

# Epilogue

By Brent Engel

The book you have just read is much more than history – it is a living testament, written about a time when the world was visited by cataclysmic death and destruction. Coincidence and fate blend to create a tale of enormous risks and indescribable miracles. The words jump off the page and draw the reader into the story. At once we are caught up in the emotions that Lieutenant Clayton C. David and his helpers felt. And, by virtue of distance in years and the luxury of a place to read, we are allowed a glimpse of a truly remarkable ordeal.

Remove the technology of the era in which it took place, and Lieutenant David's experience could have happened in any war in any age. A hundred years from now, a similar story may be written. Relatively few men and women experienced such incredible circumstances. For those involved, the type of bond born of brief encounters likely lasts beyond mortal being.

Regrettably, time has become even more of an enemy to Clayton C. David, his helpers and others members of their generation than the Germans were during World War II. This is why the book has been updated. It's also why there really isn't an ending to it, as you shall see.

The past enjoys a reawakening only when its story is told to the generations that follow. The young breathe life into it by understanding its parables, appreciating its value, and searching for heretofore unearthed details within it.

Clayton David and his wife, Scotty, have never stopped searching for details. They are explorers focused upon knowledge instead of glory. Since the original publication of the book in 1988, Clayton and Scotty have returned to

Europe six times. Each trip brought new revelations, new questions or new insights. It was like putting together a jigsaw puzzle. Minute pieces were added to the whole, instilling further explanation and drawing a better picture than had existed originally.

“Every trip was made with the objective of uncovering some information we haven’t previously had,” Clayton said recently.

The last two visits were particularly important, because they pointed the way toward an assurance that this story and these people won’t be forgotten. The journey is just beginning.

### **The First Trip – August 1989**

Fate has a way of bringing people back together at precisely the right moments, even if it’s been decades since they last saw another.

When Clayton and Scotty traveled to Europe for the first time since publication the year before of “They Helped Me Escape,” they made the trip as guests of the people of Holland. Their practical objective was to attend the Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society (AGFEES) reunion with other service men, their spouses and their helpers at the Hotel De Witte Bergen in Laren.

But in the back of their minds, questions were still burning. Revelation and coincidence combined to make for a memorable journey.

“It was pleasant memories because you were with the finest of friends and they kept adding in little bits of information,” Clayton recently recalled.

With assistance from one of his former helpers, Clayton was able to positively identify the site near Durgerdam where he landed when he parachuted from his farming B-17 during the war. In baling out of the doomed plane, Clayton had cut his right hand and he still bears the scar.

The Davids were able to find the Piet Schouten farm where he had hidden in the hours after he parachuted in, even though the original house was long gone. It was there, in 1989, that they came across one of two women who had been milking cows in the barn when he walked through on his way into the house in 1944. The women had heard stories about Allied airmen, and they were told not to look at them so that they would never be able to make a positive identification. But one of the two women milking cows had looked.

After introductions, the woman at the farm had a question for Clayton.

"She remembered that I had had a bloody hand," Clayton said. "She wanted to make sure it had healed all right. She was very much surprised and we were very, very welcomed with open arms."

The Davids also located and paid a courtesy call to two daughters of a banker who had helped Clayton. The man had worked "behind the scenes" in the underground, Clayton recalls. "I did end up with clothes that I was able to use while escaping."

Stops the Davids made included Castel Groeneveld in Baarn, the cathedral in Gouda, a museum for helpers and Allied airmen and the battlefield at Waterloo. They also attended a reunion and dinner at Amsterdam, and met with a friend in Brussels who was part of the resistance during the war but not one of Clayton's helpers.

The Davids renewed their friendship with one of Clayton's most important helpers, Joke Folmer, on her island home, Schiermonikog. She and the Davids attended The Netherlands National Resistance Conference, which was also attended by a representative of the queen.

Other pieces of the puzzle emerged. The Davids met the mother of a man who had brought food to Clayton while he stayed at a safe house in Holland for 17 days during the war. Clayton also visited briefly with a man whom he said

“may have known some of my connections in Brussels,” but wasn’t able to convince the man to discuss his memories.

During the war, many residents of countries occupied by the Germans knew members of the Underground. Some were even family members, friends or neighbors. But they rarely discussed it, even with those closest to them, and that remains true even to this day.

“Everybody knew, but nobody knew – that’s how they described it,” Clayton said.



Above: Clayton David stands with the woman at the Schouten farm (1989).



## Second Trip - - October 1990

Encouragement and recognition can sustain people. They are like food and water for the soul.

On their second trip to Europe after publication of the book, the Davids got the satisfaction of helping other Allied airmen make contact with their former helpers and gained a deeper insight into Clayton's experiences. They also participated in a highly moving ceremony honoring those who put themselves in jeopardy to help Allied airmen, often paying the ultimate price.

The Davids were part of a group tour of AFEES members who planned to meet helpers at receptions and other events during a two-week visit. Unlike the Davids, some of the Americans on the journey hadn't been back to Europe since World War II. It was through the work of Clayton and Scotty that the reunions took place.

"We set up contacts to try and meet some of the people who had been our helpers," Clayton said. "A number of people did meet their helpers, some of them for the first time on that trip."

Upon their arrival in Paris, the Davids were met by two of Clayton's helpers, Jean and Paule Arhex, and had dinner at the Eiffel Tower. Jean's father found a guide for Clayton and another evader to escape France over the Pyrenees into Spain in 1994. In 2001, the couple would play an instrumental role in helping the next generation of the David family trace Clayton's steps through the mountains.

The Davids also renewed their acquaintance on the 1990 trip with George Guillon, another French helper whose parents sheltered Clayton and Ken Shaver for a night during their evasion in February 1944. No trip to Western Europe could be complete for the Davids without a visit to see Joke Folmer and Jacques Vrij. Joke had delivered

Clayton to Jacques at the railroad station in Maastrich, Holland, where Jacques was one of the leaders of the Dutch resistance movement.

A visit to Toulouse, France, reminded Clayton of the danger he had faced in 1944. The area was a good “preparation for getting across the mountains” because the “terrain was difficult and the Germans were very thorough in watching everyone,” Clayton remembers. “There were quite a lot of people who were killed in the Toulouse area.”



Above: (left to right) Clayton David, George Guillon, Jacques Arhex, Paule Arhex, and Scotty David in Paris, France in 1990. George, Jacques and Paule helped Clayton evade the enemies in France in 1944.

At Tarascon, France, the Davids and other Americans participated in a touching ceremony at the Monument National de la Liberte, a memorial to the Resistance. More than 130 French people connected to the Resistance greeted them. Children came from the local school and sang the

French national anthem. Clayton was a part of the wreath-laying at the monument.

“It was a very moving ceremony,” he remembers. “There were tears in a lot of people’s eyes. It was something I’ll always remember.”

In Amsterdam, Holland, Clayton was reunited for the first time with Gerritt Schouten, whose brother Piet, owned the farm Clayton had first visited after his plane went down almost a half-century earlier.

One leg of the trip to the northern part of Holland proved just how unselfish Clayton and Scotty are in their quest to document history. At Assendelver Zeedijk, Clayton donated his World War II uniform to Erik De Ruiter of the Luchtoorlog Air Recovery Group Museum.

Donating the uniform was “something I had thought about doing,” Clayton said. “It was designed to show my appreciation to my helpers.”

Other stops on the tour included Gent, Belgium, and a visit to the postage-stamp country of Andorra, which is tucked into the Pyrenees between France and Spain.

“This trip was really a mission of gratitude to our helpers,” Clayton said. “I think we accomplished that.”





Above: Clayton David presents his World War II uniform to Erik De Ruiter of the Luchtoorlog Air Recovery Group Museum. (1990)

### **The Third Trip – April/May 1995**

The human capacity to recall seemingly trivial components of important events continues to amaze, especially because the mists of time and distance can interfere with clarity.

On their third trip to Europe after original publication of the book, Clayton and Scotty David made two discoveries that are easily overlooked until significance demands their study. One was a sign, the other a bridge.

The visit also was important because it marked the first time that the Davids' son, Lynn, had accompanied the couple specifically to help trace his father's path five decades after it had been worn.

"For our son, it was his first time to walk in his dad's footsteps on foreign soil," Clayton told a Rotary Club gathering in June 1995.

The Davids discovered the sign in the basement of the Catholic school in Paris where Clayton and seven other Allied servicemen had been hidden in February 1944. It is an inauspicious piece of metal not more than a foot in diameter. But it saved their lives.

As you've already read in the text, the school at 24 rue Lhomond in Paris hid Clayton and the other servicemen only briefly. The room where they were hidden was a closed stairwell off of the electric generator room. On the steel door of the room hung a sign that read "Poste de Transformation, Defense de Penetrer, Danger de Mort" – "High Voltage, Do Not Enter, Danger of Death."

The door was locked when the Germans came to search the school for Allied servicemen in 1944. Clayton believes the sign is the only thing that kept them from asking that it be opened. On a return search later the same day, the Germans did demand that the door be opened, but Clayton and his fellow evaders had already been moved down the block to the church.



On their research trip to Europe, the Davids had found the school, as well as the nearby church where Clayton and the other servicemen hid for two weeks. But they didn't find the sign because the basement of the school had been remodeled over the years. Still, Clayton held out hope, and in 1995 he was determined to find it.

The principal of the school asked a maintenance man to accompany Clayton on the search for the sign and the hiding room.

"He took me over much territory, but we never got to the right place," Clayton recalls. "He was about to give up and he said 'Well, the electrician might know some places that I don't.'"

The maintenance man summoned the electrician, and Clayton again joined in the search. In a forgotten corner of the basement, not far from the school's entrance, they struck pay dirt.

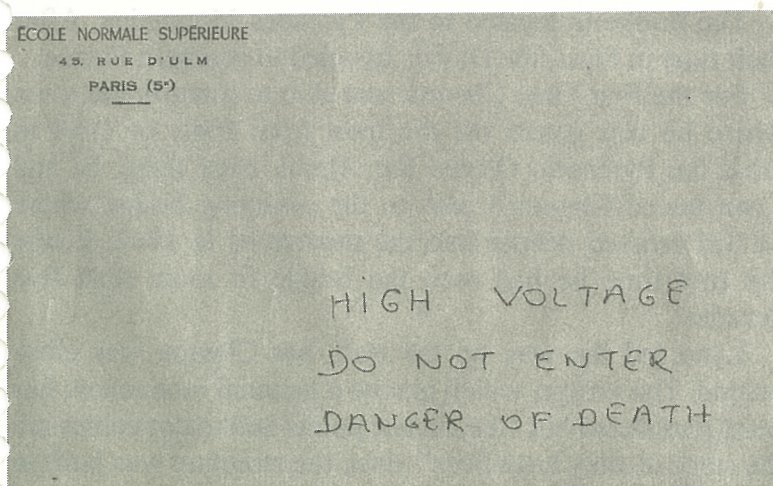
"When I spotted it, I knew exactly what it was," Clayton said. "I was surprised."

The men took the sign to the principal, who translated the message to English and presented it to Clayton. He continues to treasure it.

"That's the sign that kept us from being killed," Clayton said.



Left: This is the sign which deterred the German and French police from searching the area where Clayton David, John Buckner, and Ken Shaver were hiding.



Above: This is the translation of the sign provided by the maintenance men who helped Clayton find the original sign in 1995.



Below: Clayton David stands with the two maintenance men who helped him find the sign inside the school in Paris.

The bridge is located in the Pyrenees Mountains. After their time in Paris, the Davids traveled to southern France.

For the first time, Clayton was able to identify the town where he had gotten off the train from Paris in 1944 to cross the Pyrenees, Oloron Ste. Marie. Near there, he and Lynn traced Clayton's path to the swinging bridge where he had crossed deeper into the mountains in 1944. It was the first time he had seen the bridge in more than five decades.

Lynn led the way up the trail, but Clayton was close behind. The bridge, which is now a national monument, has been remodeled but "the anchor points and major cables are the same as they have been" since the structure was built in the 1920s.

"Everything we did for this put Lynn in the exact spot where I had been," Clayton said. "His greatest objective at all times was to try to make sure we'd found just exactly everything we wanted and where it happened."

Lynn was impressed, and the journey kindled a desire within him. "Here we were, going over the same footsteps I had 51 years before," Clayton said. "That triggered his desire to actually walk the mountain in 1999. That made him determined to walk my pathway."

Clayton also drew renewed inspiration from the journey, and found Lynn's unflappable interest heartening. "It seems like the more you do and the closer you get to it, two things happen," he said. "Number one, you want to find out more, and number two, you want to increase your accuracy of what you've already discovered."

Other stops and experiences of importance during the 1995 trip included Rotterdam, Amsterdam and Maastricht. The Davids attended AFEES reunions, as well as events marking the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Allied liberation of Europe – not the least of which was the Queen's celebration in Amsterdam on May 4. The next night,



Clayton and Scotty had tickets to an opera, which the Queen attended. They also met with Jacques Vrij, Joke Folmer, and Paule Arhex.

Also on the trip, a crew from Intrepidus Film Co. accompanied the Davids on several stops between Clayton's landing site in Holland and the French border with Spain. In the summer of 2003, work continues on the documentary.

"This trip was very special for a couple of major reasons," Clayton told the Rotary Club in 1995. "First, we celebrated 50 years of freedom with our friends in Holland, who were the last to be liberated. Secondly, a film crew joined us in Amsterdam and stayed with us all the way to the Pyrenees Mountains."

Following are other highlights from the 1995 trip, as featured in Clayton's presentation to the Rotary Club.

"This was our first time to see the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace in London. This was also our first time to be in Holland when the tulips were in bloom. We had special tickets to attend two different events in the presence of the Queen (Beatrice) of Holland. May 4, National Recognition Day, Lynn and I attended in the church where the Queen spoke and then we went outside to Monument Square in front of the Palace for laying wreaths. Respect for the Queen, the Prince, the Prime Minister and the occasion was something of great interest to Lynn. He was amazed to see 20,000 to 25,000 people stand quietly for about 20 minutes. No special security was in evidence. Could it happen here?"

"May 5 marked 50 years of liberation at Amsterdam. In the Opera House that night, Scotty and I attended a special program for the occasion and sat with one of my helpers and his wife overlooking the Queen and her party in an in an off-center stage location. When that was concluded with champagne and a special umbrella for each of us, we adjourned to the streets where a large bandstand was set up

across the canal. The Queen and her party arrived there in an open canal boat with a huge crowd looking on."

Clayton also held Rotary members' attention with the story of the visit to the school where the high voltage sign had saved his life, as well as his trip with Scotty and Lynn to Southern France.

"From Paris to Bordeaux, France, we rode the 'Rocket Train,' which reaches top speeds of 180 mph. A very smooth ride and plenty of passengers."

Clayton then told the Rotary Club about his walk with Lynn to the swinging bridge he had crossed in the Pyrenees in 1944.

"The bridge and the path have been made much safer than when (he and other evaders) crossed it before in total darkness, four of us hanging onto each other's coattail behind our guide in the greatest 'trust walk' of my life, where a misstep could have been the end," Clayton said.

In 1995, when "the mountain road turned us back with falling snow on May 13, one month later than I walked it in 1944, our son gained some additional appreciation for what it took for me to do it while evading capture, and why only about one half of us were successful," he told the group.

The detective-like spirit which Clayton, Scotty, and Lynn David showed on the 1995 trip is not something which is easily defined. Clayton unconsciously paved the path for Lynn to better understand the incredible story. Lynn, in turn, was forming a plan to engage a third generation of the David family in the remarkable tale. Clayton probably sums it up best.

"The more you hunt, the more you seem to find out," he said.





Above: This is the bridge in the Pyrenees Mountains that Clayton David crossed during his escape.

### **The Fourth Trip**

Tributes often come with ceremonies in remembrance of those who sacrificed so that others could enjoy freedom. They can also be a reflection of how events are passed along to generations that have only experienced a trauma momentous as war through the pages of history books.

On their fourth trip to Europe after the publication of "They Helped Me Escape," Clayton and Scotty David experienced both definitions. They also were part of a historic undertaking.

For the first time, the couple's grandson, Jonathan, accompanied them on the journey to Europe. Their son, Lynn, also went along. Jonathan was 11 years old at the time, and he and his 50-year-old father not only walked in Clayton's footsteps, but made plans for what would become an epic trek two years later.

The Davids made their accustomed stops on the trip, tracing Clayton's escape route from Holland to the Pyrenees. Jonathan got to see for the first time the site where his grandfather had parachuted from his burning plane. The group also visited with Joke Folmer, Jacques Vrij and Jean and Paule Arhex. It was Lynn's idea to take Jonathan.

"He thought it would be a good experience for Jonathan," Clayton remembers. "Jonathan was interested in the activities. He was also very interested in the things that almost any tourist would be interested in. He took off one afternoon when Scotty and I were in the hotel and Lynn was on the mountain. First thing I know, he comes back the hotel with two friends. He was beginning to establish international relationships."

Jonathan wasn't the only one to do so. In fact, one of the most emotional moments of the trip brought together people from several nations.

On July 8, in the French town of Saint-Girons about 60 miles south of Toulouse, former French Resistance fighters, AFEES members and evaders from England, their helpers from France and Belgium, as well as second and third generation of their families, gathered for a ceremony to pay tribute to Louis Barraau and others who helped Allied fliers evade capture.

"The French are great for pomp and pious," Clayton said. "They'll have a ceremony wherever they can have a ceremony, and this trip was set up for a number of ceremonies."

Minutes after the ceremony ended, the younger members of the contingent began a four-day trek across the Pyrenees into Spain, retracing the route so many evaders had taken. The French have permanently dedicated it as The Freedom Trail, and the trek is made annually now. The American hikers dubbed the 1999 trek "Operation Home Run," and it produced media stories around the world.

Lynn made the journey. Jonathan did not, but he saw enough of the trail to be impressed at what his grandfather accomplished 55 years earlier. About two-thirds of almost two dozen other hikers who began at Saint-Giron dropped out before they got to Spain. The AFEES members and family members who didn't walk The Freedom Trail across the mountains kept pace via car and joined the hikers at various points.

"This was the first time any Americans had gone through The Freedom Trail," Clayton said. "Lynn videotaped the whole trip, and that's the first time anyone had done that."

The hikers "had a good time going through this, even though it wasn't easy," Clayton said. "I guess one of the things you do is sit down and share each other's pain from the blisters. That climbing is tough."

Although The Freedom Trail was miles from where Clayton had crossed the Pyrenees, Lynn said he "got an appreciation for the ruggedness" of the journey. Plus, he made the trip in July. His father had done it in waist-deep snow in April.

The French guides "were like mountain goats," said Lynn, an experienced hiker. "It's not a walk in the woods."

Before coming home, Lynn was already planning a return trip – and this time he and Jonathan would retrace his father's path across the Pyrenees. He talked with Jean and Paule Arhex about hiring a guide. Clayton said the conversation "helped (Jean and Paule) realize how serious Lynn was" about the journey.

For Clayton, the opportunity to expand Lynn's knowledge of his experience during World War II and the chance to immerse Jonathan in the non-fictional adventure for the first time was very gratifying.

"It's always rewarding to me when my son and grandson come together in experiencing some of the things that I went through," he said. "It's so much different to actually

have the reality of doing it rather than reading about it in the book. I got a satisfaction out of the next generation understanding how truly difficult it was.”

The Davids need not worry that their son will forget what Clayton did. Lynn’s appreciation was developed years ago. Jonathan, meanwhile, is like many teenagers. He loves loud music. He can’t wait to get a car of his own. He’s interested in girls. And yet, he’s developed a respect for his grandfather that’s not as typical of many members of his generation. He has a maturity that goes well beyond his years.

Jonathan explained it best in a school paper he wrote the fall after reading from that 1999 trip. In it, he shows remarkable insight about his heritage – and the sacrifices made by so many.

“The reason I am here today is because my grandfather would not give up his will to survive and because helpers from many countries did not give up their fight for freedom.”

Perhaps those words will stand as the best tribute of all.

### **The Fifth Trip – July 2001**

Failure simply isn’t an option for many people. It wasn’t for a young Clayton David when he and Ken Shaver crossed the Pyrenees to avoid capture by the Germans during World War II.

And it wasn’t a consideration more than 50 years later, when his son, Lynn, and his grandson, Jonathan, updated a story of indefinable endurance by embarking on a journey of personal discovery. It was a trip that defied the odds. But it was one replete with the type of coincidences and perfect timing that had guided Clayton to freedom. In the end, it proved to be a triumph of the human spirit and a testimony to sheer willpower.

For Clayton David, the path to freedom had required putting one foot in front of the other thousands upon thousands of times. Lynn and Jonathan found a new definition of freedom by following that same path – an indescribable appreciation for what Clayton had done.

As with each trip the Davids made to Europe, this one was intricately planned. The idea, as you have read in the previous section, was two years old, but its genesis actually was formulated on the 1995 trip when Lynn accompanied his parents to visit Clayton's helpers.

The Davids scheduled their 2001 trip for July. Jonathan would be on summer break from school and Lynn would take time away from his job as a business consultant. Lynn's plan was to retrace the mountain-crossing portion of his father's evasion route. From his previous experience, he knew what to pack. What he didn't have was a guide.

The airplane reservations had already been made in March 2001 when Clayton got an e-mail from Scott Goodall, an Englishman who lives in France and is passionately involved with documenting stories of evaders and their helpers.

Goodall's message brought ironic, yet wonderful, news. A guide had been found to take Lynn and his party through the Pyrenees. The couple who found the guide was one of Clayton's helpers, Jean Arhex, and his wife, Paule.

On July 12, the Davids met Goodall and his wife, Judy, in the Tardets, France. They spent the night at the bed and breakfast, Chambres d'Hotes, operated by the young Basque guide, Thierry Artiere. Jean and Paule were regular customers of Artiere, who made goat cheese. The evening of July 13 was spent in the Ahrex home in preparation for climbing the next day.

Early on the morning of July 14, the party gathered at Holcarte Gorge to begin the journey. Clayton, Lynn and Jonathan were joined by Clayton's younger son, Jim, as



well as Lynn's friend, Betsy Byran, Thierry Artiere and Scott and Judy Goodall.

Clayton and Jim went as far as the swinging bridge Clayton had crossed to begin his trek into the Pyrenees in 1944. For those who kept going, the difficulty of the climb soon became apparent. The group had to pick its way through the heavy forest and later in the day a cold rain fell.

"If you didn't have a guide and know where you were going, you could walk around out there forever," Lynn recalls. "It's not the kind of trip where you take out a map and decide 'We're going to go out and do this.'"

The group spent the night at a shepherd's hut where Thierry had made arrangements. They awoke the next morning to heavy clouds and limited visibility. A bitter wind propelled rain and sleet into the faces as the climb continued. It was July, and yet the climbers were wearing gloves.

Finally, they came to the border dividing France and Spain. Jonathan was the first to reach the top, although his father remembers that he wasn't overwhelmed with joy because the "moment of thrill...was dampened with strong wind gusts that he thought were going to blow him off the mountain."

The group descended into Spain and met up with Clayton, Scotty, Jim and the others. As they walked out of the mountain, Lynn's appreciation of his father's ordeal only grew stronger. And now, he had passed along the first-hand glimpse of history to his only son. They had done it. They had completed the journey. But the path hadn't ended.

In speaking with Clayton David, you'll find that there really is no ending. He and Scotty have made sure of that through their tireless work, their heartfelt devotion and their efforts to never let this story die.

The elder Davids aren't the only ones who have renewed the ties that will forever link Clayton and his helpers.

Relationships also have developed between Lynn, Jim and Jonathan David and the groups of helpers and their descendants.

Jonathan, especially, has “picked up new perspectives by meeting so many people,” Clayton said. “It’s apt to influence his understanding of world affairs.”

Clayton David grew up during a time when the world seemed smaller, when few Americans thought much about the importance of events beyond the nation’s borders. All of that has changed, today, of course. And the World War II generation is responsible for broadening our horizons. It’s now up to us to remember that legacy. Clayton David believes we will.

“The next generation isn’t going to let people forget,” he said.

We must not.



Above: This picture was taken in 2001 of the David family. From left to right: Jonathan, Lynn, Scotty, Clayton and James David.



Above: Before they go to challenge the mountain are: (left to right) Lynn A. David, Clayton C. David, Jonathan David, and James S. David in their T-shirts designed for the occasion, "The Hike to Clayton's Peak – 1944 Escape Route."



Below: Jonathan and Lynn David pose for a picture in the mountains.

### **The Sixth Trip – November 2003**

America undertook an incredible effort during World War II that it's easy to overlook the tremendous suffering and sacrifices of our European Allies.

As Clayton David so eloquently wrote in "They Helped Me Escape," many of those on both sides who survived the war could not forget the faces of those who stood up to tyranny.

Clayton's sixth return trip to Europe featured a ceremony with a very famous person who remembered.

His Royal Highness Prince Bernhard of Holland was made aware of a book entitled "Stepping Stones to Freedom." It had been written by Bob de Graaff and dealt specifically with how residents of The Netherlands had helped Allied airmen escape German capture.

The Prince asked that arrangements be made to get a copy. Through contacts, Albert Postma and Fred Boogart scheduled a meeting.

But there's quite a story that leads up to the Prince receiving that book. The group that had commissioned the 1995 book wanted to get it translated into English. Clayton and Scotty spearheaded the effort, with the cooperation of the people in Holland. Dee Wessels Boer-Stallman translated the book into English and Amsterdam publisher Geert van de Meulen coordinated the final details with Walsworth Publishing of Mexico, MO.

AFEES agreed to pay the cost of packing and mailing the books throughout the U.S. It was a tremendously difficult and time-consuming job.

A truck loaded with 700 books showed up in front of Clayton and Scotty's Hannibal home with individual cartons for mailing each copy.

"Over the weekend, Scotty and I tried our hand at getting some books ready for mailing and found it was



going to be a time-consuming task,” Clayton wrote in the AFEES Fall 2003 newsletter. “For help, we recruited a couple of neighborhood girls to help and started an assembly line in our kitchen on Monday morning. By Wednesday evening, all the books were wrapped.”

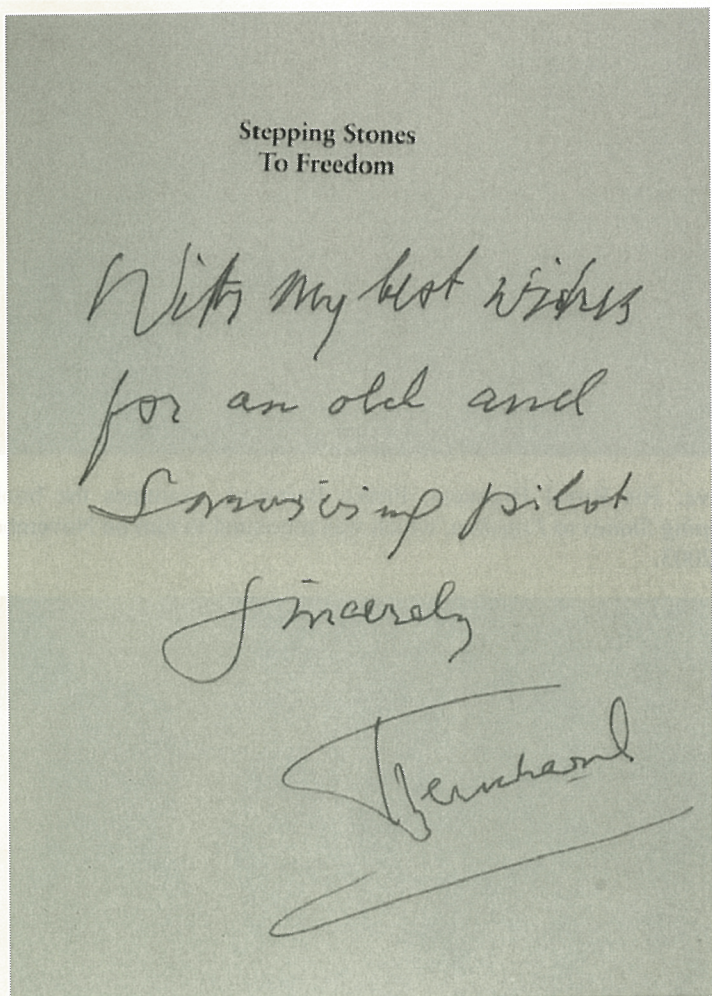
The books filled 25 large mailing bags. A neighbor of Clayton and Scotty’s hauled them to the post office. They were sent to every life member of AFEES and other who were connected to helping American servicemen escape from the enemy during the war.

“This book, in English, represents the same kind of international cooperation that existed when our helpers risked their lives to help us avoid capture,” Clayton wrote.

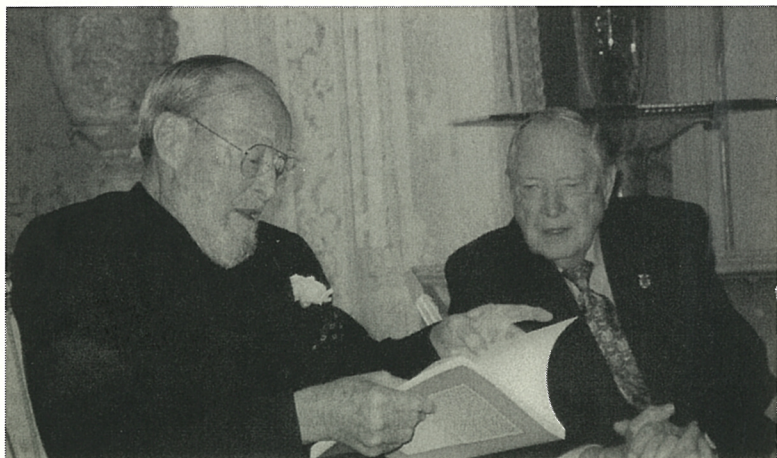


Above: Seated from left to right in this picture are Scotty David, H.R.H. Prince Bernhard, Clayton David, Jacques Vrij and Joke Folmer.

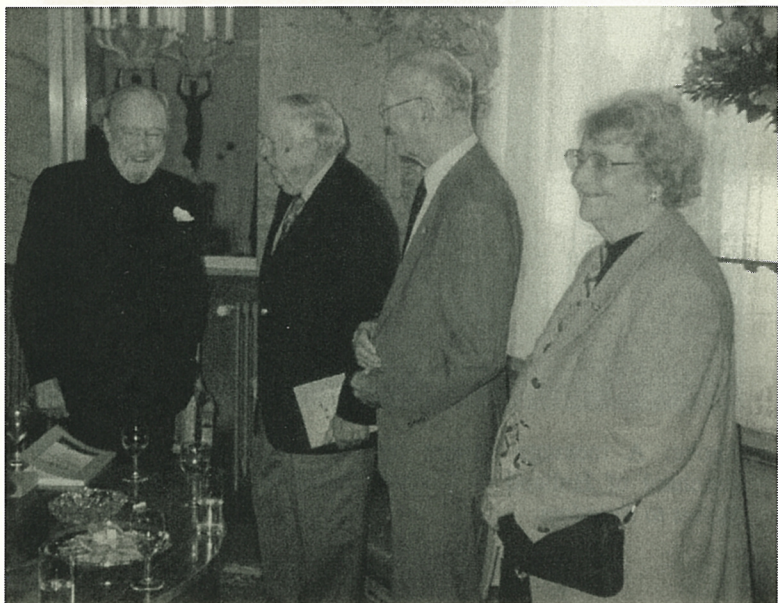




Above: A message written by His Royal Highness, Prince Bernhard of Holland to Clayton David in the book, *Stepping Stones to Freedom*.



Above: His Royal Highness, Prince Bernhard, examines the book, *Stepping Stones to Freedom*, which was presented to him on November 19, 2003.



Below: H.R.H. Prince Bernhard stands with Clayton David, Jacques Vrij, and Joke Folmer.

### **Seventh Trip – April 2004**

Sons and fathers can grow apart. Those that remain close are often the ones who share each other's dreams and passions. Lynn David had first gotten a glimpse of his father's amazing 1944 journey to freedom in 1995. Four year later, Lynn and his son, Jonathan, made the trip. In 2001, Lynn also hiked across the Pyrenees Mountains on what the French have called The Freedom Trail. But the most ambitious and, perhaps, the most meaningful trip that Lynn took was in April 2004.

Previously, he had embarked on the arduous Pyrenees journey in late spring or early summer, when the hiking was still tough but the weather was much more accommodating. This time, he decided to get a better idea of what his father went through by making the journey in April, the same month Clayton had done it 60 years earlier.

At 55, Lynn was 30 years older than when Clayton had made the trek. Still, he was determined. Lynn prepared himself for months, knowing the trip would be emotionally as well as physically demanding. Lynn wanted to perform the feat as a way to honor his father and those who helped him. He worked out extensively and even lugged a 40 pound backpack around his suburban St. Louis neighborhood.

A couple of things were different on Lynn's trip. The most obvious, of course, was that there was no fear of enemy capture. Lynn was also better supplied. Unlike Clayton, Lynn's group did not travel at night through the Pyrenees. They also found that the rickety swinging bridge Clayton had crossed so many years ago had been fortified. A father and a son were brought closer together by a milestone event in the elder's life. Fate can work miracles.





Left: Lynn David shows his father, Clayton David, the map he used to retrace his father's route through the Pyrenees Mountains. Photo courtesy of USA Today.

Below: Clayton and Scotty David look over some French newspapers that Lynn David brought back from his trip. Photo courtesy of USA Today.







Above: Lynn David poses with some of his mountain-climbing friends. From the left: a friend of the guide, Lynn David, Scott Goodall, Txmoin Etchemendy (professional guide), Mrs. Hall with her pet, and Richard Hall.

### **The Final Trip – May 2007**

In many ways, time has become as big an enemy as Nazi Germany once was. As the World War II generation passes, so do the first-hand accounts of what really happened.

Clayton David preserved those memories forever in his book “They Helped Me Escape.” He also had the foresight to hand down the story to his sons, Lynn and Jim, who have since passed it on and shared it with their children.

While the final trip for Clayton and Scotty David did not take the couple far in miles, it brought them together one final time with the one-time strangers who became soul-mates.

On May 2, 2007, Clayton, Scotty and other members of AFEES got together in St. Louis. Also in attendance were many of the rescuers who aided the downed American airmen in their paths to safety. Among those honored was one of Clayton’s most beloved helpers, Joke Folmer. Finding words to express gratefulness can sometimes be tough, but Clayton summed it up best in an interview

during the AFEES convention with a reporter from USA Today:

“Those people meant the difference between our sitting the war out in a prisoner-of-war camp and our getting away and getting back to our units,” he said. “It was almost impossible to evade capture in an occupied country without help.”

Clayton passed away at age 89 at 6:15 p.m. on Friday, May 15, 2009. Ten days later, America celebrated the annual observance of Memorial Day. It was also the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Clayton being flown back to England after his four-month evasion in 1944.

Clayton’s words will live on in this book and in the spirit he has instilled in his descendants. It’s a legacy which we can admire and from which all of us can draw inspiration.

### **Scotty David**

Clayton David’s odyssey from Holland to Spain and back to England, evading capture by the Germans during World War II, is in itself a remarkable feat. No less dramatic, however, is a devotion to this story and those of other evaders and their helpers by his wife, Scotty.

Without her, the faces and places that set hundreds of evading American airmen on the path to freedom would be but distant memories, locked up in the mind and only brought to life in a rare moment of candor when a grandchild or young visitor researching the most dramatic event of the 20<sup>th</sup> century asked for details.

Perhaps it comes from her years of teaching school, but Scotty makes it a point to let anyone who will listen know about the AFEES. For her, education is something that doesn’t stop when the class bell rings. Her knowledge of the subject, especially Clayton’s story, sometimes surpasses that of even Clayton himself. The details she provided



while Clayton discussed his evasion in interviews for the writing of this epilogue were invaluable. She frequently provided the intricate pieces of the story Clayton weaved.

Scotty exudes dignity and respect. She abhors laziness, and regards each day as an opportunity to learn something new. She has the eloquent grace of a lost age and the sharpened wit of a vaudeville comedienne. Scotty is equally at home in the presence of the queen of a European country or a cheese maker from a remote mountaintop. Had Norman Rockwell needed a model for the quintessential American mother and grandmother, he would have called Scotty. Clayton admits that he would have been lost without her assistance in the research and subsequent follow-up to "They Helped Me Escape."

"If I hadn't had her support, I would not have put all the effort in," he said. "She has gotten so involved with matching helpers in Europe with the people in America they helped. She has a fabulous memory. She remembers bomb groups and the names of the pilots. I remember at one reunion there was a helper and an American who had been looking for each other, but they weren't able to get together. That really bugged her. She felt responsible, even though she wasn't."

The Davids make a wonderful team. They've spent years of their lives and a small fortune trying to reunite American pilots with the Europeans who helped them evade capture during World War II. Along with their sons and grandson, they've created a legacy that any family would be proud to have.



Above: Scotty David presents one of her many scrapbooks which she has created to commemorate the airmen who fought in World War II and the people who helped them escape enemy territory.