

THE AIR FORCES ESCAPE & EVASION SOCIETY
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March 6, 2008

65 years on, wartime
fighter is discovered
in its seaside grave



From the London Daily Mail
Thursday, Nov. 25, 2007
(Contributed by Gwen Holt)

For 65 years, this Second World War fighter had lain hidden under the surface of a beach where it crash-landed. But now the P-38 Lightning has re-emerged after freak weather conditions caused the sands to shift and expose its rusting frame.

The U.S. aircraft -- with its distinctive twin boom design -- was discovered on the North Wales coast, but the location is being kept secret in case it is targeted by looters. Its remains were spotted by a family in July.

The Lightning has been identified using its serial number and other records. It was built in 1941 and reached Britain in 1942 before flying combat missions along the Dutch-Belgian coast. It was flown by 2nd Lt. Robert F. "Fred" Elliott, 24, from North Carolina.

During a gunnery practice mission on Sept. 27, 1942, a fuel supply problem forced him to make an emergency landing on the Welsh beach. His belly landing in shallow water sheared off a wingtip, but he escaped unhurt. Unfortunately, less than three months later, the veteran of more than 10 combat missions was shot down over Tunisia. His plane and body were never found.

His nephew, Robert Elliott, 64, of Blountville, Tenn., has spent nearly 30 years trying to learn more about his uncle's career. "This is just a monumental discovery and a very emotional thing," said Mr. Elliott, who hopes to be present for the recovery. Ric Gillespie, who heads the International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery, is leading the mission to recover the P-38.

The recovery group plans to collaborate with British museum experts in recovering the nearly intact but fragile aircraft in the spring.

U.S. AIR FORCES ESCAPE & EVASION SOCIETY
COMMUNICATIONS

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

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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.

The Prez Sez

By Richard M. Smith

<afeesone@hotmail.com>

The younger folk must carry on the heritage

Good day from bright and sunny Southern California, where Margaret and I escape to to avoid the Minnesota winter.

I've been writing these PREZ SEZ columns for several years, but this is the most difficult one I have had to write.

There is a movement among the Board of Directors (including me) to fold the AFEES flag and present it to the Air Forces Museum when we meet in Dayton in 2009.

Several members of the board are getting older, stressed out, or just tired. They want to retire!

A few members would like to have the second and third generations take over the society. I am all in favor of that.

It seems to me that if they take over, they should change the name, elect their board of directors and raise their own funds.

I encourage all AFEES members to give this matter serious consideration and those who can, come to the Savannah reunion and express their views on the matter. Those who cannot make the trip should contact a board member.

It is imperative that all of you should make your opinions known.

Good Luck to all!

---DICK SMITH, President

A 'Call to Arms'

By **CLAYTON DAVID**
Membership Chair
Hannibal, Mo.

It is becoming apparent that age is catching up with the original cadre of AFEES members. Some members believe this that means folding our flag and quitting after the 2009 reunion in Dayton, Ohio.

However, there is a strong feeling to continue, with Friends and members of the second and third generations carrying much of the workload for reunions and other activities.

With the contacts and friendships that have been developed in the U.S. and abroad, a unique rapport exists in AFEES, much different than that which exists among bomber and fighter groups that are setting final dates.

Let us encourage the younger group who have the stamina, the ability and the desire to carry on to attend the Savannah reunion to meet and help create an organization that can extend the heritage of AFEES.

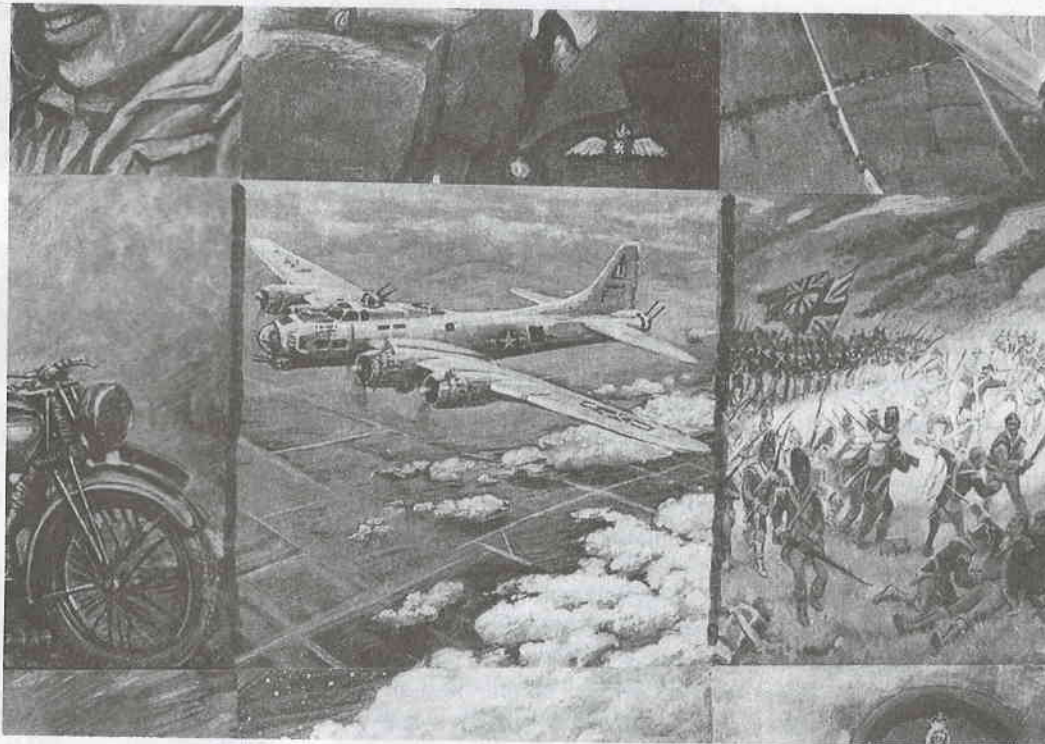
The future belongs to the young and they should have a strong voice in planning for it.

Northrop wins bid for KC-45 tanker

WASHINGTON (AFPN) -- Secretary of the Air Force Michael W. Wynne and Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force General Duncan J. McNabb announced the selection of Northrop Grumman as the winner of the KC-X competition for development and procurement of up to 179 tanker aircraft for approximately \$35 billion.

The initial contract for the newly named KC-45 is for the system design and development of four test aircraft for \$1.5 billion. This contract also includes five production options targeted for 64 aircraft at \$10.6 billion.

"The tanker is the number one procurement priority for us right now," General McNabb said. "Buying the new KC-45A is a major step forward and another demonstration of our commitment."



This is part of a mural that covers a full wall in the Bank of Montreal in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. It is 12 feet high and 22 feet long. It includes 264 12x12-inch hand-painted pictures relative to Canada's participation in wars in Canadian history. Members of AFEES can relate to four of the blocks. One is a B-17, one shows a wounded evader being searched by a German soldier. One depicts men jumping out of a plane, and one is a B-17 with Destiny's Tot in nose art. Plans are for the mural to travel to several Canadian cities.

Paris to the border. . .

The devious French Underground

2nd Lt. Bertram R. Theiss (E&E # 218), 92nd BG bombardier, went down north of Paris on his seventh mission, Sept. 3, 1943.

He has written a 30-page account of his experiences, revised by his son, Thomas of Independence, Mo. This is part of the story.

By **BERTRAM R. THEISS**
Camillus, N.Y.

I landed in a plowed field with French farmers. They told me that I was knocked out but I thought I was up immediately. Finally, I got through to them that I was American and tried to get them to hide me. They didn't speak English and I couldn't remember any high school French.

In desperation, I removed one of my flying boots and threw it under a pile of hay. They responded "Cache" and I asked them to *cache moi* (hide me).

I found out that the Germans were about 5 km. away. They told me to hide in a patch of woods about a quarter mile away. I pulled off my parachute harness, Mae West and boots and asked them "cache them" which they did, along with my parachute.

When I got to the woods, I got to the highest point where I could see what happened, plus I could see where over the hill another patch of woods that I could move to unobserved if they came toward me to search the woods.

Three truckloads of German soldiers soon arrived and talked to the farmers and milled around for about an hour. The people were working the fields and said no flier had come down there and finally the Germans left.

That afternoon a Polish boy entered the woods with some food and wine and made me understand that I was to stay there and someone would get me at dark. Jon Van Ness

came over for me about dusk and brought me to his father's barn.

Jon spoke English and I soon met his father Corne Van Ness, who asked me several questions including where in America I lived. When I told him Auburn, New York, he asked what industry they had there.

When I told him, he was satisfied with who I was and asked him if I knew this man. It was my co-pilot Andy McQueen (E&E 249) who he had picked up earlier. It was great to see each other alive and well.

After dark, Jon took Andy and me to a barn in a near-by village with a hayloft and under the loft, a bunch of chickens. We slept in the hay with the mice and in morning about 9 o'clock we heard a roll of drums. A German soldier read a proclamation to the townspeople about how much money they would get if they turned in the hiding Allied fliers and how many bullets they would get if they were caught hiding any airmen. This happened every morning.

After dark each night, the people in this small town (St. Mesmes) would bring us into one of the houses, feed us, plus wine of course, and question us through a French young man or John Van Ness; both spoke English.

It was back to the hayloft to sleep. This went on for a few days and then one night Jon Van Ness told us to say goodbye to the people and after the women wiped their tears and kissed us goodbye, he took us around the outside of town and back into another house. People thought we had left but we were in a new place in the same town. The move was for security, as too many people knew we were in the barn.

About a week later McQueen and I were taken by car to a house in Livery Du Gargan, a Paris suburb.

We met our T/Sgt. Eugene Cassidy there and stayed with Mr. Nicoli (Nicholas Camille of 19 Rue



LT. BERTRAM R. THEISS
(1943 Photo)

Meaux.) An Englishman named Ernest Greenway stopped by most evenings and acted as interpreter for us, although I was picking up some French.

While we were at Nicoli's, a few interesting things happened. Free French fliers from England bombed an electric plant near Paris one afternoon. They flew right over the village at roof-top height. Immediately the street was flooded with French villagers dancing with joy as the planes flew so low that you could see Free French insignia on the planes and the fliers waving at them.

While we there, Nicoli would take us one at a time for exercise, bicycle around to his friends' houses. We were supposed to be deaf and dumb and being cousins from south France. At these excursions, after a few drinks, Nicoli would reveal that we were American fliers and they would all want to know when the invasion was coming -- as if we knew! Then they would bring out the good wine.

One afternoon we went to an apartment and I learned that one of the men at the table was a wheel in the underground. He asked me if I

wanted to leave the country, starting that evening. I told him yes.

He made new identity cards and ration books

After the goodbyes, this man took me and an English flyer to the train in Paris. We boarded with two women - school teachers -- and we were off to southern France.

We all sat in a crowded long compartment. We were supposed to be students going down to Vichy, France. I learned later that about a dozen others were on this train in third class since they were not dressed as nicely as the Englishman and myself.

I also learned that a few on the train were in handcuffs as political prisoners being returned to Vichy. Oh, the devious French Underground!

At the Vichy border, the train was stopped and we were required to show ID cards to a German officer. I was leaning against the window as though asleep and a woman shook me and showed her card. I reached into my jacket pocket and handed it to the German officer and acted bored and anxious to get back to sleep. After looking at it and me, he handed it back and I resumed my sleep position.

We arrived at Toulouse about 9 a.m. and had a few hairy moments. No one was there to meet us and so we strung out behind the women and walked the length of the terminal. Two of the black coats (Gestapo) watched us but didn't stop us.

One of the women finally made a phone call and two cars came to pick us up and took us to a small cafe where we had coffee.

At the hotel that night, the man in charge showed up and checked us out. I found out his wife was one of the two women (the teachers) who had brought us here. He told me because of my clothing, I would have to spend an extra day at Lourdes and go by a shorter and more dangerous route than the rest of the group.

Next day the two women took us to the shrine for a few hours. I made one of my most stupid blunders at the

cave at Lourdes. As I knelt for the priest's blessing, I said, "Thank You, Father" in English. He leaned over me and whispered in English, "Good Luck Yank."

Next day they took me to a cafe for breakfast and to meet a group of students -- Dutch, Belgian and French -- with whom I would leave. Later that day, we piled into an old charcoal-burning car and stopped in a Basque cafe. We had some food and then were on our way to a farm in the foothills of the Pyrenees Mountains,

Slept in the hay of a barn overnight. We had early bread and coffee and began walking up the mountains about 5 a.m. On the way to the farm, every hill we came to, we to pile out of the car and push it up over the crest of the hill.

The mountains in front of us were huge but we figured once to the top, it would be easy. What a shock!

When we reached the top, another one just as big loomed ahead of us. Frails were quite open and up and down, so it seemed we would never get to the summit.

We walked until dark as it got increasingly colder. We ran into a violent thunderstorm near the top of a mountain. Pouring cold rain with a little sleet mixed in it. By daylight we were at the summit and the sun came out which helped our spirits.

As we walked among huge boulders, many had cup-shaped holes worn in them which were filled with ice-cold water. We wasted no time in drinking our fill.

We finally crossed into Spain about 3 p.m. as the guides pointed out the border markers. We did not linger, as the guides explained that Spanish border guards would march you back across the border to Germans for a carton of cigarettes. About 7 p.m. we reached a farm house in Spain. We were fed and then slept in a barn.

Next morning, we were bussed to Pamplona and put in jail. The Dutch Consul arrived and told me he would contact the American Consol. That afternoon we were taken to Lecumberri to a "Concentration Camp." It was a nice hotel for illegal

aliens and across the street was a civilian hotel.

Our guards were two Cambineri, who let us walk down the street to a bakery or across to the civilian hotel where we could get hot chocolate, coffee and other goodies.

Many times we sat there and saw German staff cars, followed by British staff cars, followed by American staff cars. All of them would come in to the hotel and sit at different tables for drinks. Really weird!

From Lecumberri we were taken to Madrid and put up in a decent hotel for a couple days. We were free to roam the city but had to be back at the hotel every evening.

After a few days in Madrid, the American military attache took us to the train station. He slipped the conductor a couple cartons of cigarettes and the conductor went into the train and kicked several Spanish soldiers out of their compartment and seated us there instead.

The car was full of the Spanish Blue Division, who were just back from the Russian Front.

Needless to say, they did not like us! They were very upset, plus getting kicked out of their seats didn't help.

Capt. Chuck Bennett, (the officer in charge of us on the train) had sense enough to grab one of the non-coms who spoke a little English and showed him our orders. They said that we were traveling under protection of the General of the Spanish Air Force. Chuck explained that should anything happen to us, they would be in big trouble.

Then Chuck told us to bring out the cigarettes, the food, the wine and "convert" them -- admire their medals and so on.

Chuck told them we were all fighter pilots, which they seemed to respect. By morning, we were all war-time buddies.

We ended up in Gibraltar and then were flown back to England. I made a lecture tour at some bomber and fighter bases before flying back to the States.



At this holiday season
we send our best wishes
for peace and joy
throughout the year

FROM THE MEMBERS
OF THE
AIR FORCES ESCAPE & EVASION SOCIETY

WE WILL NEVER FORGET
NOUS N'OUBLIERONS JAMAIS
VI VIL ALDRIG GLEMME!
WY ZULLEN NOOIT VERGETEN
NOI NON DIMENTICHEREMO MAI

Patton

Richard M. Smith
Francis J. Tashinsky
Yvonne Helen Rousseau

Manon Wyland
Clayton L. David

Paul H. Smith

Shirley

Sandy Comstock Jerry Decker

Richard Smith
A. Kay Kubly

Sueley Patton Ward

Larry Hummel

Again, AFEES friends respond to annual cards

Following a tradition established many years ago, year-end greeting card folders went out from AFEES President Richard Smith in early December to several hundred helpers and friends in many nations.

The cards are intended to cement the eternal bond that exists between Helpers and those they saved from capture by the enemy -- or worse.

Our message remains:

WE WILL NEVER FORGET!

To add a personal touch, the cards again were signed by members of the Board of Directors.

Many of those receiving the messages were courteous enough to reciprocate and in many cases, took the time to include a personal message expressing best wishes to members of our society.

Those who had responded by the time this issue went to press included:

FROM AUSTRALIA: Ivanko Benko

CANADA: Mrs. Agnes N. Frisque

GERMANY: Dr. Milan Buros

UNITED KINGDOM: Gwen Holt

BELGIUM: Lilia Anne De Bont, Camille Bernier-Brasseur, M. et Mme Raoul Steyaert-Broekaert, M. Rik Craeghs, Mme Janine De Greff, Mme Andree Antoine-Dumont, M. Jacques P. Grandjean, Mme Emile Boucher-Vander Grggen, Mme Anne Marie Guilbert, Raymond Itterbeek, Jean and Nelly Lamond-Guillaume, Mme Monique Thome-Hanotte, Mme Simmonne Decort-Hellbois, Roger A. Jamblin, Edgar Keesemaeker, Roberti Lintermans, M and Mme L. Vienne-Roiseux, Mme Germaine Sainvitu, M. Victor Schutters, Mme Amanda Desir-Stassard, Mr. Jacques De Vos, M. Andre Yernaut

FRANCE: Mr. Emile Adam, Michele Agniel, M. and Mrs. Francis Andre, M. Roger Anthoine, M.

and Mme Jean Arhex, Renee Atkinson and Family, Mr. Andre Aubon, M. Christian Babled, Mme Loulon Balfet, Mme Josette Baudinot, M. Jean Pierre Benier, Mme Rosa Bertrand, Mme Andree Besse, M. Louis Blanchard, M. Paul Boe, M. Robert Boher, Mme Genevieve Rozie LeBourhis, Mme Max DeBroissia, Mme Georges Brest, Jacqueline T. Briand, Mme Liliane Brochet, Yves and Anne Carnot, Mme Janine Carter, Mme Odeette Chaput, M. Rene Charpentier;

ALSO, Gilbert and Huguette Combrez, M. Maurice Costa, M. Marcel Closset, M. Louis Coum, M. Andre Couture, Mme Paulette Declerco, M. Jean Dedit, M. Jean Delery, Mme Orlette Salingue Deslee, Mme Anna Diez, M. and Mme. Michael Diot, M. Raymond Durvin, M. Jacques Flahou, M. Claude Fontaine, M. Andre Formici, M. Albert Gloaguen, M. Jean Louis Gourcuff, M. Scott Goodall, Mme. Andree Gros, Mme Rosemary Grady, Mme Marie Gicquel, Mme Pierre Guillerme, M. George Guillon, M. Jean Hallade, Mme Denise Heches, Melle Denise Lenoin, Mme Paulette Jauneau, M. Georges Jacob

AND, Mme Jacques Lavandier, M. Paul LeBot, M. and Mme Robert Lapeyre, M. Louis Ledanois, Mme Helene Lefevre, M. Ernet LeRoy, Mme Odile LeRoy, Mme Jacqueline LeRoy, M. and Mme Rene Loiseau, Mme. Jeanne Mansion, Mme Mary Jo Martizez, M. Jean Marie Moet, M. Pierre Montaz, M. Emile Monvoisin, Mme Yvette Moreau, Mme Paulette Le Fevre Pavan, Mme Janette Pennes, The Van-Laere-Pena Families, Mme Florimond Petit, Mme Bertrand Petit, Dr. Alec Prochiantz, Mlle Anne Ropers, Mme Lucienne Saboulard, Mme Adrienne Selas, M. Raymond Servoz, Mme Anne-Marie Soudet, M. Michel Tabarant, M. Paul Thion, M. Andre Turon, Mme Pierre Ugeux, Mme Alice and Raymond Paquelot-Villard, M. Jean Voileau

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Oudkerk, Mr. Albert J. Postma, Family van Rysbergen, Mrs. Yel van der Sande, Mrs. G. C. Slotbloom, Gerard Sonnemans, Anne Utlenberg, Piet van Veen Family, Mrs. M. Teuwen-Vivoes, Mr. Jacques Vrij

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Typical responses:

"The years since the last world war cannot obliterate the memories we have in common with our friendly relations."

---Janine De Greef, Belgium

"Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year from all of us."

--Renee Atkinson and family, France

"We are happy to receive the AFEES bulletin because we see again some persons we have known in Toulouse and Turon that bring back the good moments."

---Paule and Maurice Costa, France

"Thinking of you and crew members who already have passed away. We thank you again." ---Gil Kenkhuis and family, Holland

"Thank you dear friends, for your best wishes. I wish you a very good year. We never forget that the U.S. liberated us!"

---Raymond Itterbeek, Belgium

"How can we forget? It is long over due for me to say THANK YOU a thousand times from the bottom of our hearts. Happy Holidays!"

---Jacqueline Kervizic, France

R&R at Chateau La Fortelle

By JAMES ARMSTRONG
Thomasville, Ga.
384th Bomb Group

After reading about Denise Lenoin, my WWII helper, in the *Summer Communications* (Page 6), I might add a few remembrances about the R&R at the Chateau La Fortelle and the excursion to Carcassone.

In her interview, Denise told of meeting 13 airmen at the Montparnasse station in Paris after a failed maritime mission.

Actually, the number was 10, for I was one of the men returning from Quimper on the first Sunday of November 1943.

I don't remember Denise on that occasion, but Sgt. Robert Sheets and I were hastily dealt off to our new host, Gilbert. He was already caring for two RAF airmen.

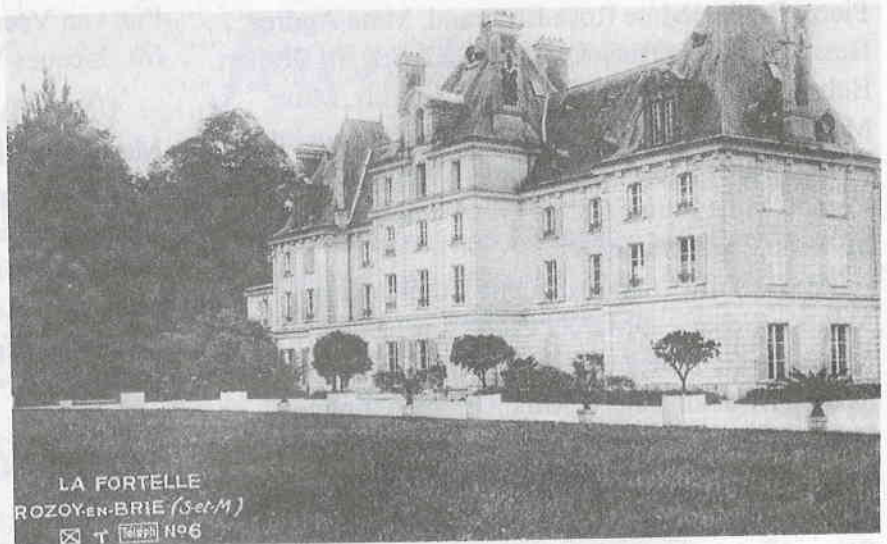
In the latter part of November, Gilbert took us to the Metro, where we met two women (one was Denise) who escorted us by train to the town of Morles-en-Brie, where we disembarked and began walking an unpaved country road. After several hours we arrived at the Chateau La Fortelle.

For the next 10 days, Sgt. Sheets, Sgt. Gary Hinote, Sgt. William Howell, Lt. Paul McCon-nell, Lt Andrew Lindsay, Lt. John Doughtry (RAF), Max Fidler (RAF), Leslie Woollard and I (nine in all) roamed the 200 acres of the chateau's walled-in grounds, sawing up trees, burning split wood, and eating mainly potatoes and blood sausage.

The time at La Fortelle was preparing us for Pyrenees walk.

After returning to Paris for a week, Denise and Gilbert escorted six of us airmen by train to Southern France. They were Max Fidler, Leslie Woollard, Andrew Lindsay, Edward Sobolewski, Russell Jones (Canadian) and me.

When we stepped off the train in Carcassone, a frightening sight greeted us. A German officer with several armed soldiers was standing at the



LA FORTELLE ROZOY-en-BRIE

... A temporary home for evading airmen

only exit gate busily checking papers of all debarking passengers.

From my viewpoint it was the end of the road. But Gilbert was not about to give in to the enemy.

At the opposite end of the platform he spotted the wign WC and he, without hesitation, made a bee line for the only refuge with six of his following flock. Where was Denise?

Was she at the exit gate causing some delay, waiting for Gilbert to join her after he instructed us to stay in the WC?

Now, after the French newspaper article, and she has come into the light, perhaps answers will come.

Maybe Denise Lenoin will be a guest of AFEES in Savannah this spring!

T-Birds plan to be busy in 2008

NELLIS AIR FORCE BASE, Nev. (AFPN) -- The Air Force Air Demonstration Squadron, the Thunderbirds, has announced its 2008 airshow schedule.

The team is scheduled to perform more than 67 shows in 25 states and Canada, as it commemorates the 55th Anniversary of the "Ambassadors in Blue."

The Thunderbirds will help commemorate another milestone in North America when the team travels to Québec City to perform June 14 and 15, honoring the city's 400th anniversary.

The Thunderbirds, originally known as the 3600th Air Demonstration Unit, out of Luke Air Force Base, Ariz., were

activated May 25, 1953.

The Air Force Air Demonstration Squadron is an Air Combat Command unit composed of eight pilots (including six demonstration pilots), four support officers, four civilians and about 110 enlisted people performing in more than 29 Air Force specialties.

A Thunderbirds' aerial demonstration is a mix of formation flying and solo routines. The pilots perform approximately 40 maneuvers in a demonstration. The entire show, including ground and air, runs about one hour. The airshow season lasts from March to November, with the winter months used to train new members.

The 2008 schedule:

March

15 -- San Angelo, Texas
29 -- Tyndall AFB, Fla.

April

5 and 6 -- Punta Gorda, Fla.
12 and 13 -- Lakeland, Fla.
19 and 20 -- Wilmington, N.C.
26 -- Charleston AFB, S.C.

May

3 and 4 -- March ARB, Calif.
10 and 11 -- Langley AFB, Va.
17 and 18 -- Fort Smith, Ark.
24 -- Tinker AFB, Okla.
28 -- U.S. Air Force Academy, Colo.
(Invitation only)
31 -- McGuire AFB, N.J.

June

1 -- McGuire AFB, N.J.
7 and 8 -- Rockford, Ill.
14 and 15 -- Québec City
21 -- Klamath Falls, Ore.
24 -- Eielson AFB, Alaska
28 and 29 -- Elmendorf AFB, Alaska

July

4 and 6 -- Battle Creek, Mich.
12 and 13 -- Milwaukee, Wis.
19 and 20 -- McChord AFB, Wash.
23 -- Cheyenne, Wyo.
26 and 27 -- Rochester, N.Y.

August

8 and 10 -- Abbotsford, Canada
16 and 17 -- Offutt AFB, Neb.
20 -- Atlantic City, N.J.
23 and 24 -- Kansas City, Mo.
30 and 31 -- Travis AFB, Calif.

September

6 and 7 -- Westover ARB, Mass.
12 and 13 -- Reno, Nev.
14 -- Mountain Home AFB, Idaho
20 and 21 -- Scott AFB, Ill
27 and 28 -- Salinas, Calif.

October

4 -- Vance AFB, Okla.
11 and 12 -- Fort Worth, Texas
18 and 19 -- Dobbins AFB, Ga.
25 and 26 -- Houston

November

1 and 2 -- Lafayette, La.
8 and 9 -- Nellis AFB, Nev.



Dogtag recovered near crash site

A 493rd Bomb Group B-24 crashed on Aug. 18, 1944, near the town of Boussicourt, France. Now citizens of the area are planning an exhibition for the crew.

The identification tag of Felix J. Shostak, a gunner, and a ring bearing the name "PROCTOR." have been recovered. The group would like to contact any family members of the KIA airmen to pass along the items.

Norman Grant, the only survivor of the crew, was present in 2001 for inauguration of the monument in memory of the B-24 crew.

Anyone with helpful information is asked to contact: M Michel DECELLE, 10, rue de l'église, 80 110 BRACHES, France

Early report on funding appeal

The response to this years appeal for donations to defray the expenses, of eligible Helpers who will attend our reunion, has been the typical AFEES response to past raffles, but even more generous and at the fastest response rate ever.

In only three weeks, I've had 225 responses, out of 665, (34%) with an average per person donation of \$ 26.00.

Last year there were 366 total donations that averaged \$ 20.47 per person.

THERE IS NO PLAN FOR AN APPEAL NEXT YEAR

It is anticipated that the response from this years appeal combined with deposits on hand will cover Helpers expenses for 2008 and 2009 reunions, and also cover newsletter expenses through that period, and somewhat beyond.

Preliminary registration responses show that more people, and Helpers plan to attend, than have in the past few years. This was anticipated before the appeal was mailed.

If you have not sent in your donation, and only one which you can afford, keep the above in mind, and reply soon.

Thank you
Frank Lashinsky on behalf of AFEES

N° 829 État : A
 Préfecture de la Somme

Empreinte digitale :

Signature du Titulaire : P Petit

CARTE D'IDENTITÉ

Nom : Petit
 Prénoms : Robert
 Marcel
 Né le 20 juin 1924
 à Guisnes
 Département
 de la Somme
 Domicile :
 Conde-Polie

Conde-Polie le 2 - 2 - 1944
 Le Prefet, Maize

SIGNALEMENT :

Taille : 1,70 m
 Cheveux : châtains
 Moustache : " "
 Yeux : gris
 Signes particuliers : " "

Sexe : masculin
 Couleur des yeux : bruns
 Couleur des cheveux : bruns
 Couleur de la peau : brune
 Couleur des yeux : bruns
 Couleur des cheveux : bruns
 Couleur de la peau : brune

MARIE DE CONDE-POLIE
 REPUBLIQUE
 FRANÇAISE
 (SOMME)

Robert treated 'like royalty'

By **ROBERT K. SCHOONMAKER**
 Green Valley, Ariz.
 E&E # 2112; 322 Bomb Grp.

We were the next-to-last plane on the July 8, 1944, night mission to Abbeville. Going in to the coast of France, we could see other planes ahead of us being picked up by searchlights.

I was flying co-pilot for Lt. Gallien so I had plenty of time to look around and worry. We were picked up by the searchlights soon after we got over France and we were never able to get away from them.

When the German night fighters started coming in from the rear, I could see their tracers flying past my shoulder and out thru the front of the plane -- I was mighty glad I had some armour plate behind me.

We dropped our bombs on what we thought was the target, but there

were so many fires on the ground we couldn't be sure which were the target indicators.

Leaving the target, we turned right instead of left and headed into France. Jerry made another pass at us, shooting out the right engine and radio and starting a fire in the navigator's compartment. S/Sgt Marson, our bombardier, then bailed out and I went back and found that our navigator, Lt. Robertson, had been killed.

I still thought we could make it home as I went back to help Gallien, but just then they hit us again and this time both Gallien and I were hit so I told him to come back and we bailed out the bomb bay.

After my 'chute opened, I thought I'd never float down to the ground, but when I hit I felt like a ton of bricks -- and luckily it was in a freshly plowed field. I buried my

chute and crawled into a hedgerow and slept until morning.

Next morning I saw a couple of Frenchmen working in the next field so I took a chance and went over to them and told them who I was. They were on our side and rushed me into their home, gave me some civilian clothes to wear, and fixed me up in pretty good shape.

I went down on July 8 and Earl Seagars (E&E #2224) of the 387th BG, was shot down about a month later near the town of Conde-Polie, where I was in hiding.

Earl was brought to the home of Richard LeRoy, where I was staying. I could speak French; Earl could not. It took me about half an hour to convince Earl that I was not a Gestapo agent trying to get information about Allied post-invasion plans.

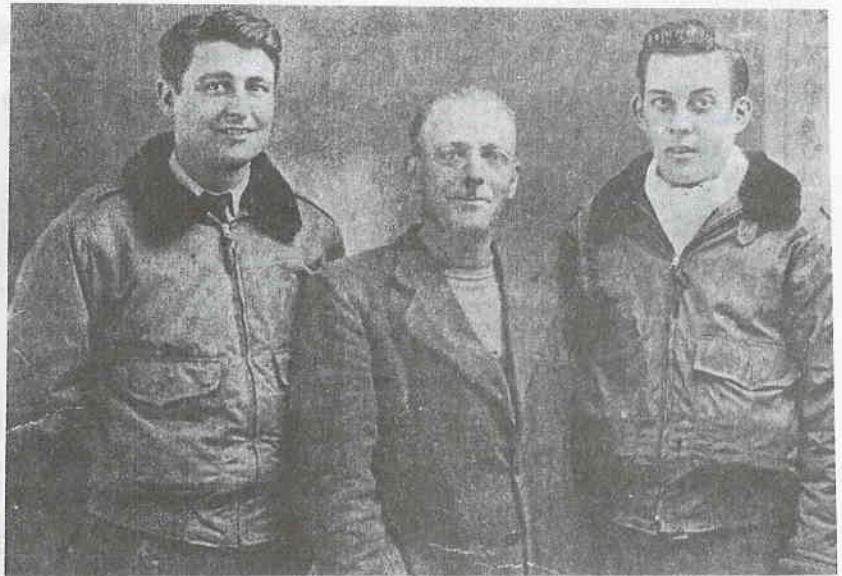
Until we were liberated Earl lived

with the Ayroulet family who lived at the other end of Conde-Polie where I was living with Richard and Andrea LeRoy.

The Underground moved me around to three different places in the couple of months I was with them and generally treated me as if I were visiting royalty. I had a couple of close calls -- once they got me out of the house just before the Gestapo arrived and several times some German soldiers dropped in at mealtime looking for a handout while I was trying to appear nonchalant.

The British finally liberated us in September 1944, and for a few days we did an awful lot of celebrating. Soon the RAF flew me down to Paris where I got in touch with our Intelligence outfit.

Since our rescue and protection by the French citizens, we have kept in contact with them over the years.



There were many French people who risked their lives and more to aid Allied airmen. Shown here, from left, 2nd Lt. Earl Seagars, 558th Bomb Sqd., Helper Richard LeRoy, and 1st Lt. Robert Schoonmaker, 451st Bomb Sqd.

POW liberated by General Patton

**By GEORGE DREW
Tampa, Fla.
(Ex-Prisoner of War)**

I was a B-24 pilot with the 464th BG, based at Pantanella, Italy.

On Aug. 24, 1944, our target was the oil fields in Bleckhammer. Before reaching the target, we lost an engine due to mechanical problems. Flying with three engines as we approached the Yugoslav coastline, our #4 engine blew and caught fire. I ordered the crew to bail out.

I jumped about 300 feet from the top of a mountain. After my chute opened, I hit the ground, injuring my back and both ankles. I crawled down the mountain and attempted to hide near a farm house. But the farmer saw me and informed the Germans.

For several days the Germans kept me and eight members of my crew in a building with no windows and rough floors.

After several days we were taken to Mostgar, Yugoslavia, where we spent two weeks.

From Vienna, we went to Frankfurt and Wetzler. From Wetzler we were

placed in boxcars with other POWs and taken to Stalag Luft III at Sagan. We were marched to Spremberg the night of Jan. 29, 1945, when the Germans began retreating from the Russians.

After six weeks in Nuremberg, they marched us out for Stalag VIIA at Moosberg. We were escorted by some old German soldiers who were not very interested in guarding us.

We began heading toward Moosberg. We arrived at Stalag VIIA 17 days later. The barracks at the camp were full and we were assigned to a large tent with American, Italian, and Russian POWs. We slept on the ground on a pile of hay. In the morning and evening we were assembled for a headcount. The rest of the time we simply wandered around.

After a month at Moosberg, we saw a US Army major dressed in a clean Class A uniform. We were filthy and wondered how he managed to be so well groomed. We found out later that the major had been sent by the US Army to negotiate an "open city camp".

At about 9 o'clock that evening, word spread around to take cover in the slit trenches because American forces were coming at dawn.

The following morning at daylight, American P-51s flew over and strafed everything that moved.

Later that morning (April 29, 1945), General Patton and the 14th Armored Division rolled up to the front gate. The remaining Germans surrendered and Patton ordered his tanks to roll up the barbed wire. Thousands of men were crying, laughing and howling. A big "6x6" truck rolled in and soldiers threw out sacks of white bread like chicken feed as it drove along. The bread tasted like Angel Food cake.

After about a week the Army arrived with 6x6 trucks and took us to an old German air base in Landshut. C47's would fly in loaded with fuel for Patton's tanks. We unloaded the fuel, put empty cans back in the plane and sat on them while we flew to Camp Lucky Strike in Rheims, France.

At Rheims, we had our first hot bath and decent food in a long time.

Interviews with evaders added to museum oral history file

By VIVIAN ROGERS-PRICE
Museum Curator/Historian
Mighty Eighth AF Museum
Savannah, Ga.



MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE MUSEUM

The oral history collection at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum has received a major donation from the Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society. A set of 16 DVDs with nearly 100 interviews were presented to the museum by members of AFEES.

These interviews provide an introduction to the World War II resistance movement that aided British, Canadian and American fliers who went down over Nazi territory.

The "helpers," as those who hid and transported Allied fliers were called, knew that if they were caught by the Germans, the penalty could be death.

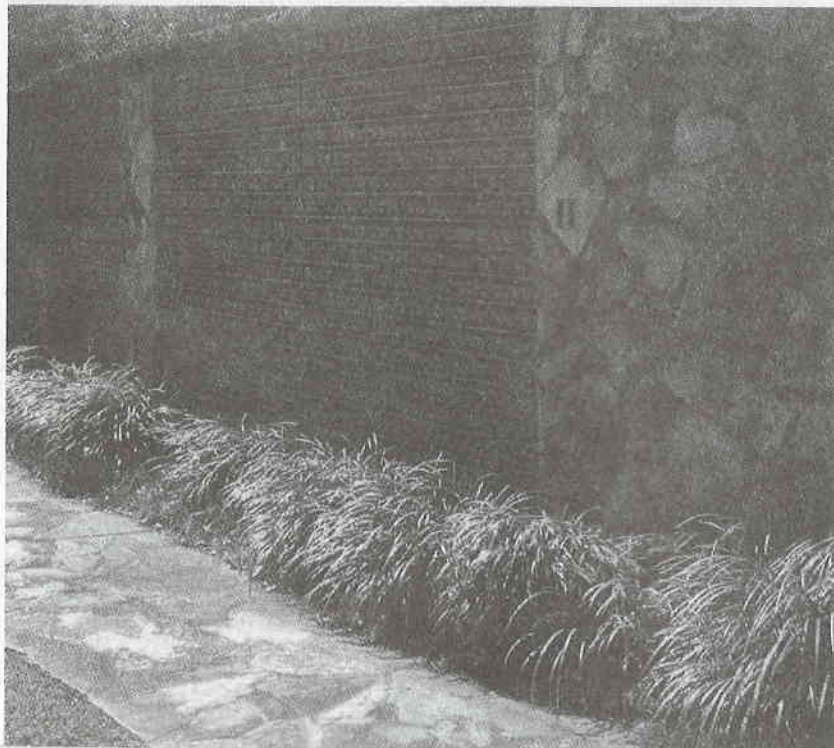
Otto N. (Cappy) Bie interviewed numerous airmen who had been forced down behind German lines during the war, as well as their helpers who risked their lives and the families' lives to assist these fliers evade. Cappy recorded these interviews at five different AFEES reunions.

He spoke with fliers from Britain, Canada and the United States, including many from the 8th Air Force.

Of special interest are his interviews with the helpers including Billy Webb, who was a coxman with the Royal Navy, Peter Hakim, Yvonne-Daley Brusselmans and Rosalie Schantz from Belgium, Ann Feith, Frederick Gransberg and George Van Remmerden from the Netherlands, Marguerite Brouard-Fraser from France, and Milan Buros, who commanded 100 Slovakian Partisans.

A highlight is Ralph K. Patton explaining how he started the Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society in the United States in 1964 in order to encourage airmen assisted by resistance organizations or patriotic individuals opposed to German occupation to continue friendship with those who had helped them evade.

Not only a memory . . .



Wall of Valor in Memorial Gardens at 8th AF Museum

A standing tribute to the men and women who served with the Mighty Eighth

The Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum's Wall of Valor stands as a tribute to the men and women of the Eighth Air Force.

These walls celebrate their courage and sacrifice for generations to come. *It is not difficult to imagine the pride felt by families and friends as they read and touch Wall of Valor plaques honoring their loved one, and to recall their heroic deeds.*

The Wall of Valor is visited by thousands of museum visitors each year, reminding them of the extraordinary service of the members of the Eighth Air Force. Every rank or service of Eighth Air Force veteran is accorded equal status on the Wall of Valor.

The Wall of Valor is similar to the Memorial Wall found in the American Cemetery in Cambridge, England. Its numbered sections frame the Memorial Gardens with plaques visible from almost every angle. The individual 4" x 12" polished stone plaques bear the veteran's name, rank and serial number.

For more information on the Wall, contact Peggy Harden at 912-748-8888, ext. 103.

B-2 pilots take survival training at base in Guam

ANDERSEN AIR FORCE BASE, Guam (AFPN) -- B-2 Spirit pilots from the 393rd Expeditionary Bomb Squadron deployed to Guam to practice their flying skills, but they also trained how to survive on the ground at Northwest Field, Guam.

For more than 10 hours, pilots and other 393rd EBS members were taught proper survival, evasion, resistance and escape techniques in the jungle including how to build a fire, find food, water and shelter, use a Global Positioning System, and radio procedures.

Staff Sgt. Brooks Steinbacher, a SERE specialist from Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., came to Andersen AFB to recertifying 12 members of the 393rd EBS.

"The pilots are required to retrain in SERE triennially," Sergeant Steinbacher said. "Because of the nature of their job, they may encounter various terrains and climates and should be prepared survive and evade the enemy. One of the biggest challenges is the wet environment in the jungle. It makes doing things like, building a fire in the jungle, hard because it's difficult to find dry wood."

After spending an entire duty day in the jungle on Andersen AFB, the SERE trainees returned to Northwest Field around 7 p.m. to participate in a joint search, rescue and medical evacuation exercise with the Navy's Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron.

393rd EBS members waited in groups of four in Northwest Field, as if they were injured in a war zone, for a helicopter.

"Participating in the night helicopter training rescue recoveries with HSC-25 was a great experience because we were able to practice our recovery procedures in a real-world environment," said Maj. Geoffrey Romanowicz, the 393rd EBS chief of weapons and tactics.



**Savannah / Pooler
1-95 & Exit 102**

Contact: Image Hotel Group
Susan Steinhauser, DOSM
(912) 330-5092
Susan@savannahholidayinn.com
www.savannahholidayinn.com



**A New Generation of Holiday Inn's
Holiday Inn's 2006 National Newcomers Award Recipient**

**Savannah, one more time!
*Thursday-Sunday, April 24-27; be there!***

Reunion Schedule

(Events and Times Subject to Change)

Daily schedules will be posted

Wednesday, April 23

Hospitality Suite open, 1300 hrs.

Thursday, April 24

Registration Opens
Hospitality Suite Open
Escorted tour of Savannah (Optional)
(Sign up on Reunion form)
(Return to Hotel, 1600 hrs.)
Reception with cash bar, 1815 hrs.
Welcoming and Helpers' Buffet, 1900 hrs.

Friday, April 25

Registration open until departure
for Museum
Directors' Meeting, 0930 hrs.
Depart for 8th AF Museum, 1045 hrs.

Lunch at Museum, 1200 hrs.

Dedication of AFEES Corner at Museum

Museum Tour, groups of 30, to follow

Return to Hotel, 1530 hrs.

EVENING FREE

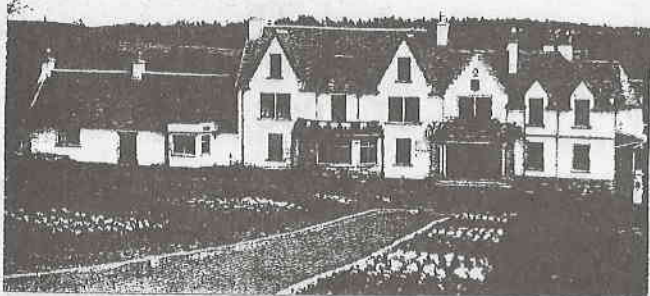
Saturday, April 26

Depart Hotel for Museum, 0845 hrs.
Memorial Service
in Museum Chapel, 0945 hrs.
Return to Hotel, 1100 hrs.
Membership Meeting, 1130 hrs.
(Directors' Meeting to Follow)
Lunch Buffet, Hospitality Suite, 1300 hrs.
Reception with Cash Bar, 1815 hrs.
EVENING: Banquet at Hotel, 1900 hrs.
Dinner Served, 1920 hrs.

Sunday, April 27

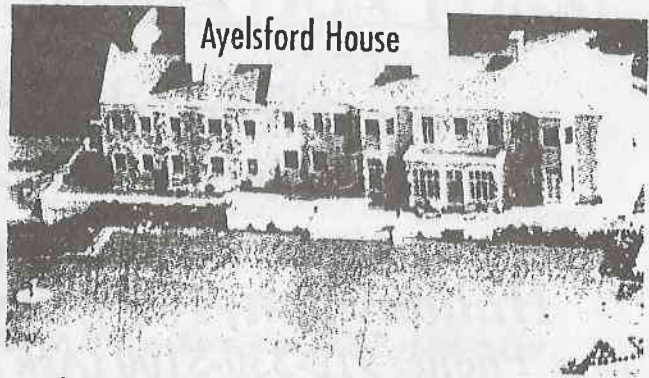
Farewell Buffet Breakfast, 0700 to 0930

Buchanan Arms

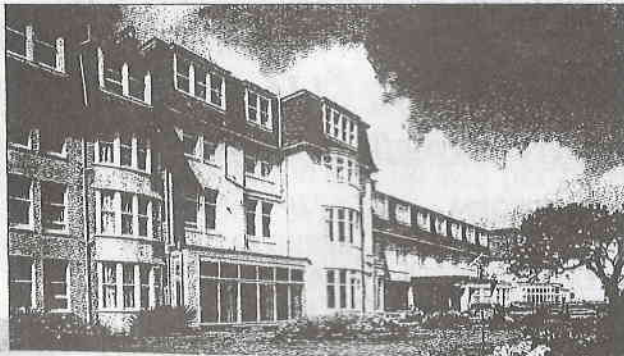


Pre-war view of the Buchanan Arms — note the petrol pumps on the right denoting the former coaching inn's modernisation to accommodate 20th century travellers! An infamous visitor to nearby Buchanan Castle was Hitler's deputy Rudolf Hess. He was held in the Drymen Military Hospital soon after his flight to the UK in 1941, pending medical examination.

Aylesford House

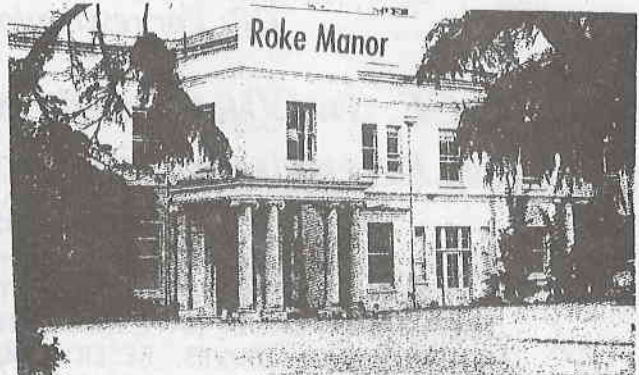


A contemporary aerial view of Aylesford House showing the rear terrace and the extensive lawns. It still remains much the same today.

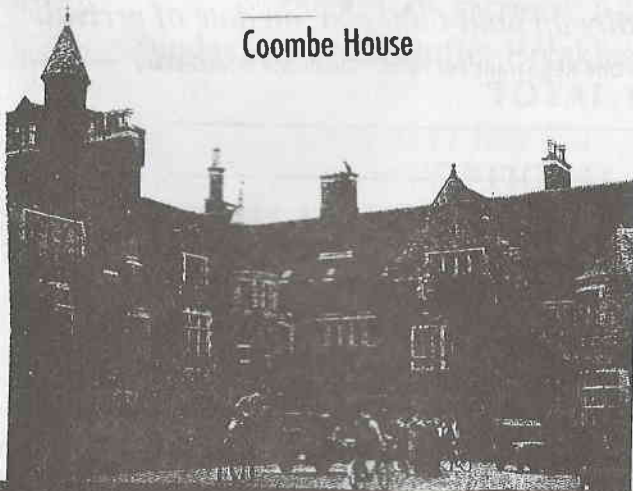


Heathlands Hotel on Grove Road, East Cliff — the former Granville Court.

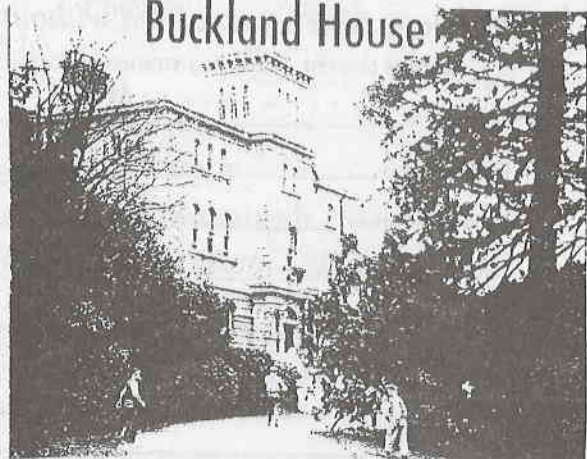
Roke Manor



Coombe House



Buckland House



'FLAK' HOUSES THEN AND NOW
THE STORY OF AMERICAN REST HOMES IN ENGLAND DURING WWII

Editorial office:
THE MEWS, HOBBS CROSS HOUSE,
HOBBS CROSS, OLD HARLOW,
ESSEX CM17 0NN



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HOLIDAY INN SAVANNAH POOLER
HOTEL REGISTRATION FORM

Air Forces Escape & Evasion Society
Thursday-Sunday, April 24-27, 2008

Please complete form and respond by Fax, e-mail, or by mail to

Holiday Inn, 103 San Drive, Pooler GA 31322

Phone: 912-330-5100 (Ask for Katie and mention AFEES)

Fax 912-330-5101; <www.savannahholidayinn.com>

OR: For reservations, call 1-800-HOLIDAY

CHOICE: Two Queen Beds or one King Bed, \$116.39, inclusive
Room Rates apply seven days before and seven days after reunion dates

HOTEL REGISTRATION FORM

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

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

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

Last Name:

First Name:

Mailing Address:

City/State/Zip Code:

Phone:

E-mail:

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

Name on Credit Card:

Expiration Date:

Signature:

AFEES REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

Thursday-Sunday, April 24-27, 2008
Holiday Inn Hotel, 103 San Drive, Pooler GA 31322

Please complete this form and return form with check or money (No credit cards) to arrive not later than April 18. Your check is your receipt.

MEMBERS: Make check payable to AFEES REUNION and mail to:
AFEES, c/o Yvonne Daley, 1962 Brae-Moor Drive, Dunedin, FL 34698-3250

HELPERS ONLY: Send both Hotel Reservation Form and Reunion Reservation Form to:
AFEES, c/o YVONNE DALEY-BRUSSELMANS, 1962 Brae-Moor Drive,
Dunedin FL 34698-3250

Please Indicate Your Choice of Events

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

OPTIONAL REUNION EVENT:

_____ **Thursday Afternoon, Escorted tour of City of Savannah**
(Price to be determined; pay at Registration Table)

For Reunion information, contact Yvonne Daley-Brusselmanns, 1-727-734-9573;
Cell Phone, 727-804-3664; <gadabout127@msn.com>

NOTE: If you have a blue AFEES lanyard from a past reunion, please bring it for use at registration.

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

NAME (please print) _____ Service Unit _____

Spouse's Name _____ Guest's Name _____

Mailing address _____

City, State and Zip Code _____

Planning to DRIVE TO SAVANNAH () OR FLY ()

IMPORTANT: Emergency Contact (Name and Phone Number):

Any Special Needs? _____

Shoe



Beetle Bailey



Young man, if you'll just be patient, I'll teach you a good lesson.
Now where is that mace!



The AFEES Corner is to be dedicated at the Mighty 8th Air Force Museum during the April reunion.

Members of this committee had a major role in making arrangements for the addition to the museum.

From left: Museum CEO Dr. Walt Brown, Kerry Brown, engineer for the corner project; Yvonne Daley, Kevin Brown, Doc's wife Alice, Lt. Gen. Buck Shuler, long-time supporter of the museum, and his wife Annette.



When President George W. Bush visited the Mighty Eighth Museum, he was welcomed by Brenda M. Elmgren, chief administrative officer, and by Ol' Doc Walt Brown, chief executive officer/president of the museum.



**Mighty Eighth
Air Force
Museum**

**175 Bourne St.
Pooler, GA 31322**

**P.O. Box 1992
Savannah, GA 31402**

'Dedee' de Jongh, an escape artist

From The New York Times

By SARA CORBETT

Published: December 30, 2007

In war, it's the men who are obvious.

No more so than when they began falling from the sky over Belgium in the early 1940s. They appeared as black slivers, bodies thrown from burning, quailing, broken planes. As they hurtled earthward, they pulled rip cords, and their silk parachutes exploded.

The Nazis had by then overrun the Low Countries. Allied planes tore through the clouds overhead, coming and going from bombing raids on Germany, dodging antiaircraft fire from below. In four years, hundreds of Allied planes — knowing that they were behind enemy lines, that their fate now lay in their ability to disappear.

A 21-year-old British gunner named Jack Newton sprinted away from his crashed Wellington bomber and hid in a cornfield. What happened to him was what happened to the lucky. Instead of being swept up by German military police and trucked off to a work camp, he was taken in by nervous but kindly Belgians. He was fed, camouflaged in civilian clothes and passed on through a secret network of safe houses established by members of the Belgian Resistance movement. He had no idea, still, how he would ever get home.

Hidden in a house in Brussels with two other rescued airmen midway through 1941, Newton was told of the Comet escape line, a risky new route being used to evacuate Allied soldiers through the heart of occupied Europe — from Belgium to France and then into neutral Spain. It was a journey of more than 600 miles, involving long rides on German-patrolled trains, stealthy border crossings and a grueling nighttime trek over the Pyrenees. Dangerous, yes, but Newton and his compatriots would be personally

escorted by the leader of the Comet line, who was just then coming to meet them.

"Must be quite a guy," remarked one of the airmen, an Australian. "I'll bet he's got some stories to tell."

It was ingrained in them, of course, to think of war as men's work, to measure success by what could be overpowered. Which is why their hearts sank when a wispy young woman strolled into the room.

Andrée de Jongh had dark, fluffy hair, a pert mouth and high-arching eyebrows. She wore a flowered dress and white ankle socks. She was 24 but looked 18, weighing about 100 pounds. She seemed to take up no space at all.

She introduced herself only as Dédée, a nickname. "Our lives," the Australian announced glumly after she'd gone, "depend on a schoolgirl." At breakfast the following day, she advised them that they'd begin their journey together by jumping into the quick-moving Somme River and swimming clandestinely across.

Her implausibility was what made her formidable. When the war started, Dédée de Jongh quit her job as a commercial artist and moved into her parents' house in Brussels. Volunteering with the Belgian Red Cross, she began nursing wounded

Allied soldiers. After her country surrendered to the Nazis in May 1940, after British troops were evacuated and the battle shifted to the air, de Jongh turned her attention to the men who had been shot out of the sky.

Nursing was fine wartime work for women, but in the end, not for her. According to the author Derek Shuff, whose 2003 book "Evader" chronicles Jack Newton's journey out of Belgium, de Jongh found her life to be "tedious." She craved more. "I was very impatient to do something," she would later say. A woman couldn't carry a gun or fly a bomber jet, but she could walk unnoticed, striding down a street in a wool coat and sensible shoes as if on her way to the market or a typist's job, trailed quietly by two or three wayward soldiers in disguise.

She found them places to stay and led them there. But safe houses were temporary and only marginally safe. She became fixated on getting them home. She pressed friends and relatives to give money, food, shelter, to forge ID papers for escaping soldiers.

In August 1941, she made a trial run. With the grudging help of a Basque guide, who insisted she at least change out of her skirt and into a



In 1972, Andree de Jongh was working in a hospital in Ethiopia

pair of borrowed trousers, de Jongh climbed a smugglers' route over the Pyrenees and into Spain with two Belgians and a Scottish soldier in tow. Arriving at the British consulate in Bilbao, she was greeted with skepticism. *You've done what?*

Within weeks, de Jongh delivered two more Scottish soldiers to officials in San Sebastián. Not long after, she arrived from Brussels with a group of 11 escaping civilians — 10 Belgian men and a portly fleeing Englishwoman in a Panama hat, whom de Jongh had pushed across the Somme River in a rubber tire.

Understanding that the return of lost R.A.F. soldiers would boost his country's sagging morale, the British consul to Spain agreed to finance de Jongh's network. Intelligence officers code-named her "the Postman."

To the men who were to travel with her, she gave lessons on invisibility. No. 1, they were to walk at least 15 feet behind her at all times, on the street and in train stations from Brussels to Paris to Bayonne. No. 2, in public they were never to speak — not to her, not to one another, not to anybody. If an airman had a friendly face, one that might invite even an innocent conversation on a train, she armed him with a copy of the French newspaper *Le Figaro* and instructions to keep it hoisted.

To others, she gave oranges to be peeled messily every few hours on a train ride, simply as a means of repelling their neighbors.

Before it was over, Dédée de Jongh would personally escort 118 people to freedom in Spain, and hundreds more would escape using the complex network of safe houses she had set up throughout Belgium and France. She pep-talked countless men over the mountains, including Jack Newton, who, depleted but grateful, was sent to Gibraltar and put on a boat home to his wife.

Many of her helpers were ultimately arrested — including her sister, who was sent to a concentration camp, and her father, who was shot by a German firing squad.

De Jongh herself was caught harboring three airmen in a farmhouse

at the foot of the Pyrenees in 1943. She endured 20 interrogations before finally confessing not just to being involved with the famous Comet line but to being its mastermind. Her German captors dismissed the idea outright. "Don't be ridiculous," they said.

Sometime later, the Gestapo thought to question her further, but when they went looking among the emaciated pale souls packed into the Ravensbruck women's concentration camp north of Berlin, they could not figure out which one was Dédée de Jongh.

After the war, she was decorated by King George VI and honored by the American and French governments. In Belgium, she was named a countess. She waved off most of the attention and strived instead for a purposeful sort of invisibility, spending 28 years nursing at a leper colony in the Belgian Congo and at an Ethiopian hospital.

Only when her health began to fail did she return to Belgium, where the skies were empty and the farmers' fields hid nothing but old stories, the safe houses she'd created now just the same as every other.

USAF adopts a new slogan

WASHINGTON (AFP) -- The Air Force has a new advertising campaign to recruit the next generation of airmen as well as better inform people about the Air Force mission:

"Above All."

"The new slogan is admittedly a bold one," said Col. Michael Caldwell, deputy director of Air Force public affairs, "but so are airmen." This campaign accurately portrays airmen and how they're executing the Air Force mission to ensure the security and safety of America now and in the future.

"Above All" is about what we do and how we do it," Colonel Caldwell said. "The job of the Air Force is to defend America and we do that by dominating air, space and cyberspace. The new campaign and slogan captures our roots, but also illustrates where we're going as a service as the Air Force prepares to contend with future threats."



Milan Buros, a Slovakian helper and a regular at AFEES reunions, is shown at upper left, in this September 1944 photo. He is wearing the flight jacket of Neal T. Cobb, a 15th AF airman he helped.

Bailing out over Belgium

By JOHN L. TONEY
457th Bomb Group
Anchorage, Alaska

On the morning of May 27, 1944, our target was Mannheim-Ludwigshafen, Germany. After a briefing and early breakfast, some of us had installed our 50 calibre guns and then curled up on the floor of the plane to sleep until takeoff.

When the rest of our crew got aboard, we were ready to take off and get in formation. It took quite some time to reach the target, and we were met by a large group of German fighters. They took some of our bombers down and damaged others. We had engines on fire and had to leave the formation.

In diving, our pilot got the fires under control, but couldn't use the engines. We thought we were headed back to our base on remaining engines, when fire broke out in one engine and the pilot gave the order to *bail out over Northern Belgium*.

We'd had no practice in jumping, so this had to be done right – the first time. After most of the crew had gone out the rear door, I jumped; and hoped the chest-chute would open properly. After falling a few thousand feet, I accidentally stuck out an elbow, and it turned me into the right position. After pulling the rip-cord and drifting down, I could see a fighter plane coming toward me. I thought I was going to get used for target practice, but recognized it as one of ours – a real relief.

I landed in the middle of a large barley field, and I saw a woman cutting weeds. After taking off my chute, I saw that a crew member had landed in a tree; and I indicated to the woman that I wanted to go and help. She didn't speak my language, but said "Bosch" were there.

When I turned, there was a man motioning for me to follow. We had barely started off when my guide was stopped by a German patrol. I dropped and lay flat and motionless,

but was expecting a gun in my back. It was months later, when back in the States, that I found out that my friend had a gun in his ribs. He convinced the patrol that he knew nothing about a parachutist. They hardly had time to get out of sight, when he was back with me. I had to crawl about half a mile, because if I stood up in the barley field, I'd be seen.

Later, I was taken to a safe home near the town of Moerbeke, Belgium. The lady of the house spoke English, which was reassuring. They carried in water and heated it so I could take a bath.

Next day, the older daughter rode her bicycle to find a route to another safe home. I didn't see the younger daughter until much later, because they thought she might be too disturbed. It turned out she knew I was there, but she knew she couldn't mention it at school, because her family was at real peril for hiding me.

I was introduced to the town of St Nicholas by going to the top floor of a large building. There was a young man hiding there, and playing his musical instruments quietly and well. Many of the young men of Belgium were in hiding to keep from being forced to work for the German war

machine.

In a short while, I was taken to the home of George Smet. He was a factory owner and head of the Resistance for that area. I found that our regular co-pilot had been struck on the arm with a broom handle during a prank the night before, and wasn't able to fly that day. It just happened that I was put in the same home with Alex, our substitute co-pilot, a few doors from the Smets.

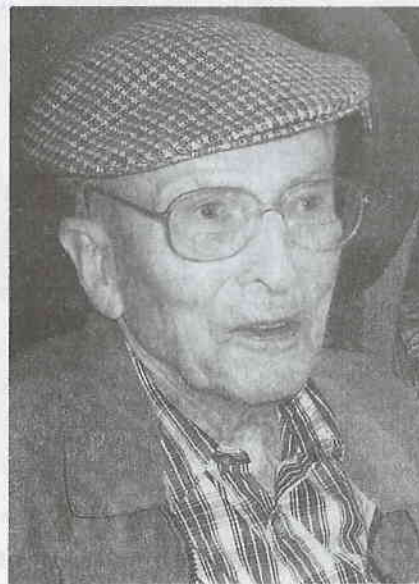
The VanKerchoves treated us like family, but we had to stay indoors and got very little exercise. We had just heard about D-Day on the radio, and according to German reports, they were naturally winning. One Sunday, the VanKerchoves were gone for several hours, and Alex wanted to head south. I don't know why, but I went with him. The first bridge we had to cross was guarded by German youth. We watched to see if everyone was stopped, then went on. We had some local money in escape kits, but didn't speak the language, so couldn't obtain food.

The good Belgian helpers couldn't always be there, but we were soon hidden in the "tall butchers" farm loft. He had a flock of homing pigeons in the barn; so we were a second illegal occupant, according to the Germans. Because he was a butcher, we ate well while we were there; and it was a neat place to stay, really.

Next we were taken to the home of a real Belgian spy; and he was always on some dangerous mission. One day he came home with a bullet hole in the framework of his bicycle seat; but he didn't seem too concerned about it.

One day a man came in a car from Brussels to take us there for hiding in a former Belgian soldier's home. We were stopped at a German roadblock and our driver chatted with the guards then gave a cheery Good Bye in German. We sat in the back seat without a clue as to what was going on.

On arriving in Brussels, we were



John Toney now lives in Alaska

taken to the home of the Belgian soldier. He had been wounded and escaped from a German hospital, so he didn't stay in his home. We had been there for several days, watching out our windows, and our Belgian helpers decided to send us by train down to the Ardennes section of southern Belgium. Again, we were with German soldiers on the train and passed them on the roads as we rode bicycles, following a guide, to a hiding place in the forest.

After several days, American Rangers came to our camp and we were liberated. Upon hearing artillery fire, Alex had gone to meet our forces and had some narrow escapes. At the near-by Belgian village, some of our troops had come in and I met a fellow-officer of my brother's. My brother was a Lt. Colonel in an armoured division; and I had met some of his fellow-officers while in southern England. Doesn't everyone meet their brother on the battlefield; especially after being missing for two or three months?

My brother took me in his Jeep and we headed toward Germany for a few hours. When a mail truck came along, I was put on it to go to Paris. We were checked out and sent back to England. I had to check into my home base in England. At the parachute shop, I told them I had no complaints.

After just a few days, I was fortunate in being assigned to a DC4 to fly back to the states. After reaching the states and being reunited with my wife, a joyous time, we were assigned to some plush quarters in Miami Beach for some rest and recreation.

Of our crew of 10, five were taken prisoner and five were hidden by Belgian patriots. We didn't know about their status until we returned to the States. We were relieved to hear that Koch, a young Jewish man, and one of our family, was kept in safe hands. Cochran, our bombardier, was also hidden.

Our pilot, Roger Birkman, is exactly two weeks older than me, so I can officially call him my old pilot. He is still active in his business in

Houston, Texas.

As soon as possible after the war, George and Marie Smet came to the United States. They came to see several men who had stayed in their home during the occupation. The Smets first visited us in Dayton, Ohio; and then we took them to my parent's home in College Corner, a small town on the state line of Ohio and Indiana.

I worked on the Ohio farm where I was born for a few years; and then we decided to go to Alaska with our young daughter. I was interested in becoming a bush pilot, but never attained that goal. I got a private pilot's license and covered lots of territory that way.

I started working for Pacific Northern Airlines in 1953. There was no terminal at that time. In 1956 we moved from a trailer court and started building the home where I still live.

Since I worked for an airline, we could get reduced fares for travel, so starting in 1960, we made plans to visit friends in England and Belgium.

George Smet had said that they wouldn't treat us like prisoners-of-war if we came for a visit; and they certainly didn't. He'd kept his chauffeur on the payroll all during the occupation, although his Buick had been taken by the Germans; and he still had a chauffeur when we visited.

They drove us all over the country. The VanKerchoves didn't like it when we stayed at the Smets; and they didn't hesitate to say so.

Major General Lyle is honored

Major General Lewis Lyle and his wife Betty were honored recently in a special ceremony at the Garland County Library near their home in Hot Springs, Ark.

An extensive set of books compiled by Retired USAF Col. Ed Miller was presented to the library in General Lyle's name.

The volumes represent a 20-year project compiling information on every airman who served in the 303rd Bomb Group in Molesworth, England during the war, a collection of the personal histories of 7,218 men.

Miller and his wife have presented a similar collection to the research center at the Mighty Eighth AF Museum in Pooler, Ga.

Miller served in the 303rd during the war and has been an officer in the 303rd BG Association.

General Lyle commanded the 303rd during WWII and is founder of the Mighty Eighth Museum.

They were both good hosts, and we really enjoyed our time with them. We corresponded for many years after the war, and their letters are treasured.

We made six more trips to England and Belgium; and my wife enjoyed the visits as much as I did.

As a postscript, I must add that we received invitations and a phone call from a Belgian police officer who is also chairman of the Patriotic Assn. in Haaltert, Belgium. It was an invitation to attend the 60th anniversary of the crash of Roger Birkman's crew in Moerbeke.

Being 85 at the time and living alone, I declined the invitation; but when my daughter Holly saw the written invitation, she responded with "Sure I'll go".

Without her vital support, I would not have gone and would have missed a wonderful experience. We flew to Gatwick, England and met good friends there. We stayed at their home for a few days before we flew on to Brussels where we were met by our Belgian host.

Dirk Vijverman took us to his home, provided us with lodging and meals, drove us around the country and then took us to the ceremony in Moerbeke.

At the time, I was the only crew member to attend the ceremony, but the pilot's younger daughter Andrea, was able to be there to represent her father, Roger Birkman. They had a complete ceremony including a color guard, fly by, and speeches by the mayor and Vijverman.

Un peu de terre de Georgie pour l'aviateur (A little bit of soil from Georgia for the flyer)



The family of Lt. Benjamin Hodges is surrounded by the mayor Andre Salome, and several historians at the site where the pilot disappeared.

**From a French Newspaper,
LE COURRIER PICARD
October 26, 2006**

An American pilot shot down while flying his Mustang P-51 on 20 June 1944 and whose remains in the marsh has been identified after a long search. His family has brought him a little bit of soil from his country.

There were a lot of emotional feelings Thursday afternoon by the town's marshes. A group including the mayor Andre Salome and a few people with a passion for aviation history surround Cindy and Wesley Nunn, an American couple who had come from the state of Georgia to meditate and pray near the site where their cousin Benjamin Hodges died while flying his Mustang fighter plane on 20 June 1944 at about 7 a.m.

The pilot was assigned to the 82nd Fighter Squadron. He lost his life fighting in the sky over Picardie and now all who knew the factors know his

face and his family.

It took several years of research to identify him. It is partly thanks to Jean Pecheur, a passionate student of WWII aviation history that identification could be made. But this inhabitant of Rancourt (near Perone) was devastated by the loss of his entire document collection when his house burned and it was after he got hold of an article in the Courrier Picard newspaper in July 1999 relating the story of Roy de Petit that he decided to find out more about it.

After several searches on the Internet he received help from a genealogist in Texas who was originally from Georgia like Benjamin Hodges..

She was able to locate pictures of the pilot, of his wife Dorothy and of his family

Jean-Pierre Ducellier, a regional historian, in his book, *The Aerial War over Northern France*, gave a copy to Cindy Nunn, which describes Lt. Hodges' last flight.

After arriving at Duxford in England in May

1944, Lt. Hodges was on his seventh mission on that 21st day of June. With hundreds of fighter pilots, he was protecting the bombers that were attacking targets on a zone from Cap Gris Nez to Compiègne.

At 7:05 a.m. his group was attacked by about 20 Messerschmitt 109s. The Germans admitted having three losses that day while Lt. Hodges was declared missing in action after the 82nd Sqdn. returned to Duxford after the mission, writes Mr. Ducellier.

At the end of 1946 they started looking for witnesses. The results of an inquiry launched in March 1947 indicate they did not find any trace of

the plane. In September 1947 a sock, a boot and a piece of a flight suit were found.

The remains of Lt. Hodges rest in the American cemetery in Saint-Laurent-Sur-Mer among 9,000 tombs of Americans.

Cindy Nunn, whose mother was Benjamin Hodges first cousin, said that she and her husband went to pray at the tomb before heading for the Somme Department

She brought a little bit of soil from Georgia and wished to have it scattered on the site where her cousin perished in 1944.

La forteresse volante a l' affiche d' Air Expo

(Flying Fortress will be present at air show)

From LA DEPECHE Du MIDI,
Toulouse area newspaper
May 12, 2007

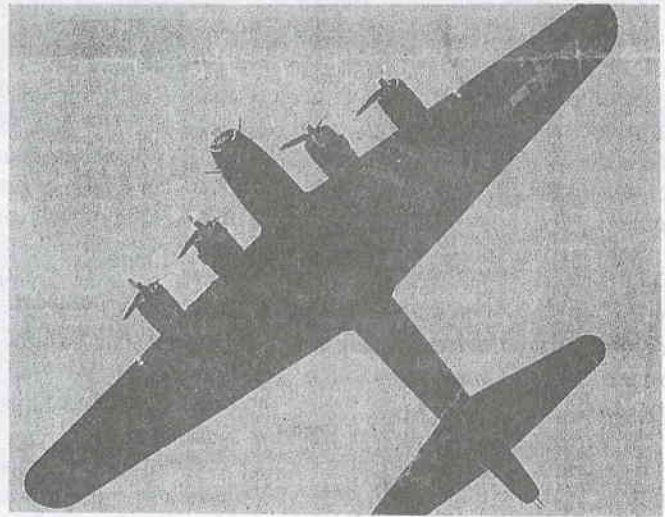
This afternoon shortly after 1 p.m. French paratroopers will jump over the Muret Lherm airport and their landing will be the starting point of the 2007 Air Expo show, the largest one in the Toulouse area.. It is free and brings crowds in the thousands.

The show is organized by the aspiring engineers from three major schools in aeronautics from the area.

This year is the 20th anniversary of the air show and all attention has been given to be a super show. The new twin-deck Airbus A 380 with Claude Lelaie at the command and a B-17 Flying Fortress, with the most destructive power during WW2, will compete for the limelight.

Yesterday afternoon the bomber took off from the Franczal airport and flew over in an impressive flight demonstration while familiarizing itself with the region.

The visitors will also be able to see a Russian Yack 52 still being used as trainer in the former



countries of the Eastern block and a navy Corsair that folds its wings upon touchdown.

There will also be several flyovers during this large popular air show.

This likely was the B-17G, 351st Bomb Group, PINK LADY, which is still flying and owned by a French consortium. Reports are that it drew more applause at the show than the giant A-380.

For more, in French and in English:

<<http://pink.lady.free.fr>>

From The Commemorative Air Force DISPATCH

FALL 2005

By Col. BERNARD DELFINO

June 20, 1944:

It's a lovely day, almost sunset. A parachute slowly drifts down over the quiet little village of Puisieux en Retz, about eight miles southwest of Soissons, France.

Hanging from it is a P-51 fighter pilot, Virgal E. "Sandy" Sansing (E&E# 1338) whose plane had been hit by flak while strafing the railway station at Chateau-Thierry, 20 miles away.

He was posted to the 359th Fighter Group based at East Wreatham in England.

Sansing watched his disabled plane come down and crash in a field on the other side of the village. A few seconds later, he landed at the fringe of a small wooded area where he quickly hid his parachute.

After a short walk he spotted a woman working in a field of onions. Juliette Durand was her name. When he stood before her, she was surprised but remained calm. She had seen the plane go down and sent her young daughter home immediately.

Sansing showed Durand the book that pilots used and carried with them. Durand then read the sentence Sansing pointed at, which said, in French, "I don't want to be taken prisoner."

Wasting no time, she took Sansing to a neighbor's house, Mister Douard.

They hid Sansing under a stack of wood where he stayed for several hours. A German commander in charge of the ammunition depots in the area resided at a nearby farm.

Upon spotting Durand walking back to her house, he quickly called for a patrol unit. They asked her if she had seen an aviator, and, following her negative reply, they disappeared and continued their search. But knowing they would come back, Durand went

to Mayor Dupressoir and told him their secret.

Together, they decided to ask Mme. Deslions if she would hide Sansing in her place. Agreeing, she gave him civilian clothes that belonged to her husband, a prisoner of war himself.

Mme. Deslion's family ran a fish farm and a water mill. She hid Sansing in the attic of a cottage attached to the family home.

It took only about three weeks for the whole village to know about the American aviator. Because of that, it became urgent to find a more secure place for him. A member of the Resistance in Soissons, Michel Carre, was asked for help.

He escorted Sansing from Puisieux en Retz to a military cemetery in Vauxbuin, near Soissons, where a rendez-vous had been arranged with a member of the Resistance.

When Sansing arrived at the cemetery, no one was there to meet him, so he was taken to Carre's house in Soissons until that evening when he was taken to a family that belonged to the Resistance.

When it was heard that the Germans had arrested the local head of the Resistance, it was decided upon that he should escape at once. Sansing and Mr. Massonnet moved to a warehouse owned by Mr. Fernandez.

On July 10, 1944, the Germans broke into Massonnet's house to



arrest him. Since he wasn't there, they took away Mme. Massonnet and their two daughters. The daughters soon were released and given to the mayor of the village. Mme. Massonnet was kept in the Gouraud military barracks. She was saved by a doctor who operated on her for appendicitis.

Hearing about the raid on the Massonnets' house, Mr. Lemasire took Sansing to Sermoise, and Massonnet got on his bicycle and escaped to Paris where he joined the local Resistance.

Sansing stayed in Sermoise until he was picked up by Christiane Coigne and taken to her parents' house in Fere en Tardenois.

Sansing's stay with the Coigne's was uneventful to start with, but precautions had to be taken to avoid problems with the omnipresent German soldiers. One day, a little boy saw Sansing fishing in the small river that ran behind the house, but Sansing never replied to his "Bonjour!"

As the boy started asking questions, he was told that Sansing was a remote cousin who was deaf and mute. "And you are blind!" emphasized Mama Coigne with authority.

But "walls have ears," and, after three weeks, an anonymous letter addressed to the Kom-mandantur in Fete en Tardenois betrayed the

Coigne family. The letter was intercepted and de-stroyed by a friend who worked in the post office.

Alerted, the family made the decision to hide Sansing with the freedom fighters in the woods at Beuvardes, four miles from Fere en Tardenois.

Sansing lived with them until the

end of August, when Allied troops reached the area. Sansing accompanied the Allies and eventually boarded a B -24 to England and then headed home.

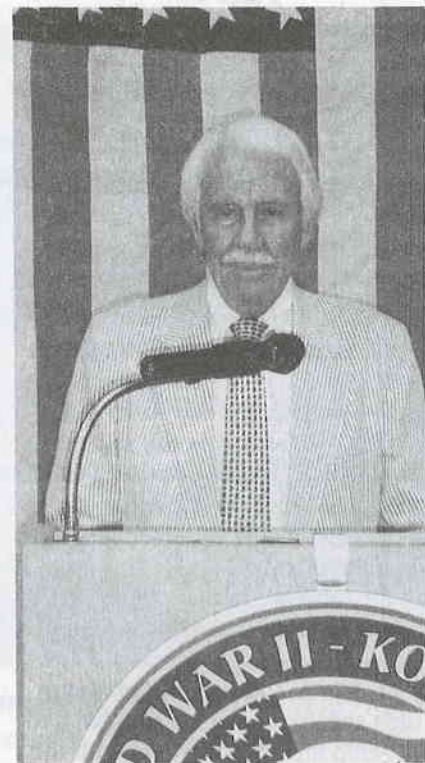
Sansing and his wife Connie, went to France in May 1997 for a reunion with the Coigne family and a visit to his crash site.



In a ceremony at the village war monument, Virgal Sansing (right) stands with the mayor of the town.



A reunion in 1997 with the Coigne family included, left to right: Madame Coigne, Sandy Sansing, Paul (a Freedom Fighter who stayed with Sansing in the woods of Beuvardes), Jean (son of Leon Coigne) Leon Coigne and Christiane Coigne.



Dr. Wm. Budd Wentz, 487th BG, of Shaker Heights, Ohio, spoke recently to the WWII-Korean War Roundtable meeting in Akron. He described his wartime experiences, including being aided by the Belgian Underground after a crash landing.

--Photo by Jerri Donohue

New 'Friends'

L/C ALLEN J. CHAPIN

19295 NW Cornell Rd.

Apt. 106

Hillsboro, OR 97124

Phone: 503-617-9791

8th AF, 381st BG

(POW after evading one month)

LOIS J. HAMILTON

PO Box 707

Grove City, PA 16127

(A Writer)

Col. TIMOTHY SMITH

USAF

218-C Goettler St.

SCOTT AFB IL 62225

REVIEW:

DAVID AND THE MIGHTY EIGHTH, By Marjorie Hodgson Parker, Bright Sky Press, \$17.50

By **KEVIN PEARSON**
Wichita Falls, Tex.

(8th Air Force Researcher)

This book for young readers is about two British lads growing up near Norwich and the American airbases there during the second World War. It is the fictional account of David Freeman (based on memoirs of the late Roger A. Freeman and another Brit, David Hastings) and his mates who are fascinated by the Americans and the bombers they flew.

Keeping journals of the planes they see, they visit bases often and develop a particular bond with the crew of *Pugnacious Pat*, a B-24. David and his pals "sweat out each mission," hoping *Pugnacious Pat* will continue to return, resulting in the climax of the book.

When a V-1 bomb hits a house, David rescues its inhabitants, and becomes an instant celebrity. The book culminates with the celebrations surrounding VE-Day when he finally learns the fate of his father who has been missing in action for several years.

Too few books of this era have been written from the perspective of the young Brits who were dispersed out of major population centers to the countryside to avoid the Nazi bombs. The book tells of the hardships suffered by young adults of that era from rationing to a hard farm life to not knowing the fate of a loved one who is MIA.

This is a very touching book and deserves a read by you and younger readers to let them know what life was like during that awful conflict. The book is 177 pages and can be ordered from Bright Sky Press, Box 416, Albany, 1X /6430 (<http://www.brightskypress.com>); or from Marjorie Parker, 2491 Parker Road, Byers, TX 76357 (mjparkermjparker@yahoo.com).

Photos of Shelburn hike

September 2007



Enjoying a champagne reception with local officials and members of the resistance historical society at La Madeleine are, left to right, Beverly Patton Wand, Godelieve Pena, a local friend, and Nadine Dumont.



The Shelburn hikers visited the House of Alphonse. From left, Roger Stanton, organizer of the ELMS Shelburn Freedom Trail Challenge, Beverly Patton Wand, daughter of Ralph Patton who left from the House of Alphonse on the third Shelburn Bonaparte operation of March 17, 1944, and Geoff Cowling, vice chairman of ELMS.

Changes and Corrections from 2006 Roster

(Changes are in **BOLDFACE** type)

1. **HOWARD R. DeMALLIE**, 300 W. Farm Pond Rd., Apt. 223, Framingham, MA 01702-6250
2. **WILMA FRUTH "W"**, 787 Deerwood Dr., Defiance, OH 43522-6741
3. **E.W. HALLIBURTON SR.**, 733 Plantation Estates Dr., Apt. E218, Matthews, NC 28105-9114, Ph.: 704-846-7302
4. **WALTER L. HARVEY "L"**, 665 Forest Park Blvd., Saint Augustine, FL 32092-2772
5. **VIRGINIA HICKS 'W'**, 1739 Fairmont Dr., Redlands, CA 92373; Ph.: 951-793-5237
6. **WALTER E. KASIEVICH**, 3344 Appel Rd., Bethel Park, PA 15102-1220
7. Col. **JAY H. WILLIAMS 'L'**, 6001 W. 119th St., Apt. 1209, Overland Park, KS 66209; Ph.: 913-498-1494
8. **MRS. AGNES N. FRISQUE 'H'**, 2842 Regional Rd 20, RR5, Bowmanville, Ont. L1C 3K6 Canada, Ph.: 905-263-2458
9. **KEN B. WOODHOUSE**, (204) 1223 Temperance St., Saskatoon, Sask S7H OP2 Canada



Helpers Jean and Jeanne Trehiou looked dapper as ever when they met Beverly Wand at the Guingamp train station.



Joseph Marsal, in the spring of 2005, points out a route over the Pyrenees Mountains taken by evaders 61 years earlier. He is shown wearing an A-2 jacket presented him by the family of Lt. John M. Carah.

Joseph Marsal, 1924-2007

Pyrenees guide aided some 300 Allied evaders

Joseph Marsal of Perpignan, France, died Dec. 14, 2007. He was 83. He was a key member of the Burgundy network during World War II.

Mr. Marsal joined the Resistance shortly after the German occupation of Vichy. He was assigned the task of organizing the escapes of Allied servicemen from Perpignan over the Pyrenees Mountains to Barcelona.

He recruited the guides, obtained food rations and organized the routes to be taken. Frequently, he had to coordinate several escapes at the same time. On several occasions, he acted as a guide himself. Overall, he estimated that he was involved in the evasion of more than 300 Allied airmen.

Mr. Marsal was born in Catalonia in 1924 and moved to Perpignan with his parents in the 1930s where he attended school and learned French. After the war, he was personally awarded the Medal of Freedom with Bronze Palm by General Dwight Eisenhower.

In 2005 he was presented with a replica USAAF A-2 jacket by the children of 2nd Lt. John Carah, one of the airmen he escorted over the Pyrenees in February 1944.

Mr. Marsal was interred at St. Paul du Loulin Cemetery near Perpignan. He is survived by his wife Fernande.

-FOLDED WINGS-

MEMBERS

- 8thAF Robert B. Blackburn, Murrieta, Calif., 96th BG, July 2007
- POW Wayne C. Bogard, Fairfield, Calif., 92nd BG, Jan. 4, 2008
- 15th AF Thomas H. Brown, Greenville, S.C., 376th BG, 2007
- 15th AF Leo B. Gordon "L", Dallas, Tex., 97th BG, Feb. 20, 2007
- #76 Louis L. Haltom "L", Beaumont, Tex., 96th BG, Mar. 13, 2007
- #515 Chauncey H. Hicks "L", Redlands, Calif., 91st BG,
June 24, 2007
- #306 John J. Maiorca "L", Manchester, Conn., 388th BG,
June 9, 2007
- #2117 Norman C. Mosher "L", New Providence, N.J., 445th BG,
March 18, 2007
- 8th AF Howard E. Melson, Dagsboro, Del., 44th BG, Feb. 10, 2007
- #602 Edward F. Neu, Portsmouth, Ohio, 92nd BG, Nov. 27, 2007
- 15th AF Robert S. Seidel "L", Frisco, Tex., 460th BG, May 23, 2007
- #1154 Alfred F. Sutkowski, Portland, Conn., 344th BG,
Jan. 21, 2008
- #2985 Earl R. Thorsen "L", Waunakee, Wis., 453rd BG,
Jan. 20, 2008
- #1415 Henry F. Wilson, Kathleen, Ga., 390th BG, Jan. 39, 2008

HELPERS

- Mr. Lucienne Keesemaecker, Brussels, Belgium, Oct. 9, 2007
- Mr. Marcel Ledanois, Noyon, France, 2006
- Mr. Piet Felix, Rijsenburg, Holland, 2007
- Mr. Cornet de Valk, s. Hertogenbosch, Holland, Jan. 1, 2008
- Mr. Jacques Vrij, Rijswijk, Holland, Dec. 25, 2007



JACQUES VRIJ 1916--2007

On Christmas Day 2007, Dutch Helper Jacques Vrij passed away at age 91. He was born April 19, 1916, in Emmer-Compascuum.

After living in several places in the Netherlands, he moved to Maastrich. He was a school teacher for a short time and then joined the Ministry of Transport.

After the war, he continued his work at the Ministry of Transport.

An illness in 1971 affected his short-term memory, but with the support of his wife Letti and his children, he managed to rebuild and enjoy life.

In 1944, Jacques and two of his fellow Resistance men escaped from prison the night before they were to be executed.

During his final hours in the hospital, he related this story to his nurses. He pointed out that his name VRIJ means "free" and that he was a free man, deciding when he was ready -- not when the Germans wanted to end his life.

For an account of Jacques Vrij's experiences in WWII, see article captioned "Helpers risked abuse when caught" in the Spring 2006 issue of Communications.

Alfred F. Sutkowski

Alfred F. Sutkowski (E&E #1154) of Portland, Conn., died Monday, Jan. 21, 2008. He was a Portland resident most of his life.

Born in Shenandoah, Pa., in 1925, he had been employed by the U.S. Postal Service and retired after 39 years as postmaster at Portland.

S/Sgt. Sutkowski was a B-26 tail gunner with the 344th Bomb Grp. Flying with the 9th Air Force, he bailed out over Calais on July 24, 1944, and evaded with help of the FFI. He was aided by the Jean-Marie network, especially Henri Beaudet of Orbec, France.

Norman C. Mosher

Norman C. Mosher, (E&E #2117) 84, of New Providence, N.J., passed away on Sunday, March 18, 2007, after a long illness.

He served in World War II with the 445th Bomb Group as a gunner on a B-24 crew. His plane was shot down on April 24, 1944, at Stavelot, Belgium, and he spent five months hidden by the Belgian Underground. He was awarded the Purple Heart.

He was born in Hawley, Pa., one of seven children. He attended technical school and worked in the aircraft engine experimental department of Pratt and Whitney in Hartford, Conn.

Later he worked for 40 years with Eastern Airlines.

Just 'round the bend

Forty engines roared real loud,
the squadron planes stood on the line.
Ten heavy bombers were warming up,
and one of them was undeniably mine.

The roar reached a deafening pitch,
when we leaped gallantly into the sky,
and sped into the morning dawn light,
to fight, to kill, perhaps to die.

Hours later a swarm of enemy fighters
cruised high above us on the way,
Soon the bomb run was flak from below,
while the enemy foe stood at bay.

After "bombs away," they attacked us
from all directions with vigor and vim,
It was evident they were out to get us
in their "at all costs" effort to win.

Where were our protective escort fighters?
Our tight formation offered little help.
Out of nowhere our friends stormily came,
rendering the death-dealers a firey belt.

Similar murderous happenings occurred daily
until all hostilities came to a thankful end.
Most of us luckily survived, but every time
we never knew what was around the bend.

--Composed by Keith McLaren Abbott in 2007

Clayton Needs to Know:

Have you moved? New phone #?

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

Send payments and changes to Clayton C. David, AFEES Membership Chair,

19 Oak Ridge Pond, Hannibal, MO 63401-6539, U.S.A. <davidafe@adams.net>

NAME _____ Amount Enclosed _____

Mailing Address _____ CITY & STATE _____

ZIP Code _____ PHONE _____ E-MAIL (Optional) _____

COMMENTS _____

The editor has the last word

By LARRY GRAUERHOLZ

<afees44@hotmail.com>

OR

<archerco@wf.quik.com>

WICHITA FALLS, Tex. -- From what I hear, the upcoming Savannah reunion will be a big 'un. Reunion Boss Yvonne Dasley says the reservations are really coming in!

If you have not yet made your hotel reservations, best to get it done pronto, as the reserved block is filling up rapidly. Form is on Page 16.

Yvonne needs to get some kind of a headcount in advance of the reunion for the City of Savannah tour on Thursday, April 24. So when you complete the reunion form on Page 17, please indicate the number in your party who wish to make the tour.

And, if you have already made your reservations, Yvonne would appreciate a phone call or e-mail with that information, so that she can

finalize the deal with the bus company.

It is possible that a visit to Hunter Army Air Field will be worked into the reunion schedule.

Plans are still in the oven, but we have been invited and the army probably will provide bus service from the hotel.

Yvonne will have the latest word, so if you would like to visit Hunter, you can check with her.

Jim Goar of Frankfort, Ind., is retiring as editor of the 392nd BG newsletter. He will be succeeded by Annette Tison, a 2nd generationer who has been Jim's assistant. And Jim says, "She's smart as a whip and a bundle of energy."

Annette: Congrats on your promotion. We need younger involvement to continue the WWII heritage.

CAN YOU BELIEVE IT? A French smoking ban has been in effect since the first of the year.

Owners of bars, restaurants, nightclubs and cafe, where smoking is now prohibited, worry that it would be bad for business.

My comment: Not to worry, In Wichita Falls, a smoking ban in such places has been in effect for several years and has been well accepted.

Claude Grimaud, a French historian, is focusing on Allied escapers who passed through Auvergne (departments of Allier, Puy de Dome, Cantal and Haute-Lire) or fought with the Maquis at the battle of Mont-Mouchet.

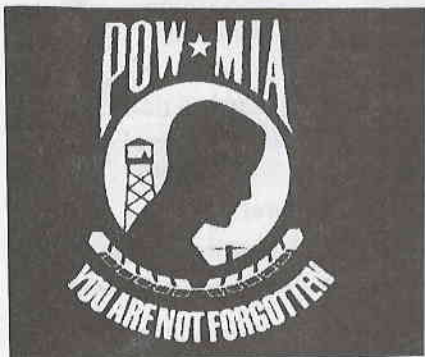
Claude has been able to trace several but knows that there are others. For instance, he knows that 23 airmen were at Mont-Mouchet, but he has the ID of only eight of them. One involved was Maj. George R. Weinbrenner, 303rd BG (E&E 2060) who now lives in San Antonio, Tex.

You can contact Claude at:
<mightyplumpy@yahoo.fr>

While we are at the Savannah reunion in April, we will have the chance to visit the Roger A. Freeman Research Center at the Mighty 8th Museum. It is filled with books, oral histories and donated items from hundreds of veterans and their families.

THE SAGE SEZ:

1. If at first you don't succeed, skydiving is not for you;
2. Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach him how to fish, and he will sit in a boat and drink beer all day.
3. Some days you're the bug; some days you're the windshield.



Several websites
have information
on escape lines

<www.cometeline.org>

By Comete Kinship

<www.comete-bidassoa>

By Comete Bidassoa>

<www.belgiumww2.info>

(By John Clinch)

<www.christopherlong.co.uk>

(By Journalist Christopher Long)

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