

# THE AIR FORCES ESCAPE & EVASION SOCIETY

## Spring 2001 Communications

VOLUME 15, NUMBER 2

WICHITA FALLS, TEXAS 76307-2501

MARCH 16, 2001

### The May reunion target:

## Set your sights on Spokane

The setting that is now the City of Spokane was a favorite campsite of Native Americans who lived in the area. They fished near the falls for salmon, a staple of their diet. The name, Spokane, given to these people, is thought to mean "Children of the Sun" or "Sun People."

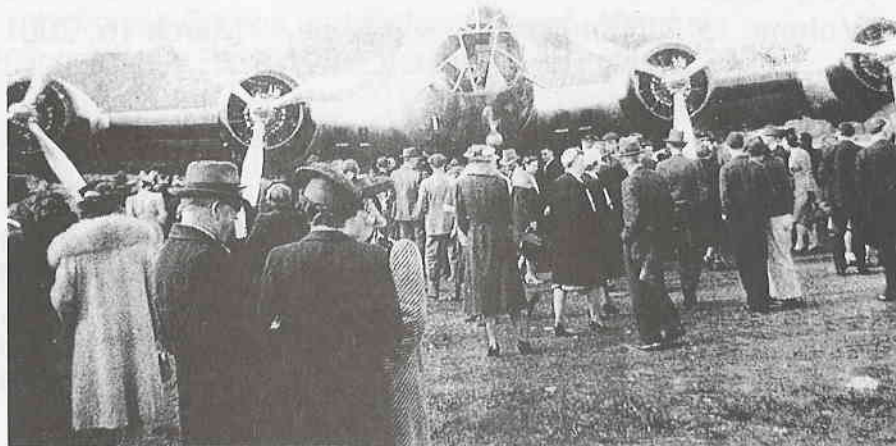
Riding horseback through the area in 1873, James N. Glover, the man credited with being the "father" of Spokane, was "enchanted . . . overwhelmed . . . with the beauty and grandeur of everything."

Determined to live in that magnificent setting, Glover purchased the rights to the land and sawmill that J. J. Downing and Seth Scranton had constructed on the riverbank and opened a store and stable. His early trade consisted mainly of Spokane and Coeur d'Alene Indians who made their home in the vicinity, fishing in the river and hunting the plentiful game.

Prior to the coming of the settlers, the only white men the natives had seen were the occasional explorers, fur traders and soldiers traveling the trails or the various missionaries in the region.

The discovery of rich silver and lead deposits in North Idaho and British Columbia, and the vast forests and the fertile soil encouraged settlement.

Immigrants were enticed by promotions of the Northern Pacific Railroad that arrived in 1881 and linked across the continent in 1883. By 1889 -- the year Washington Territory became Washington State -- the town's



People gathered at an air show at Felts Field in Spokane in 1939 to

see one of the first B-17 Flying Fortresses, the plane instrumental in

the collapse of Germany during World War II.

(Photo courtesy Spokesman-Review)

population had swelled to nearly 20,000 and it was home to 10 banks, 8 architectural firms, 16 blacksmith shops, 18 hotels, 3 flour mills, 3 breweries and 51 saloons. There were 90 real estate offices operating here that year.

Statehood was not the only occurrence in 1889 that marked a new beginning for Spokane Falls. A terrible fire swept through the city, in a matter of hours reducing years of effort to rubble and ruin.

Thirty-two blocks -- virtually the entire downtown business district -- were destroyed. The tragedy served to strengthen, not weaken, the community. As soon as plans could be drawn and materials obtained, the city grew up all over again. And this time its face wore the brick and mortar

look of permanence rather than the rough wooden facade of the frontier boom town.

In 1891, the citizens voted to drop the "Falls" from the city's name.

Spokane is the largest city between Seattle and Minneapolis and is the second largest city in the state. The Spokane metropolitan area population now stands at over 400,000 and stretches from the downtown area to the Washington/Idaho border.

The Native American fishing grounds on the Spokane River are now Riverfront Park, the site of the 1974 World's Fair.

Spokane is the smallest city ever to host a World's Fair. Fishermen still fish off the bridges in Riverfront Park.

**U.S.  
AIR FORCES  
ESCAPE/EVASION  
SOCIETY**  
*Communications*  
*Published Quarterly*  
**WE WILL NEVER FORGET**



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March 16, 2001

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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.

Spring 2001

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(Uncle was a Chetnick)



# AIR FORCES

## Escape & Evasion Society

Frank Lashinsky      Director  
15 Wychwood Road, Old Lyme, CT 06371-1838  
860-434-2434

RALPH K. PATTON  
Chairman of the Board

January 2001

To:      Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society Members  
Subject:      Helpers Raffle — Spokane Washington — May 5, 2001

Dear Colleague:

The Helpers fund raffle, in the last few years, has replaced auction revenue, as our income source. The key to this achievement, has been the broad base participation, of not only those who attend the reunion, but also the many others, who for some reason, are unable to join us at the reunion. Every contribution, regardless of the amount, fulfills the pledge to never forget those who helped us evade. Our declining roster amplifies the importance of each individual contribution.

We encourage everyone to attend the reunion. We recognize that family obligations, our or our spouses health, and other considerations will prevent individuals from attending this reunion. In any event, your participation in this fund-raiser is vital to defray reunion expenses of our Helper guests.

If, on the other hand, financial or other circumstances bar you from donating to this fund, we will understand. However, please be courteous and return the unused tickets. We reuse them at the reunion.

**The suggested donation is \$2.00 for each ticket, or \$10.00 for the book of six tickets.**

**You can also include, as many do, an extra donation to the HELPERS FUND. DO NOT INCLUDE DUES. MAIL DUES DIRECTLY TO CLAYTON C. DAVID.**

The winners awards are as follows:

**1<sup>st</sup> \$500.00    2<sup>nd</sup> 250.00    3<sup>rd</sup> 100.00    4<sup>th</sup> 75.00    5<sup>th</sup> 50.00**

Please return your stubs, with your check, **no later than April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2001** to insure that your stubs are included in the award drawing on **May 5<sup>th</sup>**. I will leave for my trip **shortly after Apr. 15.**, and mail must arrive before this. Better yet, fill out the stubs and return them today.

**Hope to see you in Spokane Washington!**

**Paul Kenny, Frank Lashinsky, Richard Smith, the Raffle Committee Raffle**



Leslie Atkinson of Perpignan, France (left) and Ralph Patton of Pittsburgh, Pa., are the two men who established AFEES nearly 40 years ago. They met again at the Paris conference on the Resistance last December, when Ralph was one of the speakers.

# Founders meet again at Paris conference

Four Americans participated in *La Nebuleuse de la Resistance Franco-American Colloque* held in Paris last Dec. 4. The conference attracted 150 former leaders of the French Resistance to the meeting in a chamber of the French Senate building.

Americans who spoke on the unrecognized men and women of the Resistance included Ralph K. Patton, chairman of the U.S. Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society; General Vernon A. Walters, former deputy director of the CIA and former Ambassador to the United Nations and who was serving as Ambassador to Germany when the Berlin Wall fell; Arthur L. Funk, emeritus professor of history at the University of Florida, who served with

## P R O G R A M M E D U C O L L O Q U E

### 9 h 00 OUVERTURE

Message de **Monsieur Christian Poncelet**, Président du Sénat.  
Présentation du Colloque par **Monsieur Alain Griotteray**, ancien Chef du réseau Orton.

### 9 h 30 LA NÉBULEUSE DU DÉVOUEMENT ET L'ENSEMBLE DE LA RÉSISTANCE EN FRANCE

Séance placée sous la présidence de **Monsieur Jean Matteoli**, Président de la Fondation de la Résistance.

Exposé historique de **Monsieur François Georges Dreyfus**, Professeur émérite d'Histoire du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle à la Sorbonne. Témoignages.

Intervention de **Monsieur l'Ambassadeur Vernon Walters**.

Intervention de **Monsieur Maurice Delarue**, auteur du livre "Contre la mémoire courte".

Intervention de **Monsieur Ralph Patton**, Président de Air Forces Escape & Evasion Society.

### 14 h 30 LA NÉBULEUSE DU DÉVOUEMENT :

ILLUSTRATIONS GÉOGRAPHIQUES  
Séance placée sous la présidence de **Monsieur Jean-Jacques de Bresson**, Président de l'Association nationale des Médailleurs de la Résistance française.

Exposé introductif de **Madame Levisse-Touzé**, directeur du Musée Jean Moulin et du Mémorial Leclerc.

Témoignages.

Exposé du **Professeur John Sweets** : la France du Centre.

Exposé du **Professeur Arthur L. Funk** : la France du Sud.

Exposé de **Monsieur Patrick Martin**, Agrégé de l'Université : le cas de la Drôme.

### 16 h 30 Débat avec la salle.

### 17 h 30 Intervention finale de l'Ambassadeur Albert Chambon, Président-fondateur du Club Témoin.

### 17 h 45 CONCLUSIONS GÉNÉRALES DU COLLOQUE.

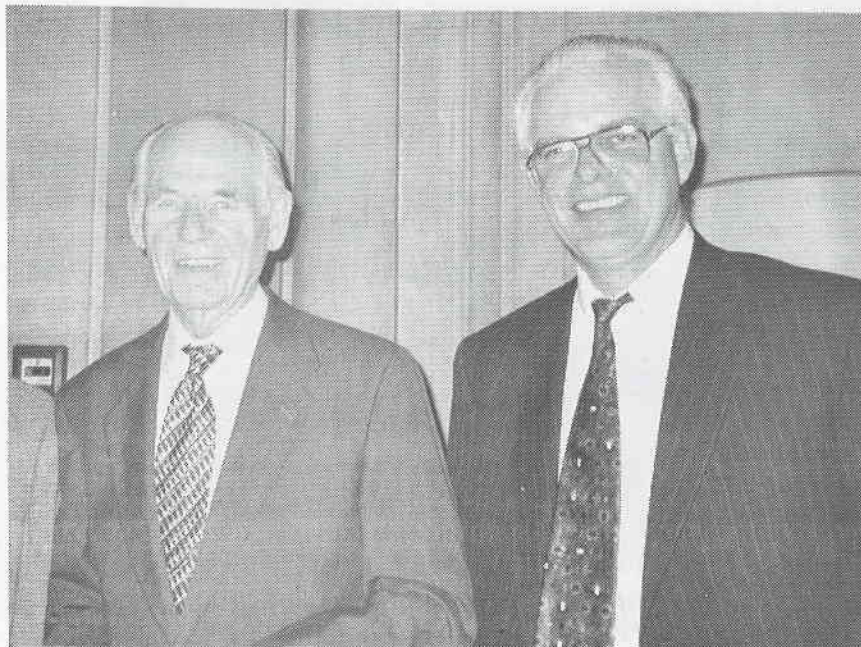
the U.S. Navy during WWII and is a former member of the U.S. Foreign Service; and John F. Sweets, professor of history at the University of Kansas.

Both Dr. Funk and Dr. Sweets have been published extensively on activities of the French Resistance in the Second World War.

The conference language was French. Ralph

Patton's address was translated by an interpreter. His address at the conference was published in the Winter 2000-01 issue of *Communications*.

Leslie Atkinson, a co-founder of AFEES, was one of the Frenchmen attending the meeting. Leslie told Ralph that he hopes to be able to attend our 2002 meeting in Florida.



**Speakers at the Paris conference in December included Arthur L. Funk (left), professor emeritus of history at the University of Florida, and John F. Sweets, history professor at the University of Kansas.**



**Lt. Gen. Vernon Walters (left) is shown visiting with Jean-Paul Bolufer, president of the Club Temoin, one of the sponsors, at the conference on the French Resistance held in Paris last December.**

## Book tells of crashes in the Oise

Evader Ken Woodhouse of Saskatoon, Sask., believes that many AFEES members would be interested in a book by a French author, printed last October. The first printing of 300 soon sold out.

The book, printed in French, is entitled, "*Aviateurs allies, tombes dans l'Oise en 1944.*" It describes U.S. and British aircraft that crashed in the Oise area north of Paris. It tells, in some detail, the stories of the airmen; also reports from French witnesses and/or Helpers.

It contains names, aircraft numbers, squadron numbers and photos of crashed B-17s, plus stories of surviving crewmen.

The book begins with the story of six B-17s shot down over the Oise on one day, Feb. 8, 1944. The planes lost were "Pistol Packin' Mama," (379BG), "Good Picking," (305BG), "Immortal Lady," (482BG), 42-37984, 42-31387 and 42-29633. The last three were 92BG.

Other accounts concern other B-17s and B-24s, P-38s, P-51s, RAF bombers -- and Ken's Spitfire.

Ken says the author is considering another printing if there is sufficient interest. He suggests that members who want to learn more about the names and aircraft in the book, or are interested in purchasing a copy if it goes into a second printing, contact the author:

ANDRE NAUDIN  
8-B Rue la Fontain Aubier  
60350 ATTICHY  
FRANCE

**REUNION, 44th BGVA (8 Balls)**  
Oct. 15-18, 2001  
Shreveport/Barksdale AFB, La.  
Contact: 44th BGVA, PO Box 712287,  
Salt Lake City, UT 84171-2287

# The search for Mr. Pipes

By FRITS L. MEIJLER, M.D.

Amsterdam, Holland

(From an article published in the  
Journal of Dayton Medicine,  
July 1991)

"Playboy," a B-24 bomber of the American 8th Air Force (466th Bomb Group) and her crew crashed near Daarle, Overijssel, Holland on April 29, 1944.

The crew numbered 10 men. One of them, Robert Falk, was killed in the air and went down with the plane. The others landed by parachute in an area around Eerde Castle at Ommen. Two crewmen came down so near the castle that they later mentioned to their host, Baron von Pallandt, that they could see details of the roof structure.

This story, however, is not about them nor about six of their fellows, but about Robert F. Pipes, the engineer of Liberator 41-29399, which flew missions in the area between Ommen and Hardenberg from April 29, 1944, to April 5, 1945, when the Canadians liberated northeast Overijssel.

Pipes and gunner W. J. Haefner Jr. were the only ones to elude the Germans. The other seven, some of them wounded, were captured.

After reading of his adventures in 1989, I was determined to get in touch



*Dr. Frits Meijler (at left) of Amsterdam and Bob Pipes of Durant, Okla., when they became acquainted in 1990.*

with Mr. Pipes and began the search for him. While visiting the U.S. in March 1990, I did locate Robert Pipes, 45 years after his crash in Holland.

Robert Pipes and his wife Betty live in Durant, Okla., just north of the Texas border near Lake Texoma. I traveled to

Durant from New Orleans after attending a meeting of the American College of Cardiology there, meeting Bob Pipes in Dallas, Tex.

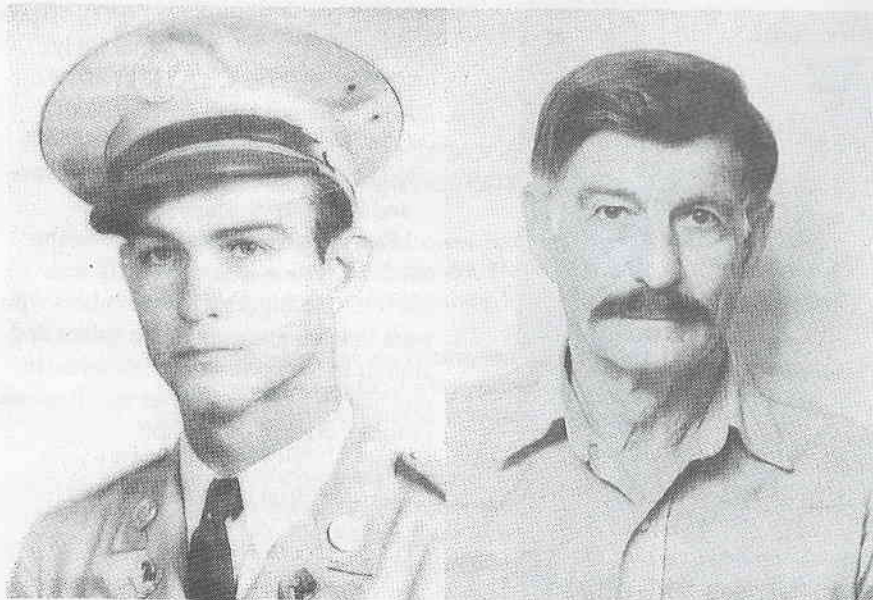
At the Pipes home, I learned exactly what happened to the bomber and its crew on that fateful day in 1944. I also found that Pipes had described his experiences in a book published in 1987.

On April 29, 1944, Pipes stood in the door of his bullet-riddled bomber and had to make the first parachute jump of his life, with the Germans in wait, eager to shoot.

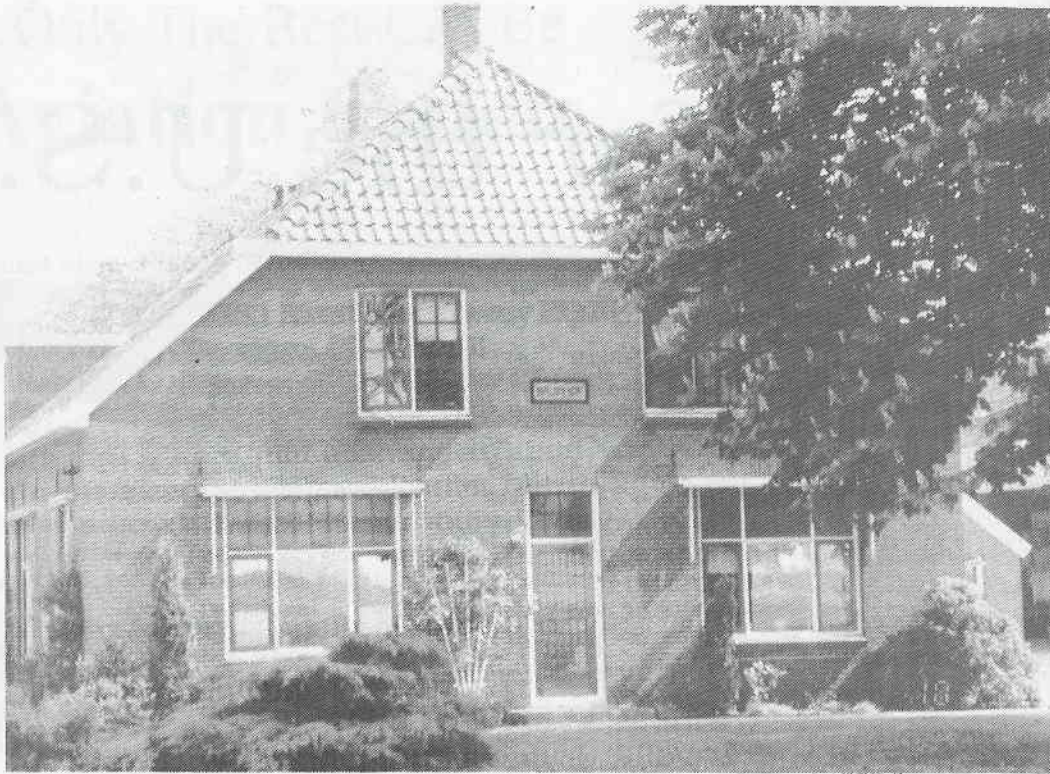
During the jump, Pipes and his crewmates were protected by an American P-47. They landed in a plowed field, where they were met by a man who gestured them to follow him. They were taken to a farm and from there by bicycle to a hiding place in a densely grown pine woods.

They hid in a hole in the ground covered with pine branches. The farmer returned later and took them to his farm where they hid in the loft of a barn.

Soon two members of the local Resistance appeared and ordered them to dispose of everything that might suggest that they were Americans. One of the



*THEN AND NOW -- Bob Pipes wore his Army uniform in 1940 when he was assigned to the Horse Cavalry before joining the Army Air Corps. At right is Pipes today, after a 32-year Air Force career that included combat missions in two wars.*



### ***The De Bruin family home, center of Underground activity at Beerzeveld***

Dutchmen was addressed as Colonel, but his identity remains unknown.

The next morning, Baron von Pallandt's Mercedes came and took Pipes and Haefner to the castle where they were given civilian clothes. They were then moved to Almelo.

Then someone took Pipes and Haefner to the train station at Almelo and gave them tickets for Enschede. The station was bristling with Germans; it was early May and German army traffic was heavy.

They stayed in Enschede for a few weeks with a family called Blokzijl and their five children. They stayed there until Americans bombed the airfield near Twente and the Blokzijls, in fear of German retaliation, were afraid to keep the Americans in their home any longer. So they bicycled back to Almelo.

The Allied invasion on June 6 caused great excitement and commotion in Resistance circles. Pipes and other Allied evaders were taken to a hideout in the woods near the South Sea (IJsselmeer). In his book, Pipes calls this place "Camp Eisenhower."

From there, he and several others walked along the railway to Marienberg where they were hidden. After several weeks on the farm of Geert Salomons and his wife at Bergentheim, he was placed

on the farm of the De Bruin family, the center of underground activities in Beerszeveld.

Adrianus De Bruin would later be awarded the Medal of Freedom for helping Allied pilots. Like Weerts, De Bruin built a hiding place behind and below a haystack, warm in winter, cool in summer, and almost untraceable. This is where Pipes and some members of a British sabotage team lived.

Once in January 1945, Pipes decided to leave the De Bruin farm. A bottle of water and some sandwiches were all that he took as he went to look for the Allied lines, all by himself.

Pipes soon found another "good" Dutchman who offered him a hiding place and something to eat. Once more he would up with Geert Salomons at Bergentheim, who took him back to De Bruin. All in all, Pipes had been gone a week and covered a distance of no more than 10 km.

Shortly afterward, Salomons was arrested and with several other people in the district, brought before a German firing squad on March 2. He left a 24-year-old wife and an unborn child.

At the end of February, the De Bruin farm was raided, an occasion well remembered in the district. There was a pitched battle between De Bruin, his sons

and refugees on one side, and Germans on the other. There were some German casualties, but most of De Bruin's group managed to get away. Among them, Robert Pipes.

The stationmaster at Marienberg was arrested and executed by firing squad on March 8, together with the Weerts family doctor from Bergentheim.

Pipes swam across the canal and arrived at the farm of the Smeenk family in Kloosterdijk, soaked and numb with cold.

When Canadians liberated Ane on April 5, 1945, Pipes was staying with the Amsink family. He was dressed in blue overalls and wooden shoes.

On April 13, he sent a telegram to his parents, "I'm alive and will be home soon." One month later, he was back in Texas. He was all of 25 years old.

After retirement in 1985, Pipes returned to Holland where he and his wife visited some of his old hiding places.

+++++  
*Dr. Frits Meijler is professor and chair of the Interuniversity Cardiology Institute of the Netherlands and an internationally known research cardiologist. Like many Jewish young people, he was saved from the Nazis in WWII by the courageous intervention of many Dutch citizens.*

## The Final Chapter . . .

# Headed for the U.S.A.

**From FAME'S FAVORED FEW,  
a WWII flier evades capture in  
German-Occupied France**

**CONTINUED FROM WINTER  
ISSUE OF COMMUNICATIONS**  
(The author and his companions  
had begun debriefing in London)

### CHAPTER EIGHT

**By KENNETH E. NEFF**  
**Atwater, Calif.**

It was good to be back in the England we had left almost five months ago as I knew it wouldn't be much longer before I'd be heading back to the good old U.S.A. But there still things to be done before leaving for home. Those things started when the four of us arrived at U-Staff headquarters in London.

Albert Monti, Dale Howard and I were assigned to one of the Red Cross shelters in London while Capt. Dick went elsewhere.

Each of had a different interrogator, so we were split up during the debriefing sessions. One of the first things we did when we got to London was go to the Red Cross Service Center and send our folks a cable, telling them we were back in England.

Monti, Dale and I spent nearly all day at the debriefings and those sessions went on for four days. All of us were still in mixed uniforms. We finally told some of the staff at headquarters that the MPs and APs were giving us a bad time about our uniforms. To solve the problem, we were issued a pass that stated what we were wearing was a proper uniform.

I think it was on the second day that we received our pay for the time we had been gone. The hard part was that most of it was in British 5-pound notes which were hard to cash.

Headquarters told the three of us we could hang around London after the debriefings or go back to our old units. After the Red Cross center I was in one night was nearly hit by a V-1, I made up

my mind that I was going to be on a train the next day, heading back to Podington, where my old unit was.

So I got my ticket to Podington, home to the 92nd Bomb Group. I found that things had changed quite a bit in the past five months. The pilot of the crew I flew with from the first had finished his tour and gone home. The bombardier went down in the North Sea and was never heard from again; the navigator had been sent to another outfit.

The only ones left of my old crew were the flight engineer and the two waist gunners.

I learned the next morning that Lt. Guy Wallace, our copilot, and Lt. Oscar Rogers, our bombardier, were back on base. I found them and the three of us walked down to the squadron operations section and went in to see the operations officer. Wallace said, "We are from the Langfeldt crew." The ops officer looked at us and said, "You fellows were not here very long and I don't remember you, but I sure remember Neff!"

I countered with, "Likewise, I remember you. I want to thank you for my nice long paid vacation in France." With that slight bit of sarcasm, I turned and walked out of his office.

Next morning after breakfast, I went down to base supply to see what was left of my issued items. What units did when a crew went down was to send the supply people over to go through your stuff in the barracks. All personal items were shipped to your home address, while all issue items were packed up and put in a holding section at base supply for one year. If the airman did not show up in that time, the items went back to the counter for reissue.

After finishing up at the warehouse, my orders were waiting for me. I went over to the barracks and told the old crew members goodbye and got on a bus headed for the depot.

There were two processing outfits in England, one was Howard Hall and the other was Nelson Hall. Everyone headed for the States went through one of them.

Rotation to the States was on a priority basis. Wounded had first priority; men who had been shot down had second priority, and so on.

About mid-October 1944, 19 of us were scheduled on a C-54 for a flight back to the U.S. The aircraft had no seats so we had soft pads on the floor.

The flight plan called for us to land at Gander, Newfoundland. After we left Gander, heading for New York City, the pilot received a message for us to go to Washington, D.C., because of the weather.

When we touched down in Washington, we were told to go to the Pentagon for debriefing.

The major in charge there said, "Fellows, this is not going to take long. What is going to take the most time is getting orders cut sending you home on your 21-day leave."

One of the fellows spoke up, "I have to have 30 days leave or I can't take any."

The major asked, "Why?"

"Well, the train only goes though my hometown once a month, so I can go in with it and 30 days later leave or I can't take any."

The dubious major responded, "There is no place in these United States that has train service only once a month. What is the name of your hometown?" The GI told him and the major called the train station and asked when he could get a train to the GI's hometown. He listened to the phone awhile and hung up.

He looked at the GI who had told him that he needed 30 days and said, "You'll get a full month."

The major told the rest of us that we could stay as long as we wanted, but we were restricted to base until we got a train for home. Almost as one, we shouted, "CUT THE ORDERS!"

They did. I boarded a train that afternoon and headed for California and a 21-day leave.

My European adventures were finally over!

**THE END**

# Only The Best Can Be Aviation Cadets



## Silver Wings Field Eureka Springs, Arkansas

This decal, shown in actual size, is transparent, made to attach to such objects as windshields, golf bags, luggage and so on. They cost \$2 each, postpaid. Order from and make checks payable to: Aviation Cadet Museum Inc., 542 CR 2073, Eureka Springs, AR 72632; phone, 501-253-5008.

## Columbia prepares to honor Doolittle Raider Helper again

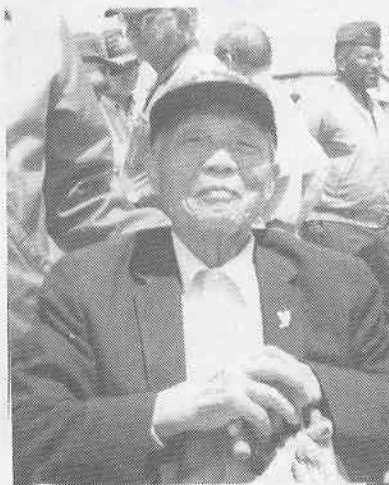
Mr. Tung-Sheng Liu, Honorary Doolittle Tokyo Raider who was awarded an honorary AFEES membership at the Columbia reunion last May, again will be among special guests at this year's Memorial Day celebration in Columbia.

Mr. Liu was an English-speaking engineer who, just before the famous raid on Tokyo in 1942, had escaped from Shanghai into unoccupied China. He happened to be in the area where Col. Travis Hoover crashlanded his B-25 with its crew. Mr. Liu acted as interpreter for the Americans and helped guide them on their journey to Chungking.

He also assisted the crewmen of Ted Lawson, author of *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo*, after they reached Chuksien.

After the war, Mr. Liu came to the U.S. and received a degree in aeronautical engineering from the University of Minnesota and worked there for several years. He later was employed for 22 years by the Air Force at Wright-Patterson AFB in Dayton, Ohio.

He now makes his home in the Los Angeles area.



**TUNG-SHENG LIU**  
At 2000 AFEES Reunion  
Columbia, Mo.

## From Pvt. to a cadet

**OFF WE WENT (Into the Wild Blue Yonder), by Barney Rawlings (E/E 671), 25 Vicki Lane, Colechester, CT 06415**  
By **RICHARD M. SMITH**  
President of AFEES

Barney has written A VERY interesting account (aren't they all!) of his times and life as a 21-year-old grade A military prospect in 1943.

His pre-military life as a confused civilian fits most of us in those days when none of us knew what was going to happen, and how best we could serve our country and still have hopes of coming out of the war.

His account of indecision as to how and why fits most of us, and for many, how he managed to go from a private in the ground forces to a cadet fits many of us, but it is well worth recounting.

In reading this account of WWII and the training, it is fascinating to learn how many methods were used for us to go through the same training.

His story of escape and return to active duty follows the path of many AFEES members, mostly a matter of pure luck.

As with many of us, some 30 years passed without much thought to WW II; we were all busy with raising families, struggling in the military or in civilian life, and in many cases, trying to put the war with all its mayhem, behind us. But as our children grew older, they wanted more information about what Daddy did in the war.

Barney writes poignantly about his decision to go back to the site of his crashed B-17 after some 25 years, of meeting the Helpers who were responsible for getting him on his way home.

The book contains many photos, some taken on Crash Day, and some a quarter-century later.

---

*2nd Lt. Bernard W. Rawlings, pilot of a B-17 out of Molesworth, (303BG), was downed by an Me-109 in Belgium after a raid on Frankfurt. He went out through Toulouse and Pau into Spain.*

# A Bronze Star, 56 years later

From the Redwood City (Calif.)  
Tribune, Feb. 3, 2001  
By DAVID MIRHADI  
Staff Editor

SAN CARLOS, Calif. -- The memory now is still as clear as the sun was on that Italian beach 56 years ago when Richard "Hank" Sciaroni crawled out from the cabin of a disabled B-24 Liberator behind enemy lines.

As far as the Army Air Corps, his squadron, even his mother was concerned, Sciaroni -- who had navigated his plane over the Adriatic Sea after losing all power -- was good as dead.

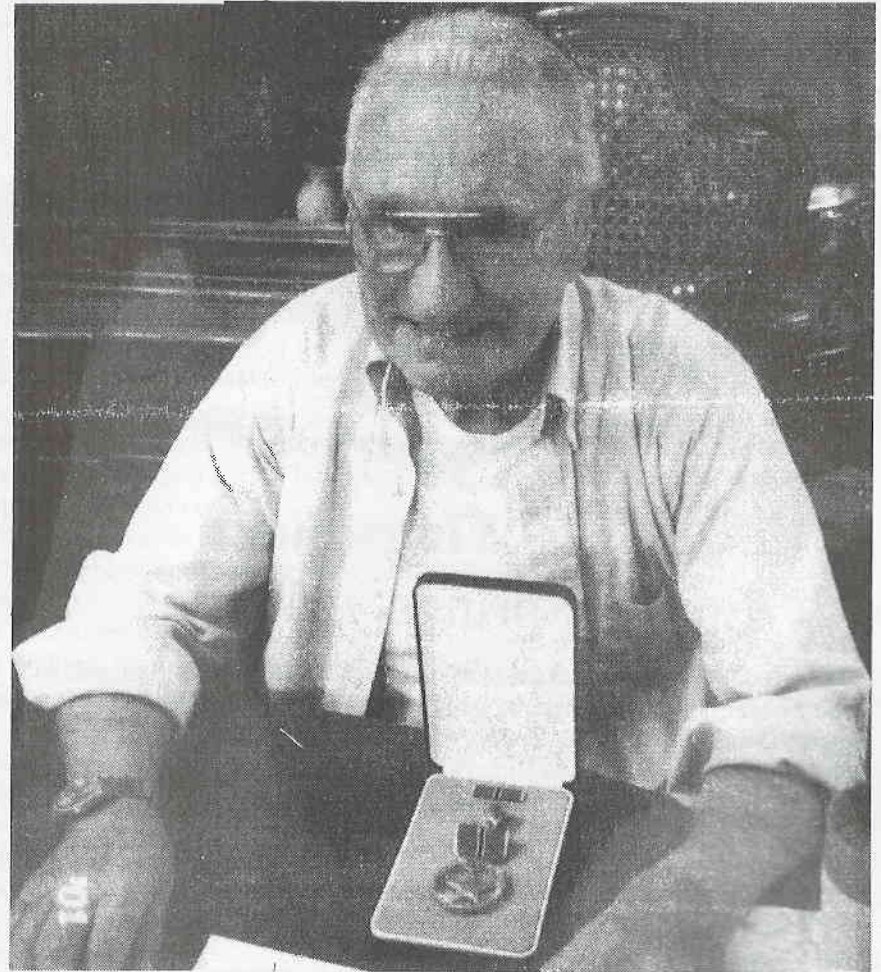
But Sciaroni, with help from Italians who discovered him in thick brush near the coast and led him to safety, was very much alive. A working knowledge of the language, along with a healthy dose of adrenaline, kept the lieutenant alive during the days his crew walked through German-held territory.

For his bravery, for "being a survivor," Sciaroni says -- he was awarded the Bronze Star in December by U.S. Rep. Anna Eshoo.

Sciarino makes it clear, though the award proclamation states differently -- that his actions were anything but extraordinary during those harrowing weeks in October 1944.

"I'm a survivor, not a hero," Sciaroni said as he sat in his San Carlos home, surrounded by photographs and telegrams stuffed in binders from his days as an airman during the Second World War.

To hear him talk, it's a wonder Sciaroni is alive to tell the story at all. His crew was flying back to the base at Stornara, Italy, after a bombing mission to Munich. As the plane crossed the Alps and headed toward the Italian coast, it was hit and two of the four engines failed. By the time Sciaroni saw the



**Hank Sciaroni with the Bronze Star medal awarded to him by Rep. Anna Eshoo for his bravery after being shot down over Italy in 1944.**

Adriatic coast, the plane was sinking fast.

The third engine blew and by that time, "on a B-24, you start falling like a rock," he said. "I did not want us to bail out over water." He had seen one of his squadron's bombers bail out over the Adriatic once before, and 16 of the 20 men aboard perished. Sciaroni and his crew were able to land the plane wheels-up along a marshy area of the beach. Nobody was hurt.

Sciaroni hid out in the bushes for more than 10 days, outwitting the Germans, who sent dogs looking for the American soldiers. Every day they came for them. And every day Sciaroni dodged the enemy.

"I had already survived coming over the Alps in a broken-down plane, and survived a crash landing. This was one more thing to be scared about. The adrenaline flows, and that helps you overcome the fear. When you're hunted, you know you have to get away," Sciaroni said.

After three days in the marshes, spending nights in chest-deep water, Italian fishermen -- partisans sympathetic to the Allied cause -- found him and fed him. "They were my salvation," said Sciaroni, who knew Italian and could ask for help. "Without my ability to speak

## Canadian veterans seek compensation

By The Associated Press  
Saturday, Feb. 17, 2001

TORONTO -- More than 50 years after they were sent to a notorious Nazi concentration camp, 14 Canadian air force veterans are seeking compensation from Germany for their time in Buchenwald.

The 14 are the surviving members of a group of 26 Canadian airmen who were among 168 men sent to Buchenwald in 1944 after being captured in Europe. The other prisoners were from the U.S., Britain, Australia and New Zealand.

Italian, I wouldn't have made it. I just told them, 'You gotta help us get out of here'."

Armed with a compass and perched on a 14-foot boat, Sciaroni and four others floated out to sea. They battled squalls, pushing forward to get past the German front. After 12 days, they landed at Cesinatico, a small harbor used by the Canadians.

After being treated by British and Canadian officers, Sciaroni hitchhiked back to his Italian base.

By this time, the Air Corps had notified Sciaroni's mother that her son was missing in action.

His commanding officer would die days later, meaning Sciaroni would never be recognized for his service to his country until Rep. Eshoo, who knew Sciaroni from his work as horticultural

advisor for San Francisco and San Mateo counties, asked Sciaroni to recall the story. Eshoo obtained the medal honoring Sciaroni and issued a proclamation which was read on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Did he ever fear death, dodging mines and dogs?

"That's hard to say. I knew I was in harm's way. My instincts were so great, I never thought I was going to die. I looked a lot for spiritual guidance and that was given to me."

Sciaroni also credits the Canadians and British forces that nursed him back to health.

But Sciaroni had another secret unearthed 56 years after his plane crashed.

Gordon Nelson, 82, a member of the 5th Canadian Armored Division, was one of the handful of military men who saw

the B-24 wreckage on the beach days after it crashed. For more than half a century, he thought all aboard the plane might be gone. The flight instruments had been taken, as had much of the contents of the plane.

"How you would ever find out about this, and find out how they survived, defies understanding," said Nelson. "To survive like they did, those guys had guts." Nelson now lives in Watsonville. He contacted Sciaroni after reading accounts of the Bronze Star award.

Nelson said, "I knew it had to be him. You see, I had no way of knowing whether the people on that plane lived or died. I don't dwell on the past that much, but the image of that plane stayed in my mind. I clearly recall it."

"The fact that he survived," Nelson said, "is amazing."

## Donation to help upgrade museum software

By **RALPH K. PATTON**  
Chairman, Air Forces Escape & Evasion Society

On Tuesday, Feb. 13, I had the pleasure of presenting a check from AFEES for \$3,000 to Judy Walker, Director of Development of the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum in Savannah, Ga., to be used for new software for their computer system.

This project began in early January when Ed Michaels, a Pittsburgh AFEES member and personal friend, called me to volunteer a substantial contribution to the Savannah museum if I could identify a specific worthwhile project.

It was a week later that the Heritage news story concerning the need for \$3,000 to update their computer software caught my attention. With Ed's initial contribution, I decided that some of us could raise the necessary amount without raiding the AFEES treasury.

Although the check was presented in the name of AFEES, the funds were contributed by several members and friends.

Currently, the museum is feeding Missing Air Crew Reports (MACRs) into their database, but plans are to also install Escape and Evasion (E&E) reports.



**AFEES Chairman Ralph Patton (left) presents a \$3,000 check to Judy Walker, development director at the Mighty Eighth Heritage Museum in Savannah, Ga. She is flanked by C. J. Roberts, museum president and CEO, and Wade Scrogam, museum archivist.**

--Photo by Debra Kujawa, Heritage News editor

AFEES members should encourage this project as much as possible.

Since the Savannah museum has the only stand-alone Escape and Evasion exhibit in a

major museum, I strongly believe that all members should visit it and lend their support. When you make a financial contribution, please mention that you are a member or a friend of AFEES.

# Living with the Partisans in Yugoslavia

By HARVEY J. DOMINICK  
Springfield, Ill.  
15th Air Force, 461st Group  
Nose Gunner

On my first mission to Bucharest, Rumania, on Aug. 26, 1944, our B-24 sustained damage after leaving the target, probably from antiaircraft fire. We were unable to stay with the formation as we approached the Adriatic Sea that separates Italy and Yugoslavia.

We were low on fuel and were advised by the flight leader to turn inland and abandon the plane over Yugoslavia. The 11 men on the crew parachuted into mountainous terrain about 10 miles north of Lake Scutari.

I used the shroud lines to guide my descent into some trees to prevent being caught on mountain ledges. I was able to climb down the side of the mountain and managed to crawl into a small cave. I

could hear and see German troops coming up the ridges. When it became dark, they gave up the search.

Later that night with a bright moon, I could see someone with sheep on a road below. I decided to wait until the next night before trying to reach them. The next night I left my hiding place and climbed down to the road where a blond Yugoslav girl was tending sheep.

She did not seem surprised to see me as I pointed to my flight jacket and name and tried to explain that I was an American airman. She motioned for me to get down to a hiding place near the road.

She left the sheep, but returned shortly with three Partisans.

The next day I traveled with six well-armed Partisans and soon joined another group. Two weeks later, another group joined us with our bombardier, engineer and assistant engineer, together with a British Wellington pilot.

I recall meeting an army captain and a naval enlisted man who had contact with the OSS in Bari, Italy.

After a month, we learned that efforts were being made to evacuate some wounded Partisans. My three crew members and the RAF pilot were to be evacuated on the same plane.

On the first attempt, weather conditions prevented the plane from landing. The next night, the pilots landed and picked up the passengers for the flight to Bari. A P-51 with red or checkerboard markings flew cover for our transport.

After we arrived in Bari, we were interrogated by British Intelligence and spent a day in the hospital before returning to our squadron.

I began flying again on Oct. 11, 1944, and completed 35 missions (although credited with 50 missions) over Rumania, Yugoslavia, Austria, Germany, Italy, Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

Of the crew that took off on Aug. 26, the pilot, navigator and tail gunner were repatriated separately. The navigator, Lt. Norman Knoke, was KIA on a later mission while with another crew.

The co-pilot, ball turret gunner, radio operator and a photographer were captured and spent the rest of the war in a prison camp.

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## AFEES PX has it!

### Get Ready for Spokane!

TEE SHIRTS -- (M-L-EXL-XXL) --Only \$10!  
10-piece TOOL KIT, with AFEES logo . . . . . \$ 8.00

#### WINGED BOOT EMBLEMS

Lapel Pin, 3/4 in. Pewter . . . . . 6.00  
Lapel Pin, 1 in. blue shield with boot . . . . . 7.50  
Cloth with metallic thread (dry clean only) . . . . . 5.00  
Cotton Sport Shirt Patch (can be laundered) . . . . . 2.50

#### BLAZER PATCH

Royal Blue Only . . . . . \$10.00

#### AFEES MERCHANDISE

Car License Plate . . . . . \$12.00  
Clock, Helping Hand logo (with battery) . . . . . 15.00  
Decals, exterior or interior . . . . . 6 for 2.00  
Southwestern Style Bolo Tie (postage paid) . . . . . 5.00  
Note Pad with Pen (Things to Do) . . . . . 4.00  
Lapel Pin (American Flag & AFEES) . . . . . 2.00

#### OFFICIAL AFEES CAPS

Mesh Back, Navy Blue or White . . . . . \$12.00  
Closed Back, Navy Blue only . . . . . 12.00

Add \$2.00 per order for shipping & handling

**Make checks payable to AFEES; mail to:**

THOMAS H. BROWN JR., PX Manager  
104 Lake Fairfield Drive  
Greenville, SC 29615-1506  
Phone: 864-244-8420  
e-mail: tbrown104@cs.com

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# Dutchman named after pair of U.S. evaders

DEAR HAROLD KILLIAN:

My name is Harold Henry Ottens. I was born on the 4th of February 1944, in Asmersfoort, the Netherlands. I am named after two U.S. pilots, Harold John Killian and Henry Vincent Schultz. They were in hiding at my parent's home at the time.

My elder sister, Nans Ottens, did a lot of research on the pilots who stayed at my parent's home during those last years of World War II. Before she died in November 1999, Nans told me that she had tried to make contact with you. I do not know whether you have received a letter from her. In any case I would like to make contact and see if you are one of the pilots I am named for.

From my family I can tell you the following: My father died in December 1999 shortly after my sister Nans died. The last part of 1999 was a sad period for the family. My father was 94 years old by then.

My mother is still alive and is in a good shape, physically and mentally. She now is 90 years old. My parents had nine children, eight girls and one boy, me.

As you can calculate, I am now 56 years old. I am married and have four children, three boys and one girl. They have left home for study or are married.

I send this letter to the address Nans received from the Air Forces Escape & Evasion Society. I give you the best wishes for 2001 and hope to hear from you.

---Harold H. Ottens

## His parents showed courage

By COL. HAROLD J. KILLIAN  
San Diego, Calif.

DEAR HAROLD OTTENS:

I received your letter, which was very informative and interesting, thanks to Nan's efforts and research. Your father was a great guy, for what he did along with your mother, for Hank and me while in your home. They were two great people who took very dangerous chances. I will never forget them.

I can never thank you and your family enough for their help and courage. Your mother, in particular, and her concern for two Americans. Her care for us, and for a new baby, she is one great lady!

We were shot down Jan. 30, 1944, during a raid on Brunswick, Germany. It was Sunday morning. We left our formation, and were a lone craft trying to ditch. That did not work out, for we had lost two engines and were losing altitude. We had descended to 1,000 feet and decided that we could not make it back to England or the Channel. We were over the Zuider Sea, down to 700 ft.

So I turned to look for land. We crash-landed and went through a canal. The nose broke off, we hit the next canal and the nose buried in. The third canal stopped the plane.

We had passed over a small town about a mile to the south. The tail of the plane was about 50 feet in the air and we were concerned that the Germans would see it. I assembled the crew and told them to leave, two at a time, in different

directions.

Co-pilot Henry and I headed south on the run. We ran through several canals, looking back to lose sight of the plane, but we didn't.

When we became tired, I told Henry that we should stop and take our chances. We rested for a time and then continued.

Finally we came to a farm house that was far back from the road. I told Henry to wait and I would see if I could get help, but to be ready to run just in case.

The house and the barn were built together. I went to the barn door and a lady came out. I told her we were Americans, and had been shot down by the Germans; that we needed help. She went into the house and soon came back with her brother, a great big man.

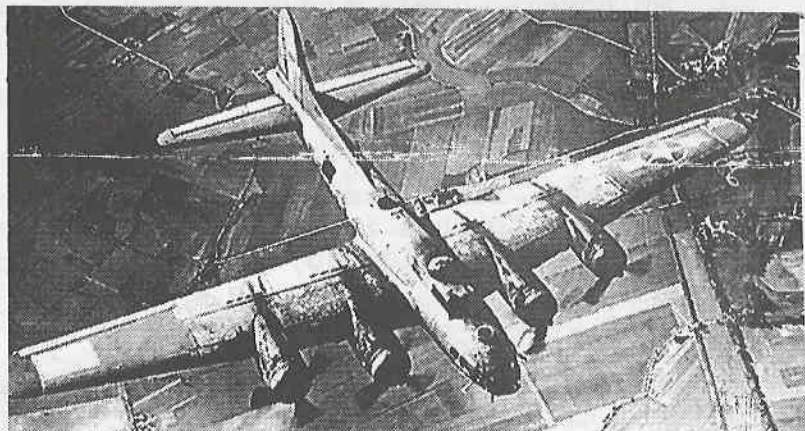
They talked for a few minutes, and after looking through my translation papers, the man said, "Come." I called to

Henry; we went into the barn and from there into the house. They were acquainted with people from the Underground. The man and the woman led us out of the house into a clump of trees in a field and left us there. At nightfall they brought us food and blankets. They told us to stay there, and that they would return in the morning.

The following day they returned with two members of the Underground. They had a change of clothes and bicycles for us. We were to follow them to another place at a safe distance on the bicycles.

We arrived at Amersfoort, your home, and were placed with your family. There we were housed and instructed to stay until we were ready to be moved later on.

About a month later a young lady named Joke Fulmer would handle us from there. She arrived, and we left your home for another stop.



*An 8th Air Force B-17 makes a bombing run over Marienburg, Germany, in 1943. Date and photographer are not known.*



# AIR FORCES

## Escape & Evasion Society

Richard M. Smith

President

### WINTER

76543 Bogonia Lane • Palm Desert, CA 92211  
Phone: 760-345-2282 • Fax: 760-345-9908

### SUMMER

36214 Augustana Drive • Battle Lake, MN 56515  
Phone: 218-495-2106 • Fax: 218-495-3000

Greetings from the California desert:

Plans for the Spokane reunion in May are shaping up nicely. We have a fun and informational program prepared. The E&E school at Fairchild Air Force Base has been most cooperative and I am sure the luncheon on base will please our people.

We have, at this date, some 80 AFEES people and friends signed up for the Alaska cruise. You need not be an AFEES member to join us on the cruise. If interested, contact Shirley Callighen and ask if she can put you on the list.

The cruise line has asked for a first-night-only table seating list. Such a list has been prepared and each person signed up for the cruise will receive it before sailing time. Again, this is for the first night only; after that, we hope members will circulate for dinner seating during the remainder of the cruise.

Because of the cruise, our regular reunion format has been slightly revised. On late Saturday afternoon, we will have the traditional Memorial Service, to be followed by a social hour and the Gala banquet.

Herbert Rosen of Mill Valley, Calif., has proposed that AFEES sponsor an appropriate memorial to the Resistance, to be located in a prominent location in Paris. Herb has been invited to the Spokane reunion to explain his suggestion to our group.

We have to leave the Ridpath Hotel by 6 a.m. on May 6 for the plane to Vancouver to catch the cruise ship. Be sure to have proof of citizenship with you, a passport or birth certificate, even a drivers license with photo ID. A current passport is the best.

You will find forms for the Reunion registration and Hotel reservations in this issue of the newsletter. There is still plenty of time to sign up; please come join us!

Take care,

RICHARD M. SMITH

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**2001 AFEES Reunion Reservation Form****WestCoast Ridpath Hotel, Spokane, WA 99201****Wednesday -- Sunday, May 2-6**

Please detach or photocopy this form, fill in proper information, then return form with check or money order payable to AFEES to:

**Shirley Callighen, Agent****4361 East Broadway Blvd.****Tucson, AZ 85711****Phone: 520-795-8400 Ext. 148; Fax, 520-795-5030**

**REUNION PACKAGE** includes Registration, Thursday evening Welcoming Buffet, Friday evening Helpers' Buffet, Saturday Gala Banquet, admission to Hospitality Suite, PX and Memorabilia Room.

Number  
of Persons

\_\_\_\_\_ Make reservations for Reunion Package @ \$135 ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Registration Only @ \$30 ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Thursday Welcoming Buffet Only @ \$33 ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Friday Helpers' Dinner Only @ \$33 ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Saturday Banquet Only @ \$39.50 ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Optional Activities:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Friday Day Trip to Fairchild AFB & Luncheon @ \$19 ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Saturday Tour of Spokane (Lunch extra) @ \$19 ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Sunday Excursion to Coeur d'Alene, Idaho @ \$30 ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*(Lunch at Coeur d'Alene not included in excursion price)*

**TOTAL Enclosed . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

(Alaskan Cruise Group leaves at 6 a.m. on Sunday, May 6 and returns May 13)  
Rooms have been reserved night of May 13 for those who wish to extend their visit.

Full Refunds will be made for Reunion activities (Optional trips not included) if cancellation is received by April 15, 2001. After that date, refund amount will depend on vendor policies. Please call 1-800-945-2565, ext. 148, (9 a.m. -- 5 p.m. MST) for more information. Your cancelled check will serve as confirmation.

**Name Badges:** List name(s) as you wish them to appear on badge:

Name (Please print): \_\_\_\_\_ Helper Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Spouse's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Guests' Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City/State \_\_\_\_\_

Arrival Date \_\_\_\_\_ Departure Date \_\_\_\_\_

Staying at Ridpath? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Flying? \_\_\_ Driving? \_\_\_ RV? \_\_\_

**Reservation Deadline: April 15, 2001**

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# Here's Jake



"It was love at first sight."



"You worked on it all day and can't get it started, eh?  
Well, I just checked the fuel tanks and guess what?"

The best of  
**"JAKE" SHUFFERT**



"Ok, Burton, come on down. You're not in space anymore."



"Hey Ed, a bottle with a note in it . . . 'to find out if you  
won our big prize, call this 800 number.' "

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**HOTEL RESERVATION FORM****AIR FORCES ESCAPE & EVASION SOCIETY****Special Reunion Rate: \$75, plus tax  
(Single or double occupancy)*****Wednesday -- Sunday, May 2-6, 2001*****Please Print**

Please Reserve \_\_\_\_\_ Room(s) for \_\_\_\_\_ Persons

Estimated Arrival Time \_\_\_\_\_ Departure \_\_\_\_\_

**Please indicate number of rooms requested for each category:**\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ King Smoking \_\_\_\_\_ King Non-Smoking  
\_\_\_\_\_ Two Doubles, Smoking \_\_\_\_\_ Two Doubles, Non-Smoking

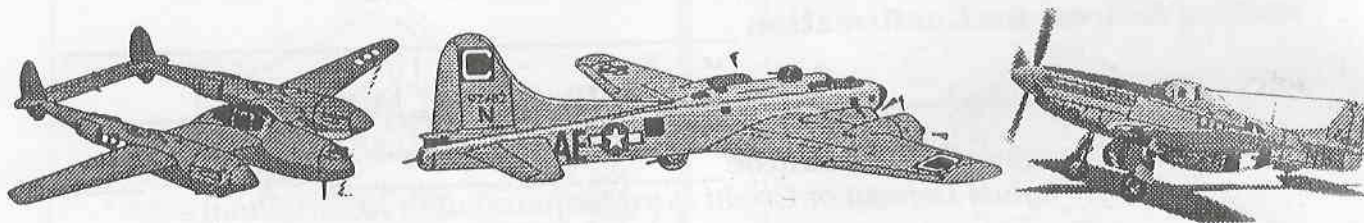
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Sharing With \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address for Confirmation \_\_\_\_\_

City, State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card Number for Guarantee \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(One Night's Deposit or Credit Card Required with Reservation)*Reservations subject to availability if received later than Monday, April 2, 2001.****Mail this form directly to hotel  
(or call 1-800-325-4000 and mention AFEES)*****WestCoast Ridpath Hotel.  
515 West Sprague Avenue  
Spokane, WA 99201  
509-838-2711  
Fax: 509-747-6970**

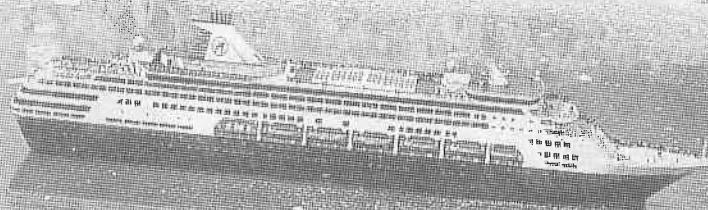
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Warbird Count-down from “Flight Journal” October ‘98

Aircraft type	Number built	Known surviving	Flying today
B-17	12,731	46	13
A-20	7,000+	11	0
B-24	18,000	16	2
B-25	9816	139	48
B-26	6,058	6	1
B-29	3,965	34	1
P-38	9,923	28	8
P-39	9,589	41	2
P-40	13,738	83	19
P-47	15,683	58	12
P-51	15,586	295	146
Bf-109	35,000est.	38	0
Fw-190	2,068	22	0

# OFF TO ALASKA!



Holland America

Nearly 80 members of AFEES, relatives and friends have signed up for a 7-day post-reunion cruise to Alaska. The group will depart Spokane early on Sunday, May 6, for a flight to Vancouver, B.C., to board Holland America's ms *Statendam* for a 5 p.m. sailing time.

Monday they will cruise the Inside Passage. They will stop at Ketchikan on Tuesday, at Juneau on Wednesday, Sitka on Thursday, cruise Glacier Bay on Friday and College Fjord on Saturday. They will arrive at Seward at 9 a.m. Sunday and then fly home or back to Spokane from Anchorage.

The passenger list includes:

AVIGNON, Bernard and Sergine, Paris, France  
BUROS, Milan, Germany  
DAVEY, Robert and Betty, Indianola, Iowa  
DAVID, Clayton and Lenora (Scotty), Hannibal, Mo.  
DAVIS, William and Doris, Ormond Beach, Fla.  
FRASER, Marguerite, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.  
FEICH, Anna, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.  
FRICKE, Margaret, Fridley, Minn.  
CARLSON, Elizabeth, Fridley, Minn.  
FOLMER, Johnna, the Netherlands  
LELIVELT, Maria, the Netherlands  
FISHER, Charles and Betty, Greenburg, Pa.  
FRUTH, Robert and Wilma, Napoleon, Ohio  
MILLER, Edward, Sedona, Ariz.  
GOLDFEDER, Adele and Carol, Allentown, Pa.  
FEINGOLD, Louis and Leah, Emerson, N.J.  
JONES, Sofia, Palm Springs, Calif.  
NAUGHTON, Dorothy, Clare, Mich.

HAINES, June, San Diego, Calif.  
KENNEY, Paul and Dorothy, Decatur, Ga.  
LEE, Dale and Alice, Sun Lakes, Ariz.  
LUCKETT, Elizabeth, Jackson, Miss.  
LUCKETT, John and Anne Robin, Jackson, Miss.  
LUCKETT, Mark and Susan, Jackson, Miss.  
LORING, Warren and Thelma, Monument Beach, Mass.  
SINGER, Margery, New York, N.Y.  
LINDELL, Ernest and Constance, Moses Lake, Wash.  
LINCOLN, William, Buffalo, N.Y.  
BIORN, Stephanie, San Francisco, Calif.  
SENFELD, Pamela, Buffalo, N.Y.  
LASHINSKY, Francis and Dorothy, Old Lyme, Conn.  
GRAUERHOLZ, Lawrence and Ruth, Wichita Falls, Tex.  
GRAUERHOLZ, Elizabeth, West Lafayette, Ind.  
ELLISON, Sue, Boulder, Colo.  
GRAUERHOLZ, Larry and Kimberly, Henrietta, Tex.  
McKEE, Ralph and Elinor, Rockledge, Fla.  
MORAN, Alex and Florence, Windsor, Ont.  
O'CONNELL, Brian and Elizabeth, Canberra, Australia  
PATTON, Ralph and Bette, Pittsburgh, Pa.  
RUCIGAY, John and Dorothy, Ballston, N.Y.  
SCOTT, Carl and Elizabeth, Columbus, Ohio  
SHAVER, Kenneth and Melba, York, S.C.  
SMITH, Richard and Margaret, Palm Desert, Calif.  
WHITBY, Ray, Chandler, Ariz.  
HIGGINS, Frank, Cincinnati, Ohio  
WIENS, Ross and Margaret, Edmonton, Alb.  
VRIJ, Jacob And Willamfen, the Netherlands  
ZGLENSKI, Christine, Wichita Falls, Tex.

# The AFEES promise is reaffirmed

The message that goes with AFEES Seasons Greetings to helpers throughout the world is more than words and a beautiful card. They promise, "We Will Never Forget!" in more ways than one.

They reach out to those who mean so much to us. They're a way of asking, "Are you still there at the same location?" and it provides an opportunity for replies. There are many beautiful messages in the replies that come back. There is no way we could print them all!

Receiving and recording the replies to our Seasons Greetings is part of a year-round effort by Scotty David. A database of names and addresses doesn't just happen. Scotty works from a hard copy base of more than 600 names. She notes every change she receives and sends the changes to Ralph Patton, who enters them on his computer database.

When time approaches for the cards to be mailed, Ralph prints out the address labels and sends them to Scotty. She reviews them and makes last-minute changes and records who is to receive the cards. Those changes then go to Ralph to update his database.

Scotty and Clayton cooperate on preparing new labels that reflect the late changes.

Dorothy (Mrs. Paul) Kenney is the artist who prepares a new card each year with attention to the message and the maximum weight for the basic overseas airmail rate. Paul Kenney makes certain

## ++++++ *A few messages selected at random from the mail*

*"I remember!" All my life-long American people shall be my friends. Best warmest wishes for the members of Air Force Escape & Evasion Societe all long of this new year 2001.*

---Paul BOE, St. Gaudens, France

*"Many thanks for your beautiful Christmas card. Hope to see you all in Spokane, Wash., next year in May."*

---Fred GRANSBERG, The Hague, Netherlands

*"To the members of AFEES: Thank you very much for your lovely card and your kind words. May I also wish you all a very Happy 2001, a year of remembrance, peace and hope for the whole World."*

---Janine De GREEF, Brussels, Belgium

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the cards are printed, with envelopes, and mailed to the AFEES president. Upon receipt of the cards from the Kennys and the labels from the Davids, the president's responsibility is to get labels and stamps on the envelopes and to see that they are properly mailed.

President Dick Smith acknowledges his wife Margaret's assistance in this final step and recruits any family and friends who might be available.

The return address on the cards (and for the newsletter) is that of the Davids in Hannibal, Mo. That ensures that a central point be used to collect all name and address changes.

As the AFEES membership committee, the Davids keep up with the

name and address changes for the quarterly newsletter.

Francis Laskinsky maintains the computer base and prints the labels which Clayton verifies before sending them to Larry Grauerholz in Texas for mailing the newsletters.

Members often take the time to express their appreciation for the newsletter when they send in checks for dues. While some of those are relayed to Larry and Ruth, a special note of thanks sent directly to them in always in good taste.

**Remember, the only compensation your volunteers get for keeping AFEES going is your expression of appreciation!**

## Our bond with overseas friends nourished

*As this issue of the newsletter went to press, many friends and helpers from around the world had expressed appreciation for the annual AFEES greeting cards that were mailed in December. The list of those who have responded includes, by country:*

**AUSTRALIA:** Ivanka Benko, Lloyd and Mrs. Gwen Bott

**CANADA:** Agnes Frisque, Ginny Labrosse

**SLOVENIA:** Danilo Suligoj

**SPAIN:** Ann Feith

**UNITED KINGDOM:** Grace Mulrooney, Roger and Jackie Stanton, Bill Webb

**UNITED STATES:** Charlotte Ambach, Yvonne Daley-Brusselmans, Rene Defourneaux, Roger and Yvonne Files, Maita Floyd, Marguerite Fraser, Louis

and Blanca Fortin, Case Hanou, Anita Hartman, Glenn Hovenkamp, Teodor Hreljanovic, Intrepidus, Desire and Lucienne Lecren, Rene and Aimie Lecren, Maria Gulovich Liu, Eighth Air Force Museum, Olga M. Puglis, George Van Remmerden, Gabriel Sauer, Rose Schantz, Harry L. Verlinden, Naomi Weidner

**Returned:** Honey Latham

**New Address** Marguerite Fraser, 2900 N.E. 30th St., Apt. 9J, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33306-1982

**HOLLAND** Wiet Abercrombe, Mrs. Margaret Albers, Fred Boogaart, Arie DeBriem, Dr. Elsa Caspers, Antonius DeBont, Dien Dieleman, Klaas van Dorsten, Fredrik Gransberg, Mrs. Joke Folmer, Pieter and Mimi van den Hurk, Han Hollander, Adrian De Keizer, Dr. Cornelis Jasperse, Mrs. Til Kenkhuis-Boogaard, Drs. Riet and Jann Klooster, Mrs. P.

Warmest thoughts  
and best wishes  
for a wonderful holiday  
and a very  
Happy New Year



FROM THE MEMBERS  
OF THE  
AIR FORCES ESCAPE & EVASION SOCIETY

Kuijsten-deBruijn, Chares L. Kroesen, Mrs. Mia Lelivelt, Nico Leons, Family of Gre Lommerse, Car Lof, Bert and Colleen Monster, Henk Mutter, Mrs. Virrie R. Oudkerk-Cohen, Mrs. Dirk Jan Pauw

And, Bert Poels, Albert and Hanneke Postma, Rinus van Rijsbergen, Mrs. Yel vander Sande, Mrs. Geertje Schouten-Scholtanus, Gerrit C. Slotbloom, John J. Swillens, Charles van der Slius, Theo G. J. Teueven, Mrs. Anna Uilenberg, Cornet De Valk, Family of Piet Van Veen, Jacques and Letti Vrij, Mrs. Annaka Voges, Wjim Willemsen, Winn Wolterink, Job Woltman, K and Gvan Dorsten

**New Addresses:** Arie De Briun, Fluweelphein 33, 7553 MG Hengelo (OV), Holland; John Swillens, Ribesstraat 6, 2563 PA, The Hague, The Netherlands

**BELGIUM:** Mme. Fernand Bartier, Camille and Lucy Bernier, Mme. Monique Berot, Emile Boucher, Jacques Brusselmans, Mrs. Lucie Chaidron, Franz Caubergh, Rik Craeghs, Roger Cuignet, Mme. Simonne DeCorte, Raymond Degeve, Mme. Andre Degive, Mme. Janine De Greef, Mme. Desir-Stassart (Amanda), Mme. Andree (Nadine) Dumont, Jacques Grandjean, Mme. Charles Guibert, Mme. Ann Marie

Guilbert, Roger Jamblin

And, Mme. Lucienne Keesmaecker, Mme. Maggy Lardot and family, Robert Lintermans, Mme. Jean Lemand-Guillaume, Gerard LeGrand, Rene Londo, Mme. Henri Malfait, Mme. Germaine Sainitu, Lucien Terrier, Mme. Monique Thome, Michou and Pierre Ugeux, Mme. Marie Claire Vienne, Jean and Francine Violo, Andre Yernaut

**Returned:** Raoul Ponchaut, Mme. Maurice Bailleux

**New Addresses:** Lucie Chaidron, 4 rue de la Resistance, 6850 Carlsbourg, Belgique; Gerard LeGrand, J. Van Meirhaeghestraat 46-24, B-2840 Reet, Belgium

**FRANCE:** Mme. Michele Agniel-Moet, Mme. Francis Andre, Jean and Paule Arhex, Andre Aubon, Mme. Bertanne Auvert, Serge Avons, Mme. Loulon BValfet, Jules Bachelet family, Gaston Bastein, Serge and Josette Baudinot, Mme. Rosa Bertrand, Mme. Andree Besse, Paul Boe, Robert Boher, Mme. Muriel Brest, Max Brezillon, Mme. Jacqueline Briand, Mme. Liliane Brochet, Alain Camard, Yves Carnot, Mme. Odette Chaput, Rene Charpentier, Gilbert Combres, Mme. Nichole Cortese-LeBon, Maurice and Paula Costa, Louis Coum

Also, Andre Couture, Paul and Jean Cresson, Rene Tabary De Bailleux, Jean Deduit, Mme. Andree Deperetti, Mr. and Mme. Raymond Durvin, Jacques Flahow, Mme. Maria Foirest, Claude Fontaine, Andre Formici, Pierre Francois, Jean Garo, Mme. Marie Gicquel, Scott and Judy Goodall, Mme. Alice Goulian, Mme. Rosemary Grady, Mme. Pierre Guilerm, Georges Guillemin, Marie Rose Guyot, Jean and Marie Therese Hallade, Mme. Denise Heches, Marcel Hennetier, Mme. Paulette Jauneau, Mme. Yvonne Kervarc, Mme. Marie Louise Kupp, Robert and Yvonne Lapeyre

Also, Henri Claude Lauth, Paul Le Bot, Louis Ledanois, Mme. Helene Le Fevre, Mme. Jacqueline Le Grand, Mme. Ernest Le Roy, Mme. Odile Le Roy, Mme. Jacqueline Leroy, Robert Levasseur, Rene Loiseau, Mme. Devin Mahoudeaux, Mme. Jeanne Mainguy, Julien Mansion, Rene Martin, Mme. Mary Jo Martinez, Claude Masson, Yvonne Michelet, Mme. Reine Mocaer, Jean Marie Moet, Mr. and Mrs. Emile Monvoisin, Pierre Moreau, Andre Naudin, Mme. Genevieve Noufflard, Yves Paillard, Mme. Alice Paquelot-Villard, Mme. Paulette Pavan, Mr. and Mrs. Jean Pena

And, Mme. Janette Pennes, Bertrand Petit, Pierre and Marceline Philippon, Dr. Alec Prochiantz, Michel Quillien, Rene Renard, Christian Richard, Mlle. Anne Ropers, Christiane Rossi-Boulanger, Mme. Genevieve Rozie-LeBourhis, Mme. Lucienne Saboulard, Mme. Arlette Salingue-Deslee, Raymond Servoz, Pierre and Yvette Sibiril, Michel Tabarant, Mme. Jacqueline Tabary-Debailleux, Paul Thion, Mme. Elie Toulza, Jean and Jeannette Trehieu, Andre Turon, Pierre and Michaou Ugeux, Jean Voileau, Stanislas Wosik

**Returned:** Gabriel Wiam, Mme. Josephine Aguirre-Castet, Claude Bacchi, Mme. Lemoine Charldale, Mme. Georgette Billerand, Mr. Jean Baptiste Le Naour, Mr. Georges Joubard, Mme. Jeanne Kerinec

# It wasn't just a walk in the park for Henry

From the Rankin County (Miss.)  
Record, July 6, 2000

By SAM HALL  
News Editor

Henry Laird was sure his 17th bombing mission was going to be a walk in the park. "It's my wife's birthday," I told my crew. "Nothing's going to happen to us on my wife's birthday."

But as the crew sat in the briefing room watching the general pull the red cloth from the map, their most treacherous mission was unveiled.

This run, which would be their last, had Regensburg as a target. Regensburg was one of the Germans' most defended sites, and Laird and his men knew it. The mission was anything but easy, nothing like the "Channel run" Laird had predicted. Instead as his B-17 bomber flew over enemy territory, anti-aircraft fire pierced the body of the large plane.

Three of Laird's four engines went out. There was little choice for Laird's decision.

"I turned us back towards England. We were gradually losing altitude, but I wanted to get us out of where we were." American fighters in the area began an escort mission for Laird and his crew. "One of the pilots contacted me and said not to worry about defending ourselves. He said there were more of him and his little friends up top. It made me feel a little better knowing somebody was watching us."

But at 5,000 feet Laird made the decision to evacuate the crew. After retrimming the automatic pilot and making sure his men were clear, Laird bid his escort pilot farewell and jumped. "He told me he would see me back in London," Laird said.

It was a hard landing. As he neared the ground he saw electrical lines below

him. He was able to maneuver away from the lines, but in doing so, Laird increased his rate of descent and hit the ground with a tremendous force.

Laird didn't stay down. He immediately was up and running toward a wooded area. Just past the lines, Laird spotted people working in a field. He feared that if they saw him he would be turned in to German forces.

Rain fell on Laird that evening as he sat hidden in the woods. He could hear German soldiers and their dogs searching for him and members of his crew. Thankfully, he was never detected. "The rain helped. It covers the odors the dogs try to pick up," Laird said. "But most of all I think the Lord was just watching over me. He watched over me a lot through that whole thing. If it wasn't for Him, I wouldn't be alive. He provided for me."

Laird headed south. Figuring he was in France, he laid a course that would take him toward friendly territory. As he came to a field, he spotted an old shed, covered, open on one side, but full of equipment where he could take refuge. There he stripped off his flight suit and hung it to dry while he tried to sleep.

"I don't remember if I slept at all that night or not."

What Laird does remember are two women, one old and one young, appearing at the edge of the field the next afternoon. The older of the two made her way to the beckoning soldier. Using a translation sheet he had been issued for such situations, he told the lady he was hungry and tired and asked if she could help.

"Everything I said, she answered 'Yah,' the German word for 'yes.' I didn't know whether to trust her or not. But the Lord told me to, so I did."

Using his silk escape map, the women pointed to the small country of Luxembourg. It was there, not France, where Laird had gone down.

The gracious woman told him there were soldiers in the area and he was to wait in the shed. She would return with food and drink that evening.

After they left, Laird got dressed in his flight suit, prepared to run if German soldiers came looking for him. Instead, it was the older woman who returned with soft-boiled eggs and two sandwiches. Also a detailed map of the area.

"She pointed out where I was. The map was in case I had to leave hurriedly, but she told me to wait and a man would come and get me later and take me to safety."

Again Laird put his faith in the Lord and trusted the woman. The next morning, he awoke to a man slushing through the field calling out, "Friend. Friend."

"It was quite dark, but he could see me. He stuck his hand out and we shook. Then he said, 'Come.' I wasn't sure what to do, but I went with him." The man led Laird to the crossroads of a small village. There he met John Regenwattor, the husband of Marie, the woman who had brought him food the previous night.

Laird spent three or four months with his new friends. He stayed in their home, leaving only twice, once to hear a BBC broadcast at a friend's house and the other to hide from a surprise SS inspection that John had been tipped off about.

When Allied ground forces began approaching the village later, Laird became anxious to see Americans again. Nearby strafing chased most villagers to shelters. But Laird stayed in the house, his head out the window to watch the planes.

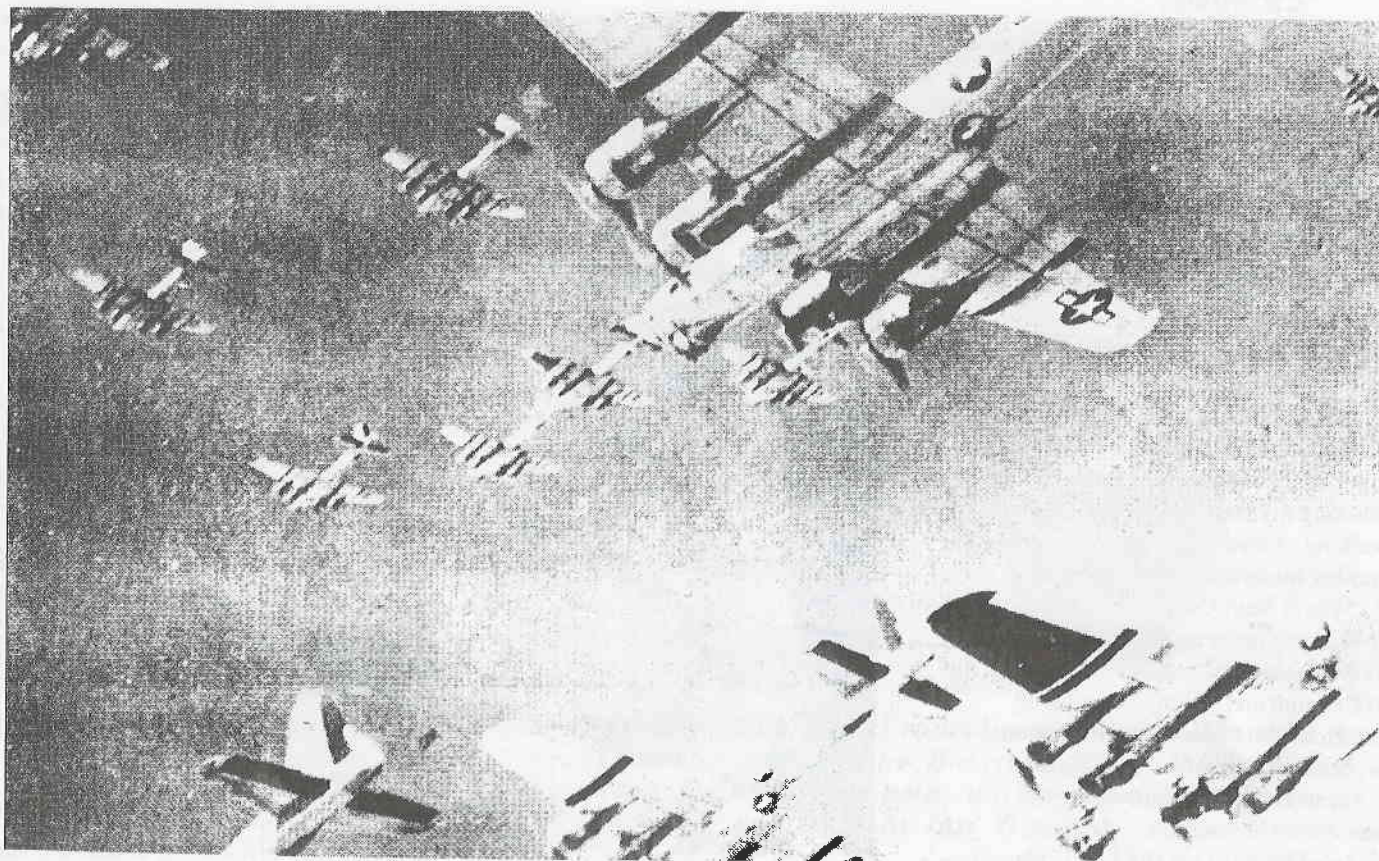
John took Laird to meet the troops as they entered the village. He was ordered to join the infantry until he could be returned. "They told me I would be endangering everyone in the village who helped. The Underground was very effective during that time, and Germans would have shot anyone on sight who was found helping Americans," Laird explained.

After the war, Laird did not forget his friends. He visited them twice. On his last visit, he learned that John was in a hospital in Luxembourg City. He loaded up some neighbors and they went to visit the man who had probably saved Laird's life.

"John never left the hospital. He died there," Laird said through tears. After a pause, "They saved my life. They risked theirs to save mine. I can never forget that. I can't ever repay that."

---

*1st Lt. Henry Laird, E&E 2093, 95th Bomb Group, went down July 21, 1944, near Bissen in central Luxembourg. He spent several months in the home of M. and Mme. John Regenwattor.*



15th Air Force B-17s on a mission during World War II. (Photo by 2nd Bomb Group crewman)

## ***'Mickey' guided B-24's route to the target***

By **KEITH ABBOTT**  
Cleveland, Ohio

"Let's get out of this firetrap before it explodes!"

That was the order I gave my 10-man crew from the pilot's seat aboard a burning B-24 on Dec. 12, 1944.

We had left at dawn on instruments from our 15th Air Force base near Foggia, Italy. Our mission was to bomb the oil refinery at Bleckhammer, Germany, on the Polish border. Our navigation and bombing was mostly in the hands of the new top secret radar device called a "Mickey."

"Mickey" used sound waves to stitch a blip path on a scope through the clouds along sea or ground to the target.

With the advent of "Mickey," the Fortresses and Liberators could now bomb day and night in good weather or bad.

Because of my experience, my crew was chosen to man the squadron's only Mickey-equipped bomber. The plane had been externally camouflaged.

We flew above a solid undercast that stretched in all directions. We had not seen the ground since takeoff.

On the bomb run and for a few minutes afterward, hundreds of AA guns were firing 88 and 105 mm shells at us through the clouds. The flak was coming uncomfortably close, close enough to knock out No. 1 engine and leaving a gaping hole in the wing. We could see other damage, but all systems were still operating, so the prospect of making it back to our base on three engines was still quite good.

But then, for no apparent reason, No. 3 engine began to spew flames at least 30 feet beyond the twin tails. It was time for quick action. I resorted to an "engine fire" checklist and with the help of co-pilot Jerry St. Hilaire, we feathered the prop and shut down all feeds to the affected engine.

What to do now? I had heard of pilots diving to blow out an engine fire, an emergency measure that usually failed, and coupled with the danger of flying

blindly through a range of mountain peaks, was a risk I did not want to take.

I was left with only one option. Time to parachute the crew. I rang the alarm bell three times, backing it up with the above-mentioned order.

The decision was a good one, except for Lt. Harry Levine, the navigator, who was murdered by his captors because of his Jewish heritage. The rest of us were aided by Slovakian Partisans and evaded, or got a "vacation" in a German POW camp.

But not for long because the war ended soon.

Our beloved "Mickey" disintegrated with the plane as we were disappearing into the clouds below at about 20,000 feet.

In any event, our sojourn into enemy real estate that day in late 1944 was anything but a "milk run."

---

*Keith Abbott was with the 459th Bomb Group of the 15th Air Force. He later flew B-29s during the Korean war.*

# Historian/author tries Comet trail

By **SHERRI G. OTTIS**  
Clinton, Miss.

(Friend Member of AFEES)

Almost two years ago I traveled to France to participate in retracing the Pat O'Leary escape line across the Pyrenees Mountains. As many of you already know, I was not successful, in spite of having given it my best shot.

After that effort, it was three weeks before I could wear regular shoes and my hip hurt for months as a result of favoring my blistered left foot while walking. I swore I would never climb another mountain.

Was it Sean Connery who said, "Never say never again?" Last June I took my children and my mother with me to Belgium and we enjoyed a lovely vacation while I burrowed in the state department documents the Belgian government so graciously gave me permission to research.

In addition to the fun I had "playing in the old papers" as my family refers to it, I received an invitation to join Nadine Dumont for afternoon coffee at the home of Dedee De Jongh. For me it was a dream come true.

When I began my master's thesis on aid for downed airmen, I never imagined how far it would take me. I even told my professor once that I would not try to get in touch with Dedee because she was so well protected.

Not only was I going to meet her, it was by her invitation. It turned out to be a lovely afternoon and one I will never forget.

Dedee, with the help of her companion, Therese, was a most gracious hostess, and I thoroughly enjoyed listening to her describe her experiences, along with Nadine. It was this visit that convinced me to try the Pyrenees again.

Roger Stanton, the Englishman who originally helped organize the St. Girons route for the Pat O'Leary retracing, had been working on retracing the Comet route for many years. He finally had worked out the kinks and the first retracing was scheduled for October 2000.

Major Eddy Lievrouw of the Belgian Air Force had served as liaison between Roger and the air force as he hoped to send a group of pilots on the trip. He



**Author/teacher Sherri Ottis of Clinton, Miss., (left) felt honored to meet Nadine Dumont (standing) and Dedee De Jongh in Brussels while doing research last summer.**

suggested that I return to Belgium in October to participate.

Dedee and Nadine added their encouragement. My school principal and my family agreed and so on Oct. 11, I boarded a plane, headed back to Belgium. Through the efforts of Eddy, I was attached to the Belgian Air Force team as an American historian. This was a great help since they arranged my meals and shelter throughout the trip. In return, I agree to educate the young pilots about why the escape route had been established in World War II.

The Belgian team decided to re-enact the entire experience of evaders, beginning with parachuting out of a plane. It was a fascinating sight to stand beside Nadine Dumont and watch the Belgians bail out. I tell my students to use their historical imagination when we are discussing events from the past; I put my lessons to use and imagined myself back in time as a woman of the 1940s watching the B-17s overhead while parachutes floated to the ground.

This was only the beginning of the experience. Early next morning, I joined

"my" airmen at the train station in the cool chill of early dawn to board the train for Paris.

Our train ride was uneventful. No one asked for identification papers, nor did they care what language we used. We were a mixed crew, speaking English, Dutch and French!

We spent the night in Pau and were up early next morning for the second part of the trip. During the war, the trip from Bordeaux to Bayonne was by bicycle and so we did the same. Well, that is a slight exaggeration on my part. I rode a token part of the way and then joined the logistics crew in a military van.

It was wonderful to arrive in Bayonne and renew friendships with fellow climbers and researchers from the year before. Although Dedee was not strong enough to join us, I was delighted to learn that Nadine planned to spend some time with the hikers.

I received a special surprise when I learned that Jean Francois Nothomb (Code name: Franco) would be joining us on the trip. We had corresponded for some time, but it was very special to be

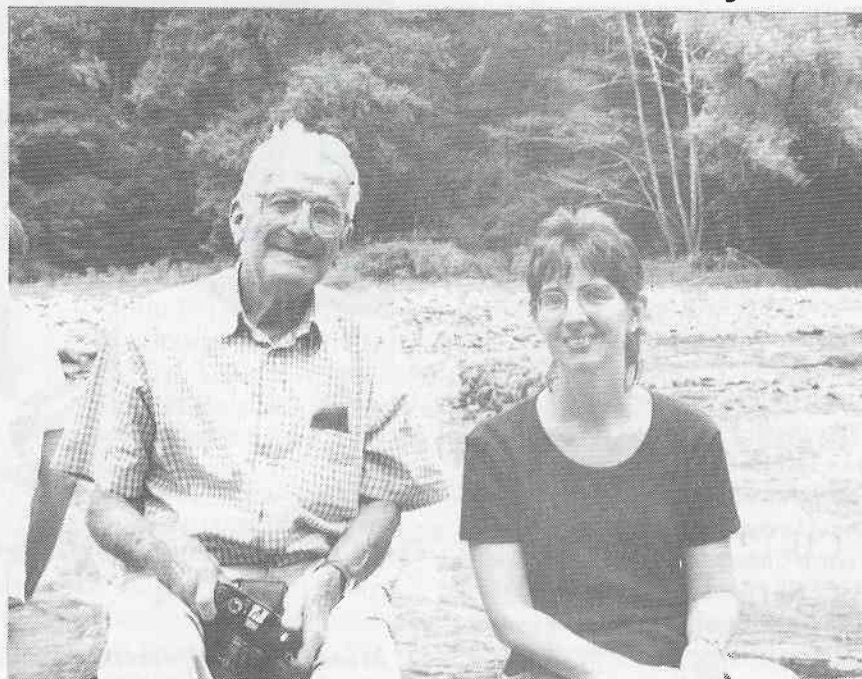
able to squeeze his hand and give him a hug.

There was a remembrance service at the memorial which commemorates the work the De Greef family did for Comet, followed by a reception where I visited with many former evaders and helpers.

Early on the morn of Oct. 17, a large group assembled at the cemetery in Ciboure where Florentino Goicochea and Cattalin Aguirre are buried near each other. At the graveside of his former comrade, Franco said he was pleased that they had been able to work together and given the same circumstances, he would do it again, with Florentino at his side.

The day was gorgeous with weather meant for walking as some 100 hikers embarked on the route last taken by Allied evaders, young European patriots and Basque guides.

We stopped for lunch at the former home of Francia Usandizaga. At this home in 1943, the Gestapo arrested Dedec, along with three evaders and Francia. Imagine my surprise to learn that the elderly woman who had joined us on the hike and offered me a handful of figs picked from a roadside tree was Francia's oldest daughter. I was again surprised at lunch when I learned I was visiting with Florentino's grandchildren



***Jean Francois Nothomb (Franco) and Sherri Ottis take a break on the bank of the Bidassoa River, the border between France and Spain, during the Comet trail reenactment last October.***

over wine, cheese and sausage.

The house, though modernized, greatly resembles the structure that existed during the war. It no longer stands isolated in the Pyrenees foothills, but is surrounded by other homes built

more recently.

The highlight of the trip for me was spent sitting beside the Bidassoa River with Nadine, Franco, Michou Ugeux (Nadine's sister and another Comet guide) and Comet evader Bob Frost of the Royal Air Force.

Although I knew the story of how Jim Burch and Jacques Cartier drowned while attempting to cross the river, it became much more real as I sat on a rock beside Franco under the shadow of Cartier's mountainside memorial and listened while Franco told me about that night. It was also a great honor to walk beside this noble and humble man when he invited me to join him in searching for the alternate route, a bridge used when the river was too high to wade.

After spending the night in tents alongside the river, the hike into Renteria continued. Another historic lunch stop was made at the Sarobe Farm. Franco explained that it was at Sarobe where he made his first stop with evaders on the Spanish side of the river. There they rested for a few hours before continuing.

From the farm, it was about a 3-hour walk into Renteria, a beautiful city. The maire held a reception at which Roger brought forth the Comet Freedom Trail commemoration book. Each person who completes the hike, from Ciboure to



***The grave site of Florentino Goicochea, Belgian guide on the Comet line, in Ciboure, France.***

Renteria, is invited to register.

With a pat on the shoulder and the words, "You earned it" from Roger's right-hand man and our friend Boris, I signed the book with shaking hands.

I was the only American who participated in the walk, the only U.S. citizen to appear on the record for retracing the Comet route 55 years after the last evaders used it.

I really do not plan to climb any more mountains, but ----. The Comet journey was used by many evaders during the war and like them, I will never forget it!

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*Sherri Ottis expects to have her book, Silent Heroes: Downed Airmen and the French Underground, available at the AFEES Spokane reunion in May.*

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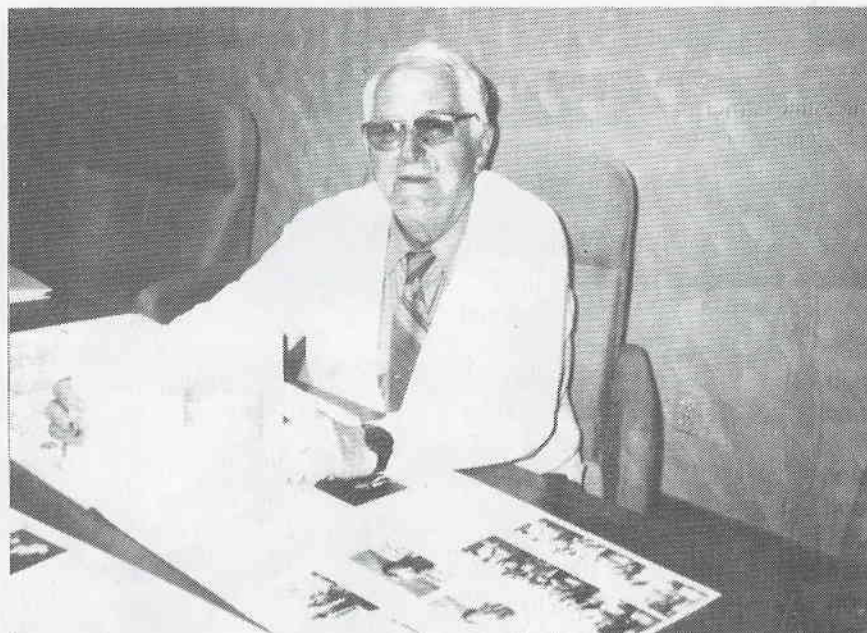
The AirCrew Memorial Association of Nova Scotia plans to erect a life-size bronze statue of a WWII RCAF aircrew member, as shown above, to honor the memory of Canadians who have served Canada and its Allies.

During WWII more than 25,000 RCAF aircrew were sent overseas. About 17,000 of them gave their lives.

Some \$70,000 will be required to complete the statue which will be centerpiece of the Greenwood, N.S. Military Aviation Museum.

For information, contact: Maj. (Ret.) C. J. Dunbar, AirCrew Memorial Association, 86 Hazelholme Drive, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, B3M 1N5.

Phone: 902-443-0270,  
e-m: cjdunbar@istar.ca



*Miodrag D. Pesich, rescuer of downed American aircrew in World War II and author of "Operation Air Bridge," was photographed with his book at the AFEES 2000 reunion in Columbia, Mo.*

## THE 'MOUNTAIN AIR FORCE'

# Serbian rescuers aided U.S. crews

By MIODRAG D. PESICH  
President, Association of  
American Pilot Rescuers in the  
World War II

Belgrade, Yugoslavia  
From his book entitled  
**OPERATION AIR BRIDGE**  
(Translation provided  
by Sofia Sekulich Jones)

It was around the middle of April 1944 when I was returning with the platoon of Ravanitza Brigade after an unsuccessful completion of our task. The task was to kidnap the commander of Ivan Kovac Brigade, Lt. Col. Ljubomir Mihailovic from the hospital in Jagodina.

The Germans put him there after they took him prisoner in an ambush in the village of Ivankovac at the beginning of April. The colonel was sick in bed and it was easy for the Germans to capture him.

That was during the massive German offensives "Hunt" and "Spring" against General Mihailovic. On that occasion,

some 1500 members of the Resava and Mlava Corps, as well as some staff of the Ivankovac headquarters were taken prisoner. That was the last German attempt to destroy General Mihailovic's forces in the northeastern part of Serbia.

Our intention to free Col. Mihailovic was thwarted by an informer. Downcast and saddened, we were returning to our base in the Kucaj mountains when we stopped to rest in a grove above the village Virine, some 10 km northeast of Cuprija.

A group of B-24 Liberators appeared in the sky, accompanied by their distinctive motor noise; they were returning from a raid on Ploesti in Roumania. One plane was lagging behind and was losing altitude.

We noticed smoke gushing from one engine. The plane was circling while coming closer to the ground. Almost at the last moment, the crew started jumping and then the plane hit the

ground, breaking into pieces.

Seven crew members jumped, one after another, while three others evidently did the same earlier. They all came to the ground within a radius of 2 km from us.

We immediately started running toward them. It goes without saying that the Occupation forces saw the plane going down and were on their way to get them.

Before they arrived, we gathered all seven of the airmen and hid them in a forest above the village of Vizine.

The first pilot we approached tried to pull his parachute down from a tree to hide it. He did not show surprise at seeing us; he looked at me calmly. To reassure him, we told him we were General Mihailovic's fighters. He was an American of Polish ancestry and the first words were "Ja Polski," adding that his name was Dimitri. He immediately took out a map and asked us to show him where we were.

We borrowed several horses in the village, lifted a wounded airman on one and put all other crewmen's belongings

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### *Americans with stories in Miodrag's book*

Richard L. Felman, from New York, rescued airman  
William L. Rogers, from Illinois, rescued airman  
Marvin Stolof, from New Jersey, rescued airman  
Gus Brown Jr., from Texas, rescued airman  
Mickey McKool, from Texas, rescued airman  
Alan Friedberg, from Long Island, N.Y., rescued airman  
Nickolas Vlahos, from New Jersey, rescued airman  
John P. Devlin, from Pennsylvania, rescued airman  
George Musulin, from New York, OSS officer  
Nick Lalic, from Cleveland, Ohio, OSS officer  
Michael Rajacich, from Washington, D.C., OSS officer

\*\*\*\*\*

on other horses. We stayed away from the roads, bypassing populated areas, as we always did, until nightfall. The airmen took walking very hard, being unaccustomed to it and without suitable shoes for such terrain.

We noticed that they had on some heavy clothing in which they could not move easily. They explained that it kept them warm at high altitude. In addition, they wore enormous boots with sponge on the soles to alleviate the fall on the

ground. Before long, these shoes were falling apart and we managed to provide them with others.

After walking about 20 km, we arrived at our camp before dawn.

What impressed us most about the airmen was their calm. They looked so much at ease as if at any moment, a plane would come to take them back to their base.

This was the first American crew we were saving and taking to the recently



*American airmen who crashed in Serbia in 1944 near the town of Lazarevac are shown with their Chetnik helpers (mostly wearing forage head pieces).*

formed collection center of the Ivankovac Tactical Unit. We were taking the crewmen to a place known as Letoviste in the South Kucaj Mountain.

After that, I left with a unit of the brigade for the Jastrebac and Kopaonik Mountains, where I stayed until the end of June.

When I returned to the base, I found some 50 American pilots and among them, the first group with Dimitry. They were still there as conditions for their evacuation had not been yet provided.

Of the airmen in the first group, I remember only one more, a good-natured and always smiling Glen Oney from Ohio.

A small building was procured, beds were brought in and improvised bathrooms were made for the airmen. Uros Prijic from Cuprija, a former merchant, took care of them as if they were his own guests. He prepared roasted lambs for them daily, not because they requested it, but because it was easy to find lambs in the mountains in spring. They were getting wheat bread because they could not get used to cornbread.

There were other collection centers: in



***A group of American crewmen who crashed near the town of Ljig in Serbia are shown with the local village school teacher (center, front row).***

the Timok, Mlava and Krajina Corps.

Bailing out from airplanes over Eastern Serbia became an everyday occurrence.

Transportation of the pilots to the

area of evacuation was organized at the beginning of July 1944, specifically near the improvised airstrip at Galovic Field, by Pranjani village at the foot of Suvobor Mountain.



***A large group of Americans who were downed near the Serbian town of Ivanjica in 1944 are shown with local Chetnik helpers.***

Before starting on the journey, pilots and their escorts were divided into two groups. Both groups traveled together until we arrived at the highway and railway Beograd-Nis.

That's when we separated. We started before dark so we would arrive at the collection center around midnight.

The first group crossed Velika Morava River on a ferryboat near Obrez village, not far from Varvarin. We rested in a nearby woods that day and resumed walking in the evening until we arrived at Krcedin village. That's where that group of pilots was handed over to the Varvarin Corps which, in turn, would accompany them further. Their escorts then returned to their base.

The second group, escorted by officer's school students, including myself, crossed Velika Morava River, also by ferryboat near Donje Vidovo village. After resting a day on the slopes of Juhor Mountain over Potocac village, we continued toward Belusic village and Kalpnic Monastery. By then, we had covered some 45 km.

We traveled through forests by day, along the roads by night. We did go through some villages if it was safe.

The long awaited moment for the pilots was when they were informed they were "going home." They were overjoyed! It was with an unceasing enthusiasm that they began their journey, especially since many of them stayed with us for over three months. But reaching "home" was still far away.

They soon came to that conclusion by themselves. Evacuation to Italy was not to happen until after another month had

gone by.

We still had to walk some 25 km to reach the designated place for evacuation.

As they were taking leave, the pilots gave their attendant Uros a one-dollar note, on which many of them signed their names. I found out later that the symbolic gesture was a custom practiced by many. (Ed. Note: The famous Short Snorter!)

Along the journey, peasants from nearby villages welcomed pilots with various offerings of food, drinks, socks, even handwoven rugs. Deeply touched by such attention, many pilots cried together with the women who were giving them presents.

We joked with them, saying that they were now "Mountain Air Force." (In Serbian: BRDSKA AVIJACIJA). When the pilots got the meaning of it, they began calling each other that way. It sounded something like, "Come on, 'Breka aviciya'" and they laughed at lot.

After a rest, we were joined by another small group of pilots and their escorts from the Reljac village where the Chetnik headquarters was located. After many days of walking, covering places such as Gruza, Knic and Vracevsnica (Monastery), we arrived at Brajice village on the ninth day.

Pilots were arriving from all parts of Serbia. They already were some 200 of them, billeted in surrounding villages.

The commander, Capt. Zvonko Vuckovic of the First Ravna Gora Corps, sent our group to Pranjani village. If General Mihailovic happened to be in the area, he would personally greet each group of pilots and he did it also this

time.

I do not know whether the pilots suffered more because of us, or we because of them. The longer our journey was, the pilots had more difficulty covering long distances. They were not conditioned for walking for such a long time.

Many of them lost their shoes and we had to find ways to get them some peasant shoes. Several pilots became ill and that added more difficulties.

The only mitigating circumstances were the warm July nights, illuminated by the moon.

We were concerned about the other group being taken to the collection center in relays. We met them two days later, as we were going back.

While I was drafted later and served in the Yugoslav army, Uros was arrested and all correspondence he had with Dimitry was confiscated, as well as photographs and the famous dollar note. He was pressured to confess that both of us were tricked into working for the American Intelligence Service. He was particularly accused that for his work for Americans, he was receiving compensation in gold.

I was charged with the same offense by KOS (Counter Intelligence Service) in the town of Nis. I didn't succeed in convincing them that those accusations were absurd and that the man in question (Dimitri) was the one we corresponded with because we could communicate with his easily.

At any rate, I was sent to the disciplinary battalion again in 1945 because I was a "danger to the society." We paid dearly for corresponding with Dimitri.

## *A story of fear, fun, action and lotsa luck!*

**THE LUCKY PIGEON,**  
The True Adventures of a Young  
Canadian Airman during World  
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by John Neal

On April 29, 1940, the governments of Canada, Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand got together in Ottawa to sign an agreement implementing the "British Commonwealth Air Training Plan."

The Plan, as it came to be known, was formulated to supply the huge

requirements for aircrew the governments felt would be required for World War II. The writer was one of the 300,000 airmen trained under the Plan, and this is his story.

Coupled with his life in the Plan is his time as a Caterpillar and an evader, both of which were forced on the writer by an enemy air force. Not only do you meet the many friends and family who saw him on his way, but you will meet the people who saw to his safety and his return home.

A truly fascinating story of courage, fear, fun, action, and a whole lot of luck. Many years after the fact, the final characteristics to surface were remembrance and reflection, which resulted in the writing of this story.

Copies of the book are available from the author, John A. Neal, Suite 321, #3 Sunmills Green S.E., Calgary, Alberta T2X 3N9, Canada; telephone: 403-201-7102; e-mail: [nealja@home.com](mailto:nealja@home.com)

Price is \$16.75 Canadian, plus \$2.50 for shipping/handling (\$3.50 overseas). Make checks payable to the author.

# **-FOLDED WINGS-**

## **MEMBERS**

- #1082 Paul F. Clark "L", Hixson, Tenn., 363 FG, Aug. 26, 2000  
 15 AF Edgar M. Demel, Houston, Tex., 460 BG, Feb. 16, 2001  
 #440 William M. Foley "L", Knoxville, Tenn., 96 BG, April 4, 2000  
 #1246 Ralph Hall, Dadeville, Ala., 94 BG, Dec. 9, 2000  
 8 AF William A. Johnson "L", State College, Pa., 493 BG, 2000  
 POW Charles J. Kukawski, Grand Rapids, Mich., 379 BG, Nov. 1, 2000  
 #245 Duane J. Lawhead, Tavares, Fla., 305 BG, Nov. 22, 2000  
 15 AF Clifford S. Lovitt, Palos Heights, Ill., 460 BG, March 9, 2001  
 #1262 A. W. "Scotty" Newkirk, Cape May, N.J., 416 BG, Mar. 30, 2000  
 15 AF Swante B. Norlund, Floodwood, Minn., 460 BG, Feb. 1, 1999  
 8 AF Benjamin L. O'Dell "L", Johnson City, Tenn., 303 BG  
 #2133 Ewell M. Riddle "L", Heflin, Ala., 95 BG  
 15 AF Robert E. Tuthill, Paramus, N.J., 459 BG, Sept. 10, 2000  
 #1129 David C. Schwartz "L", Walnut, Calif., 370 FG., August 1998

## **HELPERS**

- M. Armond FAUCONNIER, Court Saint Etienne, Belgium, Oct. 19, 2000  
 M. Edmond WAMZOU, Huy, Belgium, Sept. 25, 2000  
 Mrs. "Mimi" van den HURK-de Jong, Cuijk, Holland, Feb. 14, 2001  
 Mr. John D. VALLELY (In France), Carlisle, UK, Jan. 13, 2001

## **JOHN D. VALLELY**

John D. Valleley, who aided many American airmen in France, died in Carlisle, U.K., his home, on Jan. 13, 2001.

He attended the AFEES reunion in Pittsburgh in 1989.

Born in Carlisle, he left home to join the 4th Battalion of the Border Regiment on April 26, 1939. When most of his battalion was captured in June 1940 during the evacuation from Le Havre, he disappeared into the Normandy countryside and for over 4 years, lived in occupied France.

During that period, he helped many Allied airmen with whom he kept in contact.

#####

Tot ons grote verdriet, is toch nog onverwachts overleden mijn lieve vrouw,  
 moeder en onze oma

MARCHJE ARIAANTJE VAN DEN HURK-DE JONG

Mimi

Draagster van de Medal of Freedom  
 Verzetshedenkingskruis

echtgenote van

Peter Jan van den Hurk

Rotterdam, 24 augustus 1919

Boxmeer, 14 februari 2001

Cuijk: P.J. van den Hurk

Voorburg: Pia en Rob  
 Peter-Jan, Kees  
 Kim, Sanne

#####

# **Prisoners broke out of train**

Contributed by Michael M.  
 LeBlanc and Virgil R. Marco

On the night of May 29, 1944, Lt. William E. Ryckman (801 BG) had landed in an open field near Niove, Belgium, twisting his knee and spraining his back. After burying his chute and equipment, he painfully began walking in a northwesterly direction.

The burning wreckage of his Carpetbagger B-24 lighted the sky. He came to a grain field and hid himself until about 1300 hours the next day. Then he set out again, this time headed to the southwest.

He passed through a village without incident, although he was still dressed in a A-2 jacket and OD trousers. On the outskirts of the village, a Belgian man and woman realized that Ryckman needed help. They took him to their home, where they fed him and gave him a suit of civilian clothes.

Then he was taken to a castle where he met Lt. Wallis Cozzens (now deceased). From the castle the two lieutenants were taken to a town where they hid for three weeks.

Next they were shuttled to a farmhouse, spending eight days there and moving on to another house where they spent seven days. After one night at a third house, they rode a train into Brussels, their destination a prosperous apartment in the city. Here they remained for about 10 days.

On July 18, the two officers were taken by auto by the false "benefactors" to another apartment where they were met by five men in civilian clothes, whom they presumed to be members of the Underground. After interrogation, they were taken to another house in Brussels.

They walked to a third-floor apartment where the first thing they saw was a large picture of Adolph Hitler on the wall. Their escorts saluted the man at the desk. They were in the hands of the Gestapo!

They were moved at once to St. Gilles prison and were imprisoned for

more than five weeks before their first interrogation. Their diet consisted of coffee, carrots, potatoes and sour bread.

On the evening of Sept. 1, the men were removed from their dark cell and again interrogated, mostly about the crew's duties and positions in the aircraft.

The next day, 42 Allied airmen, including Henry Wolcott, Ryckman, Cozzens and Robert Auda, were taken from the prison and locked into the baggage car of a train. (Now named the Nazi Ghost Train). The men realized that they were being taken to Germany.

Talk was that British armor was beginning to move into Brussels. The train left Brussels at 0800 hours and by evening, had covered a distance of only 30 km. The train was parked at night on a siding and in the morning, began to roll back toward Brussels.

The German garrison troops began to panic. They located a supply of cognac and looted it. The train with its drunken German guards and its carload of prisoners, made several attempts to break through the ring of British tanks encircling the city, and each time, was turned back.

The Germans made one last attempt to break through the British line. Three km outside Brussels, the train stopped. The tracks had been blown up. Then the train went into reverse, causing the baggage car to derail. The guards, frightened and demoralized, abandoned the train.

At 0400 hours the prisoners decided to

make a break. Using a pocket knife, they picked the lock and slipped out of the car, three or four at a time.

Wolcott, Ryckman, Auda and Cozzens walked down a road until they came to a warehouse. The fence around the warehouse was too high to scale, so they ran to the canal and jumped into a barge which had been tied up.

The captain of the barge was a patriotic Hollander. When he discovered the men, he told them that open fighting had broken out in the streets of Brussels and it would be safest for them to remain hidden in his barge for the time being.

They remained overnight in the cabin of the barge. The next morning, the

captain's son came rushing and shouting, "Tommy, Tommy, Tommy!" The British had completed the liberation of Brussels.

The four men walked into the center of town where they were taken in charge by an officer and put up in a hotel for the night. Next day they caught a ride with a British supply truck going to France.

After reaching Armiens, they met an RAF officer who told them of an airfield offering shuttle service to England. They made their way to the field and soon boarded a C-47 heading for England.

It was the 6th of September and for the first time in many months, they felt free again.

## Changes for the 2001 Roster

### MEMBERS

Armando Carlino "L", Phone at Palm Beach, FL, 561-642-4936

Walter S. Hern Jr., e-m <WHern2@earthlink.net>

G. Gerald Hyson, New Area Code: 919-848-2216

Merle E. Martin, Vacaville, CA, should be Merl E. Martin

Paul H. Schlitz, 1313 N. Maize Ct. Apt. 1407, Wichita, KS 67212

Abraham Thompson, NY, Phone 631-262-6903; e-m <a6709-CMSN.com>

James T. Tronson, 303 Warner Ave., Doyon, ND 58328

Harry E. White, Wife is Doris

### FRIENDS/HELPERS

Yvonne Daley, New Area Code: 727-734-9573

ADD: Mrs. June Haines, 11589 Genuine Rd., Clare, MI 48627,  
Phone 517-386-0085

Elly D. Manion "H", 1210 Hickory Lane, Zionsville, IN 46077;  
Phone 317-873-9718

ADD: Margaret Smeenk-Tenny "H", 105 N. Lake Dr., Apt. 321A,  
Orange City, FL 32763-6182; Phone: 904-775-2419

(New Members, Friends etc. are not relisted; see Page 2)

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# The editor has the last word

By **LARRY GRAUERHOLZ**  
**afees44@hotmail.com**

WICHITA FALLS, Tex. -- By now, most members have received a copy of the 2001 roster, another outstanding production by Clayton and Scotty David.

By chance, there are a few (hundred) copies of the roster left. If you need another, hit me with an e-mail or phone call and ask for it.

Dr. Herman Bodson, Belgian Helper now living in Taos, N.M., reports that his second book dealing with evasion from The Netherlands, Belgium and France should be out soon, surely in time for Spokane. It will be in paperback, 250 pages with plenty of maps and illustrations. You may contact Herman for an advance reservation; publication price is probably \$19.95.

Bernard Gondran, mayor of Saint Girons, France, and key figure in operation of the Freedom Trail hike, sends this message concerning the Fall 2000 issue of this publication:

"It was a real pleasure for me to read the article relating to Chemin de la Liberte published in your American periodical.

"It is evidence of the importance this association has taken over the years in the mind of your fellow countrymen. Each year with the great joy and thanks to you, we celebrate this symbolic manifestation of friendship and remembrance."

This year's Freedom Trail walk from St. Girons across the Pyrenees into Spain will be July 5-8, contrary to earlier

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information. Americans interested in this year's commemorative walk should contact Scott Goodall, L'Escrabiche, Lescue, 09420 RIMONT, France; e-m: [ScotGdl@aol.com](mailto:ScotGdl@aol.com)

*The Elks Magazine*, April 2000 issue, contained a lengthy article on the secret agency MIS-X, something we airmen knew little or nothing about at the time. The article is headed: Escape and Evade, How a Supersecret Agency Aided POWs in World War II.

Much of the article is based on *The Escape Factory*, written in 1990 by Lloyd R. Shoemaker, one of four MIS-X operatives alive at the time. (I believe Shoemaker is now deceased.)

Sworn to secrecy at the close of the war, MIS-X was disbanded, its records destroyed, its building at Fort Hunt, across the Potomac from Washington, D.C., bulldozed, and trees planted in its stead.

I crossed the Pyrenees in early 1944 with a group that included Ray Sarant, one of the first Americans to escape from a prison camp inside Germany and make it back to London by way of Paris and Toulouse, mostly on his own.

A couple years ago, Member Howard DeMallie recorded his memoirs in *Beyond the Dikes*. The book was published last summer by Dry Bones Press as the lead title in a series called *Your Family, Our History*.

The book, considered a tribute to Howard's Dutch helpers, is available in book stores in the U.S. and Canada. The book with photos of some of his helpers

was part of the display at the Regis University WWII archives display. (See Page 19, Winter *Communications*).

Bob Horsley, editor of the Royal Australian Escaping Society newsletter, reports that the group is now down to 86 members Australia-wide, and is considering folding up in a year or so.

Just another reminder that Father Time is claiming our generation.

If you saw the movie *U-571*, you may have noticed how Americans cracked the German Enigma code. Historians agree that the Hollywood version was fantasy; honor for the achievement goes to British team at Bletchley Park.

If you are interested in the French version of GLORY SKY, the poem by Armand Rot on the front page of the Winter issue, let me know.

ON A PERSONAL NOTE: My special thanks to Sofia Jones, now a librarian in Palm Desert, Calif., who did a beautiful job of translating the story that begins on Page 26. Her knowledge of the Serb language and customs was invaluable; for her helping hand I have promised her a drink (perhaps lemonade) on the Alaska cruise.

## YOU BEAT THE ODDS!

While completing the required tour of 25 to 50 missions in WW deuce, the chances of you being killed were 71 percent. That's according to "Amazing Facts from WWII," quoted recently in the 483rd BG newsletter.

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