convivialite, dimanche soir, a Esterri de Aneu ou les catalans se joindronts aux randonneurs pour, a nouveau, evoker le souvenir, et parler de paix avec, comme ciment, l'amitie entre les peuples.

## Une longue traversée

C'est une longue traversée qu'on entrepris, hier matin, le premier contingent de marcheurs essentiellement compose d'etrangers. En deux jours, ils gagneront le col de la Core ou les rejoindront, demain, vers 4 h 30 du matin, le gros de la troupe.

Autrefois tres dangereuse en raison de la frequentation des patrouilles allemandes, cette premier partie est longue et assez ingrate.

Au cours du week-end, ce sera un itineraire de montagne, avec, apres la cabane de la Subera et le site du crash de l'avion anglais, la pujade des Craberous, Espugue, les etangs de Milouga, les Laouzets, le Pecouch, le refuge des Estagnous ou aura lieu la nuitée, demain soir, puis dimanche, la traversée de etangs long et rond, la montée due neve vers la Claouere, et, enfin, la descente tranquille sur la Noguera et le terminus d'Esterri ou ce sera la fete.

*For English, see next page.*

# Heading for Esterri de Aneu

(Translation of article on opposite page)

From "La Depeche," Toulouse  
July 9, 1999

147 persons, including about 50 foreigners from five countries have come to traverse the Pyrenees, using the old smugglers' trails: a mountain trek which combines sport and nostalgia.

For the sixth consecutive year, men and women have chosen to follow the trails of the old smugglers and the people who evaded in France (during World War II).

Those who, at 6:45 yesterday morning, left near Liberty Bridge, which spans the Salat River at Saint-Girons, (and those who will join them tomorrow morning, at Core Pass) are not taking any risk, except, perhaps, a small one that is usually incurred by mountaineers, the certainty to work up a "good sweat," in order to cover the distance which separates them from the Esterri d'Aneu, in the Haut-Pallars (in Spain). They will end their hike there on Sunday evening.

It was completely different, of course, for those men and women who crossed these same mountains, during World War II, running the risk of being caught in murderous ambushes. Their memories will be ever-present during these four days, and they will be thinking particularly of those who lost their lives during those dangerous expeditions.

The association presided over by Colonel Guy Seris, and which motivated Noel Faur, the devoted founder of the "Route of Liberty," has been successful. This sixth hike, which combines sport and honoring the memory of patriots and resistance members, has been closed to all but the 143 people who reserved their places. "It's the maximum that

## A Long Crossing

It's a long trek that the first contingent of hikers, composed mostly of foreigners, undertook yesterday morning. In two days they'll reach the Core Pass, where the rest of the group will join them, at approximately 4:30 a.m.

Formerly very dangerous because of the German patrols who frequented the area, this part is long and arduous.

During the week-end, the plan is to cross the mountain, after a stay in a cabin at Subera and visiting the site of the crash of an English airplane, by way of the pass at Craberous, a cabin at Espugue, the lakes of Milouga, the Laouzets, le Pecouch, an overnight stay tomorrow evening at the Refuge of Estagnous; then, on Sunday, going around the "round" and the "long" ponds, the ascent of the granular-ice field towards Claouere, and, at last, the fairly easy descent to Noguera and the final destination, Esterri, where there will be a celebration.

the bivouac site at Estagnous, at the foot of Valier, can handle tomorrow night; it's a question of security," said Colonel Seris, who would have liked to accept more participants.

Of course, places were reserved for our foreign friends: English, Canadian, Belgian, Dutch, and now, Americans. They are about fifty, accompanied by three television crews. The town of Saint-Girons welcomed them officially Wednesday night, and members of Resistance and Deportees organizations, with their flag-bearers, came to honor them yesterday.

The other hikers will join them tomorrow morning on the path that leads to Subera. This French-Spanish hike will end in a spirit of festivity Sunday evening, at Esterri de Aneu (in Spain), where the Catalans, the local inhabitants, will join the hikers, to recall old memories and to talk about enduring peace and friendship among people.

## Remember the Alamo!

By JOHN PENA  
York, Pa.

It was Sunday, July 11, the fourth day of the trek. We had reached the Spanish border.

It was a mountain pass at an altitude of 7,600 feet. We had climbed 300 yards or more, straight up; distance in the mountains is hard to estimate.

One careful step at a time, the 143 participants of "Operation Home Run" followed one another, deepening their fragile foot marks in the summer snow. I had no temptation to look straight down at the beauty of the deep blue mountain lake.

Way up at the pass, moving silhouettes in the southern Spanish sky were waiting for us. They were the greeting members of the fire brigade of Esterri de Aneu, "The Catalan Bombers."

I unveiled our American flag and had veteran family members hold it while I snapped a picture, only one. There was an ultimate moment of joy for me. A veil of fog reached the pass and limited our view of the horizon. It was as if Nature wanted to tone down our personal happiness into a moment of reflection.

While waving the flag, tied to a walking stick, I wanted to scream out to the distant mountain peaks: *Remember the Alamo! Remember the Alamo!*

I wanted to shout those words toward the west, so their echo could reach out to you, Colonel George Bennett, way out there in Texas.

Remember the Alamo! Remember the sacrifice of those who suffered and paid dearly to preserve liberty. I wanted you to hear my voice of happiness. Remember the Alamo! I hesitated and the words never came out.

Then the fog lifted like departing souls. I did not know that George's had just joined them.

*Dedicated to Colonel George Bennett of Horse-shoe Bay, Tex., who passed away on July 1, 1999.*



**WITH THE MAIRE** - Before the Freedom Trail hike began, the participants were honored with a reception at the Saint-Girons city hall. Mayor Bernard Gondron, at left, visits with Clayton David, third from left, and Paule and Jean Arhex, Resistance members now living in Toulouse who helped Clayton escape in 1944.

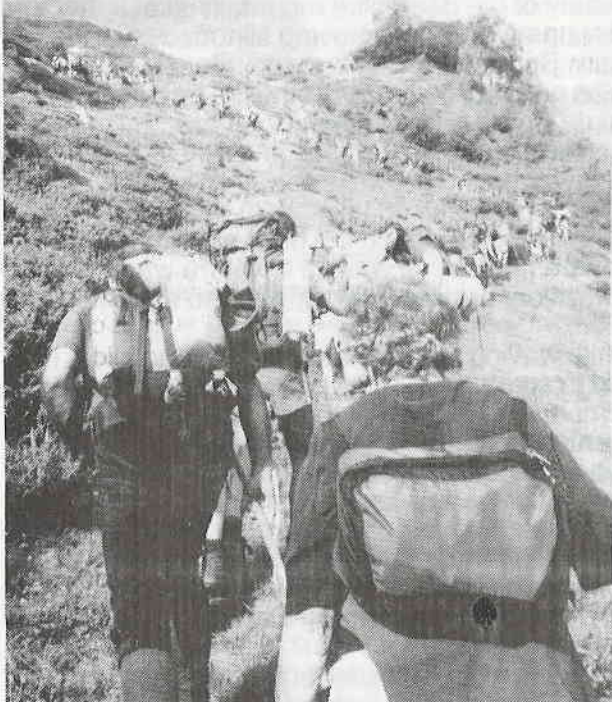


Scott Goodall, promoter of the Freedom Trail trek across the Pyrenees, was usually at the head of the column of hikers. A good job by the Scotsman who now makes his home in southern France. Of course his wife Judy was busy taking care of the non-hikers back in Saint Girons.

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**More Freedom Trail Pictures in Next Issue!**

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Day 3 of the hike found the group strung out, headed up the mountain to the site of the 1945 Halifax bomber crash.



Three generations of one family on the Freedom Trail! Is there anything the Pattons won't try? Clockwise from front: Liz Wand, 11, the youngest person ever to complete the hike; her mother, Beverly Wand, and grandmother, Bette Patton, oldest person ever to make the crossing.



CHRISTOPHE ENA/Associated Press

*Frenchman Paul Barrau (from left), Larry Grauerholz, a former U.S. B-17 navigator, and Clayton David, a former U.S. bomber pilot, visit a memorial near Saint Giron in the French Pyrenees. The memorial honors Barrau's brother Louis, a Resistance fighter killed by the Germans in 1943. Grauerholz and David were among the U.S. WWII airmen who returned to Saint Giron to pay tribute to Resistance fighters who risked their lives to shelter Allied fliers from the Germans.*

#### **MESSAGE DELIVERED AT LOUIS BARRAU MEMORIAL July 8, 1999**

Leaving St. Giron you follow, with a few minor changes, the path taken by numerous people who were desiring to leave France in order to continue their fight against the occupying German troops.

You have now arrived at the Lartigues pass (Col de Lartigues). This barn which has been reconstructed was used as a shelter along this long trail. Back in those days, there were no roads, only paths that were usually half-hidden by wild overgrowth. The barn, being slightly off to the side of the path, offered all that was necessary: discretion and safety, for the gathering and restoration of candidates for the crossing of the border.

This barn is owned by the BARRAU family. Hence, it is no surprise that they should have partaken, so to speak, in the Act of Resistance by accompanying the fugitives, using trails known only to the shepherds living in these mountains.

This was not done without considerable risk. The father, Norbert, and the uncle, Jean, were arrested in April 1943 and deported. They eventually died in a concentration camp. The sons, Paul and Louis, took over and carried on the task. They were both in their 20s, the greatest of ages when one gives without

counting the cost and without asking for anything in return.

During the night of September 11 to 12, 1943, Louis was waiting for his partner and friend who was to bring him a group of fugitives, using the very path you followed to get here. It was not his friend that arrived, rather, it was a traitor accompanied by German soldiers. Surrounded, commanded to surrender, Louis refused! The Germans then set the barn on fire. Louis jumps out of the window and attempts a desperate escape. But the rifle bullets go faster than his legs. Hit several times, his blood flowed generously over the green pastures and his eyes closed forever on these beautiful mountains that he would never cross again.

"*Mort pour la France*", he died in the service of his country, aiding all those who crossed the Pyrenees for whatever motivation. He was an innocent victim of denunciation and of Nazi barbarism. His brother Paul was at that time sought after by the Gestapo and was not safe until he, too, had escaped France and joined his cousin Robert who had preceded him in going abroad.

Certainly there are many examples of bravery and patriotism throughout the country. The one I have just cited is made all the more gripping to us when we consider how terribly affected the Barrau family has been by these tragedies.

Therefore, let us honor them as we are honoring Louis.

# The Trail, a historian's perspective

By **SHERRI OTTIS**  
Clinton, Miss.

On July 8, 1999, about 45 American, Belgian, Dutch, English and French hikers left the bridge site of a memorial ceremony at Saint Giron in southern France and began retracing an evacuation route over the Pyrenees Mountains used by escapers and evaders during World War II.

Each of the hikers had his or her own reason for making the hike. Many had fathers or other family members who were evaders. Others undertook the trek as a challenge, and a few because they wanted to gain a historian's perspective of an act about which they had studied and written.

I was one of the latter group. To everyone who asked why I would do such a thing, I explained that I wanted to know what it was really like to be an evader. I thought that to successfully cross that mountain would give me the answer. I knew my experience would not be quite the same. After all, I had taken the time to buy a good pair of hiking boots, which I spent several weeks breaking in. I had been working out in a gym for months in preparation, so unlike the airmen, who had been hiding in small spaces with no exercise, I would be in good condition for such a workout.

I had no injuries from which I was recovering and I would have plenty of food, carried in a back pack which I had been hauling around full of weights in preparation for the hike. Lastly, I would not be saddled with the fear that there might be a German patrol around the next bend.

Little did I know when I left that bridge just how well I would learn the lesson I had so often claimed as my purpose for participating in the hike. Fortunately, during the two days before the start of the climb, hikers from the various countries had had the opportunity to mingle and become friends.

As the first hours of the climb were more scenic than difficult, we continued to visit with one another as we walked. But after only a couple hours, I could feel the warning signs of a blister on one heel. When I mentioned this at our first break, one of my new Dutch friends offered me some tape to provide additional protection.

The walk continued and though most of it was not difficult, the last hour before our lunch stop became quite arduous with a winding climb up a rocky incline, followed by a steep hike through what must have been several years' layers of fallen leaves. Throughout the morning my heel had become more and more tender and I had begun to worry about what I would find when I reached the stopping point. In addition, the climb was tiring and difficult and two hikers decided they would go no further once they reached the lunch stop. I admit that I, too, questioned the wisdom of continuing if the rest of the day promised more of what the last hour had delivered.

As is usually the case, a good rest and lunch refreshed most of us. My heels were blistered, one of them completely raw and very tender. Another new friend, this time an Englishman, patched up both my feet and I pulled my boots back on, ready to keep going, though still not sure if I was making a wise decision. I just hated to quit. I felt a little



**Two history buffs on the Freedom Trail in the Pyrenees Mountains: Roger Stanton of the U.K. and Sherri Ottis of Mississippi.**

better when I learned one of the Belgian team also had sore feet.

The Dutchman, Gert Overceem, and the Englishman, Roger Stanton, became my guardians for the afternoon. Roger was determined that I should make it over that mountain and placed me in front of the line so I would be able to take advantage of periodic breaks to allow stragglers to catch up. I suspect I slowed down the group, but I appreciated the encouragement.

My energy began to wane later in the afternoon and I again worried that I might be better dropping out, though already I was growing close to some of the people in the group and did not like the idea of letting them continue without me. "Besides," I told myself, "the evaders had trouble with blisters and they managed to make it. Be tough." My raw heel had continued hurting in spite of the patch.

By the time we reached our checkpoint for the night, my heel had blisters within blisters. The patch had slipped and I had spent the afternoon walking with the tender raw skin rubbing against the back of my boot. Once again Roger patched up the raw spot. The other heel was still covered and had not worsened. We had a large meal with plenty to eat and a cabin of sorts with cots on which to sleep. My feet were tired, hot, sore and I lay awake most of the night.

Next morning, I unloaded all but the bare necessities from my pack: sleeping bag, food, water and a jacket. The first day we didn't carry a pack as cars drove to our checkpoint and delivered them to us. Remembering the difficulty of the day before, I did not want to carry more than I had to. Roger

assured me that if I ran into a problem, they would divide my pack so that I would not have to carry such a load and that they would manage to get me over that mountain.

Initially, the hike went well, but during our first break, I was forced to ask for help with my heel again. The second patch had fallen off and I knew I could not walk with that much pain in my foot. This time, my wounds became an international affair. While everyone else stood watching, Roger and the Belgians patched and taped my heel so that no bandage could possibly fall off and Lynn David, one of the Americans, provided a second pair of socks. As we set off again, I began to think that things might be looking up as I could barely feel the soreness.

Though the morning hike was not as grueling as some of the previous day's walk had been, I noticed that I was growing more and more tired as we climbed. As we rounded each ridge, I would look ahead to see if the path was going to level out soon. After a couple disappointing glances at more uphill slopes, I stopped checking. My pack did not feel too heavy, but when I leaned over on my walking stick for a quick break, I was not strong enough to keep the pack from tipping me over onto the ground. Put back on my feet by Roger and Gert, I kept going. "Just plod on," Roger told me, and I plodded. All my concentration became focused on putting one foot in front of the other. As I watched Roger's feet in front of me, I was reminded of one of the evaders who had written that only by watching the guide's legs in front of him was he able to continue.

After a particularly long and trying hill, at least for me, I had to ask Roger for a break. I had not wanted to ask for special assistance, but knew I would not be able to stay on my feet much longer. Oddly enough, tired as I was, another evader, Roland Barlow, came to mind. Roland had fallen to the ground in exhaustion and when his guide threatened to shoot him if he did not get up, Roland laughed at him. It was not a question of wanting to get up. He could not.

Fortunately for me, Roger called a break instead of waving a gun at me and Johan Samyn, my footsore Belgian friend, stepped forward to ask what I had eaten for breakfast. Correctly convinced that I had not eaten enough, he gave me some of the high-energy snacks that had been provided him and his companions by the Belgian Air Force. I did not feel particularly hungry, but his instructions to "eat this and this and drink this down to here," did not sound like commands with which I should argue. Besides, I had no energy for being difficult. I was gaining valuable insight into being an evader without realizing it. How many times had I read about weaker evaders being helped by those who were stronger? Now I was experiencing it first hand.

I hoped Johan's snacks would help, but shortly after we began to walk again, I lost my balance a second time. This time, when I was assisted, I noticed with surprise that I had no strength in my legs. Pascal Herman, another Belgian, told me to take off my pack. I felt bad about burdening someone else with my pack, but he insisted and I let it go. Other members of the Belgian group stepped in to help as well. Bob Croes carried my pack on his chest and his own pack on his back. Alain Anckaer gave me a package of cookies and told me to eat them constantly while Johan found a ring to attach my

water bottle to my belt and carried the sleeping mat which had been removed from my pack. Gert and Roger continued to walk, one ahead of me, one behind, and each time I got tired, they stopped until I was able to continue. I thought it ironic that 55 years ago, it was Belgian and Dutch helpers who had helped Americans to evade capture and cross the Pyrenees into neutral Spain. Now another American struggled to make the same trip, once again with the aid of Dutch, Belgian and English helpers.

I finally reached the place called the Col de la Core where the group stopped for lunch. Roger was willing to help me along through the afternoon until we reached the evening campsite. There I could spend the night and decide in the morning whether I wanted to continue. But as I sat on the grass staring at my lunch, I knew my hike was over. The last thing I wanted was food, but I was already weak and without eating, I could not continue. I spent the lunch break teary-eyed, sitting with my numerous "helpers" and thanking them for their assistance.

When they left, I stood miserably on the side of the hill and watched everyone go. I had become fond of so many of them and they seemed sorry to leave me behind. The last thing I saw was one of the Dutchmen blow a kiss and give a wave as he left the site. Then, just as had happened to so many evaders during the war, I was left behind while my companions continued on the way to Spain.

In my frustration at having to quit, I did not see that I had done what I had come to do. In fact, it took a comment from one of the hikers who did make it over the mountain to make me aware of what I had accomplished. He told me that of everyone, I had probably come closest to experiencing what it was really like to be an evader. I know that it was a long and difficult climb for those who continued. But if I really attempted the climb because I wanted to learn what it was like to be an evader, then I was successful. I suffered from the blisters and exhaustion as they had. I experienced the relationships that developed between evaders, and I developed the bonds with my fellow hikers that led evaders to maintain contact with each other long after the war. Even dropping out of the hike had its own lesson, for how else could I understand the anguish felt by the evaders forced to stay behind because of injuries or weakness had I not been forced to experience a degree of such misery. The only element I could not share with the evaders of World War II was that related to the fear of capture by the Germans.

It took the better part of the next two weeks for me to get over the fatigue that resulted from my attempt to cross the mountains, but I will never regret having tried. I was not able to feel the exhilaration of crossing the French-Spanish border at the top of the mountain, nor did I get the satisfaction of being able to sign the little blue book that records the names of those who followed the Freedom Trail to the end. But I can feel within myself that I gave it all I had, and I learned what it felt like to be an evader crossing the Pyrenees.

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*Sherry Ottis is a high school history teacher. She hopes to publish her book on the history of the French Resistance within the next year.*

# In the tracks of Dad

By SUE G. ELLISON  
Boulder, Colo.

It is early in the morning on Thursday, July 8, and I am about to do something totally out of character. This 47-year-old mother of three, who's never backpacked and is beset by a nearly debilitating fear of heights, is setting out on a four-day crossing of the Pyrenees Mountains.

But I'm not feeling insane. I've been training at the gym since last fall, my boots are broken in, I've packed and repacked my gear several times, I live at about 5,000 feet near the Colorado Rockies, and I am happily oblivious of how far above terra firma I will soon be. I am eager to set out.

My sister, Mary Grauerholz, and I have joined about 25 other Americans and a mix of English, Belgian and Dutch at the Pont Le Chemin de la Liberte, the beginning of the Freedom Trail, in Saint-Girons, 60 miles south of Toulouse, France. The sun is shining, and it's a beautiful day.

My sister persuaded me to make this trip to honor our father who crossed the Pyrenees over a similar path after his B-17 went down on Jan. 5, 1944, and to challenge ourselves in a unique way.

My father, the editor of this publication, asked me to write a diary of our experiences:

## THURSDAY MORNING

The French love ceremony, I quickly learn, and we are observing the first of several to come over the next four days. French veterans in medal-laden uniforms raise and lower flags, wreaths are laid, patriotic songs ring from a portable tape player and the mayor of Saint Girons speaks to us in French. In the coming days, there will be an outpouring of food and drink, compliments of the townspeople.

Finally, we begin. The trail starts



*This trio of hikers represented the only Americans present in France last July who evaded and crossed the Pyrenees in 1944, neither on the route traveled on the 1999 Trail of Freedom walk. From left, the hikers are Sue Ellison, Lynn David and Mary Grauerholz.*

out easy, the pace brisk. But soon we're bushwacking through forests of ferns taller than I am and there is no trail except for the path beaten by my predecessors. Then, we're in an area so quiet and dark and so heavily wooded that I feel almost as if I'm in a jungle. Wet green moss covers tree trunks. Black snails creep across our path.

When we arrive at our lunch spot, a barn and memorial cross where a local passeur was betrayed and killed by the Germans in 1943. I am hot and tired and my feet hurt. After a rest, lunch laid out by the townfolk, and a tribute to the passeur, we're off again, headed for a hostel at Aunac where we'll spend the night and have a ceremony and reception in the nearby village of Seix.

## THURSDAY NIGHT

We've hiked 15 miles today, and the village people have generously shown up to drive us to Seix. Mary and I hitch a ride with a family of three. My high school and college French has helped me some on this trip but it is no use with this friendly, talkative madame. "Je suis americaine. Je ne parle pas francais," with a Texas accent is about all I can get in edgewise, and yet we enjoy her immensely.

The hostel is three buildings where we'll sleep dormitory-style. Mary and I try to scope out the quietest available corner to roll out our sleeping bags. After a wonderful dinner, we have a night of little sleep. We're too hot in our sleeping bags or just too keyed up about the hike. Or worried about hiking tomorrow on a sleep deficit.

## FRIDAY MORNING

We begin to see a different kind of terrain. I fully expect Julie Andrews to pop out somewhere singing "The Sound of Music." We have for the most part left the farmland behind, with its cows with bells around their necks, and begun to see more alpine mountains.

Mary and I are starting to worry. Today's hike has not been easy and tomorrow is supposed to be harder. Scott Goodall, the organizer of the event and our leader, reassures us that we're up to the challenge. We decide to become "Scott groupies" and stay right behind him. That way we don't fall too far behind and we can watch how he maneuvers the trail as well.

## FRIDAY NIGHT

We reach La Cabane de Subera, our abode for the night, safe and sound. Cut off from roads and cars, we will sleep

tonight in tents delivered to us by donkey express. There is a cowherd here with his charges. His dog works only a few minutes each day and we get to watch him this evening. The cows will spend the night high above us, in rocky, mountainous pasture that looks pretty strange to this Texas flat-land native.

There is a natural spring here and several members of our group have hiked up to the source to bathe in its frigid waters. I get my sweaty head under the faucet down below and quickly regret it; this water is too cold for me!

Mary and I spread a sleeping bag and break out our dinner of bread, pate, fruit and nuts. Soon we've attracted the attention of one of the donkeys, which is untied. He is undaunted by our efforts to shoo him away and now one of our fellow hikers is making a game of leading the donkey into our tent.

I am surprised to learn that in France in July, dark comes at around 10 p.m. That doesn't stop me from falling asleep soon after dinner, only to wake up a little later. Mary and I engage in some sisterly conversation and then settle in for another night of fitful sleep.

#### SATURDAY MORNING

Heere van Engel, who lives near Saint Giron and makes this hike four times a year, once each season, has a couple of announcements. Until now, he says, this hike has been "children's play" and it gets serious only now. He also teaches us to yell "Cailloux!" at the appropriate time, i.e. when we've kicked loose a rock that falls toward someone further down the trail. When one person shouts "cailloux!" everyone else shouts it too. That means look up and look out.

After all the warnings about what's to come today, I inform Mary that I will panic if I get separated from her. Long before we set out on this journey, we agreed that we were doing it together. If one couldn't go on, we both stopped.

The trail is decidedly more difficult now, but still I'm doing fine. We see pieces of the wreckage of the British Halifax bomber which crashed here in 1945. When we reach the crash site, we pause to lay a wreath for the seven crew members who perished there.

We continue up a steep, slippery slope. I am keeping an eye on Mary's bright orange shirt and feeling more nervous. Suddenly I freeze. I'm afraid to

pick up a foot and unsure where to place it if I could pick it up. Within a few seconds, I have help. Three French gendarmes are there, showing me where to step, holding onto me and, once, pulling me up by my backpack. When I reach the top of this peak, with the crisis over and back with Mary, I burst into tears. I'm terrified of what's to come.

While the group rests, Heere comes to see what's wrong. I explain about losing my nerve and when it's time to set off again, I follow him.

Scott Goodall has described the descent from this point, the Col de Craberous (7,860 feet), as ... "dizzy. Three hundred metres straight down and no messing, a hectic, foot-scrabbling slide punctuated regularly by unnerving calls from above of "Caillou-u-u-ux!..." I am feeling much safer following Heere, and he is watching out for me. For most of the next day and a half, he leads me up and down the mountains, offering reassurance, showing me where to place my hands and feet, teaching me to use my trekking pole European-style, and often offering his hand while I navigate rough or frightening spots.

At one point, there are metal cables in addition to the gendarmes to help us climb over boulders. At another, the gendarmes want me to rest, while all I can think of is getting off this terrifying slope. My eyes are down and my heart is pounding while below me stretches an expanse of nearly vertical mountain. Far, far below, a beautiful alpine lake waits to swallow me up.

#### SATURDAY NIGHT

Off the nerve-racking ascents and descents, I am surprised at how quickly we cover ground. Landmarks that look far behind us were upon us just half an hour or so before. We reach Refuge des Estagnous, high in the clouds near the summit of Mount Valier, in high spirits.

At this outpost where everything is ferried in and out by helicopter, we are offered rum-spiked punch, and beer and other drinks are available. We eat our best meal yet, onion soup and a stew of lamb and vegetables, and we are entertained by impromptu singing by our French tablemates.

Our tent has a beautiful lake at the front door. With the clouds close around us and feeling wonderful at having finished the third and reputedly the hardest

day, we settle in. We spend yet another night of mostly tossing and turning.

#### SUNDAY

I am amazed that we can eat a French breakfast of coffee, bread, butter and jam and then hike for five hours before lunch, but we've been doing that every day. I will miss it when I get home.

We set off, down and up again, past Round Lake and Long Lake, and up to a steep, snow-filled gully, called a neve. We stop so the gendarmes can instruct us on the safest way to climb this ravine. A gendarme will break the trail and each person who follows is supposed to place his or her foot in the same exact place as the original footprint. We are warned that a misplaced foot can put someone back in Aunac. Heere points out a wild goat on the rocks above.

We reach the Spanish border around mid-day; this is the moment we've all awaited. We're above 8,000 feet and we're in the clouds. My mind is in a fog, too. Heere gets on the Spanish side and shakes my hand while I'm on the French side. Hiker Jean Pena unfurls a U.S. flag. One of the English passes around a glass of Scotch. If Mary had not reminded me, I would have forgotten about the sign we made. We stand on the border and open it up. It says, "To Larry Grauerholz and his 'Lucky Lady' January 5, 1944, with love, July 8-11, 1999."

Soon we say goodbye to the French gendarmes and move along. There are Spanish equivalents to the gendarmes on this side of the mountains.

At lunch, Scott leaves early with a group of five or so from each of the countries represented for a ceremony in Esterri d'Aneu, Mary among them. The alpine peaks give way to grassy slopes and I am struck by how much this looks like the Colorado Rockies. There are beautiful waterfalls and a rushing river. Wildflowers cover meadows. My feet feel much more firmly grounded and I feel full of energy. I can relax in these last few hours of our glorious adventure.

Before I'm ready, the trail ends and we are supposed to wait for transport to Esterri d'Aneu. Showers, dinner and a reception await us. I am elated to be here but profoundly sad that it is all over.

Sue Ellison misses her fellow hikers. You may write her at 437 Highland Ave., Boulder, CO 80302. Her e-mail address is [SELLis437@aol.com](mailto:SELLis437@aol.com).

## Some mixed emotions linger on after the hike

By MARY GRAUERHOLZ  
East Falmouth, Mass.

It has been only a few weeks since I stood with my sister, Sue Ellison, on a narrow, mountainous ledge bordering France and Spain and unfurled a banner commemorating the walk across the Pyrenees that our father took more than 55 years ago.

Mulling over the experience and its meaning is easier when I look at what one friend calls my "badges," two purple toenails, several ragged fingertips, and a bruise on one knee that kissed a boulder. As the bruise gets lighter and my fingertips smooth over, I get a little sadder and a little more nostalgic for the experience.

Along with the sadness, I recall plenty of the joy, wonder, satisfaction (and fear) that I felt while our group dragged ourselves up boulder-covered mountains, leaped across streams, strode across fields, and inched down mountainsides. Though I had been doing extra gym sessions for a year to get into shape, nothing could have prepared me fully for the physical, mental and emotional effects of the hike.

It has only been over the past few years, in conversations with my dad and fellow AFEES members, that I have developed any depth of knowledge about what World War II escape and evasion must have been like.

Participating in the hike gave my intellectual understanding a whole new emotional and mental pitch. It was one of the most intense and fulfilling events of my life. But in this platter of riches that was my experience, I have to admit a helping of embarrassment. Because as grueling as my hike was, it didn't compare with the "hike" that evaders and passeurs took to evade German troops.

We took our hike in summer; we walked in daytime; I had special mountaineering pants, a khaki hiking hat, and a cornucopia of camping tools. My sister and I carried pate, fine cheese and sausage we purchased pre-trek from French shops, and were served homemade meals at parties and receptions given by generous villagers along the route. Quite a difference.

I see the evaders and the Resistance as extraordinary people who accomplished an extraordinary mission.

So this is what I take from own version of the Pyrenees trek: I would like my life to be more extraordinary.

Don't get me wrong; I love my middle-class lifestyle with family and friends, a house to care for, a job. And truthfully, the most extraordinary people I know are everyday folks who don't always meet goals, sometimes say words in haste, and regret parts of their past. This is to be human.

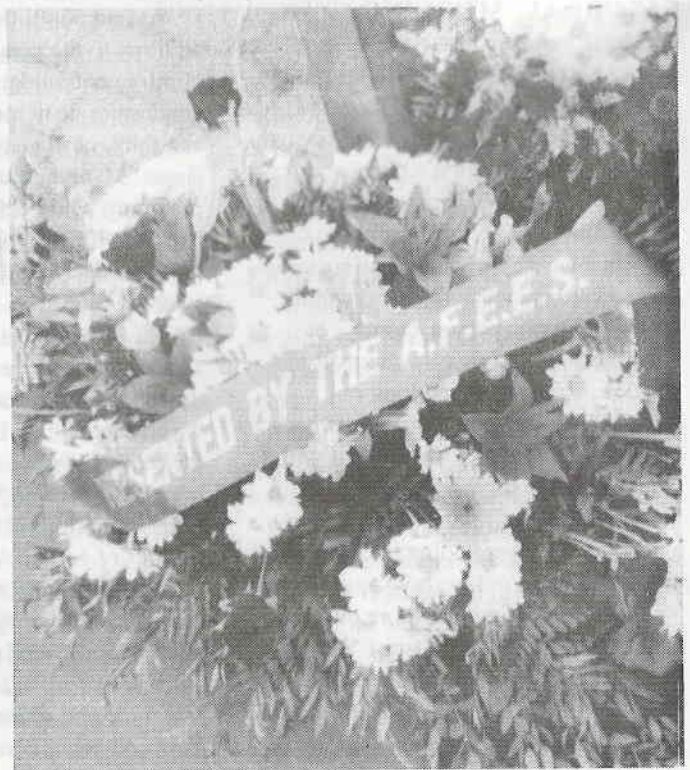
But I want a few extraordinary starbursts of my own.

I would like to take more risks. I would like to make a difference. I would like to make bigger messes, to create more noise.

Perhaps that is the way I can best honor those who fought for our freedom, not just by climbing the Pyrenees, but by striving for the extraordinary, in my little ordinary way.



*SISTERS -- Mme. Andree (Dedee) Antoine-Dumont on the left, and Mme. Pierre (Michou) Ugeux were key players in the Comete escape network. It was great to have them join the Operation Home Run participants in Saint-Girons. "Michou" now lives in Southern France; "Dedee" lives in Belgium.*



*A magnificent floral wreath from the U.S. Air Forces Escape & Evasion Society was included in the displays at various ceremonies along the route of the Freedom Trail, beginning at Saint-Girons, France, and ending at Esterri de Aneu, Spain.*



**John Carah, Paul McConnell and Paul's wife Marie-Antoinette (from left) return to France for dedication of a memorial to fellow airmen who died on July 4, 1943.**

## Airmen return to say 'Merci'

**From Ouest France, ORNE,  
July 5, 1999**

**(A Translation)**

56 years ago, they had jumped from a bomber hit by enemy gunfire. Their plane had crashed at La Coulonche, near Domfront. Paul McConnell and John Carah came from the United States to be here yesterday at the Fosse d'Eufer and thank the French people who helped them.

The ceremony is about to end at the Fosse d'Eufer. In the distance the whirr of engines can be heard. In their bomber jackets, the two grandpas become animated.

John Carah and Paul McConnell are searching the overcast sky for the plane piloted by Paul's son. (Paul McConnell II made a flower drop from his 1937 Beech Staggerwing at the close of the ceremony.) Their excitement brings a smile to Denise Collin. "No doubt these two are flyers!" she says into the microphone. They are also lifelong friends since the crash of a plane that bound their destiny.

On July 4, 1943, the same day a U.S. Air Force plane crashed at Belfonds, their plane crashed at La Coulonche, near Domfront. John Carah, 21 years old, the co-pilot from California, and Paul McConnell, 23, a native of Indiana, are on the same mission. On that day, 105 planes had taken off for Le Mans.

"Our mission was to destroy the factory which manufactured aircraft engines for the Germans," recalls Colonel John.

Both had parachuted in the region of the Andaine forest. The two Americans will find each other again some 46 years later, through the Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society to which both of them

belong. "One day Paul called me," recalls John. He, too, had made it.

"Paul had been hidden near the farm of Mr. Bouvet who had hidden his flying suit and had used his boots to jumble his tracks," relates Marie-Antoinette, Lt. McConnell's wife. Hidden in a coal miner shack, then turned over to "Mr. Rougeyron who hid him in Domfront, then sheltered in Paris by Resistants until January 1944 . . ."

Like many of his brothers in arms, he crossed the Pyrenees mountains on the road to freedom. Released from a Spanish jail, he returned, via Gibraltar, to his base in England.

Yesterday morning, John Carah spoke in French to thank the people of Belfonds for their "beau geste." His voice breaking, Paul McConnell expressed in English his "immense gratitude for the French people who helped our comrades. I will always keep in my thoughts those who lost their lives, just as I have kept in my heart a very special place for Normandie."

*John Carah and Paul McConnell were among 500 persons who attended a ceremony at Belfonds to honor the memory of airmen who died when their plane crashed on July 4, 1943.*



*Some people know how to get high to celebrate! On July 19, while still in Paris after the Freedom Trail hike, the Davids marked Clayton's 80th birthday with a dinner in the Eiffel Tower, overlooking Paris and the Seine. Cake with an appropriate number of candles was served on a model of the tower. Jon and his dad Lynn are in the foreground, Clayton and Scotty in the background.*

# Berlin: not enough fuel to get home

From FAME'S FAVORED FEW,  
A WWII Flier Evades Capture in  
German-Occupied France.

## MY LAST MISSION

By KENNETH E. NEFF  
Atwater, Calif.

On the day of my last mission, Saturday, the 29th of April 1944, I was with a new 92nd Bomb Group crew. The first pilot is on his second mission; the bombardier on his seventh mission; I am the old timer flying my 17th. All the rest of the crew are on their first mission.

The target for today is the Big B, deep within Nazi Germany, well defended by Luftwaffe fighters and many AA weapons, including the dreaded 88s.

We were airborne at 0700 and soon are crossing the Channel.

Down at 8th HQ, some planner has decided that Dummer Lake would make a good ground checkpoint for navigation; ergo, all flights heading into Germany were directed over the lake. It didn't take the Germans long to get on to this, and they responded by covering the lake with flak barges and ringing the lake with AA guns. Sometimes the smoke from the guns was so thick you couldn't see the flight in front of yours. Still another 225 miles to Berlin.

As we cross Lake Dummer, we picked up a bit of flak in the right starboard engine and so we had only one functioning engine on that side. No pilot wants to abort when he has the crew with him for the first time, so we went on.

By the time we reached Berlin, more than half our gas had been used up. Not enough left to get home!

After the bombing run, flak took out a second engine, this time it was No. 3 on the left wing. As the pilots struggled with the controls, we finally leveled off at about 12,000 feet. There we were, just west of Berlin with two engines running and most of our gas gone; and all by ourselves. My early morning thoughts that this was not to be my day were starting to come true!

After the bomber leveled off, we did not know that a piece of flak had embedded itself in the plane next to the compass and was affecting the readings.



**THREE GUYS AND MASCOT** -- This photo was taken at the home of Mr. Maurice DeFrance, an Underground helper who lived in Lagny, France, about 60 miles north of Paris, in the summer of 1944. From left: Staff Sgt. Kenneth E. Neff, unnamed P-47 pilot being moved by the Resistance, and Staff Sgt. Earl Broderick, Neff's fellow crewman and traveling companion.

Instead of heading west as we thought, we were going south-southwest with the result that we finally crash-landed in France.

Lt. Langfeldt said something about getting ready to bail out; I didn't wait to hear what else he had to say. I came out of the ball turret as fast as I could, snapped on my chest pack and went back to the bailout door, kicked it open and was ready to go out on command.

Finally, in the distance, we could see the English Channel. Everyone was delighted as we thought we had it made, but about that time No. 4 on the port wing cut out due to lack of fuel. Lt. Langfeldt came on the intercom and said we were not going to make it across the Channel and he didn't think we could get far enough out so that the British crash

boats could pick us up. He was going to try to get the plane as far inland as possible and told us to get into crash-landing position in the radio room.

Out of the aircraft and on the ground, the 10 of us took off. A man and a woman over on the side of the field were digging potatoes. We had no idea of where we were, let alone what country we were in. When I was close enough, I asked them, "Sprechen sie Deutsch?" just in case we might be in Germany or Holland. They merely looked at me.

Lt. Langfeldt was right behind me and he said, "Parlez vous Francais?" The answer was "Oui" and we knew we were in France.

The ten of us ran through the woods together, sounding like a herd of elephants. After a short time, I dropped

back to be with Earl Broderick, the flight engineer who lived in my barracks back in England.

I told him I was leaving the group because if we stayed together like this, the Germans would be able to hear us a mile away and probably capture the whole crew at one time. I asked him if he wanted to go with me and he said he would. I said, "Let's go!" and headed north with Earl right behind me.

We went a little ways and then turned back to the edge of the woods where the plane had crashed. We could see German soldiers all over the plane, so we eased back into the woods and took off fast.

It wasn't long before we heard a vehicle coming and we both hid in some bushes. The vehicle was a German lorry with GIs in it. Every 40 feet or so, one of the soldiers would drop off and head into the woods where we had just been. They sure enough were looking for us.

Earl and I decided to get out of the area as fast as we could so again we put the sun at our back and headed east, trying to get as far from the French coast as we could.

The first contact with a Frenchman, other than the man and woman digging potatoes at the crash site, was a farmer plowing his field. Earl and I hid in some bushes near his trailer and waited for him to come over. As he came closer, we went out to talk to him. We spoke English. He looked at us and started speaking French.

Earl got out our French/English book and pointed to the phrase, "Will you help us?" The Frenchman put his finger on the map at a town and then went back to his tractor. We folded the map and headed east again.

It was late afternoon and it had been a long time since breakfast and our Mars bars were long gone. I was really getting hungry.

In the evening Earl and I came to a small dirt road leading off the main road. A short way down the road was a house on the corner. It was out in the open and you could see for a long way each direction. While we were looking things over, a teenage girl came peddling down the dirt road on her bike. She spoke to us in French and since we didn't understand, we just nodded.

Looking around, we noticed a woman and a girl in the yard of the house on

main road, so we walked up to the house. When we got to them, I asked in English if we could have a drink of water. The woman said something in French, so I motioned like I was drinking. She then turned to the girl, who went into the house and returned with a glass and a bottle of beer.

When finished, we started to walk off when the girl grabbed Earl by the arm and starting pulling him toward the house. We went in with them and told them who we were and what we were doing and where we wanted to go. We never asked for help.

A little later, the girl we had seen earlier on the bicycle came to the house, and we learned she could speak very good English. She brought a duffel bag with civilian clothes. They started exchanging the clothes for our uniforms, but they didn't have any shoes that would fit either of us, so we had to keep our heated flying boots.

The French explained that we would sleep in the barn and that someone would wake us up so we could get to the town before daylight. One of the men took us out to the barn where we sacked out for the night.

A Frenchman woke us up before daylight. We had some coffee and French bread. When we were ready to go, we picked up our duffel bags and learned the French had put more stuff in them. We found another pair of socks, some hard-boiled eggs, and more bread, plus some beer.

After saying goodbye, Earl and I started down the road towards the town. About a mile down the road, we walked under a railroad track and heard a commotion.

I soon saw a German truck, staff car, motorcycle and the main source of all that noise, a tank. The convoy went 100 yards past us and stopped. The vehicles sat there for a few minutes and finally the staff car and cycle went on down the road while the truck and tank turned right and headed south.

After the Germans departed, I went looking for Earl but had a hard time finding him. The French cut their crops by hand and Earl was hiding so low that I couldn't find him for a while. We then got back on the road and started out again.

Just as it started to get light in the east, Earl and I came to the outskirts of the town we had been heading for. It was decision time again. We couldn't decide whether to go to the north or the south of the town; we didn't want to go into the town proper.

There was a small hill to the north, so we decided to go up the hill and find a place to hide. Being on high ground would enable us to see anyone who was coming near us.

It was Sunday, 30 April 1944, the first of 24 days we were to spend in the town of Peroone, France.

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**In the next *Communications*:  
OUR NEW HOME FOR THE  
NEXT TWENTY-FOUR DAYS**

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*Mr. and Mrs. Frank Caubergh of Belgium pose with Dr. Milan Buros during the AFEES reunion last April in Mesa, Ariz.*

# **FOLDED WINGS**

## **MEMBERS**

- #650 George F. Bennett, Horseshoe Bay, TX, 379 BG, July 1, 1999  
 15 AF David C. Conner, Tigard, OR, 99 BG, May 30, 1999  
 #895 George D. Cooksey Jr., Coronado, CA, 488 BG, Dec., 1996  
 #478 I. Wayne Eveland, Helena, MT, 401 BG, July 28, 1999  
 #446 Karl D. Miller, Elizabeth City, NC, 96 BG, June 19, 1999  
 #230 Henry P. Sarnow, New Castle, CA, 95 BG, June 10, 1999  
 #86 Lawrence H. Templeton, Altoona, WI, 94 BG, March 3, 1999  
 #1180 Don W. Vogel, Brandon, VT, 357 FG, April 2, 1999

Note: In the last newsletter, it was reported that John S. Vitkus was deceased. It should have read "Raymond D. Vitkus, Las Vegas, NV, 381st BG, died Dec. 11, 1998." We regret the error.

## **HELPERS**

Mme. Marthe FACHE, Bruxelles, Belgium, 1999  
 Mme. Marguerite AVONS, Villefranche Sur Saone, Fr., Aug. 2, 1999  
 Mr. Elie TOULZA, Lavelanet, France, June 1999

## **Updates to AFEES 1996 Membership Directory (Changes are in BOLD Type)**

Woodrow J. Bergeron "L", 2015 Riverbend Circle, Blairsville, GA 30512;  
 Phone: 706-745-3599  
 George F. Brennan "L", 2232 East Walling Drive, Boise, ID 83712;  
 phone 208-426-0116  
 George J. Brooks "L", 205 Aquarius St., Silver Lake, KS 66539-9677  
 Eldon H. Dahl "L", 2400 W. Durston Rd., #49, Bozeman, MT 59718-  
 1847; phone 406-586-2123  
 Robert H. Easley "L", 3743 Savory Way, Oceanside, CA 92057; phone  
 760-966-0408  
 Morris Elisco "L", 1307 Cheswick Ct., Wheeling, IL 60090-6937.  
 James R. Fauth, 4145 Raven Dr., Fallon, NV 89406  
 Charles A. Fisher "L", 206 Draw Bridge Ct., Greensburg, PA 15601;  
 phone 724-853-2544  
 Lewis M. Hatch "L", 178 Wild Wood Dr., Decatur, TX 76234;  
 phone 940-627-3529

## **Membership E-Mail Addresses**

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 Sherri OTTIS, Clinton, Miss.: sherri@co.hinds.ms.us  
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 Stan STEPnitz, Upper Marlboro, Md.: stanstep@erols.com  
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 Joe VUKOVICH, Medford, Ore.: gvukovich@aol.com

## **HOME FAX NUMBERS**

Stanley Stepnitz: 301-627-2840

(If you would like your e-mail address and/or Fax number listed, send it to: afees44@hotmail.com, or write to PO Box 2501, Wichita Falls, TX 76307-2501)



GEORGE F. BENNETT

## **OBITUARY**

# **George Bennett was interned**

George F. Bennett, Col. USAF (Ret.) of Horseshoe Bay, Tex., passed away suddenly on July 1, 1999, of a heart attack.

He entered the Army Air Corps in 1942 and served as a radio operator/gunner with the 379BG. His plane was shot down on his fourth mission on Feb. 8, 1944, over Noyon, France. He was aided by French civilians who hid him and helped him to escape by crossing the Pyrenees. He was interned for a time in Spain, but was finally released.

His book recounting his experiences was called *Shot Down! Escape and Evasion*.

He flew 52 missions in B-29s in the Korean War and 17 missions in the Vietnam conflict. He retired in 1973 as a command pilot after 31 years of service.

He began his civilian career by being appointed by the governor of South Dakota to be Secretary of Public Safety. He and his family moved to Fort Worth, Tex., in 1975 where he was employed as director of safety for 10 years at the University of Texas at Arlington. In 1992 he and his wife moved to Horseshoe Bay in central Texas.

Graveside services were held July 6 at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery, with full military honors.

Colonel Bennett is survived by his wife of 50 years, Iris Glenn; a son Barry, a daughter Barbara, and six grandchildren.

## OBITUARIES

### I. Wayne Eveland

I. Wayne Eveland, who for many years championed the cause of U.S. congressional recognition for evaders, died at his home in Helena, Mont., Wednesday, July 28, 1999. Death was from pulmonary disease, complicated by heart problems.



I. WAYNE  
EVELAND

He received his bachelor's degree from University of Montana in 1938.

He entered the Air Corps as a Flying Cadet in 1939 and was commissioned in May 1940. He served briefly with Pan American Airways, evacuating wounded and refugees from China and Burma. In 1942, he became a B-17 squadron commander and was shot down over France in December 1943. After three months behind enemy lines and with the help of the Underground, he crossed the

Pyrenees Mountains in a blizzard and returned to England.

He helped form the Montana 9095th Volunteer Air Reserve and remained active in the Reserve until 1976.

As a Helena civilian, he was active in many groups, including Kiwanis, Community Chest, Heart Association, Easter Seal and others. He retired as a Life Underwriter with New York Life in 1979.

He told family members that he so regretted being unsuccessful in securing official recognition for members of AFEES. He felt that such men deserve to be so honored.

Survivors include his wife, Lois and a daughter, Nicole.

### Henry P. Sarnow

Lt. Col. Henry P. Sarnow, one of the airmen aided in Belgium by Anne Brusselmans, died in New Castle, Calif., June 10, 1999. He was 78.

A navigator-bombardier with the 95BG, he bailed out in 1943. He evaded through Spain and arrived in London in November of the same year.

Survivors include his wife, Regina; twin daughters, 4 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren.

### *Intrepidus* has a request

George Woods Baker, chairman/CEO of Intrepidus, reports that his company is anxious to acquire evasion memorabilia directly from AFEES members. Intrepidus will make acquisitions either from donation or by purchase.

Especially needed are silk maps, escape kits, escape photos, ID cards, hidden compasses, books on evasion and other such memorabilia.

George says, "I can appreciate the sentimental value of most personal collections. However, there may be some members who have items they wish to pass along but do not know of anyone willing to accept such a responsibility. I would hope such members would consider me and Intrepidus as a worthy recipient."

Intrepidus can be contacted at 3000 West Olympic Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90404; phone 310-315-4805.



Anne Brusselmans and Hank Sarnow  
On 'This Is Your Life'

Hank Sarnow was a surprise guest in 1957 on the London television show "This Is Your Life" which featured Anne Brusselmans.

He then was stationed with the U.S. Embassy in Madrid, Spain.

His cue to come on stage was "Anne, I have come to pay my debt to you. I made three spots on your table cloth when I was staying with your family." Very short of soap during the war, Mme. Brusselmans "charged" airmen a Belgian franc for each spot they made while eating.

### Script for 'This Is Your Life'

EAMAN ANDREWS, the Host: Major Sarnow, we seem to have picked on the right man!

HENRY SARNOW: Well, of all the Americans who could have come I'm certainly glad you picked on me. To meet Madame again and say 'Thank You' properly after all these years -- that's really something!

ANDREWS: Five weeks in all you were hidden by Madame?

SARNOW: Yes, and most of that time in her own home, getting ready for my escape. Madame thought of everything! She made me exercise to keep fit -- taught me how to hold a cigarette like a Belgian -- so I wouldn't be noticed in the streets. She fixed me a false identity card -- with photograph, and clothes to wear for my escape. A black pin-striped suit, shoes, a top coat, and a brief case.

ANDREWS: Why the brief case?

SARNOW: It was something for me to hold, so I wouldn't swing my arms like an American and give myself away. You see? -- there wasn't anything she didn't think of!

ANDREWS: Except herself. That five franc fine, Major, for spotting the tablecloth . . .

SARNOW: I've brought it right with me.

# Rudy is both an evader and an Ace

From *FLIGHT Magazine*,  
November-December 1996

Darkness lay heavy between the hedgerows. Although elevated above the road, 21-year-old Rudy Augarten could barely make out the other side. He lay on his belly, his heart pounding against the moist earth. The rifle felt strange in his hands. Foreign. He was a fighter pilot. Not a Resistant fighter. He didn't belong here.

Then the unmistakable sound of a tank clanking down the road in his direction broke the silence. He could see the forms of infantrymen walking cautiously on either side of the angular, dark shape. They closed until only a few feet from his position.

It had been two months since he had knocked on Louis Souty's farmhouse door wearing his dirty flight suit. He had stashed his parachute near where he landed. The cut near his eye, where his oxygen mask had hit him when he bailed out, was still bleeding. The Soutys drew him in and protected him. They were the first of several to offer temporary sanctuary as he worked his way back through the front lines.

At one point, along with a fellow Allied escaper, he found himself facing a German sentry who was challenging him to halt. His answer was to throw a hand grenade and dive into a ditch. Unfortunately, a few minutes later, a Wehrmacht soldier stood over him, demanding he surrender. He was officially a POW, but not for long.

Once interned in a converted stable, his group slowly cut their way through the ceiling of their prison with a table knife and dropped out of a second-floor window to disappear into the night.

As the tank grew nearer, the infantrymen walking on either side of it held their weapons in ready position. Then a single shot echoed from the other side of the road. The infantry scattered to the sides of the road, several dropping into the ditch directly under Augarten. As they lay in the dark ditch, one of the troops below Augarten pleaded with his comrade in a hoarse whisper. That



***Rudy Augarten's achievements as a fighter pilot include downing two Messerschmitts in one battle while flying P-47s with the 9th Air Force. He later flew Messerschmitts and Spitfires in the Israeli War.***

whisper became the most beautiful music Rudy Augarten had ever heard.

"Fer Christ's sake, McCarthy, get off my foot!"

Rudy immediately jumped up. "Are you Americans?"

"Yeah, and who the hell are you and put your hands up!" was the reply.

Rudy Augarten is a thoroughly unique fighter pilot and was recently added to the roster of American Aces Association list of aces, making him one of the few to belong to both the Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society and the Aces Association.

His total of 6 1/2 victories -- not huge when compared with those of better-known combat superstars -- has to be a record in terms of the types of aircraft flown while making those victories.

He was assigned to the 406th Fighter Squadron, 371st Wing, 9th Air Force, operating out of the south of England in a ground support role. When flak knocked Rudy Augarten out of the air on June 10, 1944, during his 12th mission, it put him in position to see his first Messerschmitt.

"I had just been captured, and a German officer had me at gunpoint when a Messerschmitt roared low overhead. The officer pointed at it and said, 'That's one of ours.' It was the first I had seen."

Then, suddenly, the war was over. He was at Luke Field at the time, back on leave after flying 103 combat missions. After a year at Louisiana University, he transferred to Harvard, which had a Zionist club. One evening, he was invited to a lecture being given by none other than Abba Eban. "I was moved by Israel's plight and told my friend that I would like to help if I could. He gave me the address of a Zionist office in lower Manhattan, and I went down to talk to them. 'I felt all Jews had a responsibility to do what they could to help their brethren. My mother and father had lost all but two of their European relatives in the Holocaust.'"

Augarten arrived in Israel on July 4. As the truces came and went and the war dragged on, the frantic efforts to increase the size of the Air Force and decrease dependence on the less-than-loved S-199s began to bear fruit. Spitfires found abandoned in an exRAF scrap heap were made airworthy, and a P-51D was brought in pieces and assembled.

On Jan. 7, 1949, the Israeli War of independence was officially over, and Rudy Augarten returned to America for half a year to finish his college degree.

Although the war was over, Rudy Augarten's involvement in Israel's future would continue. He returned as soon as



**Rudy Augarten, Mesa, Ariz.,  
April 1999**

he graduated and, wearing the rank of Lt. Col., commanded a fighter base.

By training the first two pilot classes, I helped accelerate transformation of the Air Force into an all-Israeli unit. I have always felt that the primary job of a manager is to train a replacement. So I finished my job and came home for good."

Rudy went back to school, got an engineering degree and just recently retired after 27 years as an engineer with Rockwell in California.

Last year (in 1995) Rudy Augarten and his wife traveled back to Europe for the 50th anniversary of the ending of WW II. There, he again met Louis Souty, the French farmer who had befriended him. He again hugged the French girl, Madeleine Leportier, now a grandmother, who had taken Jerry Gordon and him to a shack and brought them food.

He visited the places of his past and stood under the window where he had escaped from the Germans. He did a lot of remembering.

*Rudy's fellow escaper, Jerry Gordon, a British paratrooper, died later in Korea.*

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# The editor has the last word

By LARRY GRAUERHOLZ  
afees44@hotmail.com

WICHITA FALLS, Tex. -- Ralph Patton, who co-founded this society nearly 40 years ago, has added to his string of accomplishments.

He not only successfully promoted American participation in *Operation Home Run*, the commemorative walk across the Pyrenees into Spain, but he conned practically all his family into actually walking the route.

Don't be misled, however; Ralph was back partying with the rest of us gold brickers in Saint Giron while the hike was taking place.

After deciding that those mountains are not any smaller than they were in 1944, I told our two daughters that it's a good thing we crossed at night back in those days. That way, we couldn't see what was ahead.

One of the French helpers that Sherri Ottis visited after the walk presented her with a silk escape map that an airman had left with him way back then. It is safe to speculate that not many of those maps are still around. It could be a museum piece.

President Dick Smith is planning a trip from Minnesota down to Columbia, Mo., about mid-September to nail down plans for the 2000 reunion with the

Salute to Veterans Committee there. My guess is that there will be plenty for us to see & do, including air shows, parades, banquets, hospitality room and so on.

Reunion dates are May 25-29 (Memorial Day weekend) next year.

Here's one for LOST & FOUND:

Scott Goodall, organizer of Operation Home Run, says a green sleeping bag (Quecha) and a pair of small Nikon binoculars were left with him after the walk. Anyone want to claim them?

French historians Francois Cadic and Claude Helias would like to learn whether Lt. Jimmy W. George, who was aboard the fishing boat *Ar Vouac'h* on Sept. 16, 1943, and John W. George, listed in earlier AFEES directories, are the same.

The national D-Day Museum will open near the New Orleans Convention Center and other museums next June 6. It is to be dedicated to all D-Day invasions of WWII.

Maurice Collins gained eligibility in the RAFES by making a sudden departure from a Halifax over France. He was part of the British group at Saint Giron and asked me to help him locate a photo of an A-20 (Havoc), with RAF markings.

He can be contacted at 15 First Ave.,

Chelmsford, Essex CM1 1RX, U.K.

On Sunday morning, June 6, Chairman Ralph Patton received a telephone call at 11 a.m. from Mrs. Jean Pena. She explained that Ralph was the only American veteran she knew who understood French and she just had to call to thank the U.S. and its veterans for June 6, 1944, and for the liberation of France. The conversation ended with, "Vive la France; vive L'Amerique."

Those B-24 guys are celebrating the 60th anniversary year of the Liberator, in San Diego, Calif., Dec. 9-12. To learn more, contact Richard Baynes, 71 Nighthawk, Irvine, CA 92714-3683; 949-552-3889, Fax 949-551-2151.

THIS ONE WORKED FOR ME:

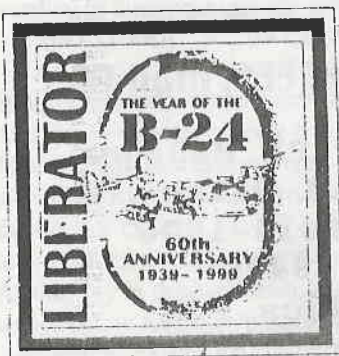
First, pick the number of days a week you would like to eat out. Multiply this number by 2. Add 5. Multiply it by 50. If you already have had your birthday this year, add 1,749. If you haven't, add 1,748. Last step: subtract the four-digit year that you were born.

You should have a three-digit number left. The first digit was your original number (how many times you want to eat out per week). The second two digits are your age! Oh, this will only work in the year 1999.

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