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Members take our story to class while attending Dayton reunion

By **JERRI DONAHUE**
Friend Member

Evaders Len Rogers and Don Fisher and Helper Peter Hakim shared their wartime memories with a younger generation during the AFEES Dayton reunion.

The trio visited Kettering-Fairmont High School on Friday, May 8, where each addressed a 9th grade World History or 10th grade American History class.

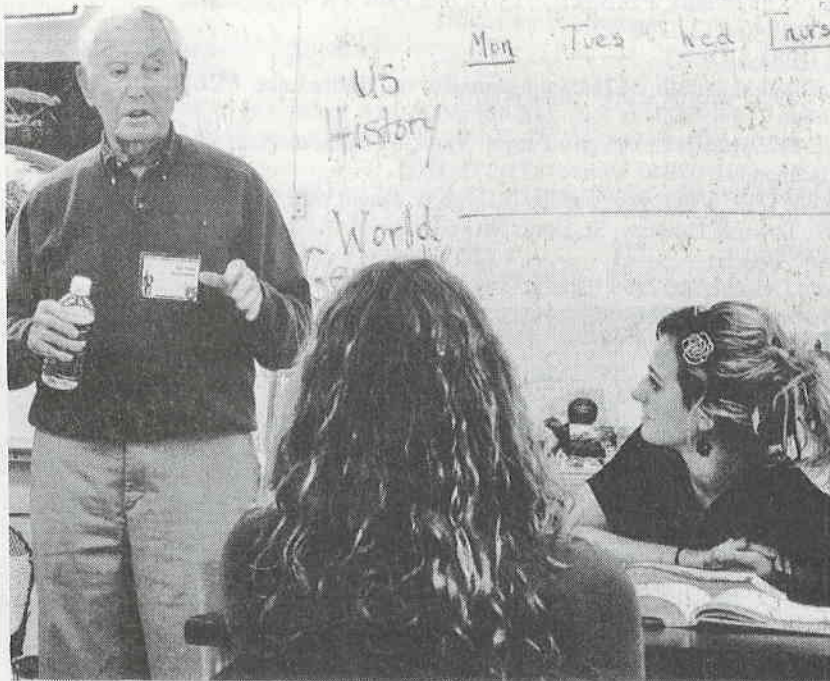
Don, E&E #1391, 305th BG, now lives in Eugene, Ore. He mesmerized a classroom full of 16-year-olds as he described bailing out of a crippled plane, landing in a freshly plowed field, and speaking briefly with a mortally wounded crewman before hiding in the woods. Don eventually made contact with the French underground and remained in hiding until Allied troops liberated the area. He was the sole evader from his 10-man crew.

The teacher later reported that her students were impressed that Don had traveled to Dayton from Oregon for his first AFEES reunion at age 91.

Len Rogers (E&E# 1351, 91st BG), was downed Aug. 13, 1944, over France.

During his talk, he conveyed the sense of urgency each evader felt upon reaching solid ground. Within moments of his landing, young Frenchmen pulled Len into a hiding place, peeled off his clothes and dressed him as a farmer.

Len told the students about the hardships brave civilians endured as



Don Fisher of Eugene, Ore., was attending his first AFEES reunion this year. He recounted some of his evasion experiences in France to 10th grade students at Kettering-Fairmont High School in Dayton, Ohio, on Friday, May 8.

they hid him from the Germans. The local people treasured his silk parachute, which a skillful seamstress soon fashioned into a wedding dress.

Len, who now lives in Youngstown, Ariz., also related his happy reunions with some of his helpers in post-war years.

Peter Hakim, who now lives in Livingston, N.J., depicted his life as a teen in German-occupied Belgium. In an emotional presentation he described the joy he felt when he watched American planes fly

overhead en route to their targets and his grief when he saw the formation return with many fewer planes.

Peter explained his family's role in finding food and shelter for an American crew shot down near their home. He answered questions about his experience smuggling food to evaders and explosives to the Resistance.

Chris Griggs, chairman of the History Department, later expressed his thanks to the AFEES visitors in an e-mail message: "The presentations were great!!!" he wrote.

More reunion coverage begins on Page 10

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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.



*Paul Ruska holds a wooden
model of a B-17 bomber similar
to the one he was in when he was
shot down over France in 1943.*

Paul tells his story to project

From the Abilene (Tex.) Reporter-
News,
May 18, 2009

An Abilene veteran's story of
being a prisoner of war during World
War II is featured in the Voices of
Veterans project of the Texas
Veterans Land Board.

Paul Ruska is among more than
200 veterans whose stories are being
added to the project.

"We focus right now on veterans
of WWII," said James Crabtree, who
conducted the interview. "This is a
state-funded program to preserve the
history of the men and women who
were a part of that war."

It was July 10, 1943, and Tech.
Sgt. Ruska was a radio
operator/gunner on the crew of a B-

17 flying a bombing mission. Ruska told Crabtree how the plane was flying on the outer edge of the formation and was an easy target for German fighter planes.

"They came straight at us," he said. "The plane caught fire and blew up."

"One had bailed out, but three of us were blown out," he emphasized. The other six members of the crew died.

Ruska said two crew members made their way back to safety with the help of the French Underground. One was captured as soon as he hit ground.

Struggling to get his parachute open, Ruska made a hard landing in a field near a small village. Unable to walk, Ruska was helped by two women who hid him in a clump of trees.

"They went for their father," Ruska said. He said another Frenchman helped carry him to a house. He was unable to walk for three months, so he spent his time mostly in an upstairs bedroom. After five months, Ruska was contacted by the French Underground and taken to another house. However, before he could escape the country, a Frenchman betrayed him to the Germans and he was taken to Paris to Gestapo headquarters.

"They were very angry that I had been in France for six months," Ruska said. "I had civilian clothes and a civilian ID."

He was interrogated every week. After 35 days, Ruska was packed in a railroad car and sent to Austria.

"I wound up in the famous Stalag 17-B," he said. "There were 4,500 American noncom officers there."

"On April 8, 1945, 4,000 men started an 18-day march across Austria," Ruska said. "It was 281 miles."

Ruska said the commandant of the POW camp did not want them to be liberated by the Russians.

"When we were liberated, they brought in C-47s to fly us out," he said. "I was at Camp Lucky Strike in France waiting for a ship." During that wait, Ruska decided to hitchhike

to see the family who had helped him during the war.

During his time hiding in the French home, he began to pick up the language. He and his wife, Julie, have visited France 10 times since 1973. When Ruska goes back, the people treat him as a hero. One major newspaper carried a front-page story showing Ruska on the back of the man who carried him to the house when he was first shot down.

The Ruskas last visited France in 1995.

"Now they are all gone except one," he said.

Crabtree spent some time talking with Julie about her role in the war. She

was an aviation machinist third-class in the Navy from 1943 to 1945.

"What was it like being a female in the military during WWII?" he asked Julie.

"I was stationed in Pensacola, Florida," she said. "There was not anything remarkable about it. We had lots of females working, so we just did our jobs."

The two met and were married after the war. In 1958, they moved to Abilene, where they operated JP Business Products.

Paul Ruska, 95th Bomb Group, is a Life Member of AFEES.

Francene stops on cruise to visit with friends in Nice, France



While on a Mediterranean cruise a few years ago, Francene Weyland, former AFEES treasurer, stopped in Nice, France, and she and Lilo Brochet had the opportunity to visit with Maurice and Paula Costa, the first time they had met since the AFEES/RAFEES meeting in Toronto in 1995.

The late Russel Weyland was aided during the war by Maurice and others.

From left: Maurice, Lilo, Francene and Paule.

Francene remarked that "I am sure Lilo's head was spinning as she had to interpret for me and reply to them in French whatever I had to say."

SHELBURNE. LE FILM D'UNE GRANDE ÉVASION



135 aviateurs alliés récupérés par les corvettes britanniques sur la plage Bonaparte à Plouha, en 1944.

« L'autobus de la Manche », raconte cette histoire d'hommes et de femmes qui ont fait leur devoir, en toute simplicité. Le film sera projeté, cet après-midi (*), en début de randonnée historique.

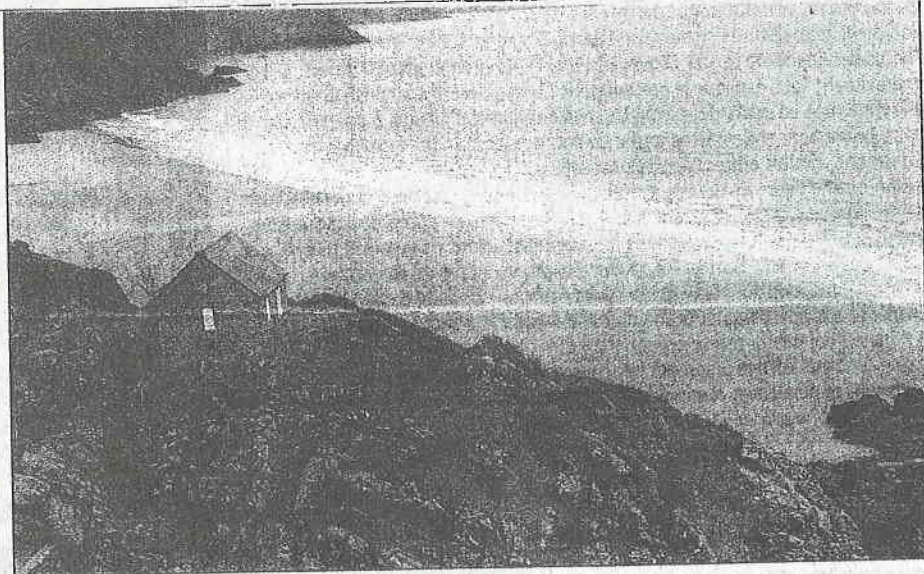
« Bonjour à tout le monde à la maison d'Alphonse »... Sitôt le message entendu à la BBC, Jeanne et Jean Tréhiou, Constance Levey, Anne Ropers, Marie Gicquel, Marguerite Pierre et autres résistants de Plouha savaient ce qu'ils avaient à faire : acheminer leur « colis » sur la plage de l'anse Cochât. Des aviateurs qu'ils récupéraient à la gare de Guingamp ou de Saint-Brieuc, où les avaient conduits d'autres convoyeurs à partir de Paris. Parfois, c'est le Guingampais Kerambrun qui les amenait dans sa camionnette à gazogène, par les chemins de traverse.

A flanc de falaise

Pas une mince affaire que d'héberger ces hôtes, en ces temps de disette, dans la discrétion la plus totale, pendant plusieurs jours, voire plus. Risqué, aussi, de conduire les aviateurs, par nuit sans lune, sur les sentiers. Après un regroupement à la maison d'Alphonse (celle de Jean et Marie Gicquel), il fallait descendre, sur les fesses, les chemins escarpés à flanc de falaise.

Quelques signaux lumineux et, comme par magie, les chaloupes noires de la corvette de la Royal Navy, mouillée à deux milles, surgissaient entre les rochers. En quelques minutes, les passagers embarquaient, les résistants remontant, chargés d'armes ou de postes émetteurs.

Tout ceci se passait au nez et à la barbe de l'occupant, posté sur la pointe de la Tour, bardée de



● Jusqu'à la fin de l'été, l'histoire du réseau Shelburne sera racontée au cours d'une randonnée empruntant les traces des résistants. Un film sera projeté aujourd'hui avant la marche. Ci-dessous, une des corvettes où embarquaient les aviateurs alliés au large de la plage Bonaparte. (Photos archives Claude Prigent et RS Productions)



canons, à quelques centaines de mètres de la plage. Des Russes blancs peu au fait des phénomènes de la mer ? Des soldats qui savaient que la guerre était bientôt

finie et fermaient les yeux ? Le mystère reste entier.

En tout cas, le secret de la réussite de ces huit opérations, de janvier à août 44, tient au respect du...

PAS DE « VEDETTES »

Des corvettes anglaises, des hommes et des femmes de tous les jours, oui... mais pas de « vedettes ». Si Roland Savidan et Florence Mahé, les auteurs de « L'autobus de la Manche », film remarquable d'efficacité, de sincérité et d'émotion, avaient choisi de montrer des images de Jane Birkin, venue à Plouha à plusieurs reprises avec David, son officier de père commandant l'une des corvettes, nul doute qu'ils auraient facilement obtenu des commandes des chaînes de télé. « Mais nous avions trop développé le côté épopée dans "Passeurs de l'ombre", passant à côté du véritable engagement de ces gens simples et courageux. Nous avons aussi envie de rendre hommage à Job Menguy ». Une superbe réussite qui repose beaucoup, aussi, sur Roger Uguen, historien qui assure le fil conducteur de cette histoire exemplaire.

secret : « On ne se fréquentait pas en dehors des opérations », raconte Job Menguy. Cet ancien capitaine au long cours, élément clé du réseau, avait été contacté par Lucien Dumais et Raymond Labrosse, deux Canadiens de l'Intelligence Service, pour trouver une plage puis, pour « sécuriser » l'itinéraire, après que la côte eut été minée.

« Ni cocorico, ni héros »

Malgré tout, le réseau sera repéré. La maison d'Alphonse, brûlée en juin. Les officiers britanniques et les propriétaires des lieux s'en échapperont, miraculeusement. Arrêtés, les premiers auraient été conduits en camp, les autres sur le billot : « Ce n'est qu'aujourd'hui qu'on prend conscience du danger. On l'a fait sans appréhension, pour rendre service, participer à une autre forme de guerre, gagnée par les alliés... sans cocorico ni héros... », confiait dans sa grandiose simplicité, Job Menguy, quelques temps avant sa disparition en 1994.

Hervé Queillé

(*) A 13 h 30, chapelle Saint-Samson, point de départ pour une rando de 8 km sur les traces du réseau, avec des témoins de l'époque (02.96.70.17.04).

(For English translation, see next page.)

SHELBURN

the film about a great escape

135 allied flyers saved by the British Corvettes on Bonaparte beach in Plouha in 1944

"The English channel bus" tells the story of these men and women who very simply did their duty.

"Hello to everybody in the Alphonse's household." As soon as they heard this message on the BBC radio, Jeanne & Jean Trehieu, Constance Ravey, Anne Roper, Marie Gicquel, Marguerite Pierre and other resistants from Plouha knew what they had to do: carry the "packages" to the beach on the Cochat Cove. Flyers that they picked up at the Guingamp train station or in St. Brieuc where they had been escorted from Paris. Sometimes it was Kerambrun from Guingamp who transported them in his gazometer truck through country roads.

Up the cliff side.

Not a very easy task to take in these guests during these times when food was scarce, in total secrecy for several days or more. It was also very dangerous leading those flyers on a moonless night through narrow lanes. After regrouping at Alphonse's house (Jean and Marie Gicquel's house) they had to manage to get down the steep lanes sliding on their bottoms along the cliff.

A few light signals and like magic the black row boats from the Royal Navy Corvettes, anchored about 2 miles from the shore, would appear between the rocks. In a few minutes the passengers would be aboard and the resistants would leave with guns or short wave radios.

All of this was taking place under the nose of the occupants positioned at the Tower pointe, full of cannons within a few meters of the beach. Were they mostly white Russians, not used to the phenomenons of the sea? Soldiers who knew that the war would soon be over and shut their eyes? It is still a mystery.

Anyway, the secret of the success of these eight operations from January to August 1944 is due to the respect of secrecy. "We did not get together outside of the operation," says Job Menguy, the former Sea captain and key man for the network who had been contacted by Lucien Dumais and Raymond Labrosse, two Canadians from the Intelligence Service to find a beach and then to secure the itinerary after the coast had been mined.

'Neither cock of the roost, nor hero'

Anyway the network was located and the Alphonse's house was burned down in June, The British officers and the owners of the property escaped miraculously. If they had been caught the first ones would have been sent to a camp. The others would have been executed.

"It is only now that we realize how great was the danger. We did it without fear to help and participate to another kind of war, won by the allies, without Cock of the roost nor hero," said in total simplicity, by Job Menguy some time before his death in 1994.

On his way to school**6th grader
saw plane
crashland**

*Sgt. Thomas J. Mikulka,
E&E # 1890, 92nd BG,
was shot down over Belgium. He
evaded for seven months.
This account is from his first
helper's family.*

By RICHARD HEYLIGEN
Beringen, Belgium
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It was Friday, Feb. 4, 1944, between 1300 and 1330 hours. After dinner, I walked back to school. It was snowing. I was 12 years old and in the 6th grade.

Our house was about 1 km from the centre when I heard the sound of airplanes coming from the east, returning from Germany.

I saw silhouettes of big bombers. I had a small book from the Germans with silhouettes of different airplanes, so I could easily identify them.

My eldest sister, 34 years old and married, lived next to my school. We watched the planes and there was one bomber left behind and attacked by German fighters. We took shelter under the style of the front door, afraid of the bullets that could get lost.

The plane descended in circles. It was a big airplane. We also saw parachutes. The plane made a forced landing on the pastures of a valley called *de Zwarte Beek* (the black stream.)

Lessons at school started at 1330 and I went back to school. In the class there were only a few pupils present. The others went looking for the crashed airplane. Later they

Continued on next page

Continued from Page 5

returned and I thought that the teacher was going to give them a blame but no, on the contrary, our teacher Mister Schoemans, was very curious and asked the pupils to tell him everything about the crashed plane. They told about the plane being in pieces, paratroopers picked up by Germans, and so on.

After school, I went home to tell everything to my parents. My mother told me that they came to get my brother Jules because there was a parachutist hiding in the small forest and there was no one who could communicate with the airman.

Louis, son of Jozef Vanschooren, knew Jules had finished high school at Beringen and was able to speak a little English. So Louis came searching for Jules to help him. My brother immediately agreed.

I told my mother, knowing Jules, he was going to bring the American to our home. Jules didn't know danger.

My mother was afraid because everyone who helped the Allies would be punished by the Germans.

At nightfall Jules came home with the American, Thomas J. Mikulka of Lansford, Pa.

He had been hiding all afternoon in the woods while Germans were looking for the airmen.

Meanwhile, Jozef Vanschooren, a farmer, was trying to make disappear the parachute. When all became quiet, Thomas took off his overcoat for not attracting attention.

At the farm they took a pitchfork and dressed Tommy like a farmer before they came to our home. At home, Thomas took off his uniform, to warm up while my mother was baking bacon and eggs to eat. We were farmers and we had enough food.

Thomas was not very talkative and perhaps a bit suspicious but he told us his name and he showed us a white handkerchief with the sketch of Belgium and environs.

He pointed to a place at the French border and said that if he could get there, he knew how to get back to England. For us this was a difficult

task because the distance through the Ardennes up to France was about 200 km.

The problem was how to travel safely at night. It was forbidden to be out at evening. This was possible if Thomas could get a miner's passport. Fortunately, Thomas had six photos and we only had to make a passport.

Albert Boelenders, our cousin, was a watchman at the coal mine and he could help us.

Albert said that he could help Thomas get away with help from the Resistance. In the morning, Thomas received my dad's new shoes and left through the pastures, over the stream, to Stal (village) to our uncle's farm.

Meanwhile, members of the Resistance arrived at Jef's farm to pick up Thomas and bring him to Kwaadmechelen. He had to bike but he had never been biking before. He only made two falls.

He remained three weeks at Kwaadmechelen because he did not want to give the code word and without his code word, England wasn't willing to pick him up because they thought he could be a German spy.

Thomas was suspicious and thought he might be in bad company, but finally admitted.

Then they went to Brussels where he took a plane back to England. We listened to the BBC to receive some news from Tommy. It was forbidden to listen to the radio and the messages were encoded but then suddenly we heard, Mikulka had arrived.

The Problems Start

We were happy to hear this news, but now the problems started for us. Someone in our neighbourhood saw that Jozef had been hiding a parachute and told this to a few collaborators and soon the Germans were told. They picked up Jozef to take him to the German headquarters at Leopoldburg where he was interrogated and even beaten. Jozef didn't tell them anything; he

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maintained that he knew nothing.

We were afraid that if Jozef told anything, it could be our turn to be questioned. So my brother and I had to go into hiding at Hasselt to my godmother, Rosa Aerts.

The woman who had spread the rumour about the parachute had been confronted and she withdrew her accusation and Jozef was released.

But the Germans were resolute and in June, Jozef was arrested again. Jules and I had to go into hiding again. This time we went to Ukkel near Brussels, to the Kirchoff family. We stayed there a week until Jozef was released. We received a telegram that my mother was cured and this was the code that everything was all right.

Meanwhile, we hid Tommy's clothes and not too close to our home. When all became quiet, we kept the uniform in our house and in summer when the beans were full-grown, we suspended the uniform between the beans to give them some fresh air and so nobody could see it.

We wanted to keep the uniform until the liberation. I removed the badges and my father told me to burn them. Mikulka was wearing a blue wooley suite with electric wiring and plugs on the legs, arms and belly, and on it an overall. He also had high shoes of pressed wool with wires and boots with thick fur on the inside. We kept all these clothes till the liberation.

We were very happy when liberation was a fact; we had sustained many pangs of death between February and September and now we were free!



--Associated Press Photo

President Barack Obama signs the bill honoring the WASP, female pilots in World War II. The flyers or their families received the Congressional Gold Medal.

WASP awarded Congressional Gold Medal for wartime service

WASHINGTON (AFNS) -- A dedicated group of patriotic female pilots were recognized by President Barack Obama July 1 at the White House for their invaluable service to the nation more than 60 years ago.

Women's Airforce Service Pilots Elaine Danforth Harmon, Bernice Falk Haydu and Lorraine H. Rodgers were joined by five female current Air Force pilots in the White House Oval Office to witness the president sign into law a bill to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the WASP.

"The Women Airforce Service Pilots courageously answered their country's call in a time of need while blazing a trail for the brave women who have given and continue to give so much in service to this nation since," President Obama said. "Every American should be grateful for their service, and I am honored to sign this bill to finally give them some of the hard-earned recognition they deserve."

The WASP was established during World War II with the primary mission of flying noncombat military missions in the United States, thus freeing their male counterparts for combat missions overseas. They were the first women ever to fly American military aircraft and they flew almost every type of aircraft operated by the Army Air Corps during World War II, logging more than 60 million miles.

Being in the Oval Office while the president signed the bill awarding the Congressional Gold Medal to the WASP was exciting and "an honor," Ms. Harmon said. "It's really nice that all these women will be honored for their service."

"We didn't join the WASP looking for recognition, but were just doing what was needed during the war," she said. "Most everyone else in the country worked hard too and did their part to contribute to the war effort."

When young female pilots thank

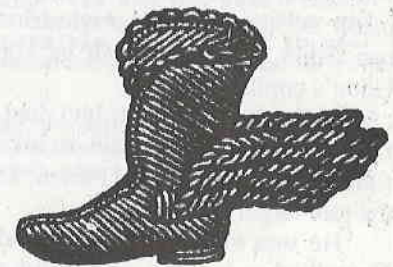
Ms. Harmon or call her a pioneer, she admitted to feeling slightly embarrassed and thoroughly impressed with today's military women aviators.

"The women pilots in uniform today are truly exceptional," she said. "They are so competent, educated and knowledgeable about things far beyond what we ever dreamed of learning in home economics. They should know that all of the WASP are very proud of what they are accomplishing today."

More than 1,000 women joined the WASP and 38 of them were killed during duty. Following World War II, these women were released from duty and returned home. During their time in the WASP, they held civilian status and were not members of the military. Their contributions went largely unrecognized and the women weren't afforded veteran status until 1977.

The groundbreaking steps taken by the WASP paved the way for today's generation of military female aircrew currently engaged in conflicts around the world.

The Congressional Gold Medal is the highest and most distinguished award Congress can award to a civilian. Since the American Revolution, Congress has commissioned gold medals as its highest expression of national appreciation for distinguished achievements and contributions. In 2000 and 2006, Congress awarded the Gold Medal to the Navajo Code Talkers and the Tuskegee Airmen, respectively.



The Flying Boot patch was awarded to airmen who evaded capture and "walked out" of occupied territory.

Last flight of the 'Hitch Hiker'

1st Lt. George L. Parker, E&E# 2164, 391st BG, went down 12 miles southwest of Caen on July 28, 1944. He died in 1989. Now his daughter in Duncanville, Tex., has learned more about the crash.

From the
DALLAS MORNING NEWS
Metro Section, Page 1
Aug. 11, 2009

By AVI SELK

<aselk@dallasnews.com>

For years, Kay Talbert of Duncanville had heard only fragments of her father's remarkable war story.

How his B-26 bomber - nicknamed "Hitch Hiker" - was shot in half over northern France in 1944.

How he parachuted into a circle of German troops.

How he was later rescued by the French underground.

But just as remarkable is the story behind the story - how a French historian tracked down pieces of the bomber in a Normandy wheat field and coaxed the details of the crash from its last living crew member.

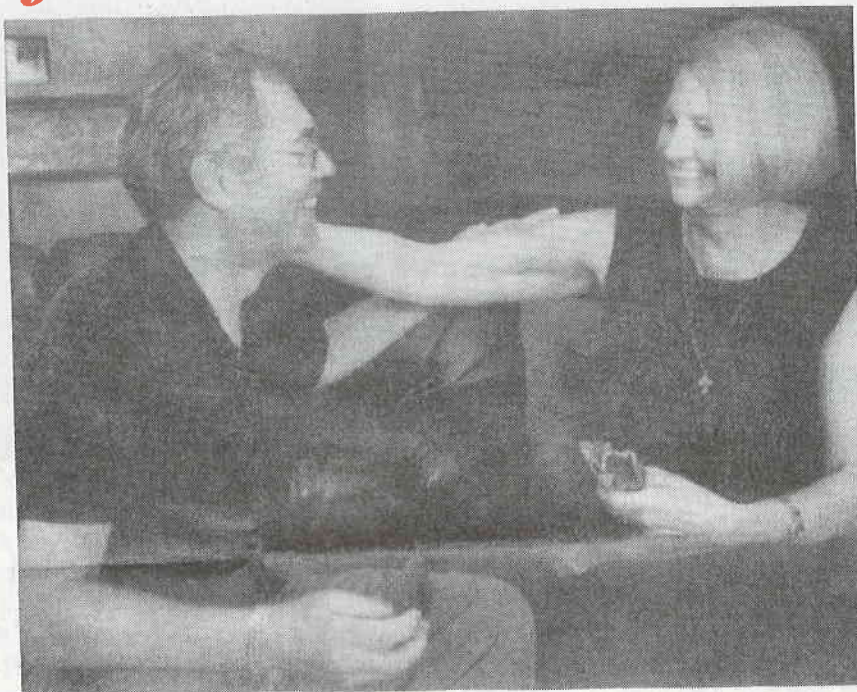
This month, the historian, Christian Levaufre, is completing the story by bringing a few of the plane's fragments home to the crew's relatives.

One of his stops was Duncanville, where he visited last week with Talbert and brought her a piece of the Plexiglas windshield her father looked through as Hitch Hiker's copilot.

"It was just story that had died as far as I knew," said Talbert whose father, 1st Lt. George L. Parker, kept the tale largely to himself.

"He was very open and friendly. He talked a lot, but not about the war."

Parker died in 1989, but thanks



French Historian Christian Levaufre, with Kay Talbert in her Texas home, brought her fragments from her father's plane. The village of Fierville-Bray has dedicated a memorial to the three crew members who died in the crash.

to Levaufre, who e-mailed Talbert out of the blue in 2004, she has managed to reassemble her father's story.

Since then, Talbert has slept in the village where her father was captured and visited the hospital where she believes he hid from German troops.

Unearthing the accounts of fallen or captured soldiers is a family tradition for Levaufre, who remembers as a boy helping his father dig a B-47 out of a field near his hometown.

In 2000, Levaufre was contacted by the nephew of Hitch Hiker's bombardier, who asked him to find the crash site and erect a memorial to his uncle and other crew members who were killed.

Knowing little more than the plane's nickname, Levaufre began searching for the B-26 among the more than 2,000 U.S. planes that went down over France in the first

two months of the invasion.

His first clue came from an archivist at the Air Force Historical Research Agency, who found a report that Hitch Hiker was last seen flying over a town called Thury-Harcourt on July 28, 1944.

"It's like saying it was last seen over Duncanville," Levaufre said. "It's a starting point, but you don't know where to go."

At the end of the paper trail, Levaufre set off to Thury-Harcourt. He and his wife spent a week visiting nearby towns, searching for any record or account of Hitch Hiker's crash site.

He found plenty of sites, but no sign of Hitch Hiker until late 2002, when officials from a tiny village near Thury-Harcourt replied to one of his letters.

Levaufre sent a friend to scour the village of Fierville-Bray for matching wreckage. The friend found some, and Levaufre decided

to make the trip himself.

As he stood in a wheat field with the village mayor and an old resident who said he had seen the wreckage, Levaufre had no more doubts - he had found Hitch Hiker's resting place.

In 2004, as the village set about turning its wheat field into a memorial for the three crew members who died in the crash, Levaufre began scouring the U.S. for guests to invite to its dedication.

"I had always wanted to find the crew," he said. "But I didn't want to find them just to tell them we could do nothing."

He found the last living crew member, Staff Sgt. John Sweren, by simply sending a letter to every Sweren he found in U.S. phone books.

The pilot and co-pilot had died in the 1980s, so Levaufre invited their children.

He enlisted a U.S. journalist to track down the family of the engineer and radio operator, who both died in the crash, but he found no living relatives.

It was at the dedication in France that Sweren, who had kept the story of Hitch Hiker's last flight bottled up for six decades, finally shared his account with relatives of his old crew.

"I think he [Levaufre] helped me bring out the things that needed to be talked about," said Sweren, 86, who is now writing a book of his account. "He opened the doors for me."

The story of Hitch Hiker might have ended the morning the plane crashed. But for Levaufre, it is now part of a growing link that spans half a century and the better part of a hemisphere.

Besides his stop in Duncanville, he plans to visit several U.S. friends he made while searching for the stories of other fallen airmen.

Levaufre said he never charges for his services.

"Let's say they paid in advance for the freedom of my country" he, said.



It was a real lively party when this threesome got together at Dayton.

*From left: Vice President Beverly Patton Wand,
Director Mary Spinning Shier and Secretary Betty Hennessy.*

A memo from the OSS archives

(Courtesy of Art Jubilian, Fremont, Ohio)

SUBJECT : Itinerary of 389 Columbia Party.

**TO : Commanding Officer, 2677th Regiment, OCS (Prov)
Attention: Operations Officer.**

1. The attached, taken from the field diary of Lt. Popovich, presents a brief outline of the activities of the Columbia Party which was composed of Lt. Col. Farish, Lt. Popovich and Radio Operator Jubilian, from 15 April to 15 June 1944.

2. This is one of the most exciting stories that has come out of the Balkans. During this two month period, this party passed through enemy lines seven times and three times they took with them wounded airmen on stretchers or on excoarts. At one time the party was on the road constantly for five days and nights, merely snatching an hour or two of sleep along the roadside.

3. In addition to evacuating the airmen, Lt. Col. Farish also sent back a considerable amount of valuable intelligence that has already been put to use.

4. The Columbia Party, and also Lt. Musulin who was recently evacuated from Mihailovich territory, are proceeding to Naples today for a few days' rest, during which time Lt. Col. Farish is attempting to coordinate some of the information which Musulin has brought back from Chetnik territory with his own data from Partisan sources. Farish will return to Bari in about a week and then leave for Algiers, where it is possible you may wish to arrange an appointment for him with Ambassador Murphy before he returns to Washington.

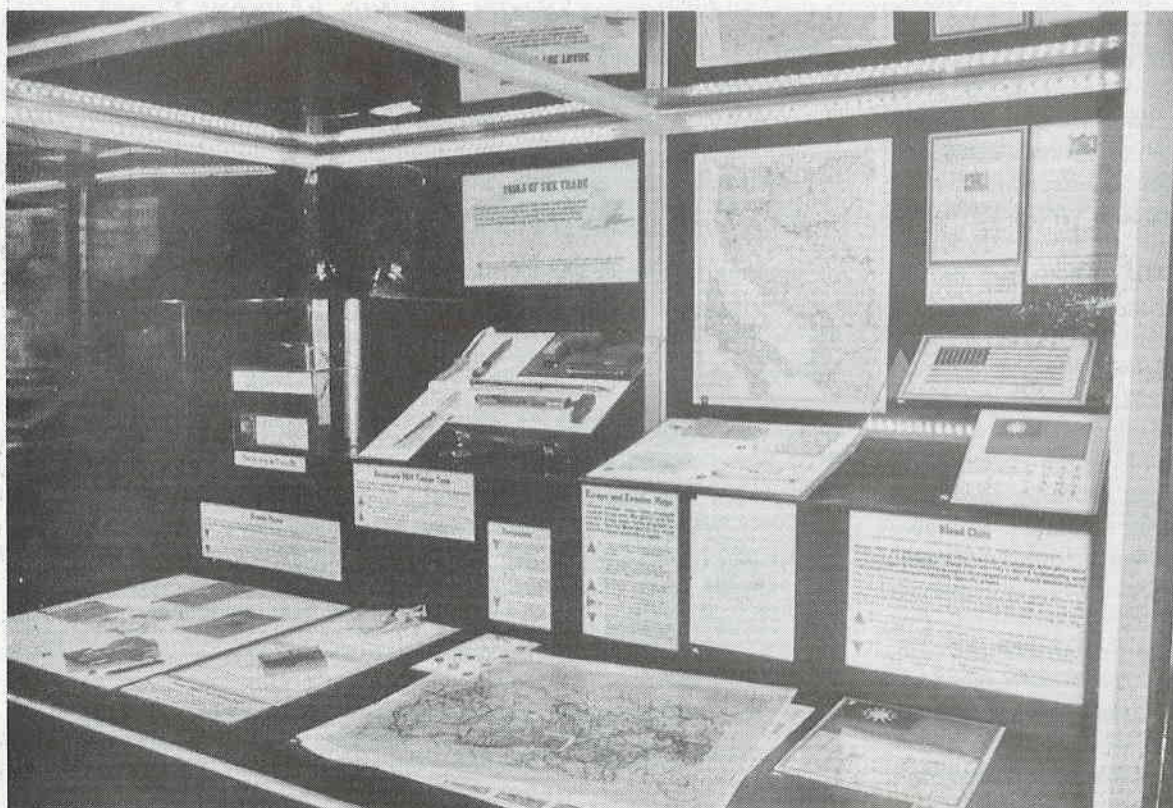
5. Proper papers are now being prepared here to recommend citations for all members of the Columbia Party. Recommendations for the promotion of Farish and Popovich are also being forwarded.



**EDWARD J. GREEN
Lt. Comdr., USNR
Commanding.**



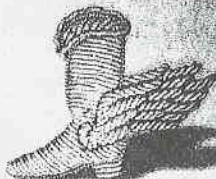
Seven Helpers were special guests at the Dayton reunion. The lighting for this photo at the dedication of the AFEES exhibit was less than perfect, but from the left are: Renee Atkinson, Marguerite Frasier Miller, Yvonne Daley Brusselmans, Nadine Dumont, Peter Hakim, Gilbert Sauer and Art Jibilian.



An exhibit telling the story of the Air Forces Escape & Evasion Society was dedicated at the National Museum of the Air Force during the Dayton reunion. Shown here are some of the many items displayed in the gallery.

AFEES displays in the National AF Museum

WINGED BOOT: ESCAPE AND EVASION



The global nature of World War II created new escape and evasion (or "E & E") challenges for Airmen. For the first time, US Army Air Forces (USAAF) Airmen received specialized equipment and formal instruction in escape and evasion techniques.

In Europe, an Airman stood a good chance of making it back to friendly lines if he could evade initial capture by enemy forces. Often with the help of local inhabitants, three thousand American Airmen blended into the population and became members of the "Blister Club" by walking out of German-occupied western Europe. Several hundred more escaped through Yugoslavia. By donning civilian clothing, however, they lost their Geneva Convention rights and ran the risk of being shot as spies if captured.

Several hundred USAAF prisoners in Europe chose the risky prospect of escaping prisoner of war (POW) camps. When they left the relative safety of POW camps, they took their lives in their own hands, and several were killed during escape attempts. Others were executed or sent to concentration camps as punishment for escape attempts.

Escape and evasion in the Pacific and China-Burma-India (CBI) Theaters presented much greater difficulties for USAAF Airmen. The vast expanses of the Pacific Ocean and the unforgiving terrain in the CBI made surviving the environment a priority for a downed Airman. Furthermore, an evader could not "blend in" to the local population as they usually could in Europe. Even so, Chinese citizens helped thousands of USAAF Airmen evade, and some Chinese were brutally executed because of the help they provided.

The problem of escape and evasion in the Pacific and CBI was captured by the Japanese. "It is almost impossible to escape from the hands of the Japanese," they wrote. "It is almost impossible to escape from the hands of the Japanese." The problem of escape and evasion in the Pacific and CBI was captured by the Japanese. "It is almost impossible to escape from the hands of the Japanese," they wrote. "It is almost impossible to escape from the hands of the Japanese."

Doolittle Raiders

After bombing Japan on April 18, 1942, all but one of the sixteen B-25 Doolittle Raid crews evaded Japanese forces in China. The remaining crew landed in the USSR, and they successfully escaped internment in 1943. Thanks to the generous help of the Chinese people, 64 of the 75 crewmembers evaded capture.

Pictured shortly after the raid (l to r) are Lt Herb Macia, Lt Jack Sims, Sgt Jacob Eierman, and the crew.

Captain Bruce Carr

While evading after being shot down over Austria, Capt Bruce Carr came across a German Fw 190 fighter on an airfield. Although he was completely unfamiliar with the aircraft and could not read the instrument panel, he started up the engine and flew the fighter to his home airfield.

Some USAAF POWs, hoping to match Carr's feat, drew up instrument panels and flight instructions like this one, drawn by Royal Frey.



Patton



Smith



Sweatt

The 3 surviving
Evader members
of the original meeting,
Niagara Falls, NY, 1964



The Hospitality Room was a popular loafing shed at the 2009 reunion. This photo shows a typical group enjoying the chance to visit and relax with other members and visitors. Former RAF Chair Frank Dell is standing in the rear; seated at the left are Len Rogers and Fred Platt.



The AFEES ensign was encased for presentation to the AF Museum at a ceremony during the Saturday night banquet at Dayton. Chairman Ralph K. Patton is at the right of the flag.

Photos from the 2009 AFEES reunion in Dayton



Officiating at the dedication of the AFEES exhibit at the National Air Force Museum was this quartet of dignitaries. This was a feature of the 2009 AFEES reunion at Dayton, Ohio. From the left: Maj. Gen. Charles D. Metcalf, director of the AF Museum; Richard M. Smith, retiring AFEES president; Ralph K. Patton, founder and honorary chairman ; and Gen. Duncan J. McNabb, commander of USTRANSCOM, Scott AFB, Ill.



Former fighter pilot Leeecroy Clifton (350FG) checked out the aircraft at the Air Force Museum during the 2009 reunion. He lives in Cibolo, Tex.



Enjoying a visit at the Dayton reunion last May were Friend Member Don Spearel (left) of Clearwater, Fla., and Life Member Joe Manos of Sacramento, Calif.

MEMORIAL SERVICE A TRADITION

*Those present are welcome to
come forward to light a candle
in honor of some one special.*



JERRI DONOHUE
Brecksville, Ohio



DR. CARL SCOTT
Columbus, Ohio



*Renee Atkinson, widow of the late Leslie A.G. Atkinson, was a
special guest at Dayton. Here she poses (seated) with well-known
helper Marguerite Frasier-Miller, now living in Sedona, Ariz..*



FRIENDS: *These two Comet line helpers were caught by the
camera of Adeline Remy at the 2008 Comete weekend in Brussels.
From the left: Andree Dumon (Nadine)
and Henrietta Hanotte (Monique).
(We were pleased to have 'Nadine' at the Dayton reunion in May.)*

Chetnik peasants take care of flyers

The late Miodrag Pesic described how many American airmen were rescued after falling out of the sky on missions from Italy and Africa. Many patriot groups helped round up airmen in the rugged mountains of Yugoslavia.

By MIODRAG D. PESIC

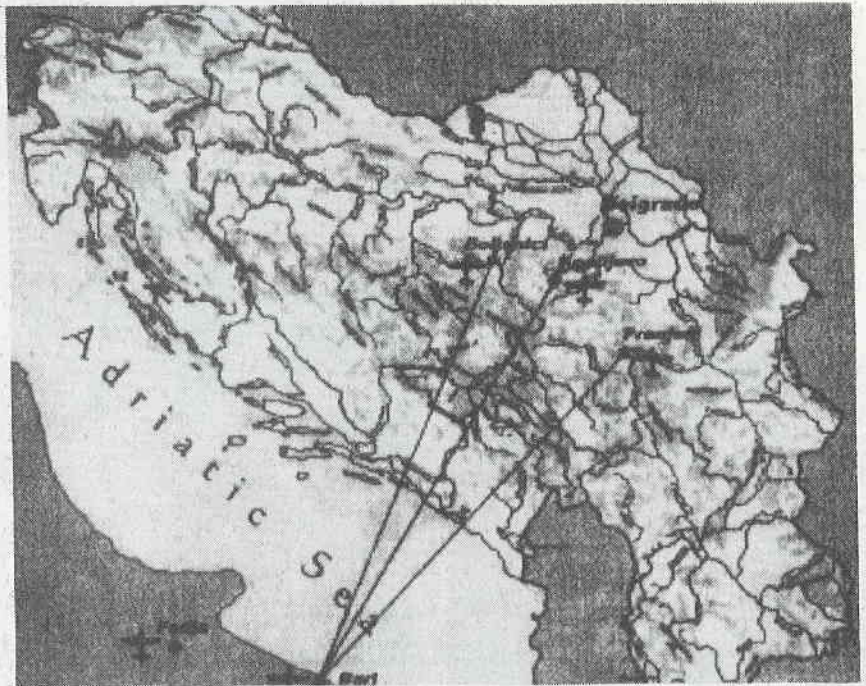
*Author of
"OPERATION AIR BRIDGE"
2002*

In April 1944, the Germans captured the great Partisan commander of the Ivan Kovac Brigade, Lt. Col. Ljubomir Mihailovic. He was sick in bed and the Germans then put him in the hospital in the town of Jagodina.

It was our intention to kidnap him from there.

Our plan to free the colonel was thwarted by an informer. Downcast and saddened, we were returning to our base in the Kujac mountains. As we stopped at the village of Virine, a group of American B-24 bombers appeared, returning from a bombing mission on Ploesti in Romania.

One B-24, lagging behind, losing altitude, had smoke gushing from one engine. At a low altitude the crew started parachuting and the bomber hit the ground. Seven crew members had jumped and three others had jumped out earlier, all landing within a radius of 2 km from us. We ran to



Geographic map of Yugoslavia, the airfields used for the evacuation of airmen to Italy.

help them.

The German occupiers also were on their way to capture them. We got there first and hid the fliers in the forest above the village of Vizine.

The pilot was trying to pull his parachute down from a tree and looked at us calmly.

To reassure him we told him we were Mihailovic's Partisans. As he was an American of Polish ancestry he said, "Ja Polski -- Dimitri" and took out a map. He asked where we were.

We borrowed several horses in the village, lifted the one wounded man on its back, and put the others' belongings on other horses. Bypassing populated areas and roads, we walked until nightfall.

The airmen had trouble due to not being used to it and some had unsuitable shoes, as well as heavy flying clothes. Explaining that it kept them warm at high altitude, their very large heavy flying boots also were a hindrance, and wore out quickly on the ground. We gave them regular shoes and continued to our camp, arriving before dawn.

What impressed us about the airmen was they looked at ease as if

as any moment a plane would come and pick them up, and take them back to their bases in Italy. We were taking them to our place known as Letovistein the South Kujac mountains.

The group grew larger over a period of a month and reached about 50 downed airmen, and Dimitri was there.

I remembered one more of the first group, an always-smiling chap named Glen Oney from Ohio.

We brought in a small building, beds, and improvised bathrooms for them. Uros Prijic, a former merchant, took care of them as if they were his own guests. He prepared roasted lamb for them every day, not because they requested it, but because it was easy to find lambs in the mountains in spring.

They were given wheat bread because many couldn't get used to corn bread. Several other collection points in the mountains were at Timok, Mlava, and Krajina Corps.

Transportation of the pilots and crews to the areas of evacuation began around July 1, 1944, specifically near the improvised airstrip at Galovic Field, next to Pranjani village at the foot of

Suvobor Mountain.

Crewmen traveled together until we arrived at the railroad and highway Beograd-Nis, then we were separated. We started before dark so we could arrive at the collection center about midnight. The first group crossed Velika Morava River on a ferry boat near Obre village, not far from Varvarin.

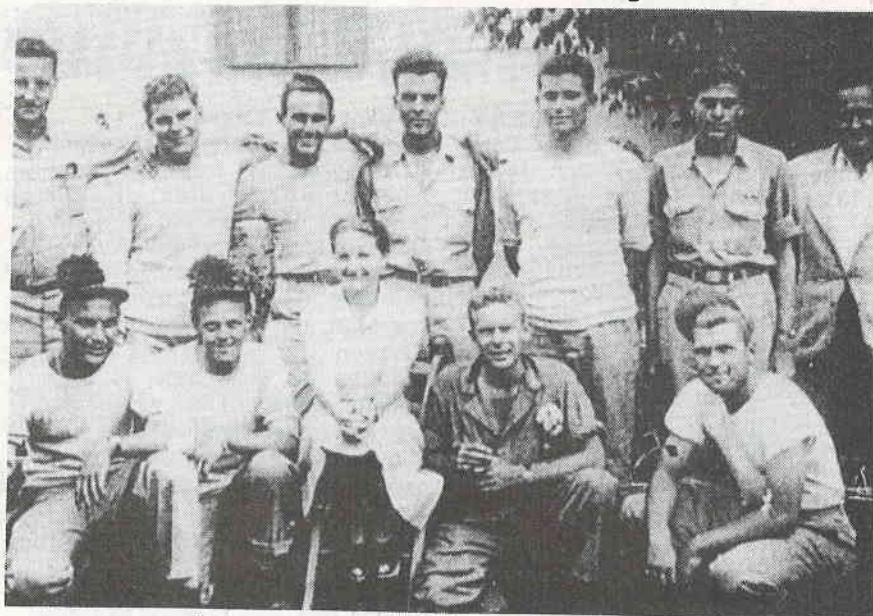
We were resting in a nearby woods by day and then walking in the evening to Kreedin village. Germans were everywhere and so we had to travel under cover of darkness.

The airmen were handed over to the Varvarin Corps of partisans who'd accompanied them further. The second group of airmen was escorted by officers' school students, including myself, to cross Velika Morava River by ferryboat.

After resting a day on the slopes of Jubor Mountain over Potocac village we continued our journey on foot. Our destination was Kalpnk Monastery, near Bekusic village. By then we'd crossed 45 kilometers. We walked through forests by day, along roads at night.

The airmen were informed they were "going home" and were overjoyed. It was with enthusiasm they had begun their long walk since many had stayed with us for over three months.

They soon came to the conclusion



Group of Allied airmen rescued by Chetniks near Ljig, together with a local school teacher.

(Editor's note: Any ID for this photo would be most useful.)

by themselves that "home" was still far away. And a flight to Italy was still a month away. We still had another 25 km to go to reach the airstrip.

Along the journey, peasants from nearby villages brought offerings of food, drinks, socks, and even hand-woven rugs. Deeply touched by such attention, many airmen cried along with the women who were giving them presents.

We joked with them, saying they

were now "Mountain Air Force" which in Serbia was BRDSKA AVIJICIJA and the airmen began calling each other that way.

After a rest we were joined by another group of pilots and crewmen from the Reljac village where the Chetnik headquarters was located.

Then on the ninth day we arrived at Brajice village where pilots and crews were arriving from all parts of Serbia. Already some 200 downed airmen were there, billeted in surrounding villages.

Early on, Col. Mihailovic was in the village of Pranjani personally greeting each group of pilots and he did greet our group. When our journey was long, the airmen had more difficulties as they were not conditioned to walking for such a long time.

Besides having lost their shoes when they bailed out, we had to find them some peasant shoes.

Some became ill, but the warm June nights and bright sunshine helped!

**This article was adapted from the
Flying Fortress Newsletter, May
2009 issue.**



American airmen, covered with Serbian national rugs thrown over their shoulders before evacuation to Italy.

(From the Wichita Falls (Tex.) Record News, Feb. 7, 1987)

Mighty 8th's story retold by general's aide

AIR FORCE SPOKEN HERE: General Ira Eaker & the Command of the Air, by James Parton. Adler & Adler, \$24.95.
By Larry Grauerholz

"Anybody who ever planned to fight a frugal war, lost. War is the most wasteful enterprise ever devised by man. In warfare only one thing is more expensive than victory, and that is defeat."
-- General Ira Eaker, in a 1965 newspaper column.

In the 1970s, when Gen. Ira Eaker stood as a strong advocate of American airpower, a friend had a nameplate made for the general's desk. It read: "Air Force Spoken Here." The phrase fit so well that James Parton uses it for his definitive profile of a Llano County farmer's son who became known as the "Father of the Mighty Eighth" for his role in developing daylight bombardment during World War II.

Parton was General Eaker's aide in England, 1942-43, then secretary to the general staff and chief air historian in the Mediterranean, 1944-45.

Twenty-year-old Eaker was attending Southwestern Oklahoma State College at Durant when the U. S. declared war on Germany April 6, 1917. The very next day, all the boys in the small college, Eaker included, went across the river to Greenville, Texas, to enlist.

Eaker was commissioned Aug. 15, 1917, at Ft. Bliss, Texas, and assigned to the infantry there. It was almost by accident that he became a flier instead of a foot soldier. A recruiter for the Aviation Section of the Signal Corps was forced to land at Ft. Bliss and chanced to talk to young Eaker, who soon applied for a transfer.

By 1920, Eaker had been promoted to captain. During the two decades between two world wars, he had many flight and staff assignments and was involved in record-breaking and experimental flights. With the clouds of war over Europe in 1941, Eaker went to England as an observer and on Feb. 23, 1942 (after Pearl Harbor) was named commanding general of the 8th Bomber Command when the operation was established (mostly

on paper) in England.

Besides assembling an aerial strike force that was to produce 1,000-bomber raids, Eaker proved to be an astute diplomat and eventually persuaded the reluctant British that daylight bombing (the Royal Air Force operated only at night to avoid German fighters) would work. Finally, he was able to talk Winston Churchill into withdrawing his opposition to U.S. day bombing with B-17s. Getting the prime minister to change his stance must rank as Eaker's greatest single accomplishment.

The decision to open up a Second Front in the skies had far broader implications than merely aerial tactics. It influenced the course of the war and by forcing German fighters into battle, gave the Allies air supremacy for the 1944 invasion of the Continent. Later Churchill was to write, "For our air superiority ... full tribute must be paid to the United States Eighth Air Force."

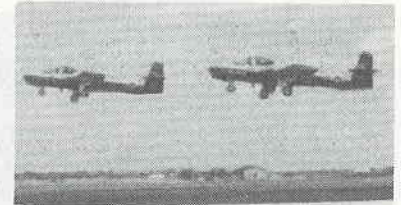
It is Parton's accounts of Eaker's wartime experiences that interest those of us who flew with the Mighty 8th. Here is the inside skinny on the disaster at Poltava, the inspiration of the movie "12 O'Clock High," and the story of the Memphis Belle, first B-17 to complete a combat tour and be returned to the States with her crew to hype the sale of war bonds.

Eaker's health began to fail in 1978, but on April 26, 1985, he was able to don the Air Force blue and go to the Pentagon to receive his fourth star. Congress, prodded by Sen. Barry Goldwater, had passed special legislation awarding four-star status to Eaker and to Jimmy Doolittle, the Tokyo Raider.

After he arrived in England in 1942, Eaker told the British people, "we won't do much talking until we've done more fighting. After we're gone, we hope you'll be glad we came." It was the full text of his first speech in England.

Incidentally, the 13th 8th Air Force Reunion is scheduled for next October in Pittsburgh, Pa.

FALL 2009



The last seven T-37 Tweets in the Air Force inventory, including the two shown here, took off one final time July 31 as part of the retirement ceremony.

T-37 training plane retired

SHEPPARD AFB, Tex. -- More than 50 years of dependable service is a lot to ask, especially from a tool used to train thousands of people in a critical and sometimes dangerous business.

But as men and women in the U.S. Air Force said farewell to the T-37 Tweet on July 31, they did so knowing they got all they asked for and more from the venerable training aircraft.

Among those who came to Sheppard to usher out the end of an era and welcome in a new technological advancement to undergraduate pilot training was Gen. Donald J. Hoffman, commander of Air Force Materiel Command. His story, like many of those who came before and after him, includes the Tweet, a durable and rugged training platform that provided the foundation of more than 78,000 Air Force, NATO and other international pilots since it became operational in 1967.

"For most students, the T-37 is the first jet, the first ejection suit, the first helmet and oxygen mask, and the first formal Air Force syllabus they have been exposed to," General Hoffman said.

General Duncan J. McNabb, TRANSCOM, returned to Sheppard AFB to speak at the farewell dinner to salute the retirement of the T-37. General McNabb attended school in Wichita Falls while his father was a squadron commander at Sheppard AFB.

Al found friends in Burma jungle

1st Lt. Alton Ward Cockrell was rescued after his fighter plane went down in enemy territory. He then returned to duty and flew a total 86 missions. Shortly afterward, the 80th FG was reassigned to a base in India.

By **ALTON W. COCKRELL**
Sanford, N.C.
10th AF, 80th FG

On the morning of April 20, 1945, our flight of P-47s joined in loose formation and headed south to our targets in southern Burma.

The war in the Pacific seemed to be going very well as we continued to pound the Japanese with rocket and napalm weapons on a daily basis.

After about 30 minutes flying we would need to climb a couple thousand feet to clear a mountain ridge then drop again to our regular cruise altitude.

All carried a 500-pound bomb under each wing, about 2000 rounds of .50 cal ammo and fuel for about five hours flying time.

Several bridges had been rebuilt overnight in the target area and our mission was to take them out again.

There were always other targets of opportunity. If we spotted any suspicious movement of troupes or vehicles, they became immediate targets. Each time we pressed the gun trigger, our wing camera automatically recorded the action.

Evidence of target destruction was always confirmed with camera footage. The flight leader that morning was our Squadron Commander, Major Rankin. I was number two pilot in the flight and flying his wing.

Major Anderson was the element leader and his wingman was Lt. Tweedy. We had flown together as a foursome on previous missions.

Everyone was aware of his in-flight duties to protect each other as needed. Safety was a top priority. The night before our mission I had

written my parents a letter, and, among other things, I mentioned I had completed 81 combat missions and was hoping to reach 100 before I came home or before the war ended.

So, on this calm and sunny morning as we cruised along at about 240 mph I felt totally at ease. This was my 82nd mission and everything seemed to be going smoothly.

Our first check point was the well known city of Bhamo. Only a few weeks back, this city was a Japanese fortress. Now it had been retaken and was under Allied control.

About 20 minutes later we crossed the front lines. The enemy front lines are never clearly defined. A given area could change within the hour, and for that reason, we often needed radio contact with a ground controller to confirm certain targets at certain times.

Today, our mission did not require a ground controller as we knew the target layout well.

When over enemy territory we became more cautious. Our concern then was enemy anti-aircraft fire. The flak guns were often moved at night to other firing positions. No one could relax until we were back over friendly territory. So far everything was quiet and routine.

Then it happened. My big, beautiful 2000 hp Pratt-Whitney engine that had been running so smoothly began to skip and backfire. I immediately began to lose air speed and slip slowly out of a loose combat formation.

A glance at the instrument panel indicated an overheated engine and possible engine fire. I released the cockpit canopy lock and slid the canopy to the fully opened position.

Darkish smoke was seeping upward through the cockpit floor. Also, more smoke and flames were blowing from the engine area along the left side of the aircraft. The engine continued to start and stop as I contacted the flight leader to advise of my problem.

Since I was sitting on a huge fuel



1st Lt. AL W. COCKRELL
P-47 Pilot
(1944 Photo)

tank with a few hundred gallons of high octane gasoline, I did not wait for an answer on my radio. As I attempted to roll out the right side of the cockpit I felt the aircraft yaw sharply to the left.

Later I surmised that my left leg had banged against the control stick as I rolled over the right side causing this violent maneuver.

Others on the flight later said that I had actually rolled the aircraft to an almost inverted position before departing the cockpit area.

I had checked the altitude and knew I had sufficient height for my parachute to open safely. I cannot explain why I pulled the ripcord with my left hand because that was not the correct procedure. I also do not remember feeling the sudden jerk on my body as the chute opened.

My first real awareness of the descent was looking up and seeing that huge, white sheet-looking apparatus blossomed out above my head.

The area below was a jungle-like terrain. I could see large trees and small trees and lots of smaller leafy bushes. I drifted into one of the low bushy areas and touched down without any problem. The parachute collapsed over the small bushes and prevented any chute drag.

This was wild looking country and surely there must be some wild

animals peeking from behind those big trees. I also knew I was in enemy territory and some of those guys might have seen me floating down.

I could see the other P-47s circling above me so I waved my arms violently to indicate all was well. My real problems were just beginning, but perhaps those could be solved one at a time.

During each mission briefing prior to takeoff, pilots are reminded of escape and evasion procedures to follow if bailout occurs. It includes information regarding the different Burmese tribes we might encounter, such as the friendly Kachins and the sometimes hostile Shans.

All this information was interesting and valuable to me later that day, but at the moment I was thinking about some wild animal or maybe a herd of people-hating pachyderms hiding. A round from my .45 probably would not have penetrated the outer layer of an elephant's hide.

All this garbage running through my mind was stupid. I guess I convinced myself to calm down and think about more important things such as Japanese soldiers. After all, I had landed in enemy territory.

My fellow pilots were still circling overhead as if they had the situation all worked out except now there were only two planes flying around. I assumed the flight leader was returning to the airbase to try to get help in some way.

I gathered my limp parachute under one arm and began making my way slowly through the foliage, hoping I would soon intersect a path of some sort.

Every few minutes I would stop in an open wooded area and spread my chute over low bushes so the planes above could maintain a position on me.

Some 20 to 30 minutes later I stumbled upon a partially cleared area about two acres in size. On the opposite side of the opening I could easily see a small dark skinned person. He appeared to be digging around an old tree stump and using some type of crude hand tool.

A small brush fire was burning

nearby. I stood motionless for a few seconds trying to figure my next move. I did not want to appear aggressive by walking over to him with my gun in hand.

Yet that long handle tool he was using could be used to take me out with one swift blow. Was he a friend or foe? Certainly he did not look like a warrior.

My parachute harness, still attached to the chute, had a small survival pouch connected to the back padding. This pouch contained a hankie-size leather piece displaying the American flag and a message written in both English and Burmese, which said, "I am an American pilot and need help returning to my people." The pouch also included a small pocket knife, some fish hooks, needles and thread and several non-melting jungle chocolate bars. Each item in the kit was to assist a person in some way to survive a situation just as I was experiencing.

I needed help from the natives to evade the Japanese soldiers and lead me to our Allies. It was time to make my move toward the unknown workman across the field.

As I walked slowly toward this strange looking man, I held the leather survival message in my hand hoping it would appear as a sign of greeting and good will.

I was approaching him almost from his back side as he continued to chop around the old tree stump. About 15 feet from his position I stopped. He appeared to be working alone, so I simply said, "Hello" to him.

He quickly turned toward me and stared for a few moments as I extended my hand with the leather message and moved closer to him. He dropped his work tool and took the message from my hand.

A slight grin wrinkled his aging face, but I did not believe he could read the message. He said nothing but kept grinning. I forced a grin also.

He appeared to be elderly, so I thought I might outrun him if he chose to attack me.

My fellow pilots continued to circle overhead. I decided to spread

my chute again to identify my position. In the meantime, the stranger had walked over to a large shade tree and returned with a crusty old gourd full of water. He motioned for me to drink. It was cool and refreshing and I thanked him by bowing several times and grinning a lot.

As we stood under the shade tree, I used hand movements and a few body gyrations to demonstrate what had happened to me. I don't think it registered because he just nodded his head and kept on grinning. I hoped he didn't think I was just strolling through the woods one day and happened to meet him.

After several swigs of cool water I returned his water gourd and listened while he chatted a few words in his own language. The he made a "come with me" gesture with his hand. I gathered my chute and followed.

Soon we were on a neat little jungle path walking in a southern direction. My only compass was the sun, so I kept it over my left shoulder most of the time while walking. I had been on the ground about an hour and was beginning to feel pretty good about the help I was getting.

We had been following the path about 30 minutes when suddenly one of the P-47s swooped low over our heads, then climbed sharply as if to make another pass.

I spread my chute over some small bushes and on the next pass a yellow message streamer was thrown from the aircraft. The streamer was about five feet long and weighted at one end so it would quickly fall straight down. It also had a message pouch on the weighted end.

Unfortunately, the streamer did not fall in an open area but lodged in a nearby tall tree that had only a few limbs near the top. The tree was about 12 inches in diameter and curved slightly from the ground to the limbs. There was no way I could climb an almost limbless tree that tall and recover the streamer.

I knew the pouch contained a message giving me specific instructions, but at that point I was lost for an answer. I glanced at my Burmese friend and he still carried

that toothless smile. He pointed his finger at himself and then to the hanging streamer and began to hustle up the tree like a young monkey.

His hand over hand and foot over foot movements were classic. I just stood there amazed. Maybe he was a Burmese Olympian on spring break.

The streamer was retrieved in short order and the message pouch contained a ground map of the area and my position and specific instructions to continue south until reaching an east/west improved dirt road.

The road appeared to be about six or seven miles from my position. I was cautioned to arrive before 5:00 pm and remain out of sight until friendly troops arrived.

I really wanted to hug my helper but opted to grin a lot and share one of my tropical candy bars. We returned to the path, walked about 30 minutes more and came upon an almost hidden little village with lots of round bamboo huts. Some appeared to be growing right out of the ground.

Near the center of the hut compound stood a much larger, deluxe structure. High pilings held it about 10 feet off the ground. A series of ornate steps led up to the front entrance. As described in my survival briefings, it had to be the home of a Kachin tribal Chieftain.

My friend and guide led me over to the fancy steps. Several villagers gathered nearby. As we stood facing the high front entrance, a grossly overweight Burmese looking man stepped outside his hut door and stared down at us. He was wearing a sloppy robe-like garment and a friendly looking smile on his face.

We eyed each other for a moment and then with both hands he beckoned me up the steps. He spoke no English, but after I handed him the leather message, he appeared to understand at least one of the Burmese dialects. He then nodded his head as if to say, "I understand." I nodded in return and grinned.

Then he turned to the assembled villagers and spit out about two minutes of unknown tongue. Very

shortly six men gathered at the ground level first step. The Chieftain chatted with them briefly and motioned for me to follow them.

I bowed a couple of times and thanked him in English. He returned to this hut, and I waited with the six men until they were ready to move out. Shortly two other men brought two large gourds of water for our group and we headed south again.

During the next three hours I visited two more similar villages, all looking about the same, including the Chieftain's house. Each time a new team was selected to accompany me. I assumed the previous teams returned to their respective villages.

When the third and final group was selected, they brought along two crates of live chickens and plenty of water. Apparently they had planned to stay overnight somewhere along the way, but I had no plans to bunk down that night in the jungle. I had a rendezvous to keep a little later that day.

During the past several hours I had continued to spread my chute about every 30 minutes to help the aircraft above maintain visual surveillance. After passing through the third village, I observed the aircraft circling above turn northward. It never returned.

The assumption was that we were getting fairly close to the improved road and the aircraft might give any Japanese troops nearby a pretty good picture of what had taken place. I was not disturbed that the aircraft departed, but it certainly was comforting to have them fly cover me for several hours.

Occasionally the team I was walking with would stop briefly and everyone would sip water from the gourds. It was always cool and refreshing. We all did a lot of nodding and grinning each short rest period. These men were doing me a real favor and I have always been thankful.

About 4:30 that afternoon our jungle path intersected a one-lane dirt road. I stood in the middle of the road and looked both ways. It did not look very improved. Vehicles of

some sort had traveled on it, and the tire prints appeared to be trucks or some type military vehicle. I wondered: Allied or Japanese?

Due to the wooded area and slight curves in the road, I could see only a couple hundred yards each way. This had to be the road and my contact point. Improved roads that we had in the U.S. did not exist in this jungle looking environment.

As our team briefly paused on the roadway, I decided to end our journey and take my chances on this spot to wait and hope. Using all types of hand motions and finger pointing, I finally convinced their team leader this was the end of the line.

As a gesture of thanks, I opened my survival pouch and gave them all the remaining items. Of course, I had passed out some of the goodies to each team as we parted so the pantry was pretty bare. They all appeared most grateful, and after we bowed a few times and grinned a lot, they gathered their chickens and water gourds and headed back toward the village.

For the first time since leaving my aircraft, I really felt very much alone and at the mercy of the unknown. I still had my parachute and if I stayed there overnight, I knew it would keep me warm.

How about those wild animals moving around after dark looking for food? Japanese troops could be hidden in the heavily wooded areas waiting to slit my throat when the sun went down. Has this whole escapade gone too well?

This was no time to panic and dwell on the negative. I thought back to all the times I had flown missions. Before each mission most of the pilots would go to the small church tent for prayer. The Chaplain was always there. He would walk past each kneeling pilot, touch his head, and whisper a short prayer. Each pilot was given his own personal prayer. It was a warm and safe feeling.

I was standing alone in this foreign land where people still live as their ancestors lived thousands of years ago. These people were not my

people. This land was totally unfamiliar. My known enemy, the Japanese army, had conquered most of the land these people exist on, and they could like very much to take me also. At that place and time I did not have a chaplain to comfort me and offer his blessings, but I did know how to give thanks. I had a short, personal chat with the Lord and asked for guidance.

Just a short distance from the dirt road I spotted a small clump of bushes with thick foliage. From that vantage point I could see at least 100 yards in each direction up and down the road and still remain hidden.

The time was 4:45 pm, about one hour before nightfall. It had been a physically demanding day, yet I did not sense the feeling of exhaustion. How much longer before the strain would consume me?

I sat on the ground in my bush-made den peeking through the foliage at the road nearby, looking first one way then the other and listening for the sound of some type of American military vehicle. The message in the dropped streamer said, "Be there not later than 5:00 p.m."

I could have used another drink of cool water. I remember looking at my chute mostly hidden in the leaves, but right beside me. I spoke directly to it. I said, "Old buddy, I have not yet thanked you for saving my life. You came with me this morning. You held me tight as we leaped from the aircraft. You helped me float gently to the ground below and all day long served as my helper to talk with the aircraft circling overhead. If I stay in this jungle tonight I'll use you again to help keep me warm, and not one time have I said thanks." I had already been blessed several times that day.

My thoughts were suddenly interrupted by the sound of an oncoming vehicle. It was approaching from the Allied front line area.

It was difficult to remain calm. I could feel my heart pounding for the first time all day. While still peeking through the foliage, I saw what appeared to be an American Jeep coming toward me.

There were deep shadows all along the road due to heavy foliage on both sides. When the vehicle was about 100 feet away, I could easily see four people and it definitely was an American Jeep.

The Jeep top had been removed and, as it moved closer to my position, I could see two American GIs in the back seat and two American officers in the front seats. I quickly gathered my chute and charged out in the little road. The Jeep came to an immediate stop.

My Squadron Commander, Major Rankin, was in the front seat and another major was driving. The two enlisted men were members of the American advisory group assigned to the Chinese Division back at the front lines.

One sergeant was manning a .50 cal machine gun and the other was carrying a military rifle. They came along to provide security during the rescue. The major driving was an American doctor assigned to the Chinese military unit. He came with the rescuers in the event I needed medical attention.

I do not remember my spoken words as I approached the vehicle, but I do remember the unbelievable feeling that swept through my body. I wanted to hug all of them.

I think Major Rankin spoke first. He said, "Get in and let's get the hell out of here." The Jeep driver executed a spinning 180 degrees and we never looked back. As we moved along on the narrow and curvy little dirt road, Rankin asked me if I was hungry and handed me a basket of fried chicken and a canteen of cool water. It was the best chicken I had ever eaten.

The two men in the back continued a head-turning vigilance as we moved recklessly toward friendly territory. I would judge the wild and high speed ride to last about 45 minutes, but I don't think anyone was timing it.

It was almost sundown when we drove into the huge Chinese bivouac area. The fact is, when we entered the encampment area, my first thought was, "Lordy, we have

accidentally driven into the wrong military compound. From freedom to a prisoner of war." Rankin must have noted my frustration and quickly allayed the emotion with an explanation.

Chinese soldiers were everywhere. I thought they were Japanese troops. We finally parked at a fairly large three storied building. It had been converted into a small hospital for the troops.

Upon entering the building, several Chinese wounded soldiers were observed bedded down on Army cots.

We continued on to the second floor to the doctor's office and his quarters, where he gave me a quick physical checkup. He gave me a thumbs-up on my condition and recommended a good night's rest for full recuperation. Major Rankin suggested I hit the sack early and he would make arrangements for our return to the fighter squadron the next day.

My bed that night was an old Army cot, but it felt so good just to assume that prone position. I realized there was a war going on, and this had been the most unusual day of my life. I did not realize that fighter pilots could get so tired!

I thanked all the guys for their bravery and my rescue. That fried chicken sure had tasted good that afternoon. I ate every piece in the box. The day was Friday, April 20, 1945. For me it was Good Friday.

The next morning sunrise was about an hour old when Major Rankin tapped my cot gently and informed me that my breakfast was getting cold. I don't know where the cook found real bacon and eggs, but it tasted like back-home cooking.

While consuming my second cup of coffee, Rankin briefed me on the plans for our return trip back to the squadron. There was an old grass airstrip about one mile away that was used by cargo planes to bring supplies to the ground troops. A C-47 cargo aircraft was scheduled to arrive around 10:00 that morning and would fly us back to our base. The plane arrived as planned, and we returned home that afternoon.

Good to hear from ya, Mia

Dutch Helper Mia Lelivelt attended many of our reunions when her health permitted.

This year she sent a greetings message to Dayton, addressed to all her friends:

"A warm hello from Holland for all of you -- wishing you a wonderful reunion!

"My thoughts will be in the States. I miss your company. It is nice that you have so much news to inform the people about the past.

"Hopefully they will learn the difference between war and peace.

"Stay in touch with your friends when traveling and make the most of every day."

700 AF leaders meet in Dayton

DAYTON, Ohio (AFNS) -- Some 700 Air Force senior leaders, acquisition professionals and defense industry partners met at the campus of Sinclair Community College April 20-22 to address challenges faced by the military acquisition technology and logistics community.

The event featured workshops, training and a forum for acquisition professionals to discuss regulatory changes and ideas for process improvement.

The agenda included presentations by Gen. Donald Hoffman, Air Force Materiel Command commander, and Gen. Duncan McNabb, U.S. Transportation Command commander.

Gen. Norton Schwartz, Air Force chief of staff, praised the group for many acquisition successes, even as media and public scrutiny naturally gravitates to a few high-dollar programs facing cost overruns, delays or contractor protests.

MESS HALL MEMORIES

BY BOB KARSTENSEN

The old line chief before me,
as we passed down through the line,
peered into his mess kit,
then whistled low and fine.

He turned to me in disbelief,
his eyes were truly plexed,
"I've done a mite of soldier'n, son,
and I'll share what comes next;

But what IS this they've handed me:
Could it be my evening chow?
Could somewhere's under that applesauce,
be hiding a piece of cow?

Does the gravy on my cobbler
mean I've lead a sheltered life?

Where do I see it written
that my world be full of strife?"

"Don't touch those peas," he cautioned me,
"I know they're bullet hard,
and if I'm not mistaken, lad,
them 'spuds' were boiled in lard."

"That marmalade they pass around,
and it goes for the butter, too,
were made, they say, the very day,
that Custer fought the Sioux.

Back home I served as Deacon,
in my little country church.
I've ate at lots of picnics,
from a blanket 'neath the Birch.

My Daddy often told me,
and I guess it holds true now,
Be pleased at what's been given,
and give thanks in prayer and vow.'

But I feel the Lord's grip weakening,
as my stomach starts to shrink,
for what I've just been offered is
TOO THIN TO PLOW, TOO THICK TO DRINK

Andre took Cody across the border

The late Cody U. Watson, E&E# 62, 95th Bomb Group, was one of the first American evaders to cross the Pyrenees. He arrived in Spain on July 2, 1943, and was jailed for about 30 days. This excerpt from his memoirs is provided by his daughter, Kittie, and his son Cody Jr., who was a first timer at the Dayton reunion this year.

**BY CODY U. WATSON SR.
(Recorded in 1988)**

After the fourth mission was the mission on which our aircraft went down. It was over Rennes, France and we were in 29689. We were going over at 25,000 ft., and everything was normal except the thing that bothered us was that we were leaving contrails.

These contrails sure pointed a finger to us for the German fighters to follow. But we went on and made our drop over Rennes, and on the way out, I noticed a B-17 down below our aircraft with the cockpit afire.

And then shortly after that something hit my right wing. The aircraft tried to spin off to the right, and I was not able to hold it. I finally got the auto-pilot back on and was able to hold it level long enough to get the crew bailed out. This was on the 29th of May, 1943.

After making certain the rest of the crew had gone, I bailed out of the hatch in the nose. I landed in a wheat field in northern France. It was something after 4 o'clock in the afternoon. I lay out in this field and didn't move for a while and then just about dusk I got my parachute and hid it away in the woods that were nearby. I got rid of the .45 automatic that I had and then I was left dressed in an air corps flying suit.

And at that time and until I left England, I never heard of any case in which pilots or crewmen were shot at

by German fighter pilots. And I know that this would have been possible when I bailed out because I bailed out last and didn't use very good judgment. I must have been about 8,000 ft. when I ripped the cord of my chute which caused me to hang in the air for quite a while.

I do recall an ME-109 circled me a time or two but headed away. I guess headed back towards his base.

I made my way to a little house that I had been watching from the side of a hill that I had been on all afternoon. Toward dusk I made my way up there and knocked. An old gentleman came to the door.

He must have been in his 70s or 80s. I said, "Je suis an American," and he motioned me to come. He couldn't speak English and of course I couldn't speak much French. But anyway, the old gentleman took care of me, gave me a bed to sleep on, and gave me something to eat.

The next morning he kept saying, "Mayor, Mayor". I didn't know what he was talking about, but finally decided that he was going to take me to the mayor of the little village. Well, I decided to go along with what he wanted to do, and he took me down to the village and to the house of the mayor, and the mayor invited us into his house, and his wife offered breakfast because I hadn't had any that morning and I don't believe the old gentleman had either.

They finally made me understand that they were afraid for me to stay there in the village.

So I left and started walking. At first I walked on the roads and headed generally south.

To give you a little idea of what was in my escape kit --there was this map on a rubberized material so that being wet would not harm it, several bars of chocolate, and a little rubber-like bag with a narrow neck for water that also included some tablets.

I left there and found that no matter which way I went on the road, I was attracting dogs that belonged to the farmers or so-called peasants.

At any rate, I left for the woods and decided I would not try to walk in the daytime any longer. I did find this little hut way back in the forest somewhere, and I knocked on the door.

This lady came to the door. I expressed to her who I was in what little French I could speak, and she put me up for that night, and then the next morning she gave me something to eat, and then when I started to leave, she filled my pockets with boiled eggs.

In that area of France there was evidently a feeling of either fear of the Germans or that they felt that they had better learn to live with the Germans because they had them on their hands. They did not act as friendly in this particular area of northern France as they did in other parts of the country that I passed through.

The Germans left all the road signs on the roads, and with the map I had I was able to pretty well judge where I wanted to go.

I remember one town I went through, which I later visited on a trip to France while flying with MATS out of Donaldson Air Force Base in Greenville, SC. The name of the town was Chateauroux, France, and when I walked into that town I looked up the street, and there were German soldiers milling around on the street.

The native people were the ones I really had to fear. I didn't think about that at the time.

I got well down into France and stayed one night with this farmer and his family. I told them what my name was and that I was trying to get to the Spanish border. The young man in the family and I were able to understand each other--he speaking broken English and I trying to speak French. He made me understand I should stay there at the house until the next morning.

Next evening the young man took one bike and I took another, and we went down to the bank of the river.

He had already prearranged for this boatman to be there. The boatman took me aboard and took me across the river and when we got to the other bank I gave him all the French money I had left.

At any rate, I continued to walk south and was walking in the daytime because I earlier discovered that walking at night only left a trail of barking dogs behind me, whereas in the daytime they didn't seem to pay much attention.

I remember late in the afternoon not too far from Lourdes, that I was on the road. I can close my eyes and still see that little white house sitting on a little knoll, probably about a hundred yards from the road, and the gate to it was standing wide open. I might add that it had been my practice since I had bailed out that when I came to a place where the gate was open that that was a sign that I probably would be welcome.

But anyway, I walked up the pathway to the house. There was no dog around and no sign of anyone, and I knocked on the door and the door opened, and I said, "Je Suis American."

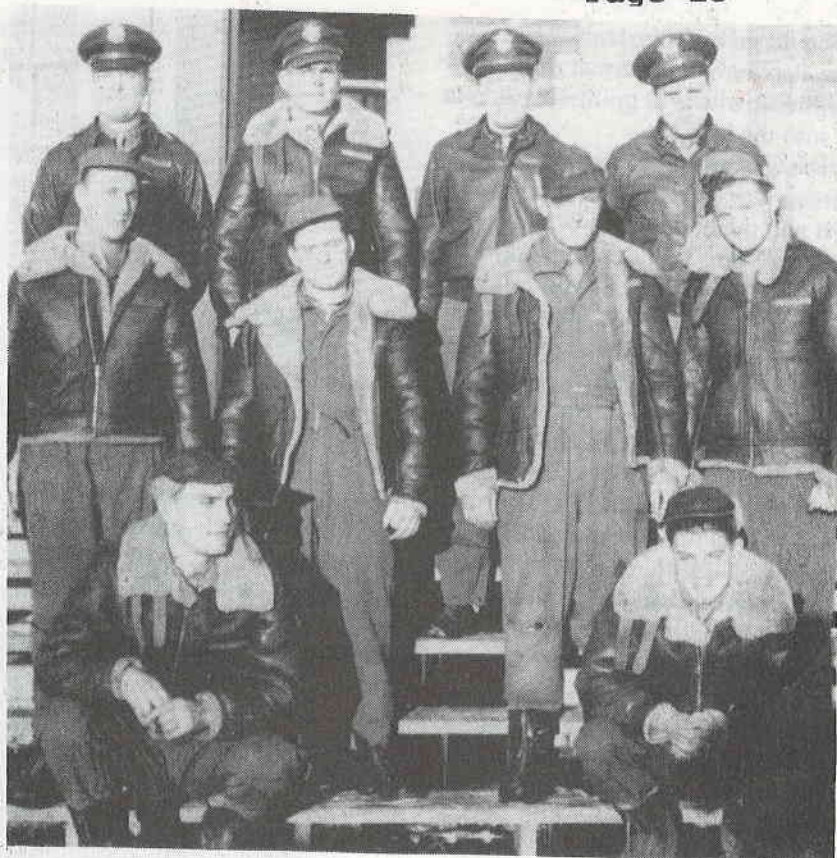
Before I knew it, the man jerked me and grabbed me inside the house. He understood a little English, and he finally made me understand the reason he had been so abrupt and so quick to pull me inside was that there were Germans down the road, not very far.

He wanted to get me in the house and out of sight. After we made conversation with my feeble French and what little English he used, he made me understand that I was to stay there and that he was going to town (Lourdes) and talk to a friend.

Later that evening he came back. I heard a truck drive up, and it stopped and it came through another gate around the house. And he brought in a boy whom I was to become closely acquainted with, and his name was Andre Turon.

Andre lived in Lourdes, and he had volunteered to come and talk to me.

They came out in a wine truck because the truck went out from



Cody U. Watson, aircraft commander, is shown at upper left in this crew photo taken at Rapid City (S.D.) Army Air Field in early 1943.

Lourdes practically every day. The sentries didn't pay much attention to it now after they had checked it over a time or two and found that everything was in order. By this time the sentries had become familiar with the driver.

Andre told me he wanted me to come and go with them on the truck and go back to town. I could stay at his house for a while before we went toward the Spanish border. As he had explained to me, he had been wanting a chance to get out of France because he was about 26 years of age.

He feared that the Germans would get him for a work camp in Germany.

So I thanked the people I had been with and went with Andre, and he and his relative put me in the back of this truck. While there, Andre discussed with me his wanting to go to Spain to avoid being put into a work camp. He wanted to join the French in Africa because he felt if he got into Spain he would be able to join the French in North Africa.

Another thing he did the next day was to get out some boots he had used to climb the Pyrenees, in which the foothills were right at Lourdes. I went with him and they had a sort of workshop in the house. He pulled some hobnails out of those boots and asked me to hand him my shoes, and in turn he took those nails and put them in my shoes so that they would give me a little better traction when we got into the mountains.

He told me he was making arrangements with a shepherd he knew, who lived in the foothills of Spain. The shepherd had agreed to guide us to a point up in the Pyrenees to where we couldn't possibly miss seeing a pass that we wanted to go through. When we got to and through that pass we would be in Spain.

A day or so later this relative of Andre's picked us up in the wine truck and concealed me in the back and headed toward the Pyrenees. We came to a little town in the foothills and that was about as far as

he could go with the truck. But it was also here that we met this shepherd, who was going to guide us up into the hills.

We had arranged that when we left town that the shepherd would go first and then about two or three hundred yards behind him, Andre would go, and then I would follow about the same distance from Andre. Purpose was that if the shepherd ran into anything that looked dangerous, he would give a signal to Andre and Andre would in turn signal me and both of us would take cover.

We went on up the hills that day, and got well into the mountains. This man, of course to me at that time he seemed like an old man, but he couldn't have been over 45 or 50, was certainly in good condition because he took off running.

We tried to keep up with him, and he'd look back and see we weren't close behind, and he'd stop and we'd come up on him and he'd be sitting there laughing at us for not being in good shape.

We continued on our way, our objective being the pass the shepherd had pointed out to us.

After dark we got to this point where Andre said, "Easy," and he told me that this was the place, that we were now in Spain.

John Neal has 2 books of interest

Friend Member John A. Neal of Calgary, Alb., Canada, has authored two fine books about subjects of interest to our members.

In *THE LUCKY PIGEON*, he goes through enlistment, training, operations and his five months as an evader in France.

BLESS YOU, BROTHER IRVIN is about people around the world who have saved their lives by parachute, including his own own. The book includes the story of the Caterpillar Club and the names of some of its illustrious members.

Both books are available from the author: John A. Neal, at phone: 403-873-1353 or at <nealpigeon1@aol.com>



Bill Giambrone at 88 and as he was in 1942. If not for a balky radio, he might have been among the dead on July 3, 1944.

Survivor honors his lost buddies

From the Philadelphia Inquirer
May 25, 2009

By DANIEL RUBIN

Bill Giambrone plants 75 little American flags around his apartment building every Memorial Day in the hope people will remember what he cannot forget.

Every time he walks through his front door in Norristown, past the photograph by the light switch, he's reminded of the most harrowing moment of his life --how lucky he was, how the others weren't.

The picture is of the

Sparta/Wilkins crew. Giambrone is one of the ten young men, all laughing at some now-forgotten joke. Except the pilot, James Sparta.

It was Sparta who had spoken up for his men after they blew off calisthenics one morning back in training. Those few minutes of shut-eye had nearly cost Giambrone his sergeant stripes.

Two or three weeks after Giambrone was discharged, in August 1945, he and his wife Cecilia, drove to Flint, Mich. to pay a condolence call to his pilot's parents.

This is the story he told them of

the Sparta/Wilkins crew's final flight: "The Germans came at us at 12 o'clock," he begins, sitting at his living room table, his wife of 66 years hanging on his words. "I saw them come right out of the clouds."

Their B-24 was the last heavy bomber as a formation flying 20,000 feet over Glurgiu, Romania. Their target was the marshaling yard where trains would be shipping oil to fuel the Nazi war machine.

The date was July 3, 1944. Giambrone was 23. He'd flown 21 missions. He was operating the bomber's radio and manning a gunner position in the waist of the plane.

"I heard a *boom* and saw one of our propellers was on fire. I called to the pilot, but I couldn't get anybody. Then the tail started to wobble."

What saved Giambrone was a balky radio. At about 15,000 feet he'd been sitting in the tail when the pilot called for him to figure out what was wrong.

When he was done, instead of squeezing back to the tail, he switched places with Bill Freiling, who'd joined up at 17 and palled around Italy with Giambrone like a kid brother.

So Giambrone was sitting four feet from the open camera hatch when the plane took on the fire and spun out of control.

"Your mind goes crazy at a time like that," he says. He grabbed a parachute from the wall, harnessed it to his chest, and grabbed the edge of the hatch for support as the bomber started bellying up.

"I poked my head out, and the wind took me right out."

Giambrone had never practiced a jump. But there he was, hurling through the air, managing to avoid the hail of bullets exchanged between a German fighter and one of his escorts.

He pulled the chute, and it yanked him. Somewhere along the way, both his boots fell off, and he floated down toward the Romanian farmland, unharmed and unaware of the fates of the rest of his crew.

He didn't find out until a day later. He was a prisoner, held at a

local police station. A German officer led him to the crash site.

What he saw there he sees to this day, especially at night when his dreams can be so disturbing that his arms flail.

A farmer handed him the dog tags from his eight dead friends, men he'd trained with and flown with for more than a year. His jailer let him scavenge another man's boots.

Weeks later, in a Romanian prisoner-of-war camp, Giambrone learned that one other crew member had survived, his friend George Morrison, the one who'd encouraged his buddies to sleep through calisthenics.

Morrison broke his ankle parachuting to safety, and was taken to a hospital before the Germans jailed him in the camp.

Back home in Norristown, Cecilia, who'd married her beau before his induction, knew something had happened, but wasn't sure what. She hadn't heard from him for weeks. One night she had a dream that when she went to visit her husband in South Dakota, his buddy

met her at the train. Bill was in the hospital.

"He held up his hand. It was all black."

When she awoke, she marked the date on the calendar. It was July 3, 1944.

Bill and Cecilia Giambrone spent a lot of time on the road the summer he was discharged. After visiting his pilot's parents, the couple called on the family of the co-pilot, Howard Wilkins, in Delaware. They drove to Steubenville, Ohio to see Bill Freiling's parents, unaware that both of them had died.

For a few years, Giambrone visited Morrison in Dayton, Ohio, where his fellow survivor made armatures for the auto industry.

All that's left of the Sparta/Wilkins crew of the 515th Squadron of the 376th Bomb Group is Bill Giambrone, a retired barber, father of three and grandfather of seven, who each year at this time hammers little American flags into the ground in the hope that we slow down and remember what's been sacrificed to let them fly.

Changes/Corrections for Roster

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COLLINGS FOUNDATION

Wings of Freedom Upcoming Schedule

- 9/16-Hyannis, MA**
9/18 (B-17, B-24, & P-51)
 Airport: Barnstable
 Municipal Airport
 Location: Griffin
 Aviation Services
- 9/18-Beverly, MA**
9/21 (B-17, B-24, & P-51)
 Airport: Beverly
 Municipal Airport
 Location: Aviators of
 New England
- 9/21-Sanford, ME**
9/23 (B-17, B-24, & P-51)
 Airport: Sanford
 Regional Airport
 Location: Southern
 Maine Aviation
- 9/23-Laconia, NH**
9/25 (B-17, B-24, & P-51)
 Airport: Laconia
 Municipal Airport
 Location: General
 Aviation ramp
- 9/25-Manchester, NH**
9/28 (B-17, B-24, & P-51)
 Airport: Manchester-
 Boston Regional
 Airport
 Location: Aviation
 Museum of NH
- 9/28-Worcester, MA**
9/30 (B-17, B-24, & P-51)
 Airport: Worcester
 Regional Airport
 Location: Main
 terminal
- 9/30-Plymouth, MA**
10/2 (B-17, B-24, & P-51)
 Airport: Plymouth
 Municipal
 Location: Main
 terminal ramp
- 10/2-Norwood, MA**
10/5 (B-17, B-24, & P-51)
 Airport: Norwood
 Memorial Airport
 Location: Main Ramp
- 10/5-Lincoln, RI**
10/7 (B-17, B-24, & P-51)
 Airport: North
 Central State Airport

Enlisteds present 'Order of Sword'

SCOTT AIR FORCE BASE, ILL.
 (AFNS) -- Arriving at the Scott Club in a horse-drawn carriage while a bagpipe melody filled the air, the commander of Air Mobility Command and his wife became a part of military history Aug. 14 here.

Gen. Arthur J. Lichte and Chris Lichte received the carriage ride under security forces escort as the start of a rich military tradition where the enlisted men and women of AMC bestowed the high honor of Order of the Sword to the general.

The event, which draws its customs from a Middle Ages ceremony, recognized General Lichte for his leadership at AMC since his arrival here nearly two years ago. It was a ceremony that saw enlisted airmen donning full mess dress to honor their leader in the finest of traditions.

Chief Master Sgt. Joe Barron, the AMC command chief, notified General Lichte of the nomination in April. As chairman of the Order of the Sword committee, Chief Barron said the primary reason the general was chosen for the award is because he is a "leader among leaders and an airman among airmen."

"I cannot think of a leader more deserving of this recognition," Chief Barron said.

General Lichte said he didn't learn or build his Air Force career just from professional military education or books, he said he learned from the enlisted core.

"(Learning) happens when the chief comes in and closes the door and tells me what needs to be done," General Lichte said. "It's when NCOs shoulder the load of the Air Force, and when I look into the eyes of airmen and see the pulse of the U.S. Air Force."

General Lichte cited many examples of enlisted leadership and the inspiration and education it has provided him. He said it was an Air Force sergeant who encouraged him to join the Air Force.

He also highlighted an Airman who was a boom operator and

refueled the planes with enthusiasm during his early days at Plattsburgh Air Force Base, N.Y., and he singled-out an NCO from maintenance who worked on those aircraft throughout the night showing tremendous dedication and professionalism.

"When I was the vice commander for the United States Air Forces in Europe, every other country wanted to be like the United States Air Force," General Lichte said. "They wanted to come and train with us. They wanted to come to our professional military education. They wanted a professional enlisted corps?"

*CMSGT Joe Barron is
an Honorary Friend Member
of AFEES*

OBITUARY

Teodor Hreljanovic fought with Partisans

Teodor Hreljanovic, born in Susak, Croatia, died May 15, 2005, at age 91. A veteran of World War II, Mr. Hreljanovic fought alongside the Partisans for the liberation of Yugoslavia.

His distinguished career included, Director of Astra Zagreb, the pre-eminent import/export company that was instrumental in the economic recovery of his beloved country. He was a member of the Diplomatic Service and was stationed in Tirana, Trieste, London and New York.

In 1963, Mr. Hreljanovic relocated his family to New York. He founded Picturmedia Limited, specializing in the production and distribution of motion pictures.

Notable is his involvement on "Loves of a Blonde" nominated for an Academy Award as Best Foreign Film, and in the animated film "Elm-Chanted Forest".

He is mourned by his children Maja and her husband Bob Giuliano, Vlado and his wife Susan Hreljanovic and Darko and his wife Pat Hreljanovic.

INFORMATION ABOUT 2010 REUNION

Air Forces Escape & Evasion Society Reunion

May 6, 2010 – May 9, 2010 – Colorado Springs, Colorado

The Crowne Plaza agreed to a price of \$99.00 per night which, including all taxes, will be \$108.31. (Less expensive than the Holiday Inn in Savannah which was \$116.39.) The hotel has also agreed to one free room for every 25 rooms booked (The normal free room ratio is one room for every 40 to 50 rooms booked.). We will also get up to 10 rooms per night at an \$89.00 rate to assist in paying for the helpers.

The following is the tentative agenda for our meeting:

| | | |
|------------------------|------------|--|
| Wednesday, May 5, 2010 | 1:00 p.m. | Hospitality Suite Opens |
| | | |
| Thursday, May 6, 2010 | A.M. | Registration Opens |
| | P.M. | Tour Desk Opens |
| | 1:00 p.m. | Colorado Springs City Tour (Optional) |
| | 6:00 p.m. | Welcoming Dinner |
| | | |
| Friday, May 7, 2010 | 9:00 a.m. | Board of Directors Meeting |
| | 10:30 a.m. | Base Tour with lunch included (Optional) |
| | | |
| Saturday, May 8, 2010 | 8:00 a.m. | Buses Depart Hotel for Air Force Academy |
| | 9:00 a.m. | Memorial Service in Cadet Chapel |
| | 10:30 a.m. | Visitors Center |
| | 11:30 a.m. | Lunch at Officer Club |
| | 2:30 p.m. | General Membership Meeting |
| | 6:00 p.m. | Annual Banquet |
| | | |
| Sunday, May 9, 2010 | 7:30 a.m. | Farewell Breakfast |



-FOLDED WINGS- EVADERS

#1478 Lt. Col. Richard F. Garland, Fair Oaks, Calif., USAF(Ret) died June 11, 2009. Richard flew P-47s and P-51s during World War II. While flying over occupied France, he was shot down and then escaped from a POW camp. Lt. Col. Garland had been awarded the Purple Heart Medal, the Distinguished Flying Cross, and the Medal of Valor.

1981 Virgil R. Marco, Dallas, Tex., passed away on July 23, 2009. As a tail gunner he flew with the 8th Army Air Force's 366th Bomb Squadron of the 305th Bomb Group stationed at Chelveston, England. On April 24, 1944 Virgil and four others bailed out of their B-17, landing near Aubenton, France. The ball turret gunner later died from injuries suffered when his parachute did not open. The pilot crash landed near Leuze, France with five men still aboard. The radio operator had been killed by fighter gunfire. Virgil was first helped by Pierre Bonnet and an Auberton Catholic priest.

Next a farm family from Rozoy, a Catholic priest from Rozoy, a Catholic priest from Guignicourt, the Guignicourt mayor and his daughter, M. L. Bronicke, a French underground agent named Bob, and the Tavernier family in Chauny. On Sept. 2, 1944 the American 1st Army liberated Virgil with Gene Snodgrass(waist gunner) and Bill Lincoln(pilot). With much thanks to their Belgian and French helpers, Virgil and six crew members had a reunion at the Jules Club during the second week of September 1944.

His book "My Stories of World War II" tells his evasion story, and Turner's Air Force Escape and Evasion book has a brief account also.

Walter (Buddy) E. Chapman, Louisville, Ky., died on Jan. 7, 2009. Buddy served as a bombardier on a B-24 with the 484th Bomb Group's 826th Bomb Squadron of the 15th Army Air Force. A German ME-109 shot his B-24 bomber down on June 13, 1944. Forced to parachute out over Italy, with the help of Italian and Yugoslavian partisans, he and three other members of his crew evaded capture and contacted friendly forces.

784 James L. Larkin, Haughton, La., passed away on May 27, 2009. He joined the Army and in May 1942 entered the Army Air Force combat glider program and graduated with the rank of Flight Officer. Jim participated in behind commando operations during the invasions of Normandy, Southern France, Netherlands (Operation Market Garden) and the German Rhineland. He received the Air Medal for bringing himself and three crewmen back to American lines during the Normandy invasion.

Henry Flesh, Hopkins, Minn., died on June 29, 2009. Henry was extremely proud of his service to his country during World War II. Served as a navigator in the 15th Army Air Force with the 719th Bomb Squadron of the 449th Bomb Group. On Oct. 13, 1944 his B-24 was shot up over Italy and eventually the crew bailed out over what is now Croatia. He claimed to have met Tito and to have ridden a horse to his plane's crash site and retrieved objects from it. The Russians flew the whole crew back to the American forces in Italy. Henry often told his story to school children.

Richard Garland***Wounded fighter pilot
escaped from hospital***

Richard F. Garland, E&E
#1478, 367th FG, died June 11,
2009, in Fair Oaks, Calif., where
he had lived for the past 46 years.
He was 86.

He retired as a Lt. Col. from the
U.S. Air Force and served as
inspector general at McClellan
AFB for 26 years.

Fighter Pilot 1st Lt. Garland
was shot down Aug. 17, 1944, in
the Falaise Gap. Wounded, he
was taken as a prisoner to Amiens.
He escaped from the hospital on
August 27 with Capt. Underwood
of the 406th FG and Lt. Patterson
of the 474th FG and rejoined the
war effort.

Richard piloted P-51s, P-47s
and P-89s and broke the sound
barrier many times.

He is survived by his wife of 64
years, Ethel, and two sons.

*Madam Ginette Just, nee Logeon, a young helper in the Chauncy
region of France, died April 19, 2009. She was 84.*



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**Please send roster changes to Richard Shandor!**

***AFEES membership dues are \$20 per year; \$50 for three years.***

***Changes of address a/o telephone # and checks (payable to AFEES)  
should be sent to***

***Richard Shandor, PO Box 254, Cresson PA 16630-0254;***

***Phone: 814-886-2735; <rshandor@hotmail.com>***

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Amount enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Street address or other \_\_\_\_\_

City and State \_\_\_\_\_ 9 digit zip code \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_

Related to Evader? Yes ☐ No ☐ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_ Evader's name \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a Veteran? Yes ☐ No ☐ If yes, what Branch \_\_\_\_\_ Years \_\_\_\_\_

Prefer to receive *Communications* electronically -- Yes ☐ No ☐

Other comments \_\_\_\_\_



# The editor has the last word

By LARRY GRAUERHOLZ  
<afees44@hotmail.com>

WICHITA FALLS, Tex. -- Now that the Dayton reunion is in the bank, thoughts are turning to Colorado Springs for next spring

Executive veep Lynn David is making arrangements with the Crowne Plaza hotel and with the Air Force Academy and promises that both are prepared to do whatever it takes to make certain we are well entertained.

A tentative outline of the 2010 schedule is shown on Page 29 of this issue. Details, plus reservation forms for the hotel and for registration will be in next two issues of this rag.

If you can't wait for more news about the reunion, just tune in our website:

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

San Antonio, Tex., has been mentioned as a possible reunion venue for 2111. Santone is an Air Force town and a great tourist city. Other possibilities are Kansas City and Omaha.

Considering our advancing years, we need to chose mid-continent cities as reunion sites to simplify the travel.

Yep, the Women Airforce Service Pilots have received their congressional medal for ferrying planes in the States during the war.

This is not a complaint, but I can't cease to regret that airmen who were able to escape from enemy territory after being shot down or escaped from a German prison and who were denied such an honor.

As an observer of politics for decades, the harsh reality is that legislation of that type requires an "angel" to push for passage.

Of course, our hired hands in Washington today cannot relate to anything involving WWII.

Past President Dick Smith never told me; I had to read about it in the Fargo (Minn.) Air Museum journal:

SMITH FLIES  
ON SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY

"Richard Smith, a B-17 pilot and aircraft commander during WWII and national president of the Air Force Escape & Evasion Society, was spokesman and ex-officio commander during the visit of *Sentimental Journey* last summer."

Dick's story, "Hide and Seek with the Germany Army," can be found in the museum gift shop at.

<[www.fargoairmuseum.org](http://www.fargoairmuseum.org)>

Dick: What would it cost me to get a copy of your tale?

T/Sgt Ralph Hall (E&E# 1246) was downed on a mission to Bordeaux and evaded until August 1944. Now a Frenchman whose family helped him would like to make contact with any family member.

Ralph's home town was Dadeville, Ala. If you have any info, please contact:

<[morgane.thepault@cea.fr](mailto:morgane.thepault@cea.fr)>

The annual Comete weekend in Brussels is slated for Oct. 17-18.

For info contact:  
<[brigoultremont@skynet.be](mailto:brigoultremont@skynet.be)>

Afees Friend Member and long-time personal friend of mine died recently. Maurice McCall, well known in Wichita Falls military and

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business circles, flew 33 missions with the 8th.

He attended the Savannah reunion last year and had a great time.

I used to introduce him in this manner: "Maurice kept on flying trying to get shot down so he could join AFEES, but he never could done."

Chairman/Founder Ralph Pat and wife Bette have moved to a retirement home in the D.C. area. Their new address:

Mr/Mrs RALPH K. PATTO  
Springhouse Apt. 306  
5101 Ridgefield Rd.  
BETHESDA MD 20816

~~~~~  
From Steve Mac Isaac
WAR IS HELL, THEN YOU
SOME NEW GUY
READS YOUR MAGS

As the test pilot climbs out of experimental aircraft, having torn the wings and tail in the crash landing, the crash truck arrives. rescuer sees a bloodied pilot and "What happened?"

The pilot's reply: "I don't know just got here myself."

THE OL' FARMER'S ADVICE

- * Forgive your enemies. It messes up their heads.
- * A bumble bee is faster than a John Deere tractor.

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