

THE AIR FORCES ESCAPE & EVASION SOCIETY

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French and Spanish officials pose in front of the Saint Giron's train station which they plan to convert to a Freedom Trail museum. A second Freedom Trail house is planned for the old prison at Sort, on the Spanish side of the Pyrenees.

St. Giron's Mayor Bernard Gondran (third from left) is active in the *Chemin de la Liberte* commemorative walk across the mountains, tracing one of the escape routes used by Allied airmen during WWII.

Coming to Sort and St. Giron's **A 'Freedom Trail' House**

From *La Depreche*, Toulouse
May 5, 2000

A decision was reached by the two mayors present at a meeting in St. Giron's Town Hall. Bernard Gondran wants to take advantage of the present popularity of the Freedom Trail to take steps towards a contractual agreement between the two towns.

August Lopez from Sort was guest of the St. Giron's municipality. This agreement will eventually be the object of a file presented to "Europe."

Hence, on both sides of the border, will be living memory of the historic past of this trail which unites both French and Spaniards. This Freedom Trail was used at different times by either side in its quest for freedom.

The trail was first used by Spanish Republicans fleeing the *Franquistes* troops, then members of the underground movements, downed airmen, pursued patriots and Jews seeking to evade occupied France hoping to reach North Africa.

If caught on the Spanish side of the Pyrenees many fugitives spent time in the Sort prison located in a building which in a few years will be one of the two Freedom Trail houses. In St. Giron's, the house will be

located in the old train station which has become property of the city.

Accompanied by his lawyer, Mr. Fernandez-Bernat and his architect, Christian Lladis, the mayor from Sort came to work with his counterpart in St. Giron's. A detailed plan for both sides is being studied in order to promote and give life to the Freedom Trail opened and marked in 1994.

Bernard Gondran was surrounded by several members of his staff and city magistrates. The President of the Freedom Trail Association was accompanied by Noel Faur and a few members of the association. Representatives of both veterans and guerrillas were also in attendance.

The Freedom Trail House (Casa de la Libertad) which will eventually be in place in both Sort and St. Giron's will host exhibitions, a library, a historic database to enlighten visitors interested in history, be it at the level of the work of the Resistance in France or the Civil War in Spain.

First on the agenda in the fall is the preparation of a legal document which will pledge both cities. This document will become the base of a national and European financing package. The realization of the project will take about five years. However, in St. Giron's, Bernard Gondran feels one could reach completion much faster and he will work towards that goal.

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

THE SOCIETY'S PURPOSE IS TO ENCOURAGE MEMBERS HELPED BY THE RESISTANCE ORGANIZATIONS OR PATRIOTIC NATIONALS TO CONTINUE EXISTING FRIENDSHIPS OR RENEW RELATIONSHIPS WITH THOSE WHO HELPED THEM DURING THEIR ESCAPE OR EVASION.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIRES THAT ONE MUST HAVE BEEN A U.S. AIRMAN, HE MUST HAVE BEEN FORCED DOWN BEHIND ENEMY LINES AND AVOIDED CAPTIVITY, OR ESCAPED FROM CAPTIVITY TO RETURN TO ALLIED CONTROL.

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

Fall 2000

AFEES get invitation to Slovakia

AFEES has received an invitation to organize a mini-reunion in Slovakia. President Richard Smith has received a letter from Dezider Toth, deputy director of the Muzeum Slovenskeho Narodneho Povstania (Museum of the Slovak National Uprising) with an invitation to conduct some sort of meeting in Banska Bystrica.

Dr. Milan Buros, who has attended the last two AFEES reunions, has discussed the idea with Dr. Toth.

Dr. Toth explains that the Slovak National Uprising Museum has "a long lasting experience in organizing international meetings as well as reunions of World War II veterans, and we are convinced of our abilities to realize such a task."

Dr. Toth has been in recent correspondence with several AFEES members, including Neal Cobb, Roy Madsen, John Rucigay and Tommy Thomas, regarding such a meeting.

Members who might be interested in a meeting in Slovakia should contact Dick Smith and advise him of their interest.



Last Chance! Still with us?

A red star on your mailing label on the back cover of this issue of the newsletter indicates that this is the final copy you will receive, unless Membership Chair Clayton David hears from you right away.

We hope you will catch up your dues, or at least, let us know that you are still interested in keeping in touch with AFEES.

You may use the form at the bottom of Page 31 to remit dues or to update personal information.



Willie Wolff of Tobaccoville, N.C., (seated, left) was special guest of the town of Cerfontaine, Belgium, at a celebration in April 1999. The town mayor is seated next to him. On Dec. 30, 1943, S.Sgt. Wolff was engineer on a B-17G which came down near Brussels in 6 inches of snow. He and Benjamin Martin, a P-47 pilot, crossed Belgium, France and the Pyrenees. Standing in white shirt is Roger Anthoine, organizer of the ceremony and former Belgian helper.

Willie honored in Belgian town where he came down

Willie Wolff was the guest in April 1999 of Roger Anthoine of Peron, France, for about 10 days. The two have been friends since 1943.

Willie was honored at an official reception in the town hall at Cerfontaine, Belgium, the village where his 303rd Bomb Grp. "Woman's Home Companion," belly-landed on Dec. 30, 1943, returning from a raid on Ludwigshafen.

Roger, now a historian/author, then was a Resistance worker involved in aviation matters.

Co-pilot Jack Jernigan, Willie and bombardier Nelson Campbell evaded capture and returned to England. Five crewmen were captured. Waist gunner

Vincent Reese joined the local underground, to be eventually captured and executed by the Germans, along with seven other U.S. aircrew.

Another ceremony in nearly Chimay honored the memory of the eight crew members and several locals executed in the woods near Chimay/St. Remy.

*Roger Anthoine's book, *Aviateurs-Pietons vers la Suisse* (U.S. Evaders to Switzerland) is now available in French. An English version may appear later when a co-publisher is located. There were some 350 Swiss evaders, including 147 identified Americans, among them James Goebel, past president of AFEES.*

For a day, Richard was a Royal Navy gunner

The recent newsletter series on exploits of the British Gunboat Flotilla has had special meaning for B-17 ball turret gunner Richard J. Faulkner of Auburn, N.Y.

Gunboat 502 picked up Richard, along with P-47 pilot Ken Williams, a mother and daughter, an agent and a captain in MI-9 on April 16, 1944. Richard writes: "Ken and I were down in the crew quarters where we could hear gunfire and shells hitting the boat when the hatch opened and the captain asked if one of us was a gunner. He needed a gunner because

one of his men had just been killed.

"I told him I was a gunner and he took me up on the bridge to use the gun.

"British Spitfires soon came along and chased the E-boats away, so for one day I was a gunner in the British Navy! I was the 19-year-old gunner replacement."

Richard Faulkner (E&E 556) was the sole survivor of a 100BG crew that went down March 18, 1944, near Amiens.



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MINNESOTA, Sept. 1, 2000

Greetings to All you Wonderful AFEES types:

One of my grandfathers always told me that as you get older, time passes more slowly. It seems to me that as I grow older, the time just flies by! It seems that Margaret and I are just home from the Missouri reunion, and now September is upon us.

Things are shaping up nicely for the AFEES reunion May 2-6, 2001, in Spokane, Wash. The information I am getting tells me that Spokane is a delightful city. Basic information concerning the reunion hotel and the Alaskan cruise is on the facing page of this issue of the newsletter.

The 2001 reunion will be handled by an agency based in Tucson, Ariz. Your questions should be directed to Bon Voyage Travel Service, attention Shirley Callighen, 4361 E. Broadway, Tucson, AZ 85711-3589. Her toll-free phone number is 1-800-945-2565, extension 148. Or, you can call Shirley at 520-795-8400. Her Fax number is 520-795-5030.

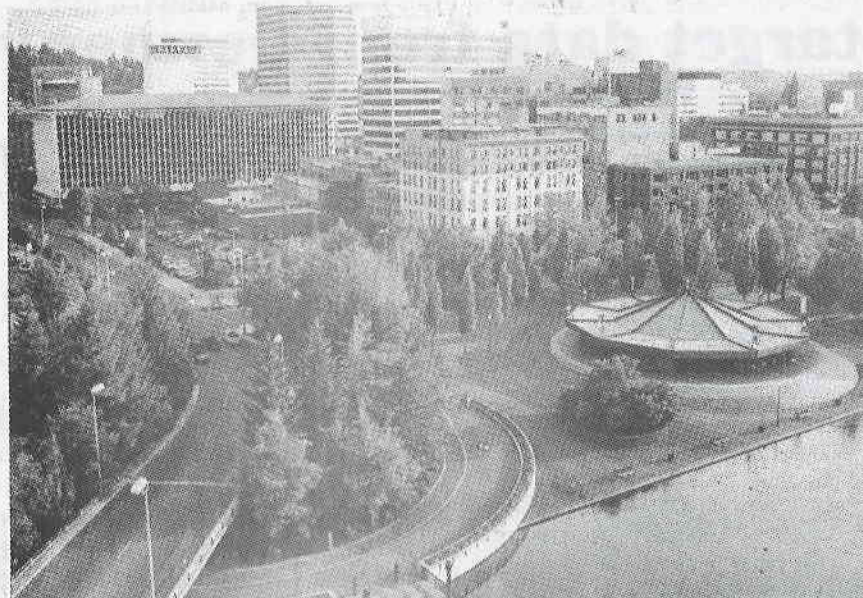
Bon Voyage Travel also can handle your travel arrangements, if you wish. Bus, rail, air and automobile facilities are available, and the Ridpath Hotel offers a free shuttle from the Spokane airport to the downtown hotel.

Spokane has much to offer visitors. AFEES has never had a reunion in the Pacific Northwest, and I believe we owe our members in that region a visit. Incidentally, early May should offer us ideal weather.

Don't forget to consider the Alaskan Cruise which immediately follows the reunion. Details including prices are published on the next page. Bon Voyage can arrange travel from your home to Spokane, on to Alaska, and deliver you home.

Do take care, and we will visit again! Details regarding the reunion and cruise will be included in the Winter issue of *Communications*, due out in early December.

DICK SMITH, President



The City of Spokane as seen from the top of the Clock Tower in Riverfront Park.

2001 Reunion scheduled for Spokane, May 2-6

The 2001 reunion of the Air Forces Escape & Evasion Society is scheduled for the WestCoast Ridpath Hotel in Spokane, Wash., May 2-6 (Wednesday-Sunday). The convention hotel is located at 515 West Sprague Avenue in downtown Spokane.

The Ridpath (formerly the Cavanaugh) offers 315 rooms and 35 suites in two buildings spanning Sprague Avenue. Two restaurants are located in the hotel, the Silver Grill on the main floor, and the elegant Ankeny's on the rooftop.

The heated outdoor pool is open year-round. The hotel offers free parking for guests, and a complimentary airport shuttle is available.

The room rate for the reunion is \$75 per night, single or double occupancy, plus tax. Reservations can be made directly with the hotel by calling 1-800-325-4000 and requesting the AFEES special conference rate. Phone number for the hotel is 509-459-6100.

(Deadline for hotel reservations is April 2, 2001)

Registration for the reunion will begin on Wednesday, May 2. The tentative schedule of events includes a city tour, a visit to the SERE school at Fairchild AFB, and an optional trip to Coeur d'Alene, Idaho for persons not making the Alaska cruise that follows the reunion.

Alaskan cruise is planned for May

Reservations have been made with Holland American Cruise Lines for a 7-day cruise to Seward, Alaska, after the AFEES Spokane reunion next May.

The schedule includes travel by Holland American Lines from Vancouver, B.C., to Seward, Alaska, via the Inside Passage, with port stops at Ketchikan, Juneau, Sitka and Valdez.

From Anchorage, passengers will be able to fly back to Spokane or directly to their point of origin.

Cabin categories begin at \$722.50 per person, plus \$178.30 port taxes, for a total of \$900.80 each, for category L upgraded to J (inside cabin).

Outside cabins start at \$1029 plus \$178.30, for a total of \$1207.30 per person. Airfare is not included. Deadline for deposit of \$250, per person, for the cruise is Jan. 3, 2001. Deposit may be made by any major credit card and is fully refundable up to 60 days before departure.

For persons of our age bracket, travel insurance is recommended.

Arrangements for the reunion and the cruise are being handled by Shirley M. Callighen of Bon Voyage Travel in Tucson, Ariz. She can be contacted at 1-800-945-2565, extension 148, or by e-mail at: scallighen@bvtravel.com

She is preparing a brochure on the Alaska trip, with information on the itinerary and other details, and will send it to interested parties upon request. Order yours today!

OSS provided target data from Germany

The following material on some unusual aspects of communications to improve bombing capabilities in the ETO in late 1944 and 1945 appeared in an occasional publication, "the Life Members newsletter" of The Institute of Electrical & Electronics Engineers, Inc., in its issue of the 4th-1st quarters of 1999-2000. It is distributed to Life members and to IEEE members 65 years and older.

At the onset of WWII, President Franklin D. Roosevelt needed information on goings-on in the occupied countries. Winston Churchill had clandestine spy organizations giving him daily communiques on what was happening. Roosevelt did not. To remedy this dilemma, on 11 Jul 41, Roosevelt appointed William J. Donovan as "Coordinator of Information."

Donovan had some difficulty gaining intelligence from various military commands and on 13 Jun 42, Roosevelt signed a military order establishing the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Donovan became its director. Donovan also had strict orders from Roosevelt to get daily intelligence with reports going directly to the President.

Successful espionage had been achieved in France with wireless telegraphy (W/T) sets, operated from safe houses and shifted as needed. It was impossible to follow this procedure in Germany.

A hostile population and tighter security made W/T sets dangerously conspicuous to carry around and extremely difficult to hide. Plus W/T signals were easy to pick up. The need for code books, antennas and power supplies entailed further insecurity. Finally, breakage often rendered worthless parachuted W/T sets.

In reviewing this situation, it was suggested that a small hand-held transceiver that communicated with an aircraft might be the solution. Thus, these difficulties were overcome with the development and use of the Joan/Eleanor (J/E) project during the fall of 1944.

J-E was a two-way communications device that enabled an agent on the ground to talk directly with an appropriately equipped OSS agent flying above. A plane flying at 30,000 feet could be in constant contact with little danger to the agent of interception. The high frequency

and vertical cone-shape of the directivity virtually nullified enemy direction-finding efforts.

As a double check, all conversations were recorded. A magnetic wire recorder was in the plane to record the ultra-high frequency voice transmission. The direct two-way voice communication also meant elimination of the delays and danger of code garbling. It further enabled briefings to be given to the agent, with the additional advantage of an immediate reply. Mistakes were minimized since either agent could get repeats of clarifications on confusing points--and as much data could be exchanged in a 20-minute contact as could be carried out in days of W/T communication.

To fly J/E missions, the RAF furnished a Mosquito bomber during the fall of 1944. The tail section was remodeled to include a complete oxygen system, intercom, direction indicators and emergency lights, and to provide space for the J/E operator and his equipment. Special training was given to crews to perfect them in the precision techniques required for the operations.

The first J/E mission started in

November 44 with the landing of an OSS agent in Ulrum, Holland. From this time until VE Day (May 1945), a total of 14 J/E OSS teams were landed in Stuttgart, Berlin, Munster, Regensburg, Munich, Landshut, Leipzig, Plauen, Straubing and Bregenz. Successful J/E communications were established with four OSS groups located at Ulrum, Regensburg, Berlin and Munich. Thirty-eight wireless contacts were made with the four teams. Sixteen were with the mission dropped to Ulrum. Only one two-way wireless contact was made with the Berlin OSS agents.

The percentage of successful wireless contacts increased greatly with experience. The equipment was successfully used both in Europe and the Far East.

Results received from even the few missions contacted were very valuable and promising relative to those from the W/T equipped teams. Finally, the "know how" acquired from the Joan/Eleanor project provided a great contribution to long-range clandestine intelligence gathering.

This report is reprinted from the April 2000 issue of the 306th BG newsletter.

From FAME'S FAVORED FEW, a WWII Flier Evades Capture in German-occupied France

CONTINUED FROM SUMMER ISSUE

(The author and his fellow evader had completed their stay in Lagney)

CHAPTER SIX

At the Chateau

By KENNETH E. NEFF
Atwater, Calif.

It was late August 1944 when the pickup truck pulled away from the DeFrance house and started down the road. Oscar Rogers, Guy Wallace, Earl Broderick and I sat in the back talking as we rode along. A little French boy was sitting on top of the cab and kept looking up in the air. By this time in the war, the Allied fighter jocks would shoot up about anything that moved on the ground.

We figured we were safe as anything as small as the truck wouldn't be

considered a target to waste ammunition on. The driver was working his way south and west, following mostly back-country roads.

As we approached an intersection, a big German lorry turned onto our road. We had to follow the German truck and were not happy that it would look like a two-vehicle convoy from the air.

About then, the boy on the roof started yelling, "Avion! Avion!" Looking up we saw a flight of P-47s overhead. We kept an eye on them until they were out of sight. If one of them had dropped a wing, there would have been six streaks off across the field, four American streaks followed by two French streaks.

Our driver stopped in another of those "big" towns like Lagny, all of two blocks by two blocks. How they knew we were coming I don't know, but as we drove down the street, two big doors opened up on the side of a wall. The Frenchman drove in and the doors closed

behind us. The driver opened the back of the truck and the four of us jumped out and went into what seemed to be a kitchen area. The women gave us food while the men worked on the truck. When the driver came in and said, "Let's go," we thanked the women for the food and climbed back into the truck. We were on the road one more time.

For an hour we drove until the driver pulled off the road and into a driveway to a building whose doors had been opened for us. The driver came around to the back and said, "We have arrived so everyone out." We piled out, not knowing where we were or what we were going to do.

The driver told us to come with him. The four of us followed him down a path into the woods. It was pitch black. There were living quarters there in the woods and you would never see them until you walked right into one.

As we wandered deeper into the area, we began to see people. We found out

there were 22 of us in the camp, 17 Americans and five British.

It seemed that every time we left a place, the French wanted to give us money. Even though we did not need the money, they insisted on giving us francs. As a result, we had money and nothing to do with it. While we were out in the woods, we played a lot of poker. The idea was to have the winner give it to the women up in the chateau of Mr. L. Ravel Le Saussay near La Houssaye, Oise. They did all the cooking for us.

The French would bring the food to us late in the afternoon so we could finish it before dark. The food was in covered pots to keep it warm.

Whoever brought the food would set the pots on a table and we evaders would take turns dishing it out.

One day a Frenchman told us to come out of the woods as the Allied invading forces had passed through. We walked up to the chateau and saw a second lieutenant from the 9th Air Force waiting for us. He announced that he was taking charge and would get us transportation south to Normandy and back to England. It sounded good to us Americans.

Later at the chateau, the Frenchman in charge gave each of us an envelope and told us if we wanted to keep any of the papers like our forged French passports, work papers, or hospital papers plus any pictures or other things like that, to put them in the envelope. We were told to seal the envelope and put our home address on it.

After things returned to normal, he would send the envelopes to us. I guess things still have not returned to normal as the mail hasn't arrived yet.

We were in the British sector, so our lieutenant had to go through the English to get anything he needed. Everything he needed was heading north with the British forces pursuing the retreating Germans, so he was out of luck and so were we!

No one, American or English, seemed capable of moving us out of the area, so the French Underground came to rescue us once again. They took us out of the chateau and scattered us around town for the evening meal and a bed for the night. Oscar and I were selected to stay together at a nice house on the north end of town on the main street.



TOGETHER AT THE SAVANNAH REUNION
Evader Ken Neff is on the left; his wife Midge is in the foreground. The Frenchman in the rear is Monsieur Henri Maigret with his wife Yvette. Henri was an Underground courier who first met Ken in the summer of 1944.

**In the next Communications
TRYING TO GO SOUTH**

Rencontres (Met by Chance) . . . and Retrouves (Met by Intention)

By HUGH SHIELDS, E&E 554

After attending my first AFEES meeting in Arizona in April 1999, I began planning my return visit to the town of Cissac Medoc, France, for April 2000. My previous visit began on 5 January 1944 when I jumped from our crippled B-17 and landed in the French countryside north of Bordeaux. (See related story on next page.)

This visit would take place with my wife Betty, and nine of our ten children. (The 10th and his wife were expecting a child the week of our planned visit.)

We received an official invitation from Mayor Mincoy of Cissac, who is married to a daughter, Huguette, of the man who engineered my rescue, Joseph Billa. The mayor provided us with a key link to make our journey successful -- an introduction to his friend, Mr. Jean-Jacques Chaux, who is fluent in English, has e-mail, and was willing to assist us.

We left for France on April 11.

Late Saturday morning, April 15, my family arrived at the Cissac Medoc Town Hall. The sight was unbelievable! Flags of France, the U.S. and the Town of Cissac were flying; WWII trucks and a Jeep from a military museum were on display. There was a large crowd gathered and a television crew was filming.

I was welcomed by Mayor Mincoy and the Town Council. I was reunited with Jean and Rina Bustamente, the couple who sheltered me in their

home on the edge of the woods. I was introduced to the children of the late Joseph Billa and the son of the late Hubert Billa. Deputy Pierre Brana came from Paris, where he represents the region in Congress, to participate in the day's activities.

Mayor Mincoy, in his speech, quoted Marquis de la Fayette, from March 25, 1777: "The happiness of the American nation is closely linked to the happiness of mankind." He went on to say, "You, Hugh Shields, sir, 56 years ago, reversed the current of history and came to help the French people."

I delivered my remarks in French, which pleased my hosts, as I described my experience and the bravery of those who hid me. I expressed my gratitude for their courage and presented the mayor a silver bowl engraved with entwined grapevines and a message of appreciation.

I presented ribbons and AFEES pins to the mayor, members of the town council and Deputy Brana; AFEES clocks to the children of the Billas and the Bustamentes, and citations to Mr. and Mrs. Bustamente, the children of Joseph Billa, the son of Hubert Billa, and Mr. Chaux, our translator/friend.

The Town Council hosted a champagne and caviar reception, a marvelous luncheon and a trip to the sites of the crash and the old mill where I first encountered my rescuers.. A television crew filmed our activities and the broadcast that evening led to another reunion!

Watching the evening broadcast, the son of Rene La Fond saw the story and contacted the mayor to arrange a meeting with me the next day. Mr. La Fond brought his mother and Mme. Picq, the widow of Edward Picq, to see me and these three people filled in for me an important part of my rescue.

In 1944, while I was in Cissac, I was suddenly told to disappear into the woods for the day and that a truck would slow down at 5 o'clock so I could jump into the back and hide. I was taken in the truck to the chateau of the Picq family and when I walked in, there was a place set for me at the dining table.

Rene La Fond and Edward Picq were active members of the Resistance and they engineered the next part of my escape into Bordeaux's Le Bouscat area. Later, both men were arrested and interned at Dachau until liberated by the Allies. Mrs. Picq still lives at the family chateau in Saint Estephe. I was glad to have the chance to thank these three for the bravery of their husbands and father and to introduce them to my family.

Sunday morning, I visited the graves of Joseph and Hubert Billa and pay my respects. We visited the German battlements at Point de Grave and concluded our visit with a luncheon in Amalie on the Atlantic Coast.

The trip was a chance to thank those who helped me, renew old friendships and celebrate the courage of the French people.



**Mayor Jean Mincoy of Cissac-Medoc with
Hugh Shields in WWII period military cap.**

Not easy to dodge Germans on coast

By HUGH SHIELDS

North Redington Beach, Fla.

On 5 Jan. 44, I was bombardier on the B-17, Little Butch, 94th Bomb Grp., 410 Squadron, on a raid against Merignac airfield at Bordeaux, France. It was my eighth mission.

Royan, at the mouth of the Gironde, was the I.P. We could see barrage balloons and AA shells bursting in the distance. We were in a good formation when I saw oil pouring from the hub on the left inboard engine. The engine was immediately feathered and in the process, we dropped back and below the formation.

We were down to 10,000 feet when we got the message to bail out. On going from the nosegun to the hatch, the plane lurched and I fell, spilling my chute

on the floor. I saw the riser cords were still in the clips and thought I might hold the silk together until I was clear of the plane. I really had no choice.

I did a cannonball from the nose hatch and watched the frame of my chute slide sideways. Then the chute popped out and I swung, losing my bearings.

I landed in a marshland clearing with skim ice on the water. I buried my chute and soon heard rifle fire. I could see German soldiers so I ran in short bursts towards the woods. When I reached the woods, I rested a bit and took stock. I had the arming pins from the bombs, a pack of Beechnut gum, a wristwatch and my dogtags.

After dark I started walking, using the North Star and keeping in one direction. I came to a two-lane concrete highway and took a right turn, away from the coast. I wanted out of this area which had German troops all around.

At the third house, I went into the barn hoping for a hayloft, but the rungs ended halfway up, so I walked on.

Finally, it was getting light as I came to the outskirts of a village. I went into a barn with goats, got some straw and rested. About 6:30 I went to the farmhouse door. The French family was very scared. They had me in, gave me a shot of brandy and an egg, and said that I would have to leave, that it was too dangerous with so many Germans around.

Most of the day I spent hiding and dodging German patrols. Then later in the day, I saw a boy with two civilians coming toward me. They were not armed so I said, "Hello," and told them I was an American. Their faces lit up. The father sent the boy for supplies and he soon came back with food, wine and civilian clothes. I ended up with a beret, turtle-neck blue sweater, old blue wool army pants, a dark blue suit coat and old French army shoes. They fit!

The father was Joseph Billa, a wood merchant. He sold firewood from the local forests and lived in the village of Cissac en Medoc. The area was bordered by the Bay of Biscay and the Gironde. I had landed about 15 miles from Bordeaux.

Joseph put me up with one of his woodcutters who lived with his wife and child in a small house at the edge of the village of Cissac. These people, Jean and Rina Bustamente, had only one room. They had a fireplace for heat and cooking. I slept on the floor in a corner.

We got up in the dark and I went to work with Jean as a wood cutter. We had imitation coffee, milk and French bread for breakfast, a snack of bread and wine at mid-morning and noodles for lunch with bread and wine. We had the same in the evening. A piece of pork with bristles still on it was a treat.

I stayed in Cissac for about two weeks. Then suddenly German units were moving down the road within view of the house. Jean told me to go back into the woods and to come out at a certain barn at 5 p.m. and a small truck would come by. The truck would slow down and I would jump in the back and lie down.

I did as he said and when the truck stopped, we were at another town, St. Esteph. I was taken to a house, the chateau of the Picq family, where they were eating dinner with an extra place set for me at the table. I stayed with the Picqs for a few days. One morning Rene LaFond and Edward Picq took me on a spur line railroad into Bordeaux.

I went on to be helped by many other people as I moved to Bordeaux, Toulouse, Carcassone, and eventually over the Pyrenees into Spain during a period of three months.

I returned to London from Gibraltar for interrogation, made a visit to my group in Bury St. Edmonds, and soon received orders to return to the U.S. on May 12, 1944.



Hugh Shields receives an oxygen bottle from his crashed B-17 from the mayor St. Saveu-Medoc. Children of deceased helper Joseph Billa are shown in the background.

'Dog Fight' shown on French television

Documentary tells Jug pilot's story

From the Amarillo (Tex.) News-Globe
Sunday, February 13, 2000

By MARY KATE TRIPP

In France the documentary called "Dog Fight" is part of a series called "Your Life As a Novel," and after seeing a tape last week, I realize how snugly the film fits into its category.

Bob Izzard (AFEES member) of Amarillo, Texas, it seems, contributed much more to the film than a knowledge of combat flying and a certain facility in turning French English into Texas English. The script written by Jacques Besson of Paris tells its story from the viewpoint of a young lieutenant in the 371st Fighter Group of the U.S. Ninth Air Force. He uses a chapter in Izzard's life to make a documentary paying tribute to the role of American fighter pilots in the liberation of France and victory in Europe in World War II.

The documentary, compiled from both Allied and Axis archival film sources, follows history through the life of a young man from Amarillo who celebrated his 21st birthday while flying combat in support of the invasion of Fortress Europe.

That was after he had been shot down behind German lines in France while on an early mission as a P-47 pilot. Rescued by the French underground, Izzard spent weeks getting out of occupied France and back to his unit in England.

He worried about losing his flying skills and being unable to participate in invasion action but his fears were unjustified. Not only did American fighter pilots do battle with the Nazi Air Force during the invasion, they later played a key role in scouting out and strafing the enemy in support of Gen. George Patton's fast-moving columns.

"Life as a Novel" needs a love story, and the World War II chapter of Izzard's life had one, altered slightly in the "Dog Fight" telling by making his sweetheart a military nurse rather than a member of the cast of "Junior Miss," a comedy being presented before American GIs by a traveling USO troop. Bob said film makers made the change because they had good footage of a disheveled Yehudi Menuhin playing his violin to entertain patients in a military hospital. In the film, the nurse is killed in a bombing of the hospital. In real life, Lt. Izzard and his pretty actress "just sort of drifted apart."

After seeing the film, I remain amazed at the role of luck and coincidence in producing a prime example of the documentary filmmaker's art.

Discovery in the National Archives in Washington, D.C., of a filmed record of history of the 371st Fighter Group opened the way for Besson's work; and when the French writer dropped into a New York City reunion of the group, he picked up more information, including the name of Bob Izzard of Amarillo, a retired radio and television newsman, and 55 years

earlier a pilot in the 371st Fighter Group. By September 1998, Besson had made contact with Bob and their collaboration had begun. At the time of the first contact, Besson did not know Izzard had written two books about his wartime experiences -- "Winged Boot" and "Shot At." Izzard said Besson was aware of Lt. Col. Jimmy Daley's command role with the flying group but did not know Daley also was from Amarillo. (Daley, who began his World War II service as a member of the RAF during the Battle of Britain, switched to the U.S. Army Air Corps after this country entered the war. He served with the 371st until his death in action.)

A few weeks before I saw the completed film, I had a letter from Besson reporting that despite a late night scheduling, many people in France saw the initial screening of "Dog Fight." The reaction, he wrote, was what the producers had sought to evoke -- profound admiration and gratitude for "what American pilots did for France ..."

Besson hopes the film will be shown in the U.S., perhaps on the History or Learning channel or some other channel devoted to special programming.

American viewers can enjoy "Dog Fight" on several levels, both as the combat record of a distinguished fighter unit and as a human document with an appealing coming-of-age narrative and overtones reflecting the larger combat picture.

Archival footage shows Winston Churchill and Gen. Dwight Eisenhower visiting the English base of the 371st Fighter Group and Eisenhower with members of the group later in Europe. Among memorable touches is the conversion of a German goose step into a Lambeth Walk, fad dance of the '30s, thanks to some skillful cutting and splicing of film and manipulation of the sound track.

An impressive closing note is a color photo of Bob Izzard, taken in Amarillo in January 1999.

The superimposed text reads: "I joined the U.S. Army Air Corps in June 1942.

"I left a first lieutenant in January 1946.

"I was decorated with the DFC, 15 Air Medals, Purple Heart, Presidential Unit Citation, European Theatre of Operations Medal and 6 battle stars.

"In January 1947, I married Kathryn Richart.

"I have three children: Robbie, Mark and Bill.

"I worked as a journalist ... creating in 1952 Amarillo's first TV news show."

~~~~~  
*Bob Izzard was shot down June 8, 1944,  
over Bolbec and spent two months in  
Normandie, getting back through  
German lines to Ste Mere Eglise where the  
371FG was based. Bob can be contacted at  
2605 South Hughes, Amarillo, TX 79109.*



# L'ancien aviateur américain et les lyceens

(The retired airman and the high school pupils)



*Joseph Normile speaks to a captivated audience of d'Hennebont high school pupils.*

**From Le Telegramme, Brittany, France  
April 10, 1999**

SAINT MARCEL -- The Musee de la Resistance is not only a sacred place of remembrance but also one of reconciliation. Joseph Normile, navigator on board an American bomber shot down over d'Ambon in 1943 and Carl Raschdil, then a FLAK gunner in St. Nazaire, were supposed to meet. The meeting did not take place. High school students from d'Hennebont benefited from it.

The USAF veteran was accompanied by his spouse and Gilles Jagoury (son-in-law of Alban Carlo). As he was making his way into the museum, he was greeted by Col. Jean Paul Bourban (vice president, museum board).

Alban Carlo is the man who risked his life hiding the airman as German patrols were vigorously searching the area for survivors.

A group of pupils from the Pierre et Marie Curie Lycee happened to arrive at the museum at the same time. After completing a detailed questionnaire in order to test their interest in the visit, pupils gathered around the survivor. The museum not only evokes the violence of WWII but also the spirit of combat brotherhood.

Posing bashful questions at first, pupils were

soon made aware of the intense danger encountered by Allied crews during raids on submarine bases, both in Lorient or Saint Nazaire. "Dropping our five 1000-lb. pounds from an altitude of 8,000 meters used to take five hours round-trip from Newcastle. Ten percent of the planes were not making it back."

On June 28, 1943, around 1600 hours, his Flying Fortress is shot down, on fire, by a German fighter plane. Of the ten crew members, four are killed; four others are captured by Germans soon after they hit ground.

Joseph Normile relates further, "The co-pilot and I, unhurt, disappeared into nearby bushes." All they wanted to do was get away from the crash site, so when night came they walked 20 kms through fields and reached Caden, where Alban Carlo, Principal of the St. Joseph School and town hall clerk, hid them for ten days.

Yesterday, intensively listening to Joseph Normile, the pupils found out how he managed to bluff the Gestapo who were tracking him from the railroad station in Malansac to the ones in Tours, Vierzon, Chateauroux and finally, Toulouse. He spent the remainder of the war as a navigation instructor in the U.S.



# Painting salutes 'Great Escapers'



**WITH THE BILL HOLDER PAINTING -- Seated (from left): Mme. Christiane Magne, Francoise Magne. Standing, same order: Jean-Loup Niox, Annie and William Magne, John A. Neal.**

On March 24, 1944, the largest escape during World War II of Prisoners of War took place from the North Compound of Stalag Luft III, Sagan, Germany.

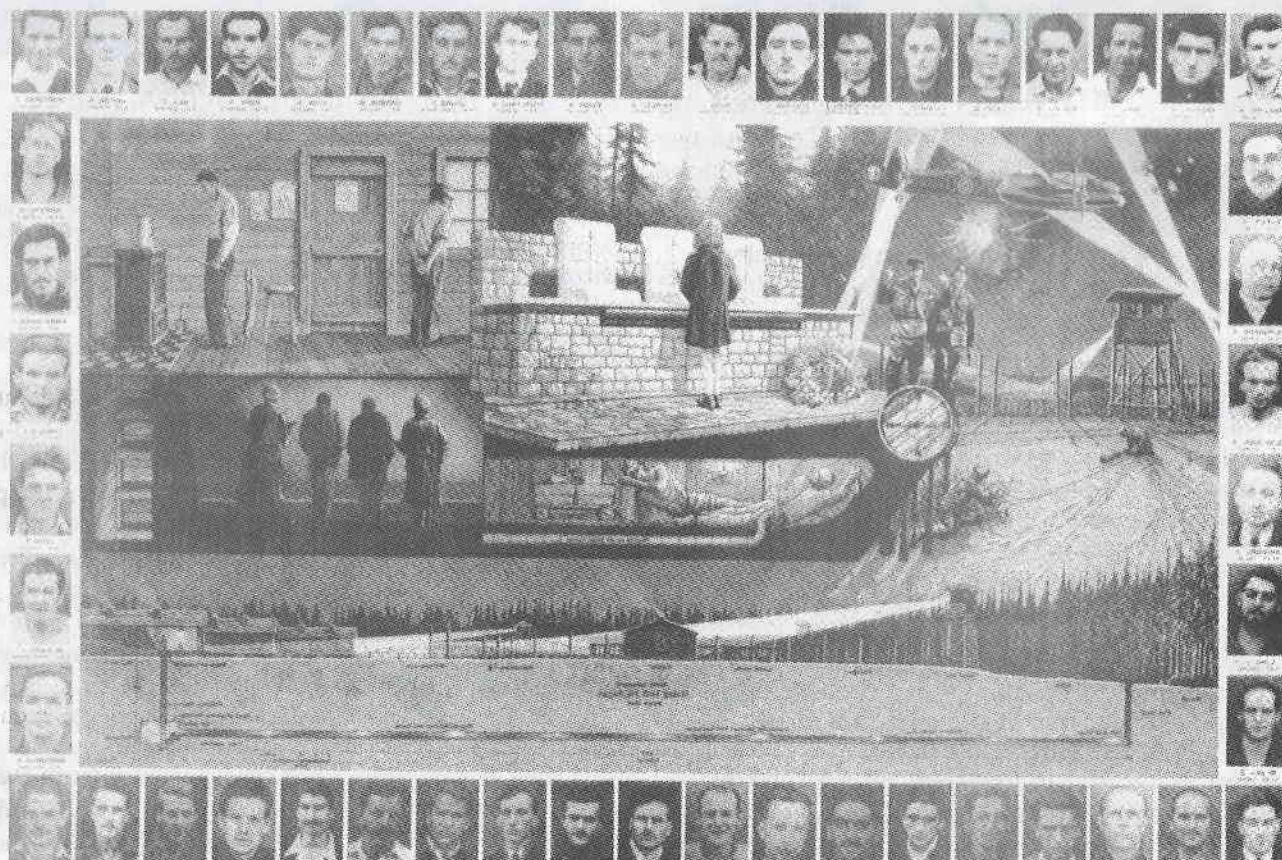
Under cover of a moonless night, 76 Allied Air Force POWs broke out from a tunnel 348 feet long, situated some 30 feet underground, in a determined bid for freedom. The attempts of the escapers ended in tragedy when 50 of the participants were executed on orders from Adolph Hitler. (See Hitler ordered prisoners' deaths, British records show, Page 28, Summer 2000 Communications.)

One of the escapers, and one of the ones murdered was Airman Bernard Scheidhauer of the Free French Air Force.

This is his story.

**By JOHN A. NEAL**  
Calgary, Canada

In 1940, during the German invasion of France, the father of Bernard Scheidhauer was a colonel in the French Army. Bernard, little more than a



**STALAG LUFT III -- TUNNEL MARTYRS**



teenager, escaped to England in a fishing boat after having tried, and failed, a crossing of the Pyrenees to Spain. In the fishing boat with him were three other young Frenchmen. In a storm, the boat capsized and all four were cast into the English Channel. Fortunately, a merchant ship showed up, rescued them, and deposited them safely in England.

However, unsure of the intent of the young foursome, the English interned them until about four months had passed. When his intent to help France had been confirmed, Bernard was released and immediately joined the Royal Air Force as a Free French member. Trained as a pilot, he was assigned to a fighter squadron flying Spitfires, and sent on patrols over Northern France.

Sadly, on his first patrol, Bernard was forced to crash land on the Island of Jersey, and was taken prisoner by the German occupiers. After the usual formalities, he was assigned to Sagan -- Stalag Luft III. Thus continues the saga of Bernard Scheidhauer until the sad end.

For the escape, Bernard was paired with Roger Bushell and it was their fortune to be the second pair out of the tunnel. Heading towards France by train, they were captured at Saarbruchen and turned over to the Gestapo. The date was March 29, 1944.

In 1998, Artist Bill Holder of Okotoks, Alberta, at the urging of Myron Williams of Calgary (himself an ex-prisoner of war) and the local branch of the RCAF ex-POW Association, created a painting to honour the 50 who, like Bernard, were not to survive the wrath of Adolph Hitler. The painting contains the faces, gleaned from German records, of all of them.

The rest of the painting describes the events taking place at Sagan; the capture of aviators, life in the camp, the building of the tunnel, the escape from the end,

and the memorial that stands on the site today. The painting serves as a tribute to the gallant 50.

Myron Williams, and many other members of the association, want to see one copy into the hands of the closest next-of-kin to all 50 of the airmen. In their search for these kin, the association knew of my connections in France, and asked me to attempt to locate the kin of Bernard Scheidhauer.

After some correspondence, I received an e-mail from Mr. Jean-Loup Niox, whose aunt, Mme. Christiane Magne is the sole surviving sister of Bernard. When the certificate of authenticity was received, it was proposed that I take the print with me during my planned trip to France, and make the presentation.

On my arrival in Paris on June 18, I found that a reception and dinner had already been laid on for Monday evening, June 19. We met first at the home of Madame Magne, where the actual presentation took place, and then we went to a restaurant for dinner. Present at the reception and dinner were:

Mme. Christiane Magne, sister of Bernard; her son William and his wife Annie, Madame's daughter Francoise, her nephew, Jean-Loup Niox, Josette (my 1944 helper) and Serge Baudinot, my wife and I. Absent were Xavier and Bernard Magne, sons of Mme. Magne.

This is not the end of the story. This group of people were far more heroic than merely one airman trying to escape.

The mother of Bernard, and his father, mentioned earlier, were involved in the French Resistance and sheltered some 38 Allied airmen during the occupation. The daughter, Mme. Christiane Magne herself sheltered another 10 or 12 in her home. Her son William, as a youth of about 9, was the decoy that lost airmen could follow on their way to new hideouts.

Col. and Mme. Scheidhauer continued

their Resistance activities in Brest. In late 1944, the father was forced to go underground, and left by train for Paris after a friend told him the Gestapo were waiting for him at home.

The mother was arrested as a hostage and held in the *Abri Sadi Carnot* in Brest. During a fight among the German occupiers, a grenade was accidentally exploded, killing Bernard's mother. Col. Scheidhauer was in Paris during the liberation without knowing his wife had been killed in Brest. The mother of Jean-Loup escaped to England to avoid capture.

In 1999, the people of the Isle of Jersey, on the initiative of a Ian Le Sueur, had a memorial service for Bernard Scheidhauer and unveiled a memorial near the field where he landed.

+++++  
*Christiane Magne was awarded the Croix de Guerre by France, the Medal of Freedom by the U.S.A. and a Certificate from the British government.*

## He got away on a cycle

E&E 800 Major Donald K. Willis (67th Fighter Wing) was one of the last airmen assisted out of Occupied Europe by the Comete line.

At the end of his E&E report, he says:

"During my evasion, while I was living in a large Belgian city, I watched an American raid on a nearby target. I saw a B-17 catch fire and leave formation. Soon after that, several parachutes opened above the city and one floated down into the section of town where I was.

"I had a good view of it and watched this parachutist land in the walled-in garden of a house. Just as he touched the ground a German motorcyclist stopped in front of the house and ran around to clamber over the garden wall at the back.

When the German got into the garden the American burst through the front door of the house and hopped on the German motorcycle and tore off down the street, blowing his horn as loud as he could and cheered on by the Belgian people.

"Unfortunately, although I saw the start of his evasion, I never learned how he made out, nor did I find out who he was."

--Submitted by Michael M. LeBlanc

## Allies sheltered by Mme. A. Magne

**Americans:** Frank Kimotek, Jack E. Ryan, Demetrius Kamezis, Edwin R. Myers, Wayne Rader, Richard (Dick) Cunningham, Lt. H. Cabot Rowland, Duane Lawhead, Allen J. Priebe, James G. Wilson, Harold E. Thomson, William B. Dunning Jr., Merl E. Martin, Walter Hargrove, William Rice, Sgt. Floyd M. Carl, Russel M. Brook, Raymond Bye, Vernon E. Clark, Lionel E. Drew Jr., Charles P. Bronner, Sgt. M.C. Ramirez, Sgt. Donald D. McLeod, Sgt. Marion Hall, Lt. Ernest Hugonnet, John Paul Semach, James N. Quinn, Harry L. Minor, James A. Schneider, Everet F. Palmer, Attilio Robert Gassidi.

**Royal Air Force:** Shedley, Riceleys, Harold L. Nielsen, Jim Adams

**Royal Navy:** J. Coles, V.E. Williams, D.E.J. Sheperd



**OBITUARY****John D. Lewis****U.S. airman who repeatedly escaped inspired 'The Great Escape'****From the London Daily Telegraph Obituary  
Section, Wednesday, August 18, 1999**

John Lewis, who has died in North Carolina aged 84, was an American fighter pilot whose repeated attempts to break out of German prisoner-of-war camps were credited with being an inspiration for the character played by Steve McQueen in the film *The Great Escape*.

Lewis escaped three times, only to be caught, taken back and placed in isolation on each occasion. The fourth time, his bid for freedom succeeded.

Lewis was first taken prisoner on March 13, 1943, when his P-39 was shot down by a Me 109 over North Africa. He was taken to Stalag Luft III, near Sagan in Upper Silesia. The camp eventually held 10,000 PoWs within 59 acres and had five miles of perimeter fencing.

Like most residents of the camp, Lewis was preoccupied with escape and he twice tried to break out under the wire, the second time with a Pole. He had made a pair of crude wire-cutters and used them to cut through the two fences and coil of wire between. The escapees were soon caught.

Between attempts to escape, Lewis made moonshine in an improvised still, using raisins and prunes (rather than the potatoes brewed by McQueen and James Garner in the film). He also helped other PoWs in the secret construction of three long tunnels they named Tom, Dick and Harry.

Seventy-six Allied airmen would escape through Harry in March 1944. Only three of the escapers (the Norwegians Peter Bergsland and Jens Muller, and the Dutchman Bob vander Stok) made it to England, while 50 of those recaptured were executed by the Gestapo, among them the escape's organizer, Squadron Leader Roger Bushell (played by Richard Attenborough in the film).

But before the breakout, Lewis had been put on a train bound for another camp. Once aboard, he managed to get onto the roof and to jump off when it slowed down. Lewis evaded capture for three weeks before being caught, and held in Munich, where he was told that if he tried to escape again he would be shot.

Nevertheless, towards the end of the war, Lewis, having made an impression of the necessary key on a bar of soap, escaped and mingled with a prisoners' working party cleaning up debris from Allied bombing raids. In the confusion of another raid, he slipped his guards again and, after passing for a beer in a cafe, took a tram to the outskirts of Munich and headed for the Swiss border.

At the town of Kempten he met some Frenchmen who were being used as forced labor in a factory. They provided him with a disguise -- a striped tee shirt and a beret.

He eventually ran into some American troops who were advancing north from Austria. They provided him with cigarettes, chocolate and whiskey. Asked why he had kept trying to escape, he replied: "Well, I just wanted to come

home."

John Dortch Lewis was born at Rocky Mount, N.C., on Nov. 13, 1914. His father was a salesman, and John grew up and went to school in Goldsboro, N.C., later attending the state university. In 1940, he went north and enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force.

He flew Hurricanes in the Battle of Britain, and took part in the raid on Dieppe in August 1942. Later that year, his aircraft was hit while over France. He managed to fly it back over the English Channel and crash landed. He was ordered to stop flying because of his injuries, but on hearing on the BBC that America was recruiting pilots, he threw away his walking stick and transferred to the U.S. Air Corps.

After the war, he returned to Goldsboro, his job in insurance and his favorite pastime, fishing. He was later consulted about his activities in Stalag Luft III by Paul Brickhill, the author of the book on which *The Great Escape* was based, and by the makers of the film.

In 1948, he married Carolyn Stenhouse. They had a son and two daughters.



**John Lewis as an airman  
before his capture**



# Dutch team conquers the Pyrenees

By JOOP DUYS

Member of Dutch Freedom Trail Team

Like last year, *The Freedom Trail* took place the second week of July. Hiking from Saint Giron in France to Esterri in Spain, the escape lines of WWII were remembered by younger generations.

About 60 hikers from France, England, Scotland, Belgium, the Netherlands and two Americans started the hike after a short ceremony at the bridge crossing the river Salat in St. Giron. The temperature is increasing by the hour and around lunchtime it is about 44 degrees C.

The first day we climb to about 1,000 meters and the guides lead us through a beautiful countryside to the first stop where the locals offer us lunch. But before arriving there we have to submit to a severe trial: the Col de L'Artigues. After lunch an English medic from the RAF and the oldest hiker, a 79-year-old American, decided to drop out.

Many backpacks disappear in the vans. The rest put on their shoes and "enjoy" again their surroundings. On our way up a young Scottish hiker has to be taken off because of leg cramps.

At the end of the first day, three Dutch lay a wreath at the memorial at Aunac. Afterwards, wine, sandwiches and other local delicacies are offered by the mayor of Seix. We have to sleep in a gym and the atmosphere inside is, after taking off our smelly clothes, so rank that some decide to sleep on the lawn!

Round 5 o'clock it starts to rain and after an excellent breakfast we have to don ponchos and raincoats. Advantage is that

## REUNIONS

**8th Air Force Historical Society**, Sheraton Salt Lake City, Salt Lake City, Utah, Oct. 17-22, 2000

**484th Bomb Grp. Association**, 15th Air Force, Dallas, Tex., Oct. 25-30, 2000

**92nd Bomb Group**, St. Louis, Mo., Oct. 12-17, 2000  
Info: 707-258-8806



**The Dutch team on the 2000 Freedom Trail**

for walking, the temperature is much better and that is what we need as the day will be a very tough one.

Nature is beautiful, but the slopes are getting much steeper. Lunch is at the Col de la Core and is prepared by the same people as yesterday. We have to leave the last dropouts. There have never been as many as this year.

Now we enter the real bush and for the next two days we are on our own. Our bivac is a shepherd's hut, Cabane de La Subera. It is constantly drizzling and dinner is an instant meal. The night suits the surroundings: it is wet and cold.

The third day a group of about 80 French arrive. They will join us for the next two days. Much to our surprise, many of them are quite elderly and stout.

Now the real climbing will start. After two hours we reach the remains of a Halifax that crashed during the war. Chris Goss, leader of the RAF delegation, places a wooden cross after an impressive speech. We climb through snow to the Col de Craberous, where it is only 2 degrees. Through the fog, we descend in groups of 10 to a hut, where we prepare our own lunch. On hands and feet we climb to the Refuge de Estagnous where a

superb dinner is prepared to us.

The last day begins with a disappointment. As there are too many French not capable of making such a trip, it is decided not to cross the glaciers into Spain, but to descend to 1,500 meters.

Excellent weather conditions and breath-taking scenery. Chamois jump from place to place and we see some beautiful waterfalls.

Halfway the afternoon we are picked up by buses that take us into Spain. In Esterri we are surprised by a mens' choir that sings in a most impressive way about the mountains. Wine is abundant and we can still our hunger with delicious food from the Pyrenees.

Around midnight the French and Spanish pay a singing tribute to mountain life.

Tired but satisfied, we board the bus that is taking us back to Saint Giron. Once more we sleep in a tent, but that doesn't matter any more. We have — become a mountain tribe!

*The American who was forced to drop out early in the hike was Harold Steinmetz of St. Louis, Mo. His son did complete the Freedom Trail walk.*



# Thank-you message to our helpers delivered in Spain at end of trail

By RAF Sqd. Ldr. Chris Goss

During the last war, a number of secret routes across the Pyrenees mountain range between France and Spain were used by thousands of Europeans fleeing Nazi tyranny. These same routes were also used by RAF and other Allied airmen who, having been shot down or escaped from prisoner of war camps, evaded capture and crossed into Spain to return to active duty.

In 1995, *Le Chemin de la Liberté*, which literally means The Freedom Trail, was inaugurated to commemorate just one of the routes and this year, for the first time, two RAF teams, one from RAF Lossiemouth in Scotland, the other from RAF Odiham in Hampshire, attempted to follow in the footsteps of Allied personnel from a generation before.

The walk, if you can call it that, isn't for the faint-hearted. The route from St. Girons in France to Esterri d'Aneu in Spain is about 50 miles and is normally done in five days. Total walking time is just under 40 hours, and the maximum height is 8,355 feet.

With proper equipment and in the summer, many today would think this relatively easy but for many of those who

attempted this same route during the war, sometimes wounded, many with just the clothes they had been shot down in, in the height of winter and avoiding German patrols, the hardship of what they had to go through can only be appreciated by those who have walked The Freedom Trail.

The walk this year started on the evening of the 5th of July. All the walkers, together with French dignitaries, attended a ceremony at a memorial commemorating the *Chemin de la Liberté* at the hamlet of Kercabanac. The memorial stone is located at a poignant spot as it now stands where a German control post once marked the start of their *zone interdit* or restricted zone which stretched the length of the Pyrenees. An hour or so later, all returned to St. Girons for an official reception at which gifts were exchanged.

Many of the French veterans were keen to get hold of RAFA baseball caps, while the mayor of St. Girons was particularly pleased to receive a RAFA t-shirt!

Suitably refreshed, an early night should have been on order but for most, it was last-minute preparation as at 0630

hours the next morning, we were picked up and taken to the Chemin bridge. After another ceremony, at 0730, the 50 or so walkers headed up into the hills.

At this point, we should have been wary when one of the local women pointed to the sky and said that the day would be hot. For the next five hours, the climb got steeper and steeper, harder and harder, hotter and hotter. By lunchtime, the temperature was a very uncomfortable 44 degrees Centigrade, too hot for many of us northern Europeans.

Nevertheless, a welcome lunch awaited, provided by the Barreau family, which followed a ceremony to the memory of 19-year-old Louis Barreau. In 1943, Louis was one of a number of *passeurs* who escorted evading airmen, only to be betrayed and shot by the Germans. The Barreau family lost four men during the war, so it was quite appropriate when RAF Lossiemouth placed a wreath of poppies at the foot of the memorial to Louis.

The afternoon continued, with the sun getting no cooler and a number of walkers being forced to drop out because of heat exhaustion and knee and hip injuries. By 1900 hours, the survivors arrived at the hamlet of Aunac, a major hiding place for those intending to cross into Spain. Following a brief ceremony, the walkers accepted a welcome ride to the town of Seix (pronounced Sex and yes, the name created some amusement) where another reception was followed by a meal. Exhausted, all had an early night. The maximum altitude climbed so far was 3300 feet and we still had a long way to go.

The next morning, the full effects of the previous day's heat became obvious when, for one reason or another, at least half the original 50 failed to start the four-hour walk to the Col de las Core, which lay at an altitude of 4610 feet. However, the weather was cooler and at lunchtime, all felt much happier about the next stretch to a shepherd's hut at Subera. We would spend the night there, but all of us had to realise that as soon as we walked off the road at the Col de la



**French veterans lead ceremony at Aunac memorial**



Core, there was no turning back and the only way back to civilisation was then by helicopter. That night was much cooler - the cloud was rolling down off the mountains and it rained much of the night.

The morning of July 8 saw a much clearer sky and, at about 0800 hours, 50 French men, women and children (the eldest being a 78-year-old former *passer*) appeared from below to join us for the last two days.

Day Three is regarded as the hardest day, but with cooler temperatures, those who had survived the first day's roasting enjoyed it thoroughly. From Subera, it was a three-hour walk to the foot of the Pic de Lampeau at 6600 feet. There we stopped at a sobering reminder of WWII and the cost in human lives. On a July night in 1945, a Handley Page Halifax of 644 Squadron, on a training flight and dangerously off course, flew into the mountain with the deaths of the eight-man crew, whose average age was only 22. The wreckage of the four-engined bomber is still spread over the mountainside.

There RAF Odiham placed a cross inscribed with names of those who died there and in the moment of silence that followed, you could have heard a pin drop.

From then on, the climb became harder. At the snow-filled Col de Craberous (7860 feet), professional guides took control of the party and then the cloud came down and the temperature dropped to just plus two degrees C. The descent off the Col was dangerous, cold and wet and when we arrived at a refuge at Epuges, all were glad of the chance to get hands warm and get some food.

Two hours later, we started again, following a path around three lakes (one complete with two, very dedicated fishermen) before climbing back up the eastern slopes of Mont Vallier whose summit, at 9365 feet, makes it one of the

highest mountains in this part of the Pyrenees.

We did not have to climb to this summit but the climb to the 8250-ft. Col de Pecouch, across massive granite slabs and back up again into the snow line, was just as hard. Back into the cloud once more, we descended to the Refuge de Estagnous, a hiker's hostel which is manned by wardens during the summer and can only be reached by walking or helicopter. This was an amazing place which defies description!

After dumping kit in tents, we all climbed back though the cloud to the hostel to be welcomed by a superb three-course meal of soup, bread, duck and goose, cheese and pastries which was wolfed down in seconds, washed down with local punch and, of course, wine. By this stage we were all exhausted and an early night was on the cards in preparation for another descent, ascent and descent into Spain the next day.

As dawn broke, most of us were awake early and the sight that greeted us was breathtaking. The clouds had gone and despite the bright sunlight and clear blue sky, we could look down on the clouds and up to the many mountain peaks around us.

However, looks can be deceptive and the weather forecast was not at all favourable so it was decided that walking into Spain, across another snowfield at 8355 feet, was not safe. Though we were somewhat disappointed, it was decided that we would all walk down off the mountains and then would take a three-hour bus ride to Esterri d'Aneu.

Not to finish the final 13 miles was frustrating. However, the safety of 50 people was paramount and in any case, any disappointment was forgotten on our arrival at Esterri.

Following spellbinding singing by local men, a final ceremony took place at which the Spanish mayor was presented with an RAF Odiham Station plaque and

a RADA t-shirt to match the t-shirt the French mayor had worn on the last day.

After that, this author read a message from Ralph K. Patton, chairman of the American Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society, thanking the French and Spanish people for their help so many times during the war and asking for a final moment of silence to conclude this year's Freedom Trail walk. More singing, food and wine and at about midnight, the survivors, most of the RAF Odiham team now minus their RAFA t-shirts, headed for St. Giron.

So the 2000 Freedom Trail ended, with most, after a little persuasion from the French participants, swearing they would do it again next year.

## RETURNING MEMBER

William C. DuBose  
141 Sally Gap Trail  
Hayesville NC 28904  
Ph.: 828-389-3730  
E&E #1634  
8AF, 55FG  
Wife: Deanna

## NEW 'FRIENDS'

David Cooksey  
3105 Sunny Meadows Ct.  
Arlington, TX 76016  
Ph.: 817-277-9429  
(Son of late George Cooksey)  
Wife: Alice

Colin Daley  
8821 Colchester Ridge Road  
Knoxville, TN 37922  
(Son of Yvonne Daley)  
Wife: Ginny

Anthony Ones  
5536 New Vista Drive  
Rocklin, CA 95765  
Ph.: 916-415-1870  
(Dick Smith's Crew)  
Wife: Margaret

## PEANUTS



By Charles M. Schulz





*Shirley and Jack Kupsick seem to be setting a brisk cadence for the AFEES parade to Stage Central, where they were introduced to the audience at the Columbia airport. Veterans were honored at the Salute to the Nation ceremony.*



*ON THE LINE AT COLUMBIA -- Dr. Cornelius Jasperse of Holland (left), who was exhausted from flight delays and missed connections on his way to Missouri and required some medical attention at the reunion, poses with Scotty and Clayton David. Dr. Jasperse made better connections on his return home and reports that his condition is being evaluated by his regular physician.*

## Meeting vet who saved ground troops was worth trip to Missouri

From the Pittsburgh (Pa.) Post  
Gazette, June 21, 2000

### GUEST COLUMN BY LOU CAIN

Anyone entering the lobby of the Ramada Inn in Columbia, Mo., during the Memorial Day weekend might have thought a senior citizens' meeting was in progress. But appearances are deceiving.

It was the May 2000 reunion of the Air Forces Escape & Evasion Society, or AFEES, founded informally in 1961 by Ralph Patton of Scott.

I am not a member, but I was invited to attend by Patton so I might meet Flamm D. "Dee" Harper, an unsung hero of a forgotten war and a "double evader," having escaped capture in both World War



II and the Korean War after being forced down behind enemy lines.

Harper had just returned from France, where he worked with a French archaeologist and historian on a documentary about Allied plane crashes, downings and escapes during World War II.

On July 15, 1944, Harper crashlanded his P-38 fighter near Montmorillon, France. A 15-year-old girl led him to safety and for three weeks, Harper fought with an underground British unit in Nazi-occupied France before making his way back to England.

This was a great story. But the reason I traveled to Columbia was to shake Harper's hand and thank him for what he had done for the ground troops in Korea.

On June 15, 1953, he was on non-flying status recuperating from injuries suffered when he was forced to bail out of his crippled jet fighter over North Korea. He had evaded capture until picked up by a rescue unit. A captain at the time, Harper was serving as operations officer at K-55 Air Force Base in Osan with a spot promotion to major.

Senior officers at the base had been called away to a conference and a "command vacuum" existed when a returning flight of fighter-bombers reported a heavy concentration of munitions trains to the north.

Although only a junior officer, Harper launched and directed a massive night bombing mission on the box cars before the munitions could be dispersed in the morning. Although he requested approval from headquarters, none came because the action happened so quickly.

Harper could have been court-martialed for his audacity, but it was later learned the munitions were to supply a "million-man-offensive" by our adversaries to the north, an operation that never happened because of the raid.

The ground troops who would have borne the brunt of the major offensive never knew what Harper did to preserve their lives.

The action came near the end of the war. In all, 120 sorties were flown that night that were never authorized. The pilots who flew them were unaware of the great contribution they made until Harper published his story after his retirement.

He had decided he would bear the responsibility of the action alone. He

was "Horatius at the Bridge," and if he had not acted, there might not have been a truce at that time.

I could have sent Harper an e-mail (now that I am computer semiliterate) to thank him, but that would have been inadequate for what he had done.

I drove to Columbia so I could meet him, shake his hand, and thank him personally for what he did for the 18th

Fighter Bomber Wing, the USAF, the ground troops, the American people and those of South Korea.

How often can you meet a genuine hero and also be in the company of the heroes who are members of AFEES?

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*Lou Cain is a retired draftsman who has researched the Dee Harper story for articles in Sabre Jet Classics and other veterans publications.*

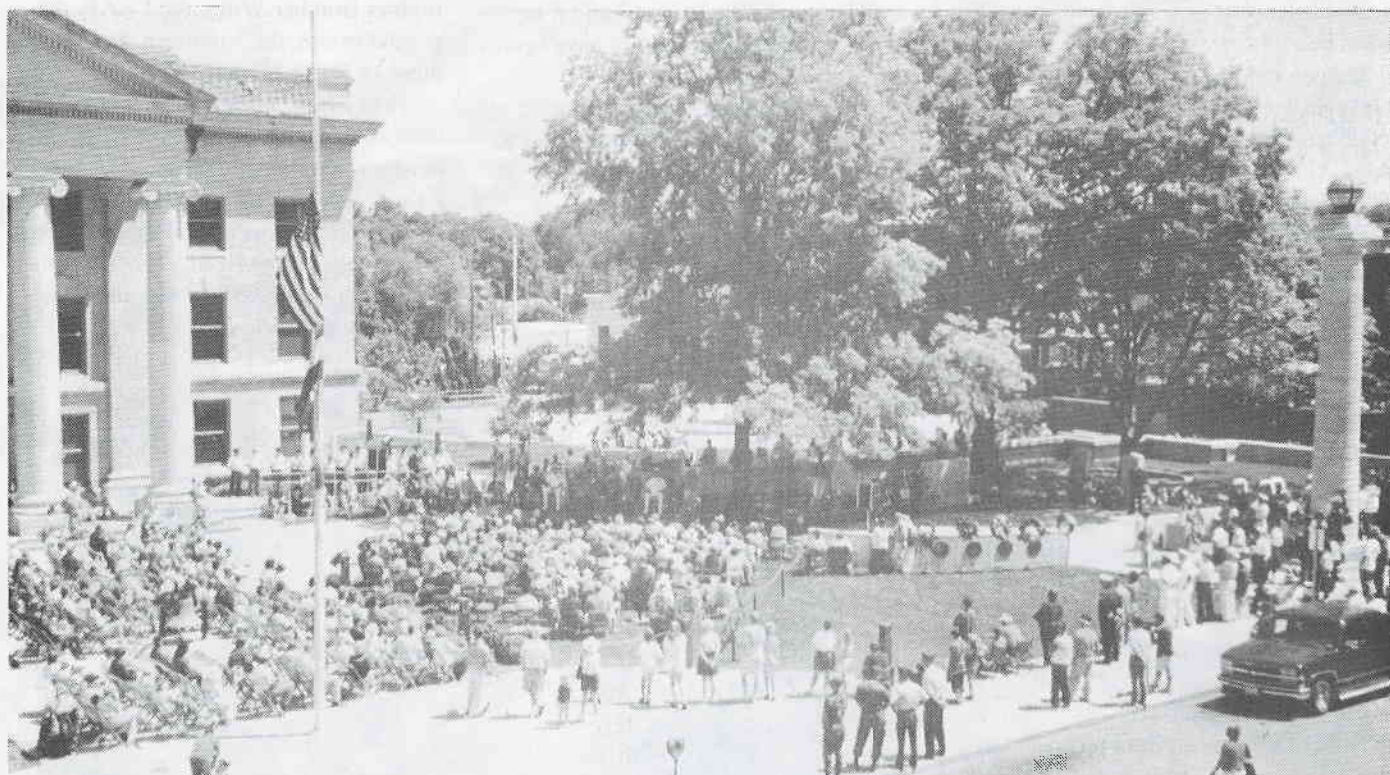


***Dutch Helper George Van Remmerden (center) and Ray and Ruth Kubly had plenty of talk about in Columbia last May. On 7 Oct. 44, Ray bailed out near Hertengenbosh, Holland, and was shot in the calf of the leg while in his chute by German marksmen. Ray and several others were smuggled out of a hospital by George and another helper and eventually made it to the Canadian lines.***



***A PIECE OF CAKE -- Some of the more fortunate at the Columbia reunion were treated to a chunk of this cake, presented by the Salute to Veterans committee.***





*The Boone County courthouse square was the site for the Memorial Day military ceremony, part of the AFEES 2000 reunion*

## Travis Hoover followed Jimmy Doolittle

**From the Columbia Missourian Airshow 2000  
Special Section  
May 25, 2000**

*By Meghan Miller*

Travis Hoover took off second.

Where he would be at the end of his flight, his mission, he didn't know. No one did.

But he was ready to follow Jimmy Doolittle anywhere. And after Doolittle launched his B-25 into the sky above the Pacific Ocean, Hoover and the rest of the Doolittle Raiders followed.

"We knew when we took off that we had no place to land," Hoover said. "We made our attack with the 16 airplanes, and we lost every one of them."

But the mission Hoover was on was anything but a loss.

Instead, it inspired the nation to fight back in the wake of its greatest military defeat, the Dec. 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor, and sent a message to the Japanese nation that World War II would indeed be fought on its shores.

This weekend, Travis Hoover will be honored at the Salute to Veterans Memorial Day Air Show. He is one of the 29 surviving members of the Doolittle Raiders, the group of Army aviators that took on a seemingly impossible mission in the wake of Pearl Harbor: Bring the war home to the Japanese.

"The Japanese had been saying, 'Don't worry,'" Hoover said. "We did it to get them unsettled enough they would make changes in their military plans. It wasn't how much damage we could do, it was the

effect we'd have on Japan."

The only trick was how to get there. To reach Japan, Hoover and the Raiders would have to take off from the USS Hornet in the Pacific and land, after dropping their bombs on Tokyo, in China. But when a Japanese ship discovered the aircraft carrier several hundred miles away from the planned departure point, the Raiders were forced to take off.

Now, they didn't have enough fuel to reach their landing strips in China. They barely had enough fuel to reach the Chinese coast.

Before taking off, they knew they might not make it. But Hoover said they didn't give it a second thought.

"My job was to be a combat aviator. I had been trained well. Was I going to do it or was I going to stick my head under a bush?," Hoover said. "My mother trained me to always do the right thing regardless of the cost."

So he lined up behind Doolittle's B-25 on the deck of the Hornet and took off, following his lead all the way to Japan. Part one of the mission turned out to be a complete success.

"It turned out to be an exceptionally good day for bombing," Hoover said. "The good Lord gave us good winds to make as much mileage as we could."

But it was part two, the psychological battle the Raiders were waging, that was the most important, Hoover said. "We didn't want everyone speaking German or Japanese," he said.

Most of the Raiders made it to the Chinese



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*At the Salute to Veterans dinner during the Columbia reunion, AFEES President Richard Smith presented a lapel pin to Tun Sheng Liu, making him an honorary Helper member. He now lives in California.*

+++++

mainland, although some were forced to land in the ocean just off the coast. One of the B-25s landed safely in Vladivostok, Russia. Hoover managed to guide his B-25 to the coast, near Ningbo.

"I tried to climb over the mountains, but I ran out of fuel and the engines stopped," Hoover said. "I made a very good landing, I might add. We didn't get a scratch."

Hoover and his crew found themselves in the midst of Japanese-occupied China. They were luckier than most of the Raiders. Eight Raiders died during the crash landings -- three were executed by the Japanese.

Hoover's crew scored when they enlisted the help of a local boy, Tung Sheng Liu.

"That's a very important name to me," Hoover said. "He heard we were trying to get through to the guerrilla fighters."

Liu, who will also be in Columbia at the air show this weekend, guided the crew to safety.

"He had total disregard for his own safety," Hoover said. "He saved my life. If we had been captured, I would have been executed."



**Tun Sheng Liu and Col. Travis Hoover**

With Liu's assistance, Hoover and his crew made it to territory controlled by the friendly Chinese Nationalist government.

"I love him like a brother," Hoover said. "He's a very modest person and will not give himself the credit he is due."

Hoover went on to fly 73 missions in World War II in Europe, North Africa and Germany, in B-25, B-24 and P-38 planes.

To this day, the Doolittle Raiders keep in touch, sharing about their lives and families.



*The AFEES banner was mounted on the lead trolley bearing members for the Memorial Day parade in Columbia, Mo., last May*





*At the AFEES reunion in Missouri, the Hakim family had an opportunity to say "Thanks" to Scotty David for her part in getting them in contact with airmen they helped in Belgium during the war. From left: Olga Hakim Puglis, Scotty David, Peter Hakim and Nicole Hakim Reilly.*

*(The story of the Hakim family's work in the Belgian Resistance was published on the front page of the December 1999 issue of Communications).*

The Joseph Hakim family sheltered the entire crew from the 390th Bomb Group, 569th Squadron, by erecting a tent in the woods for the Americans to live in. The Hakim children knew how to keep a secret and no one ever told.

The crew of the B-17 that went down May 29, 1944, near the village of Eprave included, with E&E numbers: 1924 W. E. Skymanski, 1925 V. A. Montrose, 1926 G.A. Grip, 1927 T. E. Sanderson, 1928 Alex Engelman, 1929 Solomon Goldstein, 1930 David C. Sullivan (AFEES member), 1931 P. E. Goodling and 1932 Maynard Peterson.

Nearly all members of the crew are now deceased.



*Robert Sweatt of Burton, Tex., (center) was caught by George Van Remmerden's camera while he was visiting with Constance and Ernest Lindell of Moses Lake, Wash., at a Columbia reunion dinner.*

## More attended 2000 reunion

Names of several persons who attended the AFEES reunion in Columbia, Mo., were published in the Summer issue of *Communications*.

The published list was far from complete, due to some confusion during registration.

In addition to the persons listed earlier, the following were present in Columbia:

Anne and Igor Nabelek, Mimi Gosney, John Barnacle, Neal and Pat Cobb, Frank and Dorothy Lashinsky, Tun Sheng Liu,

Bill and Bonnie McGinley, Dorothy Naughton, Richard Shandor, Kenneth and Melba Shaver, Gil Shawn, Robert and Mary Sweatt,

George and Nora Tripp, Ray L. Whitby, Alice Davey, Tom and Pat Cannon, Harold and Marjorie Steinmetz.

Signs promoting the Air Show at the Columbia airport were to be found for miles around.





*An overseas visitor at the Columbia reunion was Miodrag Pesic, president of the Society of the U.S. Air Force Pilots Rescuers in Yugoslavia. The group was associated with General Mihailovich during the war.*

*While in Missouri, Miodrag wrote several articles for a Belgrade newspaper. AFEES President Richard Smith (left) and Miograd are wearing authentic forage caps of the Yugoslav army.*



*Mia Lelivelt of Holland (center) has attended many AFEES reunions and at Columbia, she had the chance to chow down with Myrle and Vera Stinnett of Staunton, Ill. Mia's father helped and hid Myrle after his B-17 went down April 8, 1944, near the German border.*

## Committee talks about special '02 convention

**By J. W. BRADBURY**  
San Antonio, Tex.

A planning committee met at MacDill AFB, Fla., on Aug. 7 to discuss a proposed convention of special operations veterans groups, the Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society included, in Tampa in 2002, the 60th anniversary of OSS.

Such an assembly would bring together veterans of the Army, Navy and Air Force to share with each other their related operational experiences.

Tampa, where the U.S. Special Operations Command headquarters is located, seems a logical location as this command recognizes the contributions made by those predecessor organizations.

It was tentatively determined that each group or organization should have its individual reunion and retain its identity, but would also be associated with the larger group for certain events.

Planning is at a preliminary stage and suggestions are welcomed. Such details as a name for the assembly, and possible programs or events are yet to be decided.

The next planning session is scheduled for Oct. 10 or 11, 2000, at MacDill AFB. Any ideas or suggestions from AFEES members should be mailed to Caesar J. Civitella, OSS Vets Advisory Committee, 201 Westwood Terrace N., St. Petersburg, FL 33710, with a copy to AFEES President Richard M. Smith, 36214 Augustana Drive, Battle Lake, MN 56515.

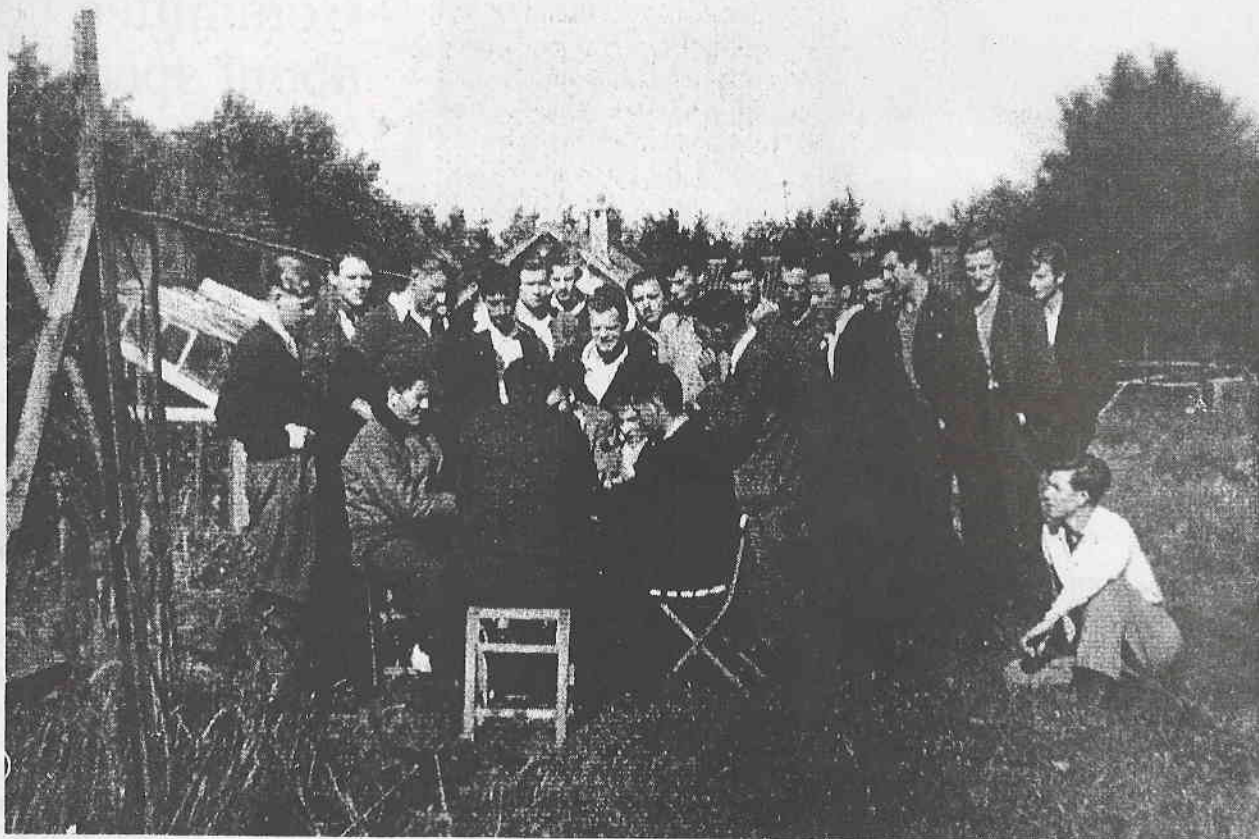
## Tulsa tv producers looking for 'heroes'

Carol Spann and Daniel May of Tulsa, Okla., are producing a tv series called *The Reunion Project*, featuring stories of "everyday heroes" of World War II, "those many men and women who kept their families intact despite the hardships of war."

They are looking for stories on how folks coped and how they kept hope alive.

To participate, contact Hero Productions, PMB 286, 3807-GH, South Peoria, Tulsa, OK 74105.





A GAME IN PROGRESS AT ONE OF THE MARATHON CAMPS IN BELGIUM

## Marathon camps served as a refuge

Crossing the Pyrenees Mountains from France to Spain was the only organized escape route for downed Allied airmen in the early part of World War II. As the war progressed, more airmen found themselves in Holland and Belgium, a long way from the Pyrenees.

The Underground patriots could move only a few airmen at a time to the Pyrenees via an escape route. At times, the only safe and last resort route was to Switzerland, where the airman would probably be interned for the duration of the war.

In late 1943, a meeting by British Intelligence Service, Mi9, was held in London for the purpose of developing additional escape routes. Maj. Airey Neave was primarily responsible for the planning of two additional escape routes, an "Air Escape Route" and a "Sea Escape Route." To develop these means of escape it was necessary to be able to move enough airmen at a time to make the risk worthwhile. This led to the idea of Marathon Camps to provide airmen a safe place until the line could move them

to the point of escape.

The Air Route was called "Mission Martiny/Possum," returning 15 to England. This escape route was discontinued after Edgard Potier, the leader of the operation, was arrested. In order not to provide information under torture to the enemy, Ed Potier committed suicide in the French prison of Fresnes in Paris.

The Sea Route required delivery of airmen to a point at Plouha Beach in French Brittany, where they would be picked up by small boats of the Royal Navy. This was called the "Shelburn" line and was operated by two Canadians, Lucien Dumas and Ray LaBrosse. This means of escape continued and was coordinated with the Marathon Camps set up in France and Belgium.

In March 1944, after some experience with the Air Escape Route and the Sea Escape Route, British Intelligence decided that a series of camps would be established from Belgium to France, ending in French Brittany. Baron Jean de Blommaert de Soye (alias "Rutland",

"Kazan" and "Jean Thomas" -- also called by his friends "le Blom") was given the responsibility of establishing and controlling the organization which at the moment was called "Marathon."

He was given an assistant, the Belgian RAF Squadron Leader, Leon Bousa (alias "Belgrave"). Blommaert also chose a radio operator to communicate with London. His name was Francois



From left:  
Sgt. Robert Tucker, Sgt. Charles  
Westerlund, Sgt. James Goebel



Toussaint, alias "Taylor." He and his radio operator were dropped on April 10, 1944, near Issoudun at St. Ambroise in France.

Blommaert and Toussaint were joined later by Bousa, who refused to be dropped but traveled from Spain to France by Comete agents. Then discussions began with Comete and Shelburn to switch to the Marathon plan.

The last airmen crossing to the Pyrenees through Comete was on June 4, 1944.

Jean de Blommaert took charge of the area of French Brittany. Leon Bousa with his assistant Albert Ancia, alias "Daniel Mouton," was in charge of establishing camps in Northern France from the Belgium-French border as far west as possible towards French Brittany.

Yvon Michels of the family famous for the Belgian chocolate, "Cote de'Or" was in charge of camps in Belgium. His war name was "Jean Serment."

He later was replaced by his assistant, Gaston Matthys, when Yvon Michels was discovered by the Germans and had to flee to England.

Leon Bousa and/or his assistant Albert Ancia were not able to complete their mission. Only two camps were established in France near Vendome (at Fretteval) and Bonneval. They were managed by Omer Jubault, a former French Gendarme.

These two camps were separate and independent from those in Belgium. The



Lt. Philip Solomon

Chauny Escape Line organized by Etienne Dromas (known during the war as "Le Noir") reduced the need for more camps in France as more French patriots were able to hide airmen in their homes until they could be moved to French Brittany. About 50 airmen were in and around Chauny, France, on D-Day.

After Yvon Michels escaped, his assistant Gaston Matthys succeeded in establishing six different, well-organized camps in Belgium for the escape route to France as planned.

These camps were named (1.) Beffe, (2.) Bellevaux, also called "La Cornette," (3.) Acremont, also called "Luchy-

Acremont," (4.) Porcheresse, (5.) Villance and (6.) Bohan, also called "Robinson," only a couple of yards from the French border.

A typical camp included three cabins, two latrines and a kitchen. All were well camouflaged. One hundred twenty airmen lived in these camps up to the liberation in early September 1944.

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*The editor is indebted to Member Virgil Marco of Dallas, Tex., for this article on the Marathon camps. Most of his information came from Michael M. LeBlanc of Canada and Rene Londo of Belgium, who also supplied the photos.*

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# B-24 gunner Ed bailed out twice

*Edwin O. Learnard of San Diego, Calif., was shot down twice in WWII. Flak brought him down in Hungary in December 1944. He was flown back to Italy and went down the second time on Jan. 15, 1945, in Yugoslavia.*

**From the San Diego, Calif., Union-Tribune, June 12, 1985**

By JIMMY THORTON  
Tribune Staff Writer

Edwin Learnard was a sophomore in Braintree, Mass., high school when World War II exploded into U.S. history Dec. 7, 1941, and he and his buddies rushed to the recruiter to join the army. He was turned down and told to wait until he was inducted.

On the day he graduated from high school, he received his greetings from President Roosevelt and on July 15, 1943, he could sing, "You're in the Army Now."

He became a tail gunner in what he calls "the flying coffin," a four-engine

Liberator bomber. He was assigned to the 451st Bomb Group of the 15th Air Force, based in war-devastated Italy.

He recalls that his first three bombing missions were uneventful. They included raids over Vienna and Belgrade.

But he will never -- ever -- forget missions numbered four and five. They were the last he would fly.

"It was the fourth one when things got interesting. We went to Silesia (Poland), which was the last of the German synthetic oil (factories). And it was defended by 912 guns; I remember that specifically from our briefing. I knew it would be a hot one."

That proved to be an understatement.

"We were fortunate that we didn't take the full brunt of the German flak. Most of it was directed at a B-17 squadron off to my right. And the Germans blew that squadron out of the sky . . . 16 planes were blown away in one barrage."

His plane dropped its bombs, peeled off-target toward Hungary, then became

the only B-24 in the squadron to be hit, losing an engine.

"When you lost an engine in a B-24, you were either going to walk or swim," he said.

The bail-out bell soon rang. And the crew began tumbling backward through the floor camera hatch into enemy skies near the Lake Balaton area of Hungary.

There were clouds, he recalls, and his greatest fear was landing in the lake and drowning. He hit a wooded area instead, then ran for his life.

A flight of German Stukas roared overhead, and he feared that they saw him. However, his rigid army training paid off, and there was no panic. He stumbled onto a farm house where two women, unaware that the U.S. was in the war, welcomed him that day, Dec. 2, 1944. They hid him from Hungary's equivalent of Hitler's Youth who came to the house looking for American fliers.

"I knew I was safe then," he says.

The next afternoon, a man showed up



**Edwin Learnard was hidden from the Germans in this country mansion.**



with a strange note. "We would love to have you for tea if you are not too fierce." Added was a footnote: "This is okay," signed by "Red."

Red was the abandoned plane's radio operator, and the written invitation was from the Count and Countess Ugron-Jessenski. The count and countess hid Learnard and Red in the main part of their palatial mansion, while a group of German officers, who were passing through, bedded down in a wing of the mansion.

The Americans were suddenly in the lap of luxury with velvet-cord maid service -- next door to the enemy. Just as suddenly, they were yanked from it.

In the middle of the night, Learnard's bed cover was jerked away, and he awoke with a rifle barrel in his face. Behind it was a Mongolian soldier, one of the enforcers of the Russian military. The Mongolian troops, Learnard was told, kept the Caucasian Russians from retreating.

The Germans had left, but the Russians had arrived. He was interrogated, then taken to Pecs in southwest Hungary.

After a bizarre propaganda tour of the Russian front, where unburied German dead were displayed (but no Russian dead) he was turned over to the 15th Air Force by way of a British supply plane.

No sooner was he back than he was ordered on another bombing mission. He argued that they couldn't send him again because if he were downed behind enemy lines a second time, he would be shot as a spy since he had provided intelligence information based on his first downing.

The officer Learnard had confronted said he had the choice of flying or being tried and shot as a coward. They needed gunners.

So he "volunteered."

On his fifth and last mission, in a raid over the Vienna area, his plane was hit by flak, an engine blew and -- what he feared most -- the bailout bell pierced his ears. Again!

"My parachute wouldn't open. It had been in the rain and it had been crushed, and the pins had been bent."

They were at 18,000 feet when he jumped, and he clawed at the chute while falling at least 12,000 feet, as he recalls. He got the pilot chute out, but when it popped, it blew half the chute's panels off.

He says a deep bank of "nice, soft wet snow" saved him.

He fell right into the hands of the Croatian Ustachis, a group of pro-German auxiliary forces in Yugoslavia. The Ustachis demanded to know why they were fighting "with the godless Russians."

His reply: "I was drafted by Roosevelt!"

They asked: "Ah, what do you think of Roosevelt?"

His reply: "Hell, he's a Democrat. I'm a Republican!"

They shouted: "*Dobra, dobra, dobra!*" (Good, good, good)."

The downed Americans spent the rest of the war either in German hands or on the run after escaping. During that time, Learnard recalls, the enemy both brutalized him and saved his life. One German grabbed his arm during a strafing by American P-51s manned by British pilots, saving him from running into a mine field.

On another occasion, two sergeants whipped out their pistols to protect him from a mob that had just been bombed out by Allied planes. They also saved him from a German officer who pulled a machine pistol on him after he had grabbed the officer's coat off a rack.

His only wound, ironically, was inflicted by British pilots during a raid on a German train. He took some shrapnel in an ankle.

On V-E Day, he was liberated at the German city of Landshut, about 80 miles southeast of Nuremberg, by Allied forces. He had spent the last month of the war wandering around the countryside, living off the land.

## Al has part in filming of 'Ghost Train' story

From FLORIDA TODAY,  
Friday, April 28, 2000  
By MILT SALAMON

Nearly six years ago we ran a column, "WW II pilot feted in Belgium towns," that told how Al Sanders of Rockledge, the pilot of a B-24 that crashed in Belgium 50 years earlier, helped celebrate that nation's liberation from German rule. He and his wife Millie were guests of honor.

On Monday, May 1, one dramatic episode of Al's wartime ordeal in German-occupied Belgium will appear on History Channel 43. Al appears in it.

It shows how, for six successful days, Belgian citizenry kept Germans from moving a prison train to Germany.

"The Ghost Train" was the one that Al escaped from in 1944. Greystone Studios in Hollywood, Calif., learned about him from a fellow POW, John Bradley, "who jumped from the train when I did," Al says. "They found out I had a full personal account of the story, and asked me to help in the documentary's filming. They came to my house, set up a studio and taped my story for about three hours."

Al's B-24 was bombing Liepzig, Germany, when its No. 3 engine was hit. Two others failed and the crew bailed out.

"Five crew members were caught by the Germans immediately. Four were never captured. I was hidden 14 times, and lived with 14 families. On two occasions, I was betrayed but managed to escape with the help of the Belgian underground.

"I was hiding in haystacks. It was like a grade-B movie." Finally, on Sept. 1, 1944, after capture weeks earlier by the Gestapo, Al escaped from a prison train.

"The train was made up by the Germans in Brussels," Al said. One car had 45 POWs, another had political prisoners, another had Jews, for a total of about 1,500 people.

"The Germans tried for about six days to move the train out," he said. "But Belgians would let the water out of the tank, or let the engine's fire go out, or switch the train to a wrong track..."

"Five of us escaped on the third day, with the help of a Canadian who picked the lock," Al told us.

"Later I hooked up with Bradley and another man. We were at a canal and were taken on board a boat that had come to load coal. The captain recognized us as Americans. We stayed aboard until Canadians and a battalion of Dutch troops entered the city."



# ■ FOLDED WINGS ■

## MEMBERS

- #2745 William M. Baker, Charlotte, N.C., 388 BG  
15 AF Joe L. Bryanet "L", Houston, Tex., 461 BG,  
June 6, 2000
- #1025 Joseph M. Connable "L", Cordova, Tenn., 381 BG,  
Feb. 12, 1998
- #369 Arthur J. Horning "L", Washington C.H., Ohio, 91BG,  
July 14, 2000
- #2225 Conrad J. Kersch "L", Stage Coach, Nev., 303 BG,  
May 16, 2000
- 15 AF Joseph Z. Krajewski, Medford, N.J., 464 BG  
12 AF Ernest J. Kulik "L", Purcellville, Va., 310 BG,  
June 22, 2000
- 15 AF Ray Swedzinski, Taunton, Minn., 460 BG,  
July 24, 2000
- # 610 James J. Valley "L", Clinton, Mass., 452 BG,  
March 2, 2000

## HELPERS

- Mr. Pierre Cresson, Bernaville, France, Sept. 4, 2000  
Mr. Ernest Heller, Caloundra, Queensland, Australia,  
April 27, 2000

### *Friends seek information about the Hellers*

French Helper M. Ernest Heller, formerly of Billy Montigny, died at a nursing home north of Brisbane, Queensland on April 27, 2000, three weeks short of his 101st birthday. His wife Josephine (Louise) died in 1998.

Both will be remembered by airmen to whom they gave sanctuary and sustenance in the later stages of World War II in the Pas de Calais area.

Both were members of the FFI.

He was born in Hungary and Josephine was a native of Austria; they married in Nice and settled in northern France in 1934. The Hellers won international acclaim, especially Mme. Heller who was awarded the Medal of Freedom by the U.S.

Dr. and Mrs. Barry McKeon, friends of the Hellers, are anxious to collect memories, records and information that may still be available regarding their wartime exploits, so that an appropriate biography may be prepared about the two courageous people.

Members who can assist with anecdotes or stories of contacts with M. and Mme. Heller are asked to contact the

McKeons at PO Box 457, Caloundra, Queensland 4551, Australia; by Fax at +61 7 5492 4440; or by e-mail at beemck@optusnet.com.au

### Conrad John Kersch

Conrad John Kersch, 84, died May 16, 2000, at Sierra Convalescent Center, Carson City, Nev.

A native of Chicago, he had lived in Silver Springs since 1976, coming from Reno, where he had lived for 20 years.

He was a retired electrical technician from the Air Force, serving for 23 years. He received five Air Medals, four Distinguished Flying Crosses and the Purple Heart award.

As a member of the 303rd Bomb Group, he bailed out March 26, 1944, near St. Omer, France. He was the only member of his crew to avoid capture. He had been an infantryman in the regular army since 1935 and soon asked to join an underground group. He fought with the FFI until Allied troops arrived. Later, a British paratroop unit took him to a hospital and then flew him to Paris.



ARTHUR J. HORNING

### Art J. Horning told his story

Arthur J. Horning, 85, of Milledgeville, Ohio, died Friday, July 14, 2000, in Fayette County Memorial Hospital, Washington C.H., Ohio.

He was born in Cleveland, Ohio, where he attended South High School.

When war broke out for the United States in 1941, he enlisted and served in the Army Air Corps as a bombardier-navigator in the 8th Air Force. He bailed out of his burning B-17 on Oct. 10, 1943, near Elsen, Holland.

He evaded by crossing the Pyrenees to Spain, where he was captured by the civil guard and spent some time in a Spanish prison at Irun.

His evasion became the subject of his book, *In the Footsteps of a Flying Boot*, a tribute to the assistance he received during his evasion. It was published in 1994 and for a few years, was available through the AFEES PX.

He dedicated the book "to all of the brave people who offered their lives and fortunes to aid the downed Allied aviators and other people in evading and escaping from the Nazis during World War II."

After the war, Art married Janet Maxwell Horning and the couple became the parents of two sons. Art retired as a Certified Public Accountant in 1976, four years before the death of his first wife.

He later married the former Janet A. Rex, who survives, and her three children were added to his family.



# Peggy Langley, a key figure in Comet escape line

FROM THE LONDON GUARDIAN

*Courtesy of Gilbert Shawn*

Peggy Langley, a leading figure in the Comet escape line between Brussels and San Sebastian, died July 20. She was 85.

She was born Peggy van Lier in South Africa during the first World War, the daughter of a Belgian businessman. The family returned to Belgium in the 1920s and when the country was overrun by the Germans in 1940, she at once looked round for some way of thwarting them.

Luck brought her in contact with a group centred on Andree (now Countess) de Jongh. They took up the dangerous task of moving out of the country, the British soldiers who had been left behind at Dunkirk, Belgians who wanted to continue to fight, and Allied airmen shot down.

She procured forged passes, carries messages, and -- more dangerous still -- escorted small groups of evaders across Belgium and France by train. She would take them as far as Paris, where Andree de Jongh and her father had safe houses. Other couriers would then see them over the western end of the Pyrenees into Spain.

In late 1942 she was warned that she was too well known to the enemy and must leave. She was brought out of France to Gibraltar and flown to Bristol, where she met Jimmy Langley, also an MI-9 agent. He was much impressed with

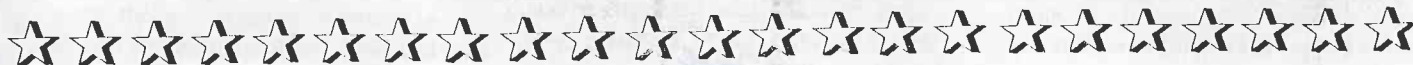


**Peggy Langley smuggled fallen airmen**

her and they married the following year.

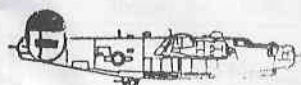
After the war, they settled at Alderton near the Suffolk coast, where they raised four sons and a daughter. Jimmy Langley died in 1983.

Peggy was awarded the MBE and the Belgian Croix de Guerre.



## TAPS

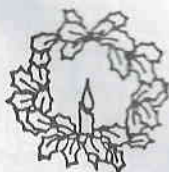
MAY THEY REST IN PEACE FOREVER



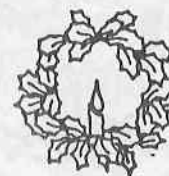
## PASSING IN REVIEW

(From the 451st Bomb Group's "Ad-Lib")

Throughout the years we've seen them pass,  
in ranks both straight and true.  
To close each day as soldiers will,  
by passing in review.



We watch our friends come marching by,  
and note their thinning ranks.  
We see them march in perfect step,  
and salute in silent thanks.



The bugle sounds it's clarion call,  
for all of us to hear.  
The sound of "Taps" means all is well,  
day's end is drawing near.





# Here's Jake



"The men on the flight line have a complaint, sir; it's the jet noise."



"I don't think they were impressed with my qualifications, Ed."

The best of  
**"JAKE" SCHAFER**

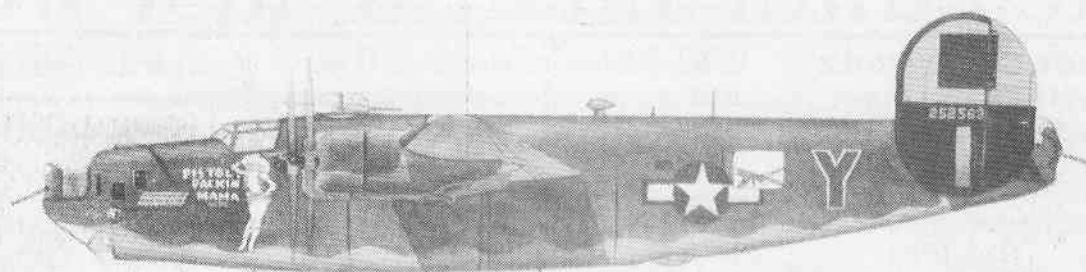


"Don't let it bother you, Billings; you're not the only guy in the squadron who didn't get a Valentine's Day card from your girlfriend."



"Boy, I can't wait to wrap my hands around the controls of one of those B-2s."





*Cartoonist Jake Schuffert painted the nose art for the B-24 "Pistol Packin' Mama"*

## Cartoonist Jake gave a Liberator a famous nose job!

By FRANK C. RAMSEY  
Gaffney, S.C.

In the summer of 1995, I received a call from Noel Dunn of Maplewood, Minn., an artist who does nature, wildlife and World War II planes, preferably those with unusual nose art.

Noel had seen a picture of my B-24 crew in which we used the plane, "Pistol Packing Mama" as a backdrop. Over the years, the picture has been printed in several service magazines. Noel had seen one of the pictures and wanted to know if I remembered the colors in the nose art.

We talked a while and it suddenly came to me; I told Noel, "Hold everything; I can put you in touch with the man who painted Ole Mama!"

Jake Schuffert was the painter. Jake and Jim Inks (now of Llano, Tex.) were members of our original group. We

**For examples of Jake Schuffert's cartoons in Airman magazine, see opposite page.)**

trained together in the States and went over with 48 B-24 Liberators. The 464th lost 138 bombers during its stay in Italy.

I sent my original snapshot to Noel and he contacted Jake. With his help, Noel painted a 18x24 of the plane. He sent the painting to me and asked that I

### Will you volunteer again?

A vacancy exists on the AFEES Board of Directors. Any member interested in serving the society should contact President Dick Smith in writing.

There will be an election at the Spokane meeting in 2001. You need not attend to be elected to the board.

add some information and send it on to Jake.

The painting has created great interest among the old 464th members, including John Graham, now 86, from West Union, Iowa. He was flight line crew chief for Mama. Others are Tony Schneider, newsletter editor; Betty Karle, group historian; Sharon Waggoner, squadron operations officer, and Jake until his death.

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*Jake Schuffert, creator of "Here's Jake," popular cartoon feature in Airman magazine, died Nov. 2, 1998, in Alexandria, Va. He and his crewmates bailed out over Yugoslavia; Jake was on his 50th mission. The crew eventually made it back to Bari, Italy. Their story is the subject of "Eight Bailed Out," a 1954 book by Jim Inks, now out of print.*

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## A gentle reminder: dues may be due!

Please complete and clip or copy this form to send dues or to report changes  
(Dues are \$20 per year. Life Membership is \$100. Make check payable to AFEES)

Send checks and changes to Clayton David, 19 Oak Ridge Pond, Hannibal, MO 63401-6539.

Phone: 573-221-0441, e-mail: davidafe@dstream.net

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Paid \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City and State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone : (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Comments \_\_\_\_\_



# The editor has the last word

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

WICHITA FALLS, Tex. -- From the way things are going, the World War II Memorial on the National Mall may never materialize, at least in our lifetimes.

The site between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial has already been dedicated and preliminary designs have been approved.

But now the NIMBY (Not in my Back Yard) element and the National Coalition to Save Our Mall have been heard from. At a hearing last month, the group denounced the memorial as a "meaningless tribute."

Many of our members have donated to the memorial fund. Perhaps somebody can explain to me why it took more than half a century for such an idea to take shape.

Speaking of ww2 memorials, the National D-Day Museum in New Orleans opened in June. Its mission statement says the museum "celebrates the American spirit, the teamwork, optimism, courage and sacrifice of the men and women who won World War II."

From Luc Dewez in Belgium came this e-mail on July 4th: "I would like to wish you a great Independence Day 2000. I hope that the veterans will receive a lot

of attention from the youngsters. If you think they pay not enough respect to your fight for the cause of freedom, be sure that in the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, at least one Belgian does. Thank you for MY freedom!"

My spouse Ruth and I spent a wonderful weekend last month in Monroe, La., where once-upon-a time, I attended navigation school at Selman Field, now the local airport famous for being the birthplace of Delta Air Lines.

We met a wonderful group of people while attended a three-day wedding celebration and had a chance to visit AFEES member A. B. (Goof-Off) Smith and his charming wife, Ruby. A. B. made it clear that they live in MONROE (the postoffice calls it West Monroe) and that the area east of the Ouachita River is East Monroe.

Here is a tough problem from Scott Goodall, our friend in southern France. Scott has been approached by a young man wanting to trace details of a Navy Hellcat which crashed near Carcassonne in August 1944: The pilot, Ens. C.W.S. Holland (or Hulland) was aided by local French and went over the Pyrenees.

He was involved in support of ground troops during the Provence landings.

So far, I have not been able to persuade Scott to get on the Internet, but

if you can help locate this naval pilot (dead or alive) please contact Scott at L'Escrabiche, Lescue, 09420 Rimont, France; Fax: 33 5 61 96 35 88

Two regulars at AFEES reunions were absent this year; both have recently lost spouses. Leonard and Eunice Schallehn had made reservations for the Columbia meeting, but Eunice passed away just at that time.

John and Ethel Yandura have been familiar figures at reunions for years; John was usually busy capturing the action on video camera. Ethel became ill on April 16 and died unexpectedly two days later. Sympathies from their friends in AFEES go to the bereaved families.

John Rucigay is promoting AFEES membership among members of the 15th Air Force Association.

John has submitted a letter to the editor of the SORTIE, explaining that personnel who were aided by the underground can contact him for information on AFEES.

Surprisingly, there are still many evaders out there who have not learned about our society and our dedication to continued recognition of our helpers.

THAT'S LIFE: Accept the fact that some days you are the pigeon and some days the statute.

From AFEES PUBLISHING  
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**(See notice, page 2)**

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