

THE AIR FORCES ESCAPE & EVASION SOCIETY
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George's message goes thru, L&C

By ANNETTE TISON
392nd BG Memorial Association

For several years, 576th Squadron radio operator George W. Michel of Racine, Wisc., has been on a mission. He's been talking to people of all ages about World War II. Not the whole war, just his little part of it.

He wears his old uniform and can still get all the buttons buttoned. He tells them what it was like to fly a mission, to get shot down, to be interned in Switzerland, and then to escape with the help of the French Resistance.

He talks about what it was like to see flak up ahead, hear the shells burst and flak fragments hit their plane, and to know you had no choice but to fly through it and hope they made it out the other side.

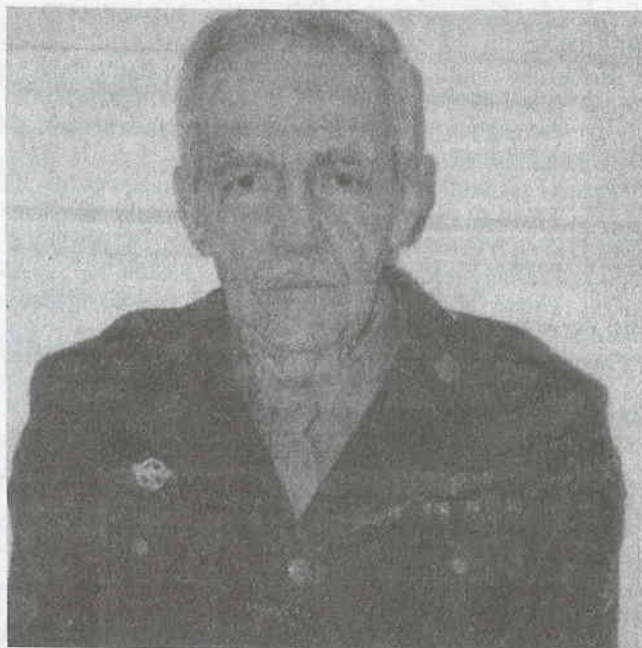
He talks about being in a badly damaged plane and given a choice: bail out or trust the pilot to get you down alive, in one piece, and not in German hands.

His audiences range from first graders to college students to senior citizens. Nearly 1,500 people have heard his 2 1/2 hour presentation by now. He's an interesting speaker with a talent for helping audiences of all ages visualize what it was like for thousands of young airmen, 60+ years ago.

He always has a question-and-answer session. Some of the questions, like "How did you go to the bathroom?" are fun to answer. Others, like "Were you scared?" are much more difficult.

"One time," George reports, "I was showing a first grade class some pieces of flak. I explained where flak comes from and how it tumbles and does not move like the bullet out of a gun.

"Then, one of the students looked up at me with the most sincere expression on his face and said,



AFEES Life Member George Michel, 392nd BG, can still button his WWII uniform.

'But, Mister, that could really hurt you.' That's when you know your message is coming through loud and clear."

No matter the age or the group, there is one constant in George's presentations. "I always tell them, especially the kids, that Freedom is Not Free. Then I ask their permission to tell them why. I ask them to look around and pick out four close friends and to imagine those friends having been killed.

Then I tell them about four of my closest friends who entered the service when I did in 1943. I tell the students that my four friends were killed in WWII.

I tell them how and where they died. I explain that the death of my friends helped give me the freedom that I have today. And I suppose, deep down, I'm begging this young generation, please don't let it happen again."

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<<http://www.rafinfo.org.uk/rafescape/afees-usa.htm>>

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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.

WINTER 2007-08

The Prez Sez

By Richard M. Smith

<afeesone@hotmail.com>

*Our future
must depend
on the young!*
Any Volunteers?

Good Morning to All from the Southern California desert.

Margaret and I arrived at our winter home in Palm Desert in mid-October and the fall weather has been absolutely wonderful.

Now, for some important AFEES business:

I hope that all voting members will carefully consider what follows.

There has been discussion among several members of the Board of Directors regarding the future of AFEES. It has been suggested that the AFEES flag could be folded for good and presented to the U.S. Air Force Museum at Dayton when we meet there in 2009.

Our regular members are growing older and so far, there has not been much involvement from the second and third generations to assume the responsibilities of perpetuating the organization.

If any of your children and/or grandchildren are interested in a future for AFEES, they should be prepared to express their wishes at the Savannah reunion next April.

I do hope that the mission and ideals of AFEES can be carried on!

--RICHARD M. SMITH

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JOB OPPORTUNITY!

Work from Home, several hundred hours per year! No monetary income -- just self-satisfaction and an occasional "Thank You!"

Applicant must be dues-paying member or Friend member of AFEES and be approved by the Board of Directors as Membership Chairman.

DUTIES INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

1. Maintain current roster with dues status.
2. Receive dues and contributions, acknowledge each, including membership cards.
3. Record and forward all monies to AFEES treasurer.
4. Receive and process newsletters and "Seasons' Greetings" returned by the U.S. Postoffice.
5. Report U.S. changes of address and deaths to V.P. Francis Lashinsky, who prepares mailing labels for newsletters, as well as handling the annual raffle. Check newsletter labels for last-minute changes and forward same to the editor.
6. Supply Larry Grauerholz, our editor, the list of new members and Friends, address changes, and Folded Wings for newsletter.
7. Maintain current mailing list of Helpers for sending annual Seasons' Greetings.
8. Handle inquires concerning our society and provide help when possible.

(Job does NOT include producing the scrapbooks now done by Scotty David.)

Interested applicants should contact any member of the AFEES Board of Directors.

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Wings of Freedom Tour Upcoming Locations

- 1/18 **Fort Lauderdale, FL**
(B-17 & B-25)
Airport: Fort Lauderdale Executive
Location: Banyan
- 1-22 **West Palm Beach, FL**
(B-17 & B-25)
1/24
Airport: West Palm Beach International
Location: South ramp, Souther Blvd.
- 1/24 **Boca Raton, FL**
(B-17 & B-25)
1/28
Airport: Boca Raton Airport.
- 1/28 **Naples, FL**
(B-17 & B-25)
1/30
Airport: Naples Municipal Airport
Location: TBD
- 1/30 **Fort Meyers, FL**
- 2/1 (B-17 & B-25)
Airport: Page Field Airport
Location: Ramp at north end of field.
- 2/1 - **Venice, FL**
2/4 (B-17 & B-25)
Airport: Venice Municipal
Location: Venice Jet Center
- 2/6 - **Kissimmee, FL**
2/8 (B-17 & B-25)
Airport: Kissimme Municipal
Location: Atlantic Aviation
- 2/8 - **Ocala, FL**
2/10 (B-17 & B-25)
Airport: Ocala Intl. Airport
Location: Landmark Aviation

Secret Partisan hospital destroyed

By CORY ADAMS

<cory.adams@cox.net>

AFEES Friend for Life

Something tragic has happened in Slovenia. The Idrija Museum, over the years, had rebuilt Franja Hospital, a secret Partisan-built hospital used to help injured Partisans during WWII. It was never taken over by the enemy. It was reconstructed at the original site inside a steep, barely-accessible canyon near Cerkno.

On Sept. 18, Slovenia had a great deal of rain, causing massive flooding in the Idrija/Cerkno area. The flooding completely destroyed the reconstructed hospital.

Before and after photos can be seen at:

<<http://www.muzej-idrija-cerkno.si/english/index.htm>>

My father, 2Lt Harold C. Adams, spent several months in the hospital as one of the few non-Yugoslavs to ever be taken there. Dad was with the 725th Bomb Sq, 451st Bomb Gp, 15th AF stationed at Bari, Italy. On 25 Feb 1944, they left Bari on a mission to bomb the Regensburg aircraft factory, and were shot down over Slovenia. He was flying as a substitute bombardier with another crew. I think his aircraft was "The Citadel", but that day he was flying on the "Wee Willie"

From Slovenian documents, six of the crew of the "Wee Willie" appear to have been:

1Lt James G. Boornazian

2Lt George R. Stricker

Sgt Corbin McPherson

Sgt Jack Haley

Sgt Paul Mouton

Sgt Elzie Blankenship

These six guys landed in Slovenia near each other and were quickly rescued as a group. Some of them are current AFEES members.

From Dad's post-war letters, I believe that Sgt James McCauley was another crew member who landed near him, but died shortly after the crash.

From a book ("Evasion and Repatriation", Edi Selhaus) about the incident. Sgt Lloyd Cook was another crew member mentioned, along with Boornazian, Stricker, and McPherson. The book didn't mention Dad, probably because, as a substitute, he was an unknown to the crew.

You AFEES guys (primarily John Rucigay, who got me the data on the other crew members and who also knows Edi Selhaus) steered me toward the book. I was able to talk to John at one of the AFEES reunions, when I was passing through Dayton.

I helped the museum in the late 1990s document and verify his stay there to qualify the reconstructed hospital for designation as a UNESCO World Heritage site. I also

worked with his rescuer, Danilo Suligoi (an AFEES Helper, who died a couple of years ago), which resulted in the awards that the museum and Danilo received in 97-98.

My daughter Tanya was stationed in Germany at the time and went down to Slovenia to participate in the ceremony with Danilo, the Slovenian government, and the museum.

Edi Selhaus also participated at the Slovenian ceremony. I passed a whole lot of the souvenirs and letters my father collected to the director (Ivana Levkovic) of the museum and there are several things exhibited there now. However, some were in the hospital itself -- now probably gone forever.

Danilo's certificate from AFEES was one of those things displayed in the reconstructed hospital, and now probably gone.

The story of the hospital, including photos of Danilo and my father, was also documented in the E&E exhibit at the Chanute Air Museum.

**WE REMEMBER THE
15TH MOTOR GUNBOAT FLOTILLA
OF THE ROYAL NAVY
KINGSWEAR 1942-1944**

**THIS FLOTILLA CARRIED OUT
CLANDESTINE OPERATIONS FROM THE
DART TO NORTHERN BRITTANY FROM
1942 TO 1944. WORKING CLOSELY
WITH THE FRENCH RESISTANCE,
IT LANDED OR BROUGHT BACK TO
ENGLAND MANY BRAVE BRITISH AND
ALLIED AGENTS AND ALSO BROUGHT
BACK MANY ALLIED AIRMEN SHOT
DOWN OVER EUROPE.**

**MGB 502 WAS SUNK OFF NORWAY
ON 12 MAY 1945. THERE WERE
ONLY TWO SURVIVORS.**

This Remembrance plaque, located on the quay side at Kingswear, U.K., was unveiled on April 29, 1995, by Contre Admiral de Kercauson, French Defence Attache in London, in the presence of Captain Moore RN, commanding officer of HMS Britannia, local civic dignitaries, Sir Brooks Richards, members of the 15th Flotilla and the French Resistance networks, their families and friends.

Il faut sauver le lieutenant John

(We Have to Save Lt. John Reitmeier)

*From a French newspaper
July 11, 2004*

In May 1944, an American B-24 bomber, crippled by the German flak, crashed in Mably. The crew parachuted over Chenay-le-Chatel.

Philippe Bailly, a Frenchman living in Melay, told what happened to John Reitmeier (E&E# 1999, 801st BG), one of the flyers, during the following 48 hours. Today, he remembers what he and others did to save the lieutenant.

After two days and two nights of roaming the countryside, John Reitmeier met Philippe Bailly, Emile Chalton and Paul Lagoutte. Bailly recognised John Reitmeier's American flightsuit and offered to help him.

The three young men brought the lieutenant to John Lagoutte's house in Chenay-le-Chatel, located northwest of Lyon. After eating his first real meal since the crash of his airplane, John Reitmeier donned civilian clothes and his three French friends took him by bicycle to the Moniers in Urbise.

Next morning, they had John stay in an open field until the following night. Then Antoine Buffet took him to his house where he stayed for one month. John was so well treated that to this day, he considers the Buffets like his second family.

After 30 days, Antoine Buffet took John to the railroad station in Saint-Martin-d'Estreaux. He gave him a magazine which would identify him to a girl who was to take him in charge. The young girl got on the train in Saint-Germain-l'Espinasse and sat right behind John without saying a word.

They both got off in Roanne and John followed the girl at a distance. A man on a bicycle stopped and said a few words to the girl. When John got to them, the girl bade him goodbye and John followed the man on



Philippe Bailly was the first Frenchman to help Lt. John Reitmeier.

the bicycle who turned out to be an English agent, code name Geegee. He took John to M. Bossonade's house where John was delighted to find John Meade, the bombardier on his B-24.

John Reitmeier was given a false identification card indicating that he was deaf and dumb. One morning, Mrs. Bossonade told John to quickly get out of the house because the Gestapo were searching the area. A block from the house, John saw Geegee, who was going to the Bossonades. He told him that the Gestapo were in the Bossonade courtyard and without this fortunate meeting, the English agent could

have fallen into the Gestapo's hands.

Mr. Bossonade was arrested. John was handed over to the local French Resistance where again he met John Meade.

A German spotter plane saw the camp of the resistance but fortunately, they were able to flee before the Germans arrived.

John Reitmeier was taken to the farm of the Robertons. One day, Germans passing by simply shot at a window where John and the Robertson's daughter, a girl 14 years old, were watching.

Reitmeier and the girl ran to the basement, but Mrs. Robertson made them leave the farm and told them to hide in the woods.

The flyer went to stay at the Benois in Saint-Polgues, which was liberated a short time later.

The mayor of Saint-Polgues took John to the main square of the village where all the local young girls wanted to kiss him. French soldiers stood at attention and honored him by asking him to raise the flag.

Soon after, John Reitmeier was sent back to the States where he died on Dec. 2, 2000.

Besides John Meade, other members of the John Reitmeier crew included French Russel, Murray Simmon, Philip Latta, Graham Hasty and Leo Dumesnil.

Wilford Hall marks anniversary

LACKLAND AIR FORCE BASE, Tex. (AFPN) -- Hospital officials and guests commemorated Wilford Hall Medical Center for 50 years as the Air Force's medical flagship in a ceremony here Nov. 16 that marked medical excellence from 1957-2007.

Maj. Gen. (Dr.) Thomas W. Travis, commander of the 59th Medical Wing, led the ceremony to celebrate the beginning of what is now the largest U.S. Air Force medical facility in the world.

The 50th anniversary celebration commemorated the dedication of a building that allowed the Air Force to develop a world-class medical treatment and training facility.

What began as a small station hospital and later downgraded to an infirmary, eventually led to a nine-story, 150-bed hospital in 1957.

'Sweet Pea' and Joe meet after 64 years

From the DAILY LEADER,
Brookhaven, Miss., July 1, 2007

By SARAH HOLCOMBE
Daily Leader Staff Writer

When United States Air Force Tech. Sgt. Joseph J. Walters met 18-year-old Janine Dardenne in her village of Boirs, Belgium, on Aug. 17, 1943, it was a chance meeting that only lasted about 15 minutes. But it turned out to be 15 of the most important minutes of his life. Their primary meeting was not under ideal circumstances, considering that Walters was American, and his plane had been shot down in Nazi-occupied territory.

Recently these old friends met again -- for the first time since that fateful day -- at the Brookhaven home of Janine "Sweetpea" Dardenne Adams, who moved here in April 1946 when she was the "war bride" of the late Versie Adams.

Back in 1942, Walters was an American ball turret gunner on a B-17 Flying Fortress in the famous Eighth USAAF, 381st bomber group. His plane, the Chug-A-Lug-LuLu, had just completed its 15th bombing raid, which was on the ball-bearing factories in the Bavarian city of Schweinfurt in Germany. As many as 190 enemy pilots attacked the plane. With three of its engines shot and damaged beyond repair and the B-17 losing altitude rapidly, the crew bailed out over Belgium.

Parachuting from the plane, Walters and the rest of his crew were strewn across the landscape wherever they drifted to the ground. The moment the Germans realized the plane had gone down, they immediately began searching for survivors to take as prisoners. They were kept quite busy, for on that day, more than 600 airmen would be killed or captured. The Eighth Air Force lost

nearly 90 bombers on three missions that week.

Walters and the other nine crewmen survived, but of them, only three escaped capture. Walters landed in an apple tree in an orchard and much to his relief, was rescued by Albert Tilkin, the owner of an apple crate factory nearby. He and his son were active members of the resistance.

As the Tilkin men escorted Walters to safety, one of the factory workers shot a photo with his box camera. The camera was later destroyed when it was feared that the Nazis would find it, but they kept the film and hid it for about 40 years, when it finally resurfaced. The photograph is now prominently displayed at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in Savannah, Ga.

Walters said, of his rescue, "They asked me if I wanted to surrender. I told them no, so they burned my parachute and hid me up in the loft and piled a bunch of crates around me."

After it was dark, they took him to a safe house nearby. In order for Walters to escape via the Underground, he needed to be given instructions about how he would escape, for he had a long, dangerous journey ahead of him to safety. The solution for the language barrier was to find someone in the village who could speak English.

Sweetpea Adams was a bright young woman for her age, and had always had a knack for language. She began at age 13 by learning Flemish, and the ensuing years, she added German and English. She was the logical choice to serve as translator between Walters and the members of the Underground who would save his life.

Adams recalled her first glimpse of the dashing and handsome American. "He was sitting at the



Janine Dardenne (Sweetpea Adams) was 18 years old and living in Boirs, Belgium at the time she met Joe Walters.

kitchen table surrounded by some members of the Underground, and the owner of the house," she said. "When my mother and I got there, even as sore as he was from being all banged and bruised up, and with a broken arm, when we walked into the room, he stood up. I remember how that impressed me, because the others hadn't done that. I thought to myself right then, 'I'm going to marry an American! They're so polite!'"

Walters said, humorously, of his first encounter with his translator, "I gave her a chocolate bar, a compass and chewing gum. She told me later that she buried the compass because she thought the Germans were coming. She ate all the chocolate bar

and she got sick."

Laughing at the memory of the rare treat, Adams said, "It was one of those candy bars the soldiers were issued that was supposed to be eaten on for a week if you were in the desert or something, and I ate it in 10 minutes on the way home in case I got caught and shot."

At that time, her village had been under Nazi control for about three years and rationing was a very real thing, so she was unaccustomed to the rich chocolate. It was also a dangerous thing to be found in one's possession, considering that the Nazis were always on the lookout for signs that locals might be cooperating with the Allies.

Over the course of their brief conversation, she explained to Walters that the next morning at 5 a.m., a truck would pick him up, and he would be dressed as a construction worker. He would be given a pick and shovel, and would sit in the back of the truck with other actual construction workers who went to work that way every morning.

This would be the beginning of his

Americans: 'They're so polite!' ... Sweet Pea Adams, in 1943

long journey back to safety. By the time he made it into safe hands in England at the first of December 1943, he would have walked, run, ridden trains, trucks and bicycles through Belgium, France, over the Pyrenees, to Spain and finally arriving in England.

"When I was crossing the Pyrenees, I lost a shoe. Eventually, they gave me some more clothes and more shoes. I even had a beret. I played a deaf-mute so nobody could tell I couldn't speak the local language," Walters said.

For a year after Walters left Boirs, no one in the village even mentioned that he'd been there -- because it wasn't safe with the Nazis all around. Keeping such a big secret was harder for some than for others.

"My father said, 'Don't tell anybody. You cannot open your mouth, because if you do, you're going to get people shot,'" Adams

said. "Can you imagine a teenage girl not telling a secret like that?"

"I never did, though. But it was so hard to have my girlfriends around me and not be able to tell them that I had talked to an American flyer!"

In the beginning, Adams' voice helped Walters have a chance to make it to safety.

After he left, it was her silence that ensured it. Eventually, word filtered back through the Underground to the village that Walters was safe. Of course, it was in code because of the Nazi occupation. The code words were, 'The rabbit is back in the hutch.'

In 1993, with the help of some of her friends like World War II veteran Donald Hemphill, of Brookhaven, Adams located her old friend Joe Walters. As they began to talk, time fell away and they became close friends.

Every year on the anniversary of their first meeting, they make a point to talk by phone. They speak frequently throughout the year, as well.

This year was special, though, for Walters, 93, who now lives in Florida, and his daughter, Jo Ann Lydic, of Atlanta, Ga. They made their way to Brookhaven to have a real-life visit with the woman who risked her life to help a stranger that dark day when he fell to the earth in a village that was surrounded by the enemy.

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt once said, "This generation of Americans has a rendezvous with destiny." It is a generation of heroes who transcended gender, age, nationality and social class, and whose sacrifices for a goal greater than themselves -- freedom for all -- ended a world war and tyranny.

Joe Walters' complete story has been recorded and is part of the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in Savannah, Ga..



T/Sgt. Joseph J. Walters of the 381st Bomb Group and Sweetpea (Janine) Dardenne Adams, of Brookhaven, Miss., first met 64 years ago when he "dropped in" to her village of Boirs, Belgium.



Friend Member Lynn David delivers a special tribute to General Duncan McNabb during the annual AFEES banquet at St. Louis, while President Richard Smith looks on.

At the St. Louis reunion last May, Lynn David delivered a special tribute to General Duncan J. McNabb, now an honorary director of AFEES in recognition of the assistance he has rendered our society. Lynn, in addressing General McNabb, said:

"It is difficult to adequately describe what your involvement, your wife Linda's involvement, Lt. Col. Cheryl's, Chief Master Sgt. Joe's and your Scott Air Force Base staff's involvement have meant to the men and women associated with AFEES.

"We frequently recognize the contribution made by our current members and by those no longer with us. These dedicated men and women are responsible for keeping AFEES a vibrant organization since 1964.

"However, General McNabb, your personal and professional involvement with AFEES since 2002, has provided this organization, the airmen and their helpers with the recognition they so justly deserve.

"The Military Code of Conduct states that, 'It is the duty of each member of the armed forces to evade capture, and if captured, to attempt to escape.' We must remember that members of AFEES fulfilled their code of conduct.

"General McNabb, we are very pleased to have you as our military patron. By your grace and presence, you provide the wonderful airmen and helpers of AFEES with the comfort that someone at a VERY high level in the military recognizes their contribution. Your involvement with AFEES provides the critical momentum for us to continue to come together every year for our reunion.

"Last year at the annual business meeting, there was discussion about whether AFEES should set a date for a final reunion. I feel my father, Clayton David, spoke for most of us when he said, 'Why don't we let the last airman or last helper make that decision.' General McNabb, with your involvement, I feel AFEES will continue to conduct a reunion for many years to come.

"Thank you, General McNabb, thank you Linda, and thanks to your staff. You truly mean so much to all of us."

WINTER 2007-08

AF leaders meet

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo.

(AFPN) -- On Nov. 2 Air Force senior leaders concluded the two-day CORONA Fall conference at the United States Air Force Academy.

The goal of this CORONA summit was to ensure planning for tomorrow is not compromised by concentrating on today's fight.

"Our current mission focus is waging and winning the long war," said Gen. T. Michael Moseley, Air Force chief of staff. "However, we can't take our eyes off the strategic playing field. We can't wait until tomorrow to think about tomorrow."

General Moseley talked of the importance of Global Vigilance, Global Reach and Global Power in shaping the future of the Air Force.

CORONA conferences are held three times a year and allow the Secretary of the Air Force, the Chief of Staff, and senior Air Force civilian and military leadership to come together for frank, open discussions that will lead the Air Force into tomorrow.

Discussions and briefings at CORONA Fall centered on the three themes of mission, people, and tomorrow.

Dr. John Hamre, former Deputy Secretary of Defense, provided a strategic perspective on Air Force organization for future challenges. He highlighted that the changing world requires an inter-agency, full spectrum response for national security.

Lt. Gen. Patrick Paimbault of the French Air Force shared lessons learned from the French Air Force in Africa to assist in standing up Africa Command.

Gen. Duncan J. McNabb, the Air Force vice chief of staff, concluded the conference by saying, "Our Nation is facing a complex and dangerous world with strategic challenges that require foresight and planning -- not just reaction. During this conference we focused on how we can prevent future wars while still winning the war we're in. We have to do both to fulfill our duty to this great nation."

Yanks take part in Shelburn hike

By BEVERLY PATTON WAND
Madison, N.J.

At the end of September 2007, I participated in the inaugural Shelburn Freedom Trail Challenge along the coast of Brittany, organized by the Escape Lines Memorial Society, which runs numerous commemorative walks each year for international/inter-generational participants.

A contingent of AFEES members hiked over the Pyrenees in 1999 as part of the annual Chemin de la Liberte. We found the camaraderie of the hikers, the spectacular scenery, and the warm reception we received from local officials, veterans and other citizens more than compensated for the difficulty of that hike.

This year was the first for the Brittany-based Shelburn hike. Hikers and veterans converged in Brittany on Tuesday and Wednesday, Sept. 25-26, arriving in planes, boats, trains and cars from the United States, England, France and Belgium.

For we Americans, Kim Clark (granddaughter of Al Day) and myself, it was an easy ride on the TGV train from Paris or Charles DeGaulle airport. Roger Stanton, (ELMS Secretary and trip organizer extraordinaire), Keith Janes (ELMS Communications Director and historian), and Geoff Cowling (ELMS Vice Chairman) arrived via car ferry from England on Wednesday morning.

On Wednesday we visited the town of Plouha for market day.

Some of us toured the area, Plage Bonaparte itself and the nearby site of the House of Alphonse.

Others met with the mayor, M Le Guen, with members of a local walking club who volunteered to guide us on the final day's walk, and with M. Jean Trehiou of the local resistance organization.

All told, there were 10 walkers, five veterans, and Christopher, the Land Rover driver, along with his 9-week-old Springer spaniel and its mother.

Hikers, helpers, veterans invited to 2008 Shelburn Freedom Trail

Brittany Coast of France, April 9-14, 2008

By BEVERLY PATTON WAND

The commemorative Shelburn Walk along the coast of Brittany is an exciting new addition to the Escape Lines Memorial Society's hikes. In 2008, the hike will take place on Thursday, April 10 through Sunday, April 13, and ELMS planners encourage walkers of all ages and abilities to participate.

In the words of ELMS literature, "The event is organized as a Walking Memorial in memory of the people of Shelburn, and the MGB crews, who assisted escapers, evaders, and other fugitives to reach England and continue the fight for freedom. The main event is a four-day walk, organized in four stages, so should you need to take a "day off" you can do.

This hike has all the features of other ELMS hikes:

Dedication to commemorating historic events and opportunity for younger generations to meet and get to know helpers and veterans over a four day period;

Amiable and interesting international hiking partners;

Amazing scenery best seen from places accessible only on foot;

Opportunities to learn from local historians and to meet local officials (often with champagne involved!)

Reasonable cost.

AFEES members who hiked the Pyrenees in 1999 already know that a commemorative hike is a truly unparalleled experience.

The Shelburn hike is unique, however, in that it is well-suited for people of all ages and levels of fitness due to three important features:

First, walkers sleep in the same comfortable accommodations every night and are transported by vehicle to the various trail heads each morning. Aside from enabling participants to be quite comfortable every night, this allows walkers to carry only a small rucksack each day.

Second, the path follows the coast, passing through villages throughout the day. It is easy for veterans and walkers to rendezvous along the way for a spot of tea (or a pint of ale!). Hikers who find they are enjoying the company of the veterans even more than the hiking may choose to bail out (so to speak) of the hike for part of the day and travel by vehicle instead.

Third, at the end of each day, walkers and veterans are transported back to the accommodation and treated to an excellent meal by the very talented local chef, Max.

For more information about this hike, contact Beverly Patton Wand at 973-377-3103 or

To read about the WW2 Escape Lines Memorial Society (ELMS), their philosophy and their hikes, visit their website at

James says day of dogfights is over

From the PLAIN DEALER
Cleveland, Ohio, Aug. 19, 2007

By BRIAN ALBRECHT

On Oct. 26, 1944, James Frolking's mother in Cleveland Heights received the dreaded Western Union telegram expressing "deep regret" from the War Department. The telegram said her son, a 20-year-old pilot with the 8th Air Force's 479th Fighter Group in England, had been missing in action for three weeks.

Eleven days later, she got another telegram: "All well and safe. Please don't worry. Hope to see you soon. James Frolking."

For nearly a month Frolking (E&E#2614) had survived being shot down, parachuting into enemy territory and hiding in various farmhouses and villages, sheltered by the Dutch resistance, living under a false identity as Nico van der Maas, a deaf and dumb baker.

Today, Frolking, 83, of Shaker Heights, looks back on those days as a time when he went from a self-described "green, snot-nosed kid, just out of high school" to one of the "knights in armor of World War II," as author Stephen Ambrose called Allied fighter pilots.

His chance came after graduation from high school in 1942 and he enlisted in the Army Air Corps. Two years later he was flying his first combat mission on a particularly memorable date -- June 6, 1944, the D-Day invasion of France.

Frolking remembered peering down from the cockpit of his P-38 and seeing the Allied invasion fleet spread out for miles. "It almost seemed like you could step from one ship to another, all the way from England to France," he said.

He amassed 200 combat hours, flying P-38 Lightnings and P-51 Mustangs.

Frolking flew on patrol and strafing missions or escorted bombers away.



Fighter Pilot James Frolking of Shaker Heights, Ohio, evaded capture with the help of Dutch civilians. He says the biggest lesson he learned from the war was to trust and believe in others.

to protect them from German planes.

"The flying was exciting," Frolking said. "You had your independence, you could do all kind of crazy things, but then, we were young and reckless."

That thrill was tempered by the sobering side of war. Seventy of the 350 pilots in his group were killed in action.

Frolking was credited with damaging two German fighters and destroying a third.

His own number nearly came up on one mission when a German fighter suddenly appeared behind him, then inexplicably pulled alongside, close enough for the two pilots to lock eyeballs, before peeling away.

"I should've been dead," Frolking said. "I don't know why he didn't shoot -- maybe out of sympathy or out of ammo."

His luck held after his plane was disabled by anti-aircraft fire while returning to base from his 52nd mission. Frolking dived headfirst from the cockpit, pulled the parachute ripcord and watched as his brand-new P-51 crashed into the North Sea, just off the coast of Holland.

His first break came in landing in chest-deep water, a short-dinghy paddle from the German-occupied Dutch Island of Noord Beveland. He soon met two men who directed him to a nearby village, where he took a chance at one house, flashed his

emergency language card that stated "I am an American pilot" and was fortuitously sheltered and had contact with the Dutch underground.

Frolking was given civilian clothes and taken to a farmhouse, where he was hidden in a windowless second-floor bedroom, permitted to emerge only at night for dinner and a chance to listen to BBC radio broadcasts with his hosts.

He spent his days reading English language books the Dutch provided, along with a fake ID. A few times he sneaked downstairs and caught a glimpse of enemy soldiers passing outside. Once he endured a long, nervous night in hiding when three German officers slept in a downstairs bedroom.

After a couple of weeks, Allied advances came close enough for Frolking to be taken to another island and directed toward Canadian troops.

Frolking later wrote in a memoir: "As I introduced myself, the first comment by the Canadian trooper was, 'We find you guys in the oddest places!'"

Frolking had managed to avoid becoming a POW, but his combat days were over. Regulations did not allow an airman who had escaped or evaded capture to return to combat, risking recapture and possibly revealing the identity of civilians who had helped him (whom Frolking would revisit to thank 42 years later).

He came back to the United States to teach new pilots how to fly P-47 fighters and survived a second accidental aircraft crash. The first was during his initial flight training.

For his war service he was awarded decorations including the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal (with four oak leaf clusters) and the French Croix de Guerre.

Frolking continued flying in the Air Force Reserves after the war.

The retired banker now looks back on the war as one that probably saw the peak of aerial jousts by those "knights in shining armor" whom Ambrose admired and wrote that "in a mass war fought by millions, the fighter pilots were the only glamorous individuals left."

Frolking noted that in these days

of robotic aircraft, "the fighter pilot is fast becoming obsolete. The technology has surpassed man's ability to keep up. The day of the dogfight, that's over."

Yet one aspect of the war endures,

even if the pilots and practices don't.

"The best part was the camaraderie," Frolking said. "You remember the fun times and the sad times. It's the guys I'll never forget, and so many of them are gone now."

New guide lines now in effect for retiree funeral missions

By Tech. Sgt. Ben Gonzales

ARLINGTON, Va. (AFPN) --

Since Nov. 1, honor guard teams across the Air Force support retiree funeral missions with seven members for standard funerals nationwide.

While funerals at Arlington National Cemetery will continue to receive military honors supported by Air Force Honor Guard Airmen, funerals for retirees outside the national cemetery will be composed of a team of honor guardsmen made up of three less members due to manning restrictions Air Force wide.

The formal 10-person funeral will no longer be authorized for retiree funerals. The detail will now consist of seven people to carry out the job as pall bearers, flag folders, flag presenter, bugler, spare and firing party. The new funeral sequence will have three major differences: The NCO in charge of pall bearers will also be the NCO in charge of the funeral, the number of firing party members will be reduced to three, and a spare position will be added.

The change should help alleviate manning cuts at Air Force bases and the Air Force Honor Guard. Located at Bolling Air Force Base, D.C., the Air Force Honor Guard has reduced its numbers from 271 guardsmen to 231 members in just one year, and must shrink to only 212 members by 2011.

Standardizing the funeral support was crucial with the number of missions required today and in the future.

"Veterans Department officials predict that World War II and Korean served our country. They deserve our service, and we aim to be as precise and perfect as can be."

War veterans (needing funeral support) will continue to grow through 2012," said Lt. Col. Anthony Taylor, the Air Force Honor Guard commander. "The change allows base honor guards to adapt to manning constraints while being able to render military honors. Plus, with the new standard, all the ceremonies will be done in the same professional manner, and bases can request the Air Force Honor Guard for expertise." Additional performances such as retirements, ceremonies, promotions and special events require honor guard members, which push honor guardsmen to the limit.

"We are engaged in eight to 12 events a day," said Senior Airman Chris Cenatiempo, a ceremonial guardsman from the Firing Party Flight. The St. Louis native joined the Air Force a month after high school and has served with the Air Force Honor Guard for 2.5 years.

"We do these events day in and day out. We have to be on point for every ceremony, but I never get used to it," he said. "So many people count on us to give the perfect image of the Air Force."

Including the additional missions we support, the Air Force Honor Guard has had a 10 percent increase in the missions performed compared to the number we did last year, Colonel Taylor said.

"It's very important to support these funerals," said Tech. Sgt. Richard Hopewell, the Colors Flight chief for the Air Force Honor Guard. The 17-year veteran from Colonial Beach, Va., has served on the Air Force Honor Guard for one year.

"We bury heroes every day," Sergeant Hopewell said. "We honor those who have fallen."

Airmen put on the way to Sweden

Adapted from "The Rescue Operation of Three Crew Members from a Liberator B-24 Shot down above Denmark Easterday, April 9, 1944."

By EJVIND JENSEN

Early Easter morning 1944, 505 USAAF bombers took off from bases in England for a mission to Northern Germany and Poland. In the Baltic Sea, the formation was attacked by Messerschmidt fighters.

Liberator No. 42-52432, 458th Bomb Group, fell victim to the attack when three engines were destroyed. As the plane lost altitude, the pilot changed course in an attempt to reach Sweden. The plane continued to lose altitude and decision was made to bail out. Two wounded crew members came down at Halkevad, Denmark in their parachutes. They were discovered by a German patrol and became prisoners.

Three members of the crew jumped out near the Ejvind Jensen father's farm. As a 15-year-old schoolboy, Ejvind, through binoculars, observed them drift down over the farm in the light easterly wind. He immediately jumped on his bike and took off to the landing place.

He saw two airmen down a half mile south of his village of Hyllested, and one land north of the village. When he arrived at the scene where the two airmen had landed, there was already a small crowd of people gathered. The airmen took off their parachutes and some of the crowd cut off the strings to use for drying laundry as there was a shortage of string in Occupied Denmark.

A farmer pulled Ejvind aside and told him that he should get the two men away before a German search patrol showed up. Ejvind responded by telling him that he realized this, but he could not take them to his home with all the people watching. He knew that if the Germans were to find the two airmen on their farm, they would probably blow up the farm buildings and shoot both him and his dad. The farmer advised Ejvind to not take them to his house, but that he must find another place where they could be hidden.

The crowd continued to grow and Ejvind told the airmen, "Follow me." He picked up his bike in the ditch and they walked south on the small road toward the Slagelse-Naestved railroad.

The airmen started to talk, but he said, "Wait until nobody can hear us."

The radio operator (Thomas R. Murphy from New York) was usually silent, and most of the talk was between the co-pilot (George D. Reed from Idaho) and Ejvind. He gave the airmen this advice: "Follow the railroad eastbound, find a hiding place in the little pinewood close to my home. I will later bring you some food and we will find a way to get you to Sweden."

Ejvind found it more secure to return home on his

Ejvind Jensen died in 2006

bike. The time was 1 p.m. and his mother had told him to be home for Easter dinner at noon. But that day there were no bad feelings. They ate in silence.

When they had finished, Ejvind asked his mother for some food in a basket. She had seen the two men walking down in the woods herself. "Yes," she said knowingly, "but don't tell Dad anything, perhaps he will be questioned by the Germans, and first you go down and see if they are still there." Ejvind went down looking for his two airmen, but they had left the hiding place.

Some days later they heard that the local bus driver had noticed the parachutes coming down and he went looking for them in his bus. When he arrived in Hyllested he was told that he could not go through Vensley. The road was closed.

The rest of his passengers got off; he turned the bus around and slowly went back on the same road. When he got close to the pinewood, he honked the horn the Morse Code for Victory -- three short and one long honk.

Then "Ejvind's two airmen" came running over the field, got into the bus and down on the floor. The bus driver brought the two men to a nearby school, where



Ejvind Jensen in Belgium Sept. 23, 2006

the teacher hid them in his cellar. Late in the night a doctor took them to the next hiding place by the resistance in Slagelse. They got them to Sweden.

Ejvind was told that another crew member (Pilot Byron E. Logue from Montana) came down safely in his parachute. He too was put in the escape line to Sweden by the Danish Resistance.

Ejvind's two brothers told him at the Easter dinner that they had talked to the airman (Bombardier Walter J. Kirta from Pennsylvania) who landed north of Hyllested. He had hurt his shoulder when he hit the ground and asked to get to the hospital. The Germans captured him and he became a POW.

During their last week of April 1944, there was a welcome message in the Danish news from BBC London. Three airmen saved from German capture sent a greeting and a "thank you" to all the people who helped them through German-occupied Denmark to Sweden. After questioning by Swedish police they were flown back to England by an RAF courier plane.

In his booklet, Ejvind names 21 Danish Helpers and explains the roles they played in the safe delivery of the three American airmen to Sweden.

AFTER THE WAR

On Sept. 2, 1945, the people of Venslev erected a memorial stone in honor and memory of the four crew members who were killed in the crash. Each year flowers are placed at the stone on April 9.

The men who died in the crash were tail gunner Sidney Sheren of New York, waist gunners Edward Walter Cisek from Massachusetts and Fred Earnest Stiles from Ohio, and ball gunner John Henry Schram from Vermont.

In 1994 Ejvind located the pilot and radio operator alive in the U.S.; the co-pilot died in 1989.

Ejvind also found families of the seven other crewmen and in 1996 took a criss-cross tour through the U.S. to visit with survivors and relatives.

In 2003 Ejvind and his wife Bjoerg went to California to visit relatives of the radio operator, who passed away in 1999, and spent a week with the widow of the co-pilot in Lewiston, Idaho.

RESTAURANTS WITHIN One Mile of Holiday Inn, 103 San Drive, Pooler, Ga.

Lovezzola's Pizza, 320 E US-80, Pooler, Ga.
912-748-6414

Distance to Hotel: 0.54 mi.

McDonald's, 903 US-80 E, Pooler, Ga.
912-748-5441

Distance to Hotel: 0.71 mi.

Cracker Barrel, 1000 US-80 E, Pooler, Ga.
912-748-7411

Distance to Hotel: 0.77 mi.

Taco Bell, 1004 US-80 E, Pooler, Ga.
912-748-0022

Distance to Hotel: 0.79 mi.

Pizza Hut, 1004 US-80 E, Pooler, Ga.
912-748-0022

Distance to Hotel: 0.79 mi.

Huddle House, 1009 US-80 E, Pooler, Ga.
912-748-8347

Distance to Hotel: 0.79 mi.

Krystal, 1015 US-80 E, Pooler, Ga.
912-748-4552

Distance to Hotel: 0.80 mi.

Peking Gourmet Chinese, 1017 US-80 E,
Pooler, Ga., 912-748-3812

Distance to Hotel: 0.80 mi.

Baldino's Giant Jersey Subs, 1022 US-80 E,
Pooler, Ga., 912-748-7827

Distance to Hotel: 0.81 mi.

Nagano Japanese Restaurant,
1105 US-80 E, Pooler, Ga.;

912-748-1838

Distance to Hotel: 0.90 mi.

Blondie





HOTEL & SUITES

Savannah / Pooler 1-95 & Exit 102

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 Susan Steinhauser, DOSM
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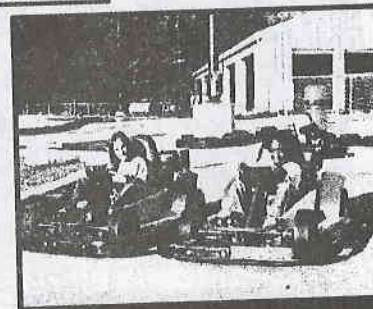
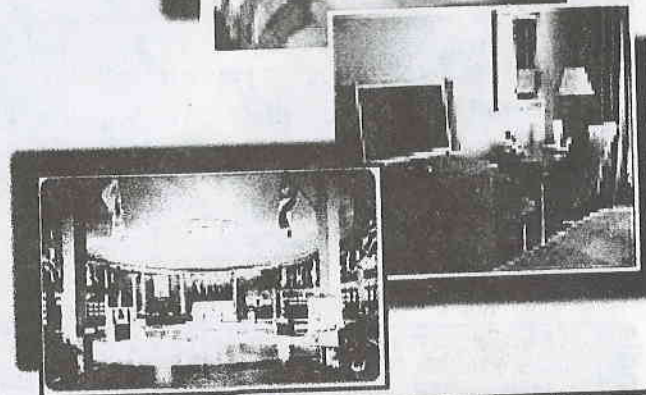
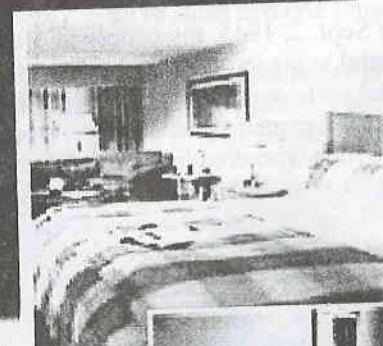
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HOLIDAY INN SAVANNAH POOLER
HOTEL REGISTRATION FORM**Air Forces Escape & Evasion Society****Thursday-Sunday, April 24-27, 2008****Please complete form and respond by Fax, e-mail, or by mail to*****Holiday Inn, 103 San Drive, Pooler GA 31322******Phone: 912-330-5100 (Ask for Katie and mention AFEES)******Fax 912-330-5101; <www.savannahholidayinn.com>******OR: For reservations, call 1-800-HOLIDAY******CHOICE: Two Queen Beds or one King Bed, \$116.39, inclusive******Room Rates apply seven days before and seven days after reunion dates***

HOTEL REGISTRATION FORM

HOTEL RESERVATIONS ARE BASED ON A FIRST-COME FIRST-SERVE BASIS. TO ENSURE THE GUARANTEED ROOM RATE, PLEASE REGISTER BY MARCH 23, 2008. THE REUNION GROUP RATE WILL BE HONORED UNTIL THE BLOCK FILLS OR THE CUTOFF DATE ARRIVES. RESERVATIONS ARE TO BE MADE ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS AND CONFIRMATIONS WILL BE SENT FROM THE HOTEL.

Reservations may be cancelled without penalty up until 6:00 p.m. on date of arrival.

Space is Limited - Early Registration is Advised>>>>One Registrant Per Form - Duplicate if Necessary

Last Name: _____

First Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City/State/Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

ARRIVAL DATE:	DEPARTURE DATE:
Number of Adults:	Smoking Preference:
PAYMENT METHOD	
Check Enclosed (y or n)	
Visa Number	
AMX Number	
MC Number	
Other CC Number	

Name on Credit Card: _____

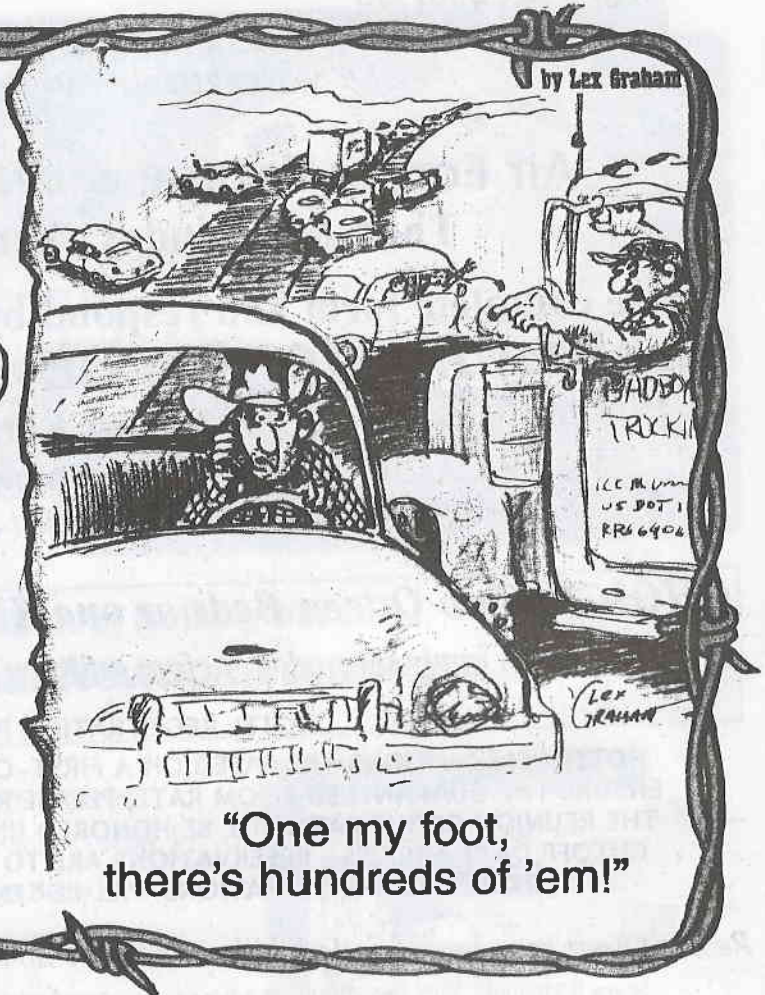
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The BACK FORTY

by Lex Graham

"IT'S ON THE NEWS NOW!
THERE'S SOME IDIOT GOING
THE WRONG WAY ON THE
SAME INTERSTATE YOU'RE ON!"



Shoe



Hagar



EARLY BIRD REUNION RESERVATION FORM**AIR FORCES ESCAPE AND EVASION SOCIETY****Thursday-Sunday, April 24-27, 2008****Holiday Inn Hotel, 103 San Drive, Pooler GA 31322***Please complete this form and return form with check or money (No credit cards) to arrive not later than April 18. Your check is your receipt.***MEMBERS: Make check payable to AFEES REUNION and mail to:****AFEES, c/o Yvonne Daley, 1962 Brae-Moor Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698-3250****HELPERS ONLY: Send both Hotel Reservation Form and Reunion Reservation Form to:****AFEES, c/o YVONNE DALEY-BRUSSELMANS, 1962 Brae-Moor Drive,
Dunedin FL 34698-3250*****Please Indicate Your Choice of Events***

Number

_____	Registration Fee @ \$25 per person	\$ _____
_____	Thursday, Welcoming Buffet @ \$25 pp..	\$ _____
_____	Friday, Luncheon at Museum @ \$17 pp	\$ _____
	CHOICE OF ENTREE: Shrimp Salad _____ Chicken Salad _____	
_____	Saturday, Luncheon at Hotel @\$14 pp.	\$ _____
_____	Saturday, Buffet Dinner @ \$35 pp	\$ _____
	CHOICE OF ENTREE: Beef _____ Chicken _____ Fish _____	
_____	Sunday, Farewell Buffet Breakfast @\$15 pp	\$ _____
	TOTAL ENCLOSED	\$ _____

OPTIONAL REUNION EVENT:**Thursday Afternoon, Escorted tour of City of Savannah***(Sign Up for tour and pay at Registration Table.)*

For Reunion information, contact Yvonne Daley-Brusselmans, 1-727-734-9573;

Cell Phone, 727-804-3664; <gadabout127@msn.com>

NOTE: If you have a blue AFEES lanyard from a past reunion, please bring it for use at registration.**NAME BADGES: List names as you wish them to appear:**

NAME (please print) _____ Service Unit _____

Spouse's Name _____ Guest's Name _____

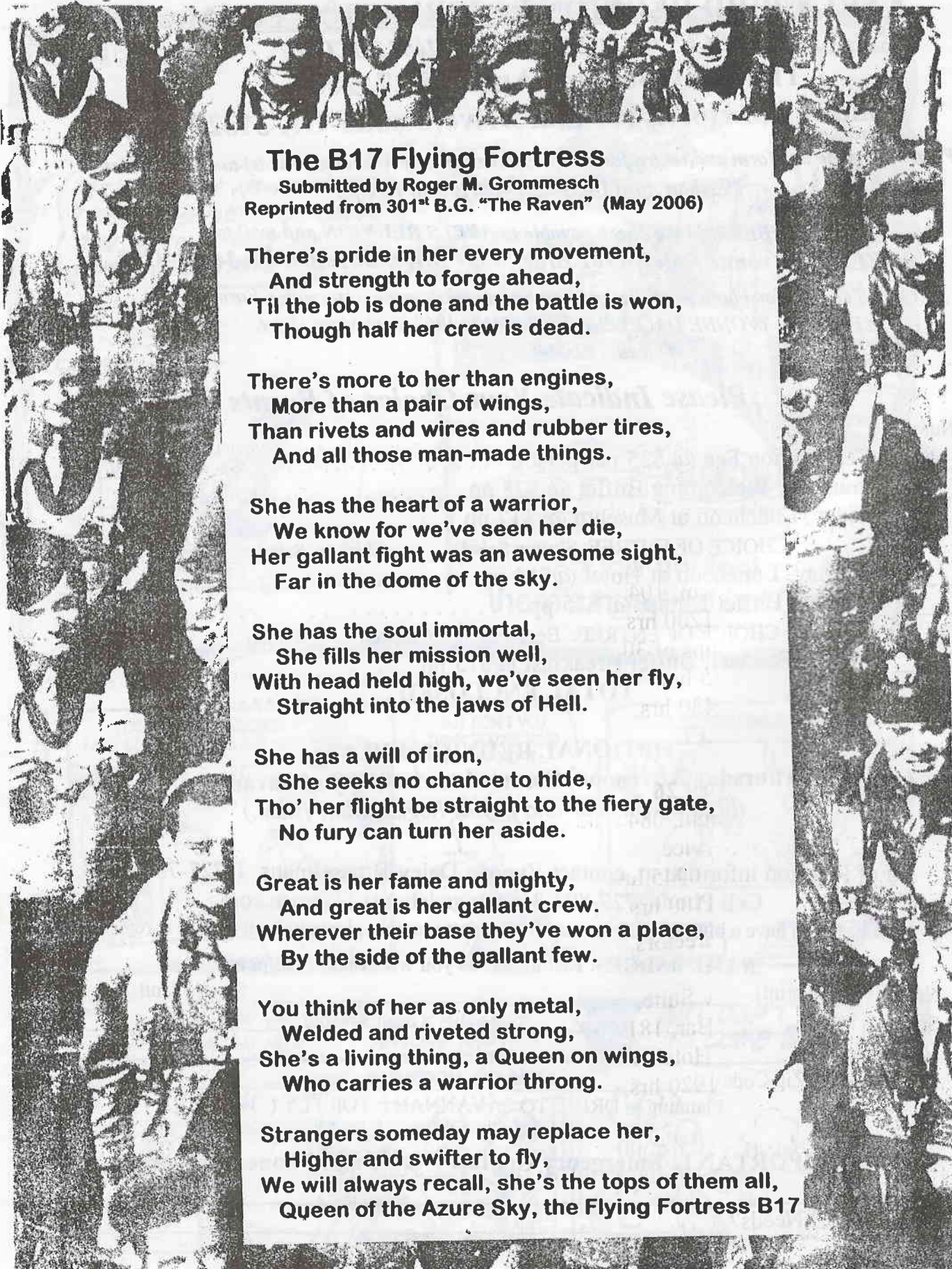
Mailing address _____

City, State and Zip Code _____

Planning to DRIVE TO SAVANNAH () OR FLY ()

IMPORTANT: Emergency Contact (Name and Phone Number):

Any Special Needs? _____



The B17 Flying Fortress

Submitted by Roger M. Grommesch
Reprinted from 301st B.G. "The Raven" (May 2006)

There's pride in her every movement,
And strength to forge ahead,
'Til the job is done and the battle is won,
Though half her crew is dead.

There's more to her than engines,
More than a pair of wings,
Than rivets and wires and rubber tires,
And all those man-made things.

She has the heart of a warrior,
We know for we've seen her die,
Her gallant fight was an awesome sight,
Far in the dome of the sky.

She has the soul immortal,
She fills her mission well,
With head held high, we've seen her fly,
Straight into the jaws of Hell.

She has a will of iron,
She seeks no chance to hide,
Tho' her flight be straight to the fiery gate,
No fury can turn her aside.

Great is her fame and mighty,
And great is her gallant crew.
Wherever their base they've won a place,
By the side of the gallant few.

You think of her as only metal,
Welded and riveted strong,
She's a living thing, a Queen on wings,
Who carries a warrior throng.

Strangers someday may replace her,
Higher and swifter to fly,
We will always recall, she's the tops of them all,
Queen of the Azure Sky, the Flying Fortress B17

Reunion Schedule

Holiday Inn, Pooler, GA
(Events and Times Subject to Change)

Daily schedules will be posted

Wednesday, April 23

Hospitality Suite open, 1300 hrs.

Thursday, April 24

Registration Opens

Hospitality Suite Open

Escorted tour of Savannah (Optional)

(Return to Hotel, 1600 hrs.)

Reception with cash bar, 1815 hrs.

Welcoming and Helpers' Buffet, 1900 hrs.

Friday, April 25

Registration open until departure
for Museum

Directors' Meeting, 0930 hrs.

Depart for 8th AF Museum, 1045 hrs.

Lunch at Museum, 1200 hrs.

Museum Tour, groups of 30

1315, 1330, 1345 hrs.

Return to Hotel, 1430 hrs.

EVENING FREE

Saturday, April 26

Depart Hotel for Museum, 0845 hrs.

Memorial Service

in Museum Chapel, 0945 hrs.

Return to Hotel, 1100 hrs.

Membership Meeting/Directors' Meeting
1130 hrs.

Lunch Buffet, Hospitality Suite, 1300 hrs.

Reception with Cash Bar, 1815 hrs.

EVENING: Banquet at Hotel, 1900 hrs.

Dinner Served, 1920 hrs.

Sunday, April 27

Farewell Buffet Breakfast, 0700 to 0930

UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN IN 2009!

Servicemembers send holiday greetings home

By Michael Tolzmann

Army and Air Force Hometown News Service

SAN ANTONIO (AFPN) -- What began as a novel idea to give a handful of infantry soldiers in the Sinai a chance to say "hi" to family and friends back home during the holidays, has been transformed into a program that has thousands of servicemembers from around the globe appearing on TVs in virtually every state and territory in America.

The holiday greetings program, videotaped and produced by the Army and Air Force Hometown News Service, is in its 24th year, providing servicemembers serving overseas during the holidays a chance to send short "hi mom" greetings back home.

In studios co-located with the Air Force News Agency, seven broadcast producers worked around the clock, 24-seven, to have the thousands of greetings sent to TV and radio stations throughout the nation by Thanksgiving. Each servicemember's greeting is edited to a 10 to 15-second piece.

"We get a lot of positive feedback from the stations. They always want more greetings," said Larry Gilliam, Hometown News deputy director and "grandfather" of the program.

CAPS tapes our tales

For more than a decade, Combat Aircrews Preservation Society founder and president Jon Cermin of St. Croix Falls, Wis., has been videotaping first-person stories from WWII Army Air Corps personnel, primarily those associated with the B-17 Flying Fortress.

Purpose of the society is to preserve history through education. Today's young people are growing up in an age of microchips, memory chips, and real time information access, Jon explains.

Jon says, "While it was considered cutting edge at the time, aircrews from the 1940s operated with primitive equipment by today's standards. There were no pressurized cabins, ground radar, electric targeting systems, GPS navigation, and so forth. Those combatants relied only on their skills, talent, instincts and fellow airmen to complete their military objectives."

You can learn more about CAPS plans and projects by checking the website at

<www.combataircrew.org>



St. Girons Museum honors French evaders and the *passeurs*

Museum dedicated in Saint-Girons

By SCOTT GOODALL

Rimont, France

<settgd112@wanadoo.fr>

After a delay of more than two years, our Freedom Trail museum down here in Saint-Girons was finally opened with all due pomp and ceremony on the 10th of July.

A crowd of more than 200 people attended the official inauguration which was headed by the Sous-Préfet of Saint-Girons, Monsieur Bernard Gondron the mayor and also the mayors of Esterri d'Aneu and Sort in Catalonia. (Our new bond of friendship and close relationship with the town of Sort is explained in a separate article). Colonel Guy Sérís, president of our Chemin de la Liberté Association also played a leading role.

Among the foreign contingent present were 25 British hikers about to face the challenge of this year's Pyrenean traverse, two standard-bearers from the Royal British Legion and a group of very special friends who have become "regulars" down here in the Ariège over the

years. Namely...Dot Collins, widow of the sadly-missed Maurice, daughter Carol and husband Mike, Diana Morgan and Tommy Brady, Maurice's fellow RAF crewman back in the wartime days of 226 Squadron.

Also present and paying a very welcome first visit to the mountains was the irrepresible Elizabeth Harrison MBE, whose selfless work over many years with the Royal Air Forces Escaping Society is well-known and very much appreciated by all members of ELMS.

Three years ago Elizabeth arranged for the delivery of *une maquette* or a scale model of a sculpture she had in mind on the subject of capture, escape and liberty. The maquette was duly presented to Bernard Gondron, mayor of Saint-Girons, during the 2004 Chemin event and it is now displayed in a glass case in the museum facing the entrance. Many among us (including Elizabeth) would dearly love to see this work produced as a full-scale sculpture outside the museum but as always, the big question is...who's going to pay for it? Maybe one day...

By an amazing coincidence, another former secretary of the Royal Air Forces Escaping Society was also

present. Anthea Dawson, who worked for Ted Norman of RAFES in London back in the 1970s now lives with her husband Oliver close to Saint-Girons. She speaks fluent French and I was extremely grateful for all the help she gave me on inauguration day by translating the various speeches given after the laying of several wreaths.

Another point to note is that the museum is not called a museum as such but *Maison du Chemin de la Liberté*. In French, *maison* means a home or a house and this family atmosphere is what our Chemin Association is trying to achieve. A place where the surviving local veterans can meet and chat, a place where local schoolchildren come on regular visits from surrounding areas first of all to be taught the history of the countless escapes across the French Pyrenees, helped by visual references and DVD films, and then given the chance to take part in all or part of the Chemin trail during their school holidays.

I personally am trying to finalise details of a visit from the Françoise Dissard college in Toulouse. So far I have been unable to make contact with the right people mainly because the original school was destroyed in a massive chemical explosion back in 2001 and has now been rebuilt elsewhere. My aim is to enroll the students

as members of Young ELMS and establish permanent links on an international basis. Our local and enthusiastic amateur historians André Lébé, Paul Broué and Joseph Gualter have also contributed many hours of work to completion of this project.

On August 16, La Maison was visited by two extraordinary people...Madame Paule Arhex and her husband Jean (Driven over from Le Pays Basque by their daughter Dominique). Paule will be 93 years of age this year and Jean has just turned 90. Both are fit, active and unbelievably energetic. During the war they were in charge of a resistance group reporting directly to General De Gaulle's set-up in London. They were responsible for the location of suitable parachute-drop sites, the collection and distribution of arms, ammunition, explosives and also money to pay what they called "commercial" passeurs.

Their main center of operations was in southwest France, near Pau, but they were also involved with groups in Toulouse and subsequently Saint-Girons. By dealing with the various Maquis groups on the run-up to D-Day, they also became involved in ferrying odd "parcels" collected in various places by the resistance.

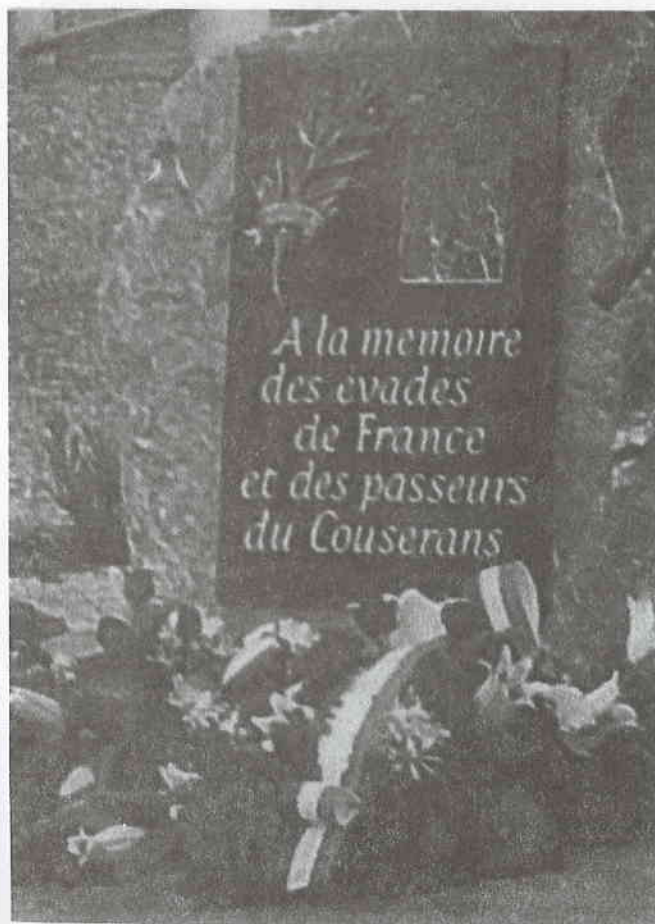
Two of those "parcels" were American B-17 bomber pilot Clayton David and his friend Ken Shaver. Both men were found, helped and sheltered by Jean and Paule (codenamed "André" and "Claire" and subsequently guided across the mountains to safety in April 1944.

Clayton David and his wife Scotty have remained lifelong friends of the Arhex family and have visited them in France many times over the years.

For Madame Arhex, her visit to Saint-Girons had a very emotional meaning. In May 1944 she was in charge of a mixed group of seven evaders who had been fed down the Pat O'Leary line to Toulouse. For various reasons she decided the safest route to freedom was a train journey to the small village of Boussens, in the département of Haute-Garonne, which then had a (Ebus connection with Saint-Girons 35 kilometers to the south.

All went well until the group got off the Ebus seven miles north of Saint-Girons near a tiny village called Arau. It was here, in a quiet country lane, that Paule and her group were to meet the wife of the passeur, a local blacksmith. Instead, a black *traction avant* or sinister Citroen came round a bend. Out jumped two Gestapo officers and two French Miliciens from the garrison in Saint-Girons.

It was obvious right away to Madame Arhex that she had been betrayed. She was instantly recognised as the leader of the group and everyone was taken to a nearby farm. There the Gestapo men starting punching and



ST. GIRONS MUSEUM PLAQUE

kicking Paule in order to get more information. She refused to talk and the Germans left, saying that a truck would be arriving that evening to drive them all to the Saint Michel Prison in Toulouse. "There," the Gestapo men said, "You'll be in the hands of professionals."

They then left, leaving the group in charge of the two French Miliciens. Paule realized that her only hope of escape was right then and there, before she was transported to Toulouse and the unimaginable horror that would follow.

She asked to go twice to the toilet...once to bathe her wounds from the beating and wash her face. The Frenchmen were relaxing their attitude. Just as dusk approached, Paule forced a small window at the back of the house and leapt to freedom. She was in deep woods within a matter of minutes and kept going in a northerly direction.

All she knew was that she had 35 kilometers to cover before she could get back to the tiny station at Boussens where she had friends who could help her to get back to Toulouse.

In the small town of Salies-du-Salat she was disturbed by barking dogs and had to dive into a water-filled ditch to avoid discovery. That was when she lost

her shoes...and had to cover the last 12 kilometers to Boussens in pitch darkness and bare feet.

She made it! Got back to Toulouse and was subsequently flown out to England with Jean soon after in a Royal Air Force Hudson.

Much later, Paule learnt that the passeur she was supposed to meet that night near Saint-Girons had been shot by the Gestapo. On the 16th of August this year in the museum, Paule met the nephew of that same passeur and also an evadé de France who was the last Frenchman to escape along the Arau-Col-de-la-Core, Estagnous route before the betrayal of May 17.

The passeur's nephew knew exactly where the farm was from which Paule had escaped and it was a very moving afternoon for all concerned as we took Paule and Jean back to where all these events had taken place. The farm is still owned by the same family who occupied it during the war but the one thing Paule regrets is that the window at the back of the house from which she jumped to freedom is no longer there. "Building work," she said with a sigh. "Such a shame. I did toy with the idea of jumping out of it again for the second time!"

And I'm darned sure she would have done it!



At the dedication: Paule and Jean Arhex, their daughter Dominique and Scott Goodall

An emotional trip

Paule and Jean make a visit to Saint-Girons to see museum

Paule and Jean Arhex, who live in Paris, visited the new museum in Saint-Girons in August and spent some time with Scott Goodall.

In describing their visit, Scott writes:

"Judy and I spent a marvelous day with Paule and Jean. They were driven over from Tardets by their daughter Dominique. Their visit had been mainly arranged by the museum historian, Andre Lebe, who was delighted to get in touch with them.

"Paule (at age 93 this year) is still a dynamo of energy and enthusiasm. We had lunch at a local hotel and visited the museum that afternoon.

"Paule was delighted to meet the nephew of the *passer* who was killed the night she was arrested by the Gestapo near Saint-Girons in May 1944. Also present was a French evader called Rene Caujolle, who escaped over the Pyrenees the week before she was caught from the same farm in which she was held captive.

"That afternoon, led by the nephew of the *passer*, we all drove to the farm in which she had been held and beaten by the Gestapo before escaping by leaping out of a window at the back. The farm is still owned by the same French family, but unfortunately the window from which Paule leaped to freedom has now gone, removed several years ago during conversion work.

"It was definitely a most moving moment for her -- recognising the approach path, her escape route through the woods during her 35 km night-time run to the railway station at Boussens, half of it in bare feet after she lost her shoes by diving into a ditch to avoid a German patrol. She really is an amazing lady and it was a privilege and pleasure to be part of her visit."

"The BBC in London repeated the call of General De Gaulle, telling the French to go to North Africa to form part of his army. I decided that when I had the opportunity I would cross the Pyrenees."

---Joseph Gualtier, Saint-Girons (France), escaped on Nov. 15, 1942.

"After the introduction of the Obligatory Work Service which forced young French men of military service age to work in the German war industry, you could be deported at any time. That is why I decided to flee France and join the French army in North Africa."

---Albert Dougnac, Toulouse (France), escaped on June 6, 1943.

Hundreds of evaders passed through Sort

*Information supplied by Josep Calvet
of Lerida, Catalonia*

A history museum was dedicated on July 15, 2007, at Sort, a Spanish community near the French border and an key point in the evasion route of many Allied evaders.

Hundreds of Canadian, British and American aviators crossed the Pyrenees after being shot down. With the help of guides, they entered Spain with the hope of reaching England and rejoining the war.

The Franco regime was highly tolerant of these evaders, and they therefor soon managed to leave from Spain.

One of the most famous pilots who passed through Sort was Lt. Charles E. Yeager. He says:

"The plane I was flying was shot down by the Germans over La Gironde. The French Resistance hid me from the Nazis and I arrived at the foothills of the Pyrenees to then pass through Spain and reach Gibraltar, and from there on to England to rejoin combat."

From Luchon, he arrived in La Val d'Aran on March 28, 1944, and on March 31st he passed through Sort. Years later, he became the first pilot to break the speed of sound and he became a general in the U.S. Air

Force.

Two twin-engined aircraft crashed into the mountains of the Sort region. A Dornier Do-217 E4 fell into the valley of Peguera on Aug. 25, 1943, and a Junkers JU 88 crashed into the mountain of Enviny on March 25, 1944.

The Pyrenean frontier, far from being a barrier has, for people of the area, been a place of connection and interchange, crossed by a constant flow of people, tradesmen and workers from both sides of the mountains. The inhabitants of the land, both north and south of the Pyrenees, have travelled from one side to the other, depending on their own personal circumstances and the economic or political situation of the time.

For many years (1936-1945), crossing the border became a key objective for the thousands of victims of war and repression.

It has been calculated that, between the time of German occupation of France and its liberty, some 60,000 refugees seeking freedom were saved on reaching the border. Of these, some 2,800 passed through the prison at Sort.

During the first two years of the war, travel from France to Spain was relatively easy until the end of 1942,

More about SORT . . .

when the German army occupied the frontier and the main ports.

Communications links were strictly controlled on both sides of the border and traffic was restricted throughout a 20 km frontier zone. From then on, border crossings could only be made on foot across the mountains.

Crossing the Pyrenees through the El Pallars Sobira region was a hazardous, dangerous task: harsh terrain with mountains almost 3,000 meters in height, snow eight months a year and a journey of considerable length.

The town of Sort, with a history marked by closeness to the border, had a central role in the story of escape routes. It was the gateway for those who managed to enter via the Pallars Sobira area, and many who had come through Le Val d'Aran. It was the first center of reception and reclusion of captured refugees as headquarters of the local judicial area.

Almost 3,000 refugees passed through the prison of Sort, and were often crowded together in a small area.

Allied aviators and those with economic resources were authorized lodgings in hotels and pensions in the area. Foreigners did not stay long in the town.

The main escape route which linked the French region of Ariège with El Pallars Sobira began close to Saint-Girons and through the mountain passes of Pala de Clavera, Salau and Aula, to arrive at Les Bordes de Perosa and from there, to Alos d'Isil, Esterri d'Aneu and Sort.

The association *Le Chemin de la Liberté* has today recovered one of these itineraries and has held a mountain crossing each year since 1994, revisiting those places where so many managed to escape the Nazis.

Each July a large group of people, among those the direct descendants of the refugees, meet in order to pay homage to those who found their liberty on this path.

The route begins near the village of Seix, and passes through La Pala de la Clavera, to arrive at Les Bordes de Perosa. It is an example of heritage tourism.

Spanish refugees in France, country folk and other anonymous figures risked their lives in the fight for freedom. They helped the refugees as well as they could, guiding them using *passeurs*, or clandestine mountain guides, to Spain, across the most improbable routes.

Their destinations were the Allied consulates of Barcelona or Portugal. Pat O'Leary, Combat and Wi-Wi

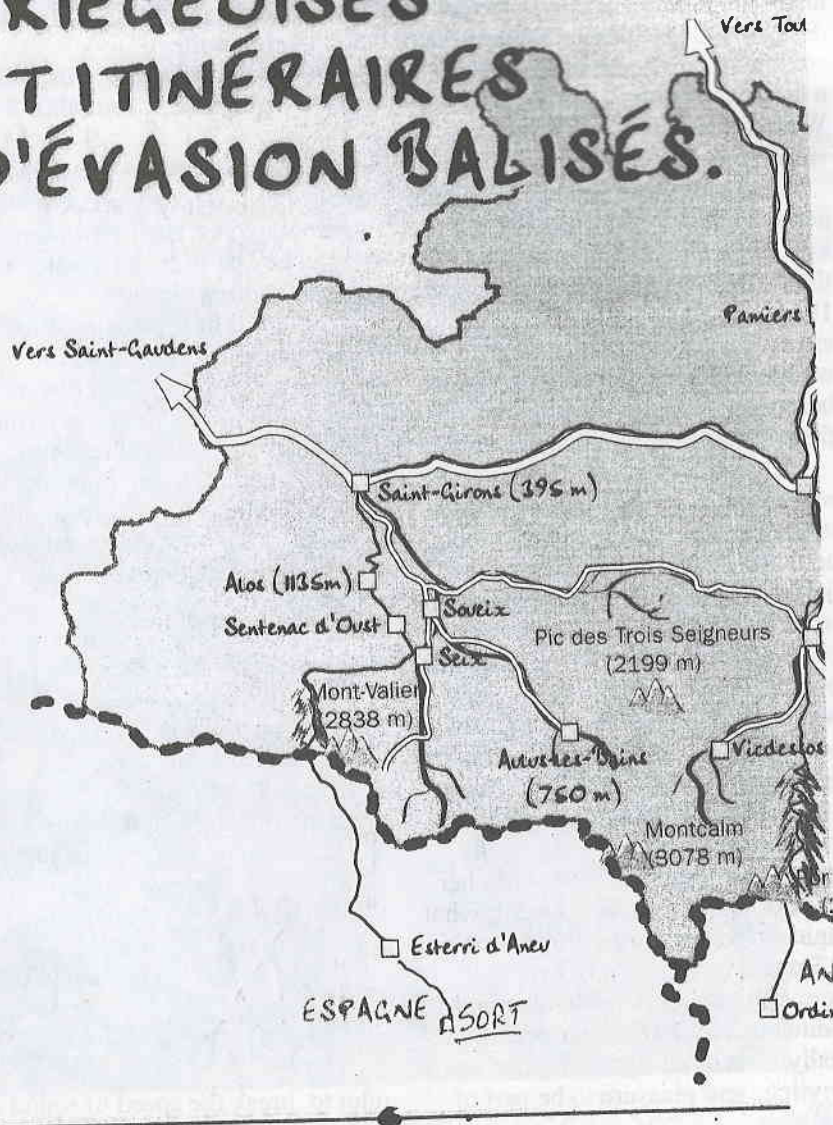
WINTER 2007-08

were some of the names of organizations which operated in the Pyrenees of Lleridas.

Over half the guides were captured, executed or deported, a fact which has left the deep scar of repression on the region.

The French were the largest group to cross the border to Spain. It is calculated that about 35,000 managed to arrive in North Africa via Spanish territory. Most were opponents of the Vichy regime who were trying to unite with Free French troops. Some were escaped prisoners or simply those who wished to avoid military service or obligatory work camps.

DES PYRENEES ARIÉGEOISES ET ITINÉRAIRES D'ÉVASION BALISÉS.



'Dedee'de Jongh, Belgian heroine

By ANDREE DUMONT (Nadine)
Member of Comete
Brussels, Belgium

In May 1940, after the capitulation of Belgium, Andree De Jongh was working as a designer in Malmedy, a little town in the Ardennes.

Already then, she helped French prisoners of war who had escaped from Germany. Then she came back to Brussels and went to Bruges as a Red Cross volunteer to care for wounded English soldiers. She believed they had to escape before the Germans sent them to Germany.

So she tried to find a way for them to go back to England and with the help of a friend who had worked on the Spanish border near St. Jean de Luz before the war and knew some Basque smugglers, and a Belgian family who was living in Anglet since the war and were ready to help by all means. So she decided to try that way and went there with some Belgian soldiers and an Englishman.

When there, she discovered it is not possible without the help of the British -- because the escapers were arrested in Spain and put in a camp. Then she decided to cross the Pyrennes again and see the British consul in Bilbao.

After hesitation because the consul could not believe that this young and frail girl had crossed the mountains, he finally gave his help.

After that, Dedee crossed the mountains many times with English soldiers first and afterward, with Allied airmen until she was arrested in January 1943.

People who knew her were always impressed by her radiant personality, her peaceful courage and her great determination to reach her goal.

She was awarded the title of Countess by King Baudium for her courage during the war and for what she did in Africa after the war, taking care of lepers.

Sadly, she died in October and we all miss that exceptional Belgian heroine.



Bob Frost and his wife Daphne (not shown) entertained Dedee de Jongh (center) and Elvire DeGreef (Tante Go) at tea at a London hotel in the 1960s. Mme. DeGreef died in 1993.

By BOB FROST
150 Sqdn, RAF
Aircrew Rep., WWII Escape
Lines Society
Kent, England

I first met Dedee De Jongh while returning home, courtesy of the Comete Line which she had founded in 1940.

We were seated on the back step of the farm house at Bedegain Bess in the foothills of the Pyrenees which we were preparing to cross.

With the five airmen on that crossing were Del Mounts, a U.S. citizen who enlisted in the RCAF. He came from North Dakota and was flying in our crew on his first op to gain experience before taking his own crew. Del later crossed to the U.S. air corps and eventually retired at San Diego, Calif.

Dedee was arrested at the same farm house in January 1943. With her at the time was Stan Hope, who remembers her as "utterly fearless" and making a mockery of her captors. She survived concentration

camp, losing herself among the suffering crowd. Army nurse Nora Thornbuin, who visited Dedee after the Liberation of Paris in 1945, remembers her as a living skeleton.

When recovered, Dedee resumed her nursing career and spent the next 30 years nursing lepers in the Belgian Congo, Ethiopia and Senegal.

My family and I met her on numerous occasions, most notably in the 1960s when she came to London with two other George Medalists, Elvire DeGreef (Tante Go) and Mme. Michou Ugeux, both of the Comete line, as guests of the RAF Escaping Society and of course at the Comete reunion held each year on Oct. 21 in Brussels.

What did Dedee do for the line she founded? She inspired them to suffer arrest, torture, deportation and death. The complete dedication to Freedom and Comete and self service -- nursing lepers -- exemplified her life for the which the King of Belgium made her a Countesse.

I last saw Dedee on July 2, 2007, when visiting her nursing home.

Belgian Resistance Heroine***'Dedee' and the Comet escape line***

By ADAM BERNSTEIN

Washington Post Staff Writer

Tuesday, October 16, 2007

Andrée de Jongh, 90, a Belgian resistance fighter who established the most successful escape route in Europe for downed Allied airmen during World War II -- a 1,000-mile trek across occupied France, over the Pyrenees into Spain and down to the British colony of Gibraltar -- died Oct. 13, 2007, in Brussels. No cause of death was reported.

Ms. de Jongh, known as "Dédée" and the "Petit Cyclone," began her resistance work in May 1940 after the Nazi advance into Brussels. At the time, she was a 24-year-old commercial artist and Belgian Red Cross volunteer.

The British authorities, whom she sought out for logistical and financial support, and Germans, who eventually sent her to concentration camps, found her an improbable heroine despite her determined bearing.

At first, neither side believed her when she described herself as the ringleader of a daunting escape route dubbed the "Comet Line."

The idea began after the British retreat at Dunkirk in 1940. German patrols were increasingly monitoring the English Channel, and Ms. de Jongh helped bring the remaining Englishmen overland, through France and into neutral Spain. This evolved into a plan to try to rescue the thousands of American and British aviators who would get shot down over Europe.

With the help of her father in Paris, she created a route of safe houses through France. At the Spanish border, she arranged for Basque guides to ferry the Allied airmen over the goat trails used by smugglers in the Pyrenees.

The Germans made attempts to capture Ms. de Jongh, but she managed to stay free for 18 months -- until Jan. 15, 1943, when a farmhand in the French-Basque village of Urrugne sold her out, along with the three aviators she was helping escape.

The Comet Line was credited with rescuing



COUNTESS ANDREE de JONGH
1916-2007

more than 700 airmen, of which Ms. de Jongh was said to have led 118 to safety. It continued operating through the Normandy invasion of June 1944, by which time hundreds of Comet Line operatives had been captured and sent to concentration camps or executed.

Peter Eisner, whose book "The Freedom Line" (2004) examined the escape network's pivotal figures, said the Comet Line was the "greatest of escape lines in Europe in numbers of rescues as well as the most sophisticated, longest operating and most successful."

"The value of what she was doing went beyond the individuals she was saving," said Eisner, a former Washington Post editor. "She gave hope to

aircrews in England before they took off that there was this angel of mercy working in occupied territory that had a complete system working to find them. It was a great psychological boost."

Ms. de Jongh was born Nov. 30, 1916, in Schaerbeek, in German-occupied Belgium during World War I. She trained as a nurse but found work as a commercial artist before her father, a schoolteacher, deepened her involvement in the resistance.

To procure funding for the Comet Line, she traveled in August 1941 with two British army privates in tow to the British consulate in Bilbao, in the northern Basque region of Spain. The British vice consul was skeptical of her offer to help more fliers.

According to "The Freedom Line," the vice consul wondered how someone so attractive could also have had the stamina and wiles to evade the Germans for the 500-mile trip across occupied France. "I'm as strong as a man," she replied. "Girls attract less attention in the frontier zone than men."

A young political secretary at the consulate persuaded his superiors that she was a legitimate resistance organizer.

Ms. de Jongh crossed the Pyrenees 24 times before the German authorities arrested her near the

Spanish border. The Gestapo sent her to a series of prisons and concentration camps, and she ended the war at the Ravensbruck camp, near Berlin.

Her father had been executed by firing squad in Paris in 1944. Ms. de Jongh said she survived the war because the Germans might have been hoping to use her in a prisoner exchange.

After the war, she was feted at Buckingham Palace in London and received the George Medal, a top British civilian award for bravery. She was made a Belgian countess several decades later, after her career had taken her to Africa, first in the Belgian Congo and then in Ethiopia to work in a leper hospital in Addis Ababa.

She retired to Brussels after her eyesight faded and other medical ailments persisted. She periodically attracted media coverage as aging veterans she had helped made their way to Belgium to thank her for rescuing them.

She reminisced for the *Times* of London in 2000: "When the war was declared I knew what needed to be done. There was no hesitation. We could not stop doing what we had to do. We knew what the cost was. Even if it was at the expense of our lives, we had to fight until the last breath."

Andree ushered escapers to border

From the *NEW YORK TIMES*
October 15, 2007

By DOUGLAS MARTIN

Andree de Jongh, whose youth and even younger appearance belied her courage and ingenuity when she became a World War II legend ushering many downed Allied airmen on a treacherous, 1,000-mile path from occupied Belgium to safety, died Saturday (Oct. 13, 2007) in Brussels.

Her death was announced by a website for former resistance fighters: <verset.org>.

Derek Shuff, in his book *Evader*, (2007), told of three British crewmen whose bomber made a forced landing in 1941. They found their way to the Underground and were ensconced in a safe house when a slip of a young

woman appeared.

"My name is Andree," the 24-year-old woman said, "but I would like you to call me by my code name, which is Dedee, which means little mother. From here on I will be your little mother, and you will be my little children. It will be my job to get my children to Spain and freedom."

She left and the three sat in stunned silence. One finally spoke. "Our lives are going to depend on a schoolgirl," he said.

Two of the men survived the grueling trek along what became known as the Comet escape line, because of the speed with which soldiers were hustled along it.

Ms. de Jongh eventually led 24 to 33 expeditions across occupied France, over the Pyrenees to Gibraltar. She herself escorted 118

servicemen to safety. At least 300 more escaped along the Comet line.

When the Germans captured her in 1943, it was her youth that saved her. When she truthfully confessed responsibility for the entire scheme, they refused to believe her.

The citation of her Medal of Freedom with Golden Palm, the highest award the United States presented to foreigners who helped the American effort in World War II, said Ms. de Jongh "chose one of the most perilous assignments of the war."

Andree de Jongh was born on Nov. 30, 1916, in Schaerbeek, Belgium, the younger daughter of Frederic de Jongh, a schoolteacher. She was brought up to admire Edith Cavell, shot the year before Andree was born for helping Allied soldiers

escape from Belgium during World War I.

She was working as a commercial artist in May 1940 when the Germans absorbed Belgium. Having had first-aid training, she began working as a nurse. She quietly pored over the myriad German rules governing control of movement and conferred with confidants about escape.

Her task was harder than that of Ms. Cavell, who had only to move men across the Dutch frontier. Belgium was surrounded by occupied countries. Eventually Ms. de Jongh settled on the long route to Spain.

When she got her first two airmen to the British consulate in Bilbao, Spain, she asked for support for further missions. Officials there were sufficiently convinced of her integrity to overcome skepticism among the British intelligence brass that she might be part of a Gestapo plot.

Ms. de Jongh's mission had wider resonance because it signaled to Allied nations that pilots and crews crashing in enemy territory were not lost. It also succeeded in coupling espionage with escape by sending critical information to Allied channels.

The Comet operation was complex: organizers needed to recover fallen airmen, procure

civilian clothing and fake identity papers, provide medical aid for the wounded, and shelter and feed the men as they moved along their obstacle course.

It was also so dangerous that Ms. de Jongh warned recruits that they should expect to be dead or captured within six months. Her own father was captured and executed, along with 22 others.

Her inspiration was sometimes all that kept exhausted men plodding on.

Bob Frost, a bomber crew member, said in an interview with a publication of a British veterans' group, "It was her eyes, they were absolutely burning and there was an air of supreme confidence about her."

She was captured escorting a soldier over the Pyrenees in January 1943 after a German collaborator betrayed her. After 20 interrogations, the Germans still refused to believe her confession and she was sent to the Ravensbruck concentration camp. There, among skeletal and shaven forms, she was so unrecognizable that the Gestapo could not identify her for questioning.

Ms. de Jongh later worked in leper hospitals in the Belgian Congo and Ethiopita. She was made a Belgian countess in 1985.



Countess Andree de Jongh with a clock presented her by the RAF.

Dedee escorted 116 evaders to the border

From the RAFES (Australia) Newsletter, Nov. 2, 2007

By R.M. HORSLEY, Sec.

Countess Andree de Jongh, who died in Brussels at age 90, founded and organized the Comete Escape Line with a route through Belgium, France to Spain used by hundreds of Allied airmen to escape from German-occupied Europe.

Known to all as "Dedee," Andree de Jongh began her resistance work as soon as the Germans advanced into Belgium in 1940. At the time she was as commercial artist and Belgian Red Cross volunteer, but gave up her work in order to nurse wounded soldiers; once they were able to walk she found them safe houses and recruited her friends to help.

As those soldiers and airmen evading capture were soon spread throughout Belgium, she had to find a means of returning them to Britain. With the help of her father, she set up



In her 20s, Andree de Jongh rescued Allied airmen. Here she is thanked after the war by Jack Newton of the Royal Air Force.

a trail of safe houses along which she could move the men, from Brussels through Paris and to the western Pyrenees, where loyal Basques gave her great support.

Once the *Comet Ligna* was established, there was a constant stream of shot-down aircrew escorted to the "last house" in the France-Basque village of Urrugne.

Whichever route the evaders took through France, they ended up at this house where they were sheltered before meeting Basque guides organized and led by a giant of a man known as Florentino. He constantly drove the evaders to move quickly as he helped them across the rivers and mountains, with Dedee encouraging them from behind.

Dedee de Jongh made more than 30 double crossings and escorted 116 evaders, including more than 80 aircrew. But on the night of Jan. 15, 1943, she was sheltering at Urrugne with three RAF evaders when she was betrayed. The house was stormed and she was captured.

The escape line survived, and by the time the Allies invaded France in June 1944, more than 880 men had passed down the line to safety. "Helpers," both men and women, had paid a great price: many were executed, including Dedee's father, Fredric, who faced the firing squad in 1944.

Dedee de Jongh was sent to Mauthausen and Ravensbruck concentration camps. For two years she lived on a diet of dirty potato and turnip soup, practicing her nursing skills and trying to avoid being singled out. Although she survived, she had become gravely ill and undernourished by the time she was released by advancing Allied troops in April 1945. Many of her colleagues died in captivity, among them Francis Usandizaga, who had kept the last house in Urrugne.

After the war she returned to nursing, spending many years as a sister at a leper colony in the Belgian Congo before moving to a hospital in Ethiopia where she was a matron. When her health and sight began to fail she returned to Brussels.

Airey Neave of MI-9 described Andree de Jongh as "one of our greatest agents," and wrote a book about her exploits called *The Little Cyclone* (1954).

Andree de Jongh's philosophy was simple. In 2000 she recalled, "When war was declared I knew what needed to be done. There was no hesitation. We could not stop what we had to do although we knew the cost. Even if it was at the

expense of our lives, we had to fight until our last breath."

In July of 2007 a group of RAF personnel retraced the route of the *Comet Ligna* after going to see the frail Dedee at a nursing home in Bruxelles. She died a few days before the memorial service and reunion held annually in Bruxelles for survivors and relatives of those who served with the *Comet Ligne*. She was unmarried.



*"L'idéal nous accompagne
Illuminant le chemin..."*

Mademoiselle Thérèse DE WAEL,

sa sœur de cœur;

Monsieur et Madame Frédéric WITTEK et leurs enfants,

Monsieur Martin WITTEK,

Mademoiselle Mady WITTEK (†),

ses neveux et nièces;

Madame Marie-France PAÏN,

sa filleule;

Monsieur et Madame Pierre DE WAEL-CODDE,

Tous ses amis "Comète",

ont la grande tristesse de vous faire part du décès de la

COMTESSE

Andrée DE JONGH

"Petit Cyclone"

Docteur Honoris Causa

de l'Université Catholique de Louvain

Fondatrice du Réseau d'évasion "Comète"

Lieutenant-Colonel A.R.A.

Détentrices de nombreuses décorations

belges et étrangères dont :

Officier de l'Ordre de Léopold avec palme

"George Medal"

Officier de la Légion d'Honneur

"Medal of Freedom" avec palme d'or

née à Schaerbeek le 30 novembre 1916 et décédée à Woluwe-Saint-Lambert le 13 octobre 2007.

Le service religieux, suivi de l'inhumation dans le caveau de famille au cimetière de Schaerbeek, sera célébré, en l'église Notre-Dame de la Cambre, le VENDREDI 19 OCTOBRE 2007 à 11 heures.

Réunion à l'église à 10 h 45 :

Abbaye de la Cambre à Ixelles

La famille remercie le Docteur Body, Madame Frédérique Matthys, le personnel soignant si dévoué, ses amis et amies de la "Résidence Fonpavo", ainsi que Vania et Mady.

Mademoiselle Thérèse DE WAEL

1180 BRUXELLES - "Résidence du Domaine du Neckersgat"

Avenue Reisdorff, 36.

-FOLDED WINGS-

MEMBERS

#358 William H. Booher "L", Corea, Maine, 95th BG, Sept. 4, 2007

#156 Wilmot C. "Bill" Grodi "L", Lawrence, Kan., 385th BG,
Nov. 28, 2007

Col. Horace W. Lanford, Naples, Fla., 455th BG, Sept. 2007

#274 Robert W. Metlen, Ontario, Ore., 96th BG, Oct. 30, 2007

#2224 Earl J. Seagars, Anchorage, Alaska, 387th BG, Jan. 20, 2007

15thAF Harold C. Talling "L", Jameson, Pa., 459th BG, Feb. 2, 2006

#507 James E. Tracy, Broomfield, Colo., 94th BG, Sept. 19, 2007

#808 Earl E. Woodard, Kirkwood, Mo., 457th BG, Nov. 8, 2007

HELPERS

Contesse Andree DeJONGH, Uccle, Belgium, Oct. 19, 2007

Henri MAIGRET, Perpignan, France, Oct. 10, 2007
(Member of Alsace Escape Line; aided 120 Allied airmen.)



1st Lt. Earl Woodard, 457th Bomb Group, 8th Air Force, of Kirkwood, Mo., died Nov. 8, 2007.

After attending Southwest Missouri State and Westminster College, he enlisted in the armed forces in 1941. He served as a B-17 navigator and flew several missions over France and Germany.

His plane was shot down over occupied France in April 1944 and he escaped on foot over the Pyrenees Mountains into Spain.

His decorations included the Purple Heart and Air Medal with two clusters.

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WINTER 2007-08

Enola Gay pilot Gen. Tibbets dies at age 92

Retired Brig. Gen. Paul W. Tibbets Jr., the pilot of the first atomic bombing mission, died of natural causes Nov. 1 at the age of 92 in Columbus, Ohio.

The general was the pilot of "the Enola Gay," the B-29 Superfortress which dropped the first atomic bomb, "Little Boy" on Hiroshima, Japan, on August 6, 1945, which many historians consider the end of World War II.

General Tibbets, a native of Quincy, Ill., entered the Army Air Corps on Feb. 25, 1937, at Ft. Thomas, Ky., after attending college at University of Florida and the University of Cincinnati where he majored in chemistry. He graduated from pilot school at Kelly Field, Texas, and went to his first assignment with the 16th Observation Squadron at Lawson Field, Ft. Benning, Ga.

After flying multiple combat missions in Europe and North Africa, the then-B-17 Flying Fortress pilot returned to the United States in March 1943 to participate in the B-29 program.

In September 1944, the general was assigned to the Atomic Bomb Project as the Air Force officer in charge.

He helped develop the employment capabilities of the atomic bomb in combat operations, including the mating of the development of the atomic bomb to the airplane.

He also was in charge of the flight test development of the atomic bomb itself.

During what many consider one of the most daring air raids in American history, the Enola Gay, named after General Tibbets' mother, took off from the island of Tinian in the Mariana Islands, headed for Japan.

General Tibbets retired from the Air Force on Sept. 1, 1966.

Flying Tiger ace 'Tex' Hill is dead

SAN ANTONIO (AFP) -- Famed Flying Tigers ace and Texas Air National Guardsman Brig. Gen. David Lee "Tex" Hill, died Oct. 11 of congestive heart failure at his home here. He was 92.

General Hill flew with Gen. Claire Chennault as a member of the Flying Tigers, a volunteer group of American aviators who flew during World War II to defend China, which had no air force of its own.

He served as both flight leader and then squadron leader of the 2nd Squadron, flying the Curtis P-40 fighter with the distinctive shark's teeth paint scheme on the nose of the plane. During his time as a Flying Tiger pilot, he was credited with 12 aerial victories.

When the Flying Tigers were disbanded in July, 1942, General Hill continued to fly, eventually commanding the 23rd Fighter Group. By the time he left active duty, he was a triple-ace, credited with some 18 confirmed aerial victories.

In 1946, he joined the Texas Air National Guard as the youngest brigadier general in the history of the Air Guard. He was 31.

"Tex Hill has forgotten more about leadership and what's important than most of us will ever know," said Gen. T. Michael Moseley, Air Force chief of staff.

Changes and corrections from 2006 Roster

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Please report promptly any changes or corrections!

Dues are \$20 per year. Life Membership is \$100. Make checks payable to AFEES.

***Send payments and changes to Clayton C. David, AFEES Membership Chair,
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The editor has the last word

By LARRY GRAUERHOLZ
<afees44@hotmail.com>
OR
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WICHITA FALLS, Tex. -- Many WW deuce veterans' groups are folding their colors for the last time and calling it quits. It is no secret that our wartime generation is fading away.

Be that as it may, the question for us to decide is:

Should AFEES liquidate the organization, perhaps in Dayton in 2009, or continue on a limited basis, perhaps with mini-reunions?

The matter will be discussed at the reunion next April. Members who cannot make the Savannah reunion might want to let President Dick Smith know how they feel about it.

Dick discusses the matter in his column on Page 2 of this issue.

The editor personally feels that perhaps it is time to revise our reunion agenda, but that the AFEES newsletter should continue as long as possible.

There is too much escape and evasion history that is not yet made a matter of record.

Clayton David, who with his wife Scotty, has done a masterful job of handling AFEES paperwork for longer than I can remember, has decided that it's time to pass the torch along. He has prepared an ironic Help Wanted ad for Page 3.

Is there someone out there who is willing to carry forward the torch?

The passing of Andree de Jongh, a

Belgian resistance legend who established the Comete line, made news around the world. Some of the tributes to "DeDee" are published on Pages 25-29 of this issue.

Maj. Gen. John K. Singlaub, a personal friend of several AFEES members, was awarded the 2007 Donovan Award by the OSS Society at a dinner in Vienna, Va., on Sept. 20.

The affair was in conjunction with the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Central Intelligence Agency. Dr. Robert Gates, U.S. Secretary of Defense, was keynote speaker.

Our Webmaster, Frank Haslam, sends along a message from Philippe Lesler of Aisne, France, who is seeking information on Robert Hersch, a B-17 airman whose plane crashed in late 1943 in that area.

The evader crossed the Pyrenees and went back to the U.K. His last known hometown was Silver Springs, MD. Let the editor know if you can help.

Frank does a terrific job of handling our website, listed at the top of Page 2. If you haven't opened it lately, give it a look and you may be surprised at the amount of information it presents. It has attracted nearly 2,000 hits since it was linked

From
AFEES Publications
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to the RAF site.

Hanneke, the wife of well-known Dutch Helper Albert Postma, passed away on Nov. 8. Albert has attended many reunions and says he would like to keep in touch with his friends in AFEES.

Condolences to Albert and his family on their loss.

Our very own Yvonne Daley was guest speaker at the November 20 meeting of the MacDill AFB chapter of Daedalians. She talked about some of the experiences she and her mother, Anne Brusselmans, had helping downed Allied airmen in Belgium in WWII.

Mia Lelivelt, Dutch helper who attended many reunions while able to do so, sends along *Prettige Kerstdagen* greetings to members of AFEES. She says she hopes we have a great time in Savannah and remembers the great times we have shared. Mia, we miss you so much!

THE SAGE SAYS:

The irony of life is, by the time you're old enough to know your way around, you're not going anywhere.

And this advice: If you find yourself in a hole, the first thing to do is to stop digging

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Peace
be with
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