

WWII U.S. GLIDER PILOT'S BRIEFING

NATIONAL WWII GLIDER PILOTS COMMITTEE
OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE

SILENT WINGS MUSEUM FOUNDATION
Legacy of the World War II Glider Pilots Association



Why is it that the 51st Troop Carrier Wing, the first TC Wing to see combat in Operation Torch, North Africa, is the only TC Wing never to transfer to the Ninth TC Command in the European Theater?



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The 51st Troop Carrier Wing
The usage of Recycled Gliders

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You have received this quarterly briefing because you are a paid member of the National World War II Glider Pilot Committee which is a component of the Silent Wings Museum Foundation. The Foundation is an independent 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization incorporated to support the Silent Wings Museum, and is not otherwise connected with the City of Lubbock, TX. The briefing content is created by our members who are not compensated for their research and writing. This content provides you with glider and other troop carrier stories, information, images, and history usually obtained directly from U.S. Military archives and other sources not in common circulation.

Editor's Note

Dear Readers,

Happy New Year as we welcome in 2023! I hope that this edition finds you well. I am a bit late in completing this quarter's edits, you can attribute that to my recent holiday in Australia visiting my fiancée for Christmas and the New Year.

We've had another successful year of Briefings and I look forward to those to come. This quarter's articles offer an excellent recap of our organization's recent exploits in Lubbock, TX. In addition you will find an installment by our International Director, Hans den Brok, where he explains the difficulty in truly understanding an individual glider's flight history despite their tendency to be reused in multiple missions.

Furthermore, I want to thank Mark for his article detailing the 51st TCW's combat operations in North Africa.

If you have thoughts or insight into the articles we provide, please reach out to us at the below email address so that we can share your comments with the rest of the membership in the following quarter's issue.

briefingeditor.nwwiigpc@gmail.com

Now a look at our past "Year in Review:"

Winter 2021 - *Not-So Virtual Impressions*, a recap of the in-person activities of 2021's virtual symposium hosted by the US Air Force Academy, by: Lt. Col Colin Henderson (USAF)

Spring 2022 - *The Kid: His Real War History*, this article featured the true story of F/O "Jackie" Coogan during the war as well as offered explanation into how the historical record is often distorted by publishers attempting to link obscure events to well-known names, by: Patricia Overman and the editor.

Summer 2022 - *Where was that Beautiful Formation?*, an article detailing the C-46's combat debut, by: Richard Chancellor and Patricia Overman

Fall 2022 - *Reunion Special Edition*, this edition had all the details, timelines, locations, and presentation topics for our October Reunion.

It has been a pleasure serving you this year, and I shall strive to continue to do so.

Best,
Trevor Shimulunas

50th WWII GLIDER PILOTS REUNION REPORT

Lubbock, Texas, October 2022

Prepared by:
Gary Stripling, Chair, Mary Roemer, Reunion Chair,
Chuck Hobbs, Treasurer, and Col Mark Vlahos (USAF ret.)



Fred Lunde ,on the right, is talking with Frank Brandon about Market Garden where 78 years prior they both flew gliders into enemy territory. Iconic photo taken by Zach Cromely



The 50th National WWII Glider Pilots Reunion was held Oct 6-8, 2022, in Lubbock, TX. It was co-hosted by the National WWII Glider Pilots Committee and the Silent Wings Museum. Big Kudos go out to Mary Roemer and Gary Stripling, who led the overall team effort. Everyone was glad to attend and reconnect after three years of no reunions! The hotel utilized was the MCM Eleganté Hotel which included dinner on Thursday night with the opening presentations. Other major facilities utilized included both the Lubbock Women’s Club for dinner Friday night, and the Silent Wings Museum. Presentations were delivered at each location, with the Silent Wings Museum also serving as the main venue for tours, a United States Air Force Academy (USAAF) 94th Flying Training Squadron (94th FTS) glider static displays, a luncheon, and the Saturday closing ceremony and banquet. The closing ceremony included a special visit from the Air Attaché for the Kingdom



of the Netherlands, Colonel Bertil van Geel, who flew in from Washington D.C. to induct Frank Brandon and Fred Lunde, two WWII glider pilots, into the order of the Orange Lanyard, meritorious unit award – the Military Order of William, the Netherland’s military honor. Colonel Bertil van Geel also inducted glider pilot Franklin Stickney into the order, presenting the award to his daughter Claudia Coggin. Having both Fred Lunde (100 years old) and Frank Brandon (102 years old) attend the reunion and receive an Orange Lanyard for flying combat missions in Holland was truly the highlight for all who attended. Finally, and without a doubt, the consensus of those assembled was that the decision to provide financial assistance for our WWII glider pilots and their families to attend the reunion was money well spent and highlights the purpose of this not-for-profit organization.



As fast as the Reunion came and went, we do not want to miss the opportunity to thank the many members who planned, attended, and participated in the 50th Reunion events. We are especially thankful for our two WWII Glider Pilot veterans, 1st Lt Fred Lunde, 100 years young and Maj. Frank Brandon, 102 years young, and their families. Their presence was the highlight of the 50th Reunion.



We were also honored with the attendance Col. Bertil van Geel, the Air Attaché of the Netherlands, and his gracious wife Carin. They traveled from Washington, DC to present the Orange Lanyard to Glider Pilots 1st Lt Fred Lunde, USAAF (Ret) and Maj. Frank Brandon, USAAF (Ret) for their participation as U.S. Army WWII Glider Pilots in the liberation of Holland, Operation Market-Garden.

A very special thanks goes to the United States Air Force Academy 94th Flying Training Squadron (FTS) Commander, Lt Col. Chad “Sloth” Davies for sending two officers, four cadets, and one of their soaring gliders to the Reunion. We could not have been more proud of our

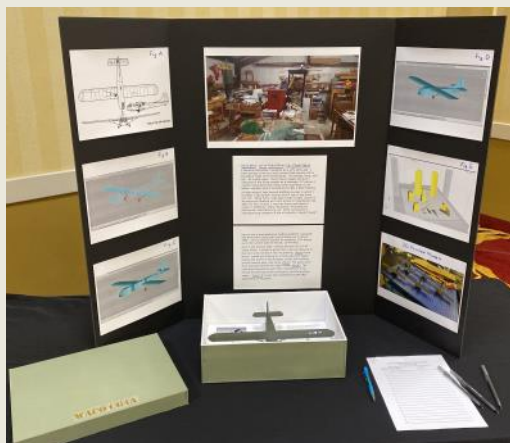


USAFA Officers and Cadets. Their professionalism, engagement with our WWII veterans and our members was OUTSTANDING! In attendance were:

- 2nd Lt. Trevor Ervin, 94th FTS, USAFA, Officer in Charge
- 2nd Lt. Daniel Huntsman, 94th FTS, USAFA
- Cadet 1st Class, Brad Westhauser, 94th FTS, USAFA, Cadet in Charge
- Cadet Rachel Eberhardt, 94th FTS, USAFA
- Cadet Katie Keating, 94th FTS, USAFA
- Cadet Andrew Ratcliff, 94th FTS, USAFA



We must also thank the City of Lubbock museum personnel who went above and beyond to co-host the 50th Reunion. Jacquie Bober, Municipal Museum Director, Eddy Grigsby, Museum Assistant Manager, Sharon McCullar, Silent Wings Museum Curator, and all of the museum staff members. Without their help, the events at the museum simply could not have happened.



Thank you to Mary Roemer, our Reunion Chair. Mary reports that we had 83 registered attendees with 81 in attendance. Thank you also to Mary's incredible volunteers, Sally Abbe, (Lubbock Women's Club banquet and Box Lunch catering) Beth Stripling (all table decorations at all venues and the Awards banquet catering), Dave and Susan Pinter (Beautiful Blessings and willing to help at any time with anything that needed to be done including venue set ups and providing the beautiful quilt for raffle), Jeff McGovern (willing and able for any help we needed) Mark Vlahos and Doreen Pliner (for the EXCELLENT Hospitality Room at the Hotel).



We owe the MCM Hotel staff our thanks for an EXCELLENT job and Customer Service across the board. Thanks goes to Janie Zuniga, Director of Sales, Carlos Rojo, Banquet Manager, the incredible breakfast staff, Ritchie, Ronald, Lena-lady, James, and Steven who was so helpful with technical and AV interfaces with the hotel



banquet rooms. What a great hotel staff!

I must also thank all our "Presenters." These were among the very best presentations we have ever had at a Reunion. They are listed below in the order the presentations were given.

1) Captain Trevor Shimulunas, USMC; 2) Dr. Jeff McGovern; 3) Dr. Claudia Coggin; 4) Dr. Peter Houck; 5) Vice Chair, Joan Abrahamsen; 6) Jim Calams; 7) Cadet First-Class Brad Westhauser; 8) Col. Mark Vlahos, USAF (Ret) and Mrs. Monique Taylor; 9) The Overman family, Bruce, Patricia and John for the Video Overview and narration of HOLLAND - just incredible; 10) Colonel Bertil van Geel for the Orange Lanyard Presentation; 11) The National WWII Glider Pilots Awards by Vice-Chair Joan Abrahamsen; 12) David Berry for the CG-4A 3D-Printed Models Silent Auction; and 13) Susan Pinter for the incredible Quilt Raffle.

And a special thanks to Trevor Shimulunas for stepping in for Patricia and providing technical support at all three venues during the Reunion.

Thank you to our National Wing Commander, Patricia Overman and our Previous Chair, Bruce Overman for their incredible remote technical support live during the Reunion. Keeping our Facebook page alive with photos and videos as they happened. We simply could not have accomplished what we did without your help and technical skills. Your family is truly a blessing.

A very special thank you to our international attendees. These included Michael Larkin who came from Helsinki Finland. Michael is a long time member in the National WWII Glider Pilots Association with great recollections of earlier Reunions when many Glider pilots attended. We also thank Jean Michel Soldi and his lovely wife, Corrine, who came from Les Arcs France. JM and Corrine represent our "Southern France," Operation Dragoon

connection and live in the midst of where much of the glider action took place.

Also a very special thank you to Nathalie Gonzales, the mayor of Les Arcs, who gave the organization, through JM, their beautiful town crest¹ and an autographed copy of a book about Les Arcs with wonderful photos taken in Les Arcs during WWII.

I want to thank Mark Piercy, the Chair of the Silent Wings Museum Foundation who attended and provided very interesting background about South Plains Army Airfield and the single hangar, across the airfield from the Silent Wings Museum that survives today. It was a real pleasure to meet Mark and to establish a new relationship.

We are happy to report that the NWWIIGPC remains strong financially. Chuck Hobbs, our

Exec. Council Treasurer, reports that after all Reunion related expenses have been paid, we stand in excellent financial shape as an organization. And in that vein I would especially like to thank our current members who were responsible, with their donations, in getting the veterans to our reunion. Kudos to you all.

It was an exciting Reunion and you, our members, remain our greatest strength. The Committee's reputation for providing the planning, resources and expertise to support families in their research of WWII Troop Carrier Glider Pilots, Power Glider Pilots, Glider Mechanics, and C-47 tow crews has never been stronger. It was our privilege to serve our veterans and you, our members, for the 50th Reunion.

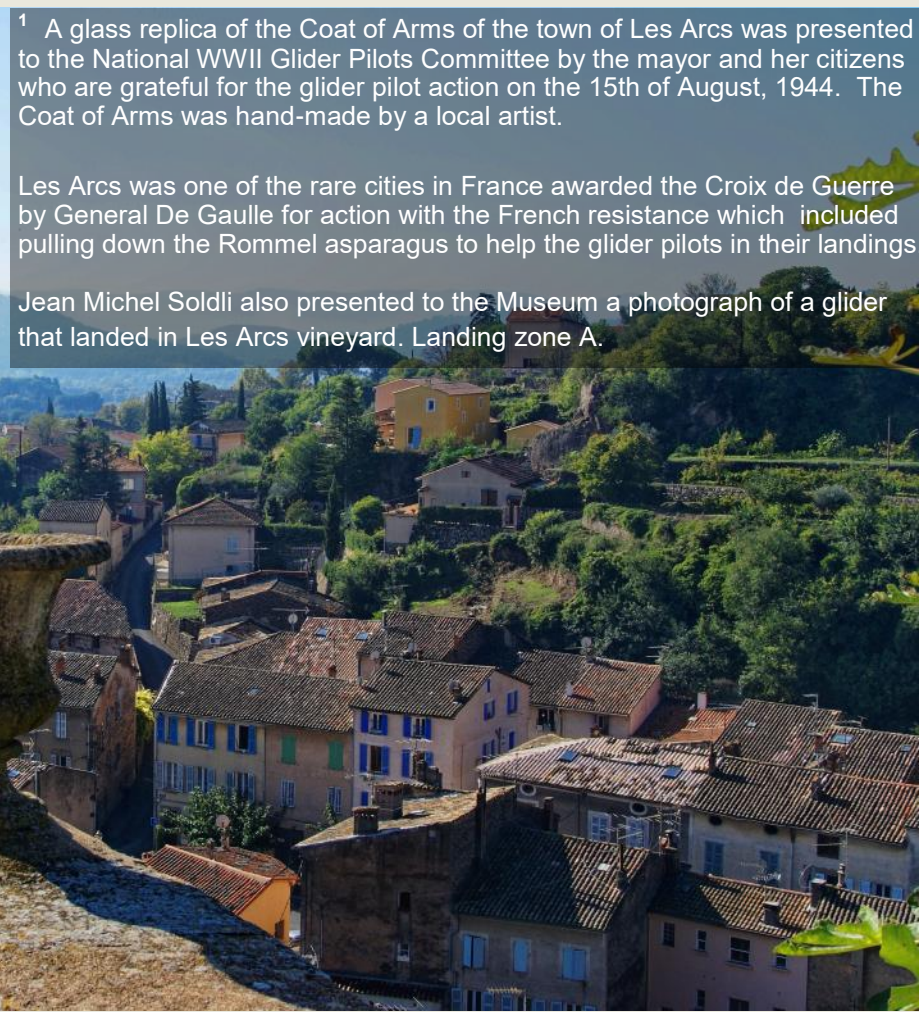
—Gary Stripling, Chair,



¹ A glass replica of the Coat of Arms of the town of Les Arcs was presented to the National WWII Glider Pilots Committee by the mayor and her citizens who are grateful for the glider pilot action on the 15th of August, 1944. The Coat of Arms was hand-made by a local artist.

Les Arcs was one of the rare cities in France awarded the Croix de Guerre by General De Gaulle for action with the French resistance which included pulling down the Rommel asparagus to help the glider pilots in their landings.

Jean Michel Soldli also presented to the Museum a photograph of a glider that landed in Les Arcs vineyard. Landing zone A.



OPERATIONS FOR THE
94TH FLYING TRAINING SQUADRON (94 FTS)
Air Force Academy



50th REUNION PICTORIAL



Back row L to R: Lt Daniel Huntsman, Cadet Andrew Ratcliff, Cadet Rachel Eberhardt, Cadet Brad Westhauser, Cadet Katie Keating, and Lt Trevor Ervin.

Front Row L to R: Fred Lunde and Frank Brandon





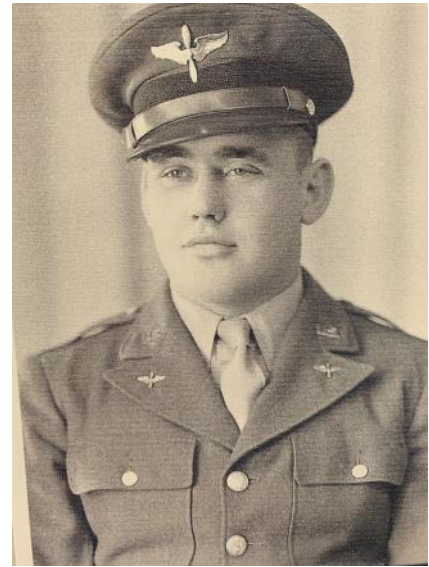


National Wing Commander

We received great news from Timothy Nickerson, the son of Major Dwayne Nickerson, USAF ret. (76th Troop Carrier Squadron, 435th Troop Carrier Group.) that his father was turning 100 on November 7th, 2022. What was so exciting was that we were back in contact with Mr. Nickerson. He will again be receiving the Briefing as well as other communication from us.

Tim told us that his dad started flying in high school with the Civil Air Patrol, joined the Army as a cadet, but was washed out. He went to mechanic school for B-25's, decided he could get to fly in the glider program, and signed up.

He continued to fly the rest of his career- Instructor, airport manager, Contract instructor with California eastern and Cessna instructing for the USAF. He retired at the rank of Major. He then spent 22 years as an FAA Inspector. We all wished him a happy birthday. Glad to have you back! A cake is waiting for Dwayne in the background! Photo taken on his birthday.



We also received an email from Genese Dufur the daughter of DeLloyd A VanDyke, notifying us that he celebrated his 100th birthday on August 21st 1922. DeLloyd A VanDyke's parent unit was the 305th Troop Carrier Squadron, 442nd Troop Carrier Group. He flew a glider into Holland, codenamed MARKET. On December 4, 1944 he received the Air Medal for the Holland mission. We hope to get a photo of Mr. VanDyke soon to add to his record.

You can help! We are always looking for Troop Carrier personnel from WWII; Glider Pilots, Mechanics, Crew Chiefs, Pilots, etc., including those who were members that we have lost contact with over the years. If you know or have or can find information on anyone in the following lists on the next pages, please let us know. We do the research when we get time but helping over a 100 families a year does not give us much time for other research.

William D AARON --Memphis TN
 Richard Ross ALLEN --Bartlesville OK
 Edward AMES --Clearwater FL
 Robert ANDERSON --Lakeville MN
 Shirley E ANDREWS --Dallas TX
 Andy ANTONIK --Weirton WV
 Scott ARMSTRONG --Pecos TX
 H M ARNOLD --Raleigh NC
 Clyde B ATKINSON --El Cajon CA
 H T BAILEY --Rockport TX
 Philip E BALDWIN --Riverside CA
 Walter BALLARD --Ventura CA
 Wiley P BALLARD Jr --Atlanta GA
 Everett L BANTA --Patterson CA
 James W BARTELTSEN --Glenview IL
 James H BASFORD --Olive Branch TN
 Carlos BASQUES --Carmicheal CA
 L H BASYE --Waverly Hall GA
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 Henry E BEADLE --Novato CA
 Garland BELL --
 Jack BELLAMY --Murfreesboro TN
 Vernon BELOR --Hampton VA
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Donald R NELSON --Grantville OH	Roy Emerson REYNOLDS --Norwalk CA	Wallace SCOTT --Amory MS
John G NELSON --Portland OR	George Alverton RHOADS --Emporium KS	Robert J SCURLOCK --Bradenton FL
Charles N NESOSSIS --Clearfield UT	Carl E RHODES --Carbondale IL	Donald G SECOR --Virginia Beach VA
Robert R NEVILLE --Westlake Village CA	Fred A RICH --Dallas TX	George J SENSEN --MarshALL MN
Benjamin W NICHOLSON --San Antonio TX	Mario Wilson RICHARDS --Oak Harbor WA	Bennie S SETLIFF --Blue Ridge TX
James NOLAND --Hopkinsville KY	James E RICHTER --Mechanicsburg PA	Byron J SHARP --Salt Lake City UT
Lillard Leon NOLAND --Van Nuys CA	Newell V RISDALL --New Brighton MN	C W SHAW --Memphis TN
Duane M NORMAN --Midland TX	Maurice S RITCHEY --Santa Barbara CA	William J SHAW --
Charles Edgar NORTON --Olney TX	William C ROBBINS --Goleta CA	Robert A SHAWN --Herndon VA
Eugene Miller NUSS --Sarasota FL	James Monroe ROBERTS --Boonville AR	Michael E SHEEHAN --Alto MI

Gerald SHEILDS --	Ralph T TACKETT --Syracuse NY	Guy L WATKINS --Hot Springs AR
Walter Lee SHELTON --Jackson MS	L W TAGGE --Stokesdale NC	Bernard Thomas WHEELER --Spencer IA
Russell G SHERMAN --Northport AL	Edward S TALTY --Houston TX	Charles W WHEELLOCK --Chickasha OK
Jackson Johnson SHINKLE --St. Louis MO	Hubert L TAYLOR --	Bennett Otho WHITE --Los Angeles CA
John Charles SHULTZ --Redding CA	Royal Howard TAYLOR --Dallas TX	Michael Joseph WHITE --Birmingham AL
Arthur SILVERMAN --Rancho Mirage CA	Raymond Paul TENSING --Cincinnati OH	Ray Travers WHITTINGTON --Artesia NM
Flavius K SIMMONS --Little Rock AR	Horace J THERIOT Jr --Prairieville LA	John L WHITWORTH Jr --Parkersburg WV
William J SIMONINI --Phoenix AZ	Robert S THOMAN --Enterprise AL	Ramsay WILLETT --Laconia NH
Norman L SIROTA --New York NY	Arthur J THOMAS --Manhattan KS	George R WILLIAMS --Alhambra CA
George V SKAINS --Houston TX	John C R TOMPKINS --Millbrook NY	Richard Lee WILLIAMS --Deland FL
Jess L SKUBAL --Hollister CA	Charles A TRIMBLE --Versailles KY	Robert E WILLIS --Somerville MA
Mathieu T SLATER --Merced CA	James R TUCKER --Cedar Falls IA	Edward S WILSON Jr --Granby CT
Clarence B SLAUGHTER --Austin TX	Norman R TUCKER --Hutchinson KS	Lawrence W WILT --Hennepin IL
Wallace P SMITH --Cocoa Beach FL	C R TURNER --Santa Ana CA	Lloyd E WINTERSOLE --San Antonio TX
William H SMITH --Richmond CA	Harry B TURPIN --King City MO	Clarence Dixon WITT --Mt. Juliet TN
William Dulty SMITH Jr --Colorado Springs CO	Byron D UNDERHILL --Pahrump NV	Jack WOERNER --Murfreesboro TN
William D SMITH --Colorado Springs CO	Elton R UNDERWOOD --Clinton MO	Thomas A WONACOTT --Bishop CA
Carl Everett SMOAK --Newing GA	John A USNER --Jefferson LA	Frank A WOODHAMS --Kalamazoo MI
Harvey B SNIVELY Jr --Winter Haven FL	George VER HOVEN --Oskosh WI	Harold B WOODS --Albuquerque NM
Lloyd SOUTHWOOD --Evansville IN	Weldon VICKERY --Valley Mills TX	George H WOODWARD --Kerrville TX
Gerald Franklin SPARKS --Mena AR	Charles R VILLIAUME --Valparaiso IN	V Raymond WOODWARD --Albuquerque NM
Joseph A STAHL --Waco TX	Floyd WADDILL --Kirksville MO	James Marcus WRIGHT --Altus OK
Jack STAMPER --Hugo OK	Robert WAGNER --Norwalk CT	William A WRIGHT --W. Sacramento CA
Charles W STANFORD --Ft. Walton Bch. FL	Harold C WAKEFIELD --El Paso TX	William W WYATT --Valdez AK
Joe STANLEY Jr --Pikeville KY	Phillip G WALDNER --Baltimore MD	Charles R WYROSDICK --Summerville SC
June Horace STEBBINS --Fort Walton Beach FL	Orlie I WALKER --Oklahoma City OK	Sherman Floyd YORK --Houston TX
R E STEINKAMP Jr --Overland Park KS	Vincent P WALKER --Royal Oak MI	Jacob B YOUNG --Lombard IL
Joseph A STEINMETZ --Annapolis MD	James W WALLACE --Oceanside CA	James M YOUNG --Fairfax VA
Joseph J STEWART --Roanoke VA	Paul G WALSH --Memphis TN	John P YOUSKO --West Mifflin PA
William G STOCKL --Eagle Rock MO	George WALTERS --Elizabeth City NC	Ben ZAFRIN --Far Rockaway NY
Arthur P STONE --Pine Knoll Shores NC	Ben O WARD --Laguana Woods CA	Carl J ZAUCHA --Hyattsville MD
John James STONEMAN --Bella Vista AR	Richard David WARD --	Earle Christian ZELLE --Bridgeport WV
Richard J STROHL --Easton PA	Vernon Harley WARD --Cincinnati OH	John Walter ZINN --Haddonfield NJ
Daniel Russell SULLIVAN --Aliquippa PA	William Howard WARNE --Sun City FL	
John Ellis SUMMERS --South Gate CA	Walter W WASHABAUGH --College Park MD	
	Glynn Cleo WATKINS --Texarkana AR	

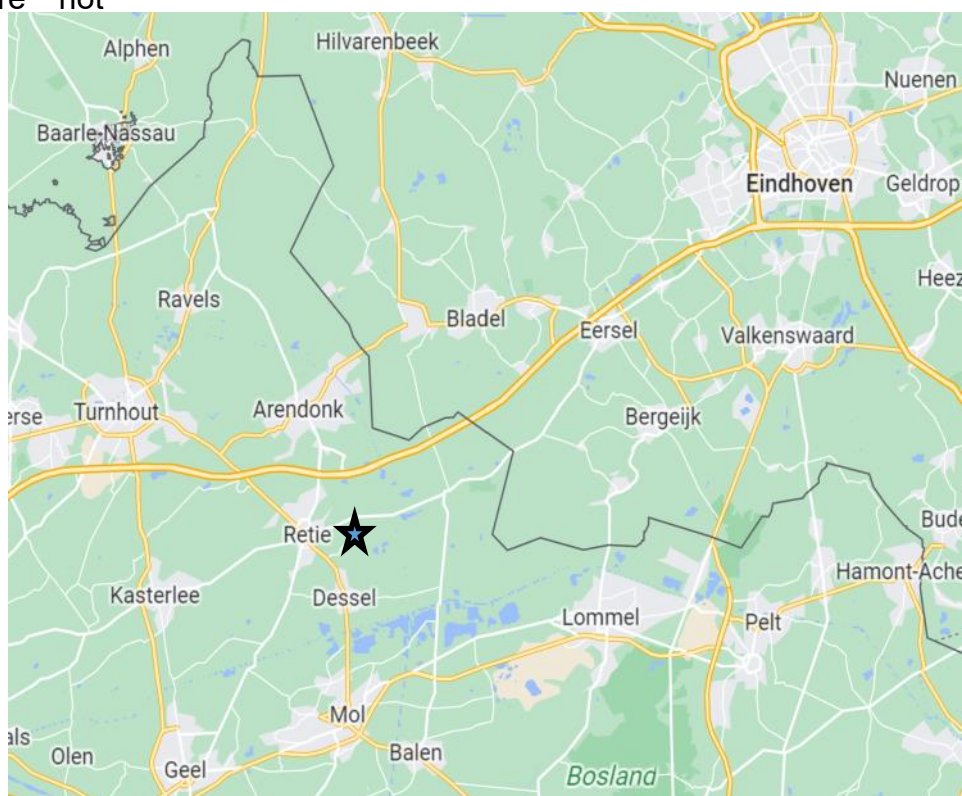
My girlfriend teaches geography. As a teacher, she gets a magazine related to her profession, and recently it had a nice article related to WW2. It was about war monuments, and the evolution of such. As it is a Dutch magazine, it is clear that the focus was on the WW2 monuments here in Holland.

Shortly after the war, the people had the idea that the war should not be forgotten. And that the victims should be remembered. National monuments were built. In Amsterdam is the National Monument De Dam. And about every town or village has a monument. These monuments are the center point of the local commemorations on May 4, when the casualties are remembered, a bit similar to Memorial Day with the difference that civilian casualties are remembered as well. Yes, German repression and the Holocaust cost many civilian lives, and those are not forgotten.

Between the end of the war and today, things changed. Where it started with general monuments, this moved to monuments for a group (for example a combat unit, or a resistance group), and evolved further into monuments for individuals. This last group can be for a crew of an aircraft, or Stolpersteine (little cobblestones with names of those who were deported to concentration camps, placed in front of the house where these people lived).

With this evolution, monuments are placed to commemorate airmen who survived the war. And I have seen photos of markers where a glider landed, even where there is no further information regarding the glider crew, date, etc. I will write about this later, but it is remarkable to have a spot marked off the very little verified information.

Thus, with such an evolution in mind, I am happy to tell that a new glider monument has been placed near Retie, Belgium. A 437th Troop Carrier Group glider, piloted by Flight Officer Scott Stewart, landed there on 17 September, 1944 in German occupied territory. Two soldiers died in the engagement, whereas glider pilot F/O Stewart, managed to reach friendly lines after dodging German patrols for some days.



SUSAN PINTER, Chaplain

Dear Friends,

The time for our reunion/symposium has come and gone. It was so exciting to be able to come together in person this year after a two-year absence!

My quilt was won by Mr. Phillip Needham from Alaska whose dad was a power glider pilot with the 77th TC Squadron, 435th TC Group. Congratulations Mr. Needham!

The first time I saw this quilt pattern I knew that I wanted to make it for the Glider Pilot reunion. The pattern "Life Imitating Quilts" is based on a "quad tree" which is a technique used in computer programming to efficiently organize information according to its level of detail. This spoke to me in multiple ways. We as the World War II Glider Pilot group work to save, add to, make available, and honor the history and work of the World War II glider pilots. So much information is stored on the data base, at the museum and in our hearts. The image of a tree symbolized to me the strength of our group; a strong main trunk with many branching limbs, each with glider pilot wings to show our connection. The wavy quilting lines represent the wind blowing through our tree bringing fresh ideas and change. What doesn't show on this quilt is the depths of our roots; our respect, our love, and willingness to work to maintain this legacy tree for the glider pilots.

I was to happy to see so many of you at the reunion and that all of you had safe travels; blessings for all especially our veterans.

Susan Pinter, Chaplain

FINAL FLIGHTS

November 2019—September 2022

50th Reunion Memorial the following names were honored

<i>Thalia</i>	<i>B.</i>	<i>Adams</i>	<i>Wife of Dallas P Adams</i>	
<i>Carl</i>	<i>G.</i>	<i>Belville</i>	<i>441 TC Group</i>	<i>302 TC Squadron</i>
<i>Morris</i>		<i>Bennett</i>	<i>439th TC Group</i>	<i>93rd TC Squadron</i>
<i>Gerald</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>Berry</i>	<i>439th TC Group</i>	<i>91st TC Squadron</i>
<i>George</i>	<i>P.</i>	<i>Buckley</i>	<i>434th TC Group</i>	<i>74th TC Squadron</i>
<i>Lynn</i>		<i>Cochran</i>	<i>Power Pilot 316th TC</i>	<i>45th TC Squadron</i>
<i>Lavonne</i>		<i>Collins</i>	<i>Wife of Glider Pilot</i>	<i>Authur B Collins</i>
<i>Dr. Milton</i>		<i>Dank</i>	<i>439 TC Group</i>	<i>91 TC Squadron</i>
<i>Naomi</i>		<i>Dank</i>	<i>Wife of Glider Pilot</i>	<i>Milto Dank</i>
<i>Joyce</i>	<i>H.</i>	<i>Day</i>	<i>Wife of Charles Day,</i>	<i>Historian</i>
<i>Guy</i>	<i>J.</i>	<i>DeGenaro</i>	<i>438th TC Group</i>	<i>90th TC Squadron</i>
<i>Lt. Colonel Dale</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>Duckworth</i>	<i>USAF With Project</i>	<i>recovery for MIAs</i>
<i>Gertrude</i>	<i>K.</i>	<i>Finklestein</i>	<i>Wife of Glider Pilot</i>	<i>Wilton J. Finklestein</i>
<i>Richard</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>Ford</i>	<i>C-47 Pilot 315th TC</i>	<i>310th TC Squadron</i>
<i>Myron</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>Guisewite</i>	<i>314th TC Group</i>	<i>32nd TC Squadron</i>
<i>John</i>	<i>G.</i>	<i>Gulbin</i>	<i>313th TC Group</i>	<i>47th TC Squadron</i>
<i>James</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Hammett</i>	<i>437th TC Group</i>	<i>79th TC Squadron</i>
<i>John</i>	<i>D.</i>	<i>Hardie</i>	<i>3rd Air Commando</i>	<i>318 TC Squadron</i>
<i>James</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Harry Jr</i>	<i>441st TC Group</i>	<i>99th TC Squadron</i>
<i>Mary</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>Holker</i>	<i>Wife of Glider Pilot</i>	<i>Jack C Holker</i>
<i>Philip</i>	<i>R.</i>	<i>Howland</i>	<i>Glider Instuctor Pilot</i>	
<i>Gladys</i>	<i>V.</i>	<i>Hughes</i>	<i>Wife of Ray Huyghes</i>	
<i>Raymond</i>	<i>J</i>	<i>Hughes</i>	<i>434th TC Group</i>	<i>74th TC Squadron</i>
<i>Alfred</i>		<i>Hulstrunk</i>	<i>Glider Instuctor Pilot</i>	
<i>Mildred</i>		<i>Jolly</i>	<i>Wife of Glider Pilot</i>	<i>John M Jolly</i>
<i>Maj. Gen George</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Johnson</i>	<i>440th TC Group</i>	<i>98th TC Squadron</i>

GLIDER PILOTS'
MEMORIAL TREE AND
PLAQUE:

The bill to erect the memorial at Arlington National Cemetery was first introduced on May 5, 1981. Ten years later the memorial was placed and dedicated on 14 March 1991.

<i>Danon</i>		<i>Judevine</i>	<i>437th TC Group</i>	<i>84th TC Squadron</i>
<i>James</i>	<i>L.</i>	<i>Kuhns</i>	<i>441 TC Group</i>	<i>100 TC Squadron,</i>
<i>John</i>	<i>F. R.</i>	<i>Lamm</i>	<i>Glider Engineer 441st 301st TC Squadron TC Group</i>	
<i>Patsy</i>	<i>J</i>	<i>Lane</i>	<i>Wife of Glider Pilot William C Lane</i>	
<i>Evelyn</i>		<i>Lawton</i>	<i>Wife of Glider Pilot John Lawtond</i>	
<i>James</i>	<i>W.</i>	<i>Magee</i>	<i>316th TC Group</i>	<i>45th TC Squadron</i>
<i>John</i>	<i>J.</i>	<i>Mason</i>	<i>403rd TC Group</i>	<i>Headquarters</i>
<i>Jerome</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>Miller</i>	<i>62 TC Group</i>	<i>7 TC Squadron</i>
<i>Richard</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Neff</i>	<i>315th TC Group</i>	<i>310th TC Squadron</i>
<i>Rose</i>	<i>A.</i>	<i>Nugent</i>	<i>Wife of Glider Pilot Robert Nugent</i>	
<i>James</i>	<i>E.</i>	<i>Pritchett</i>	<i>Power Glider Pilot 436th TC Group</i>	<i>81st TC Squadron</i>
<i>Walt</i>		<i>Raby</i>	<i>Power Glider Pilot</i>	<i>Maxton AAFB</i>
<i>Dorothy</i>		<i>Rimer</i>	<i>Wife of Glider Pilot Shelton Jacob Rimer</i>	
<i>Carroll</i>	<i>A.</i>	<i>Ray</i>	<i>439 TC Group</i>	<i>91 TC Squadron</i>
<i>Betty</i>		<i>Ryser</i>	<i>Wife of Glider Pilot Clarence Lee Ryser</i>	
<i>Mae</i>		<i>Schelley</i>	<i>Wife of Glider Pilot Jerry Schelley</i>	
<i>Erling</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>Severson</i>	<i>62nd TC Group</i>	<i>8th TC Squadron</i>
<i>Robert</i>	<i>D.</i>	<i>Starkey</i>	<i>434 TC Group</i>	<i>73 TC Squadron</i>
<i>Kermit</i>		<i>Swanson</i>	<i>437th TC Group</i>	<i>84th TC Squadron</i>
<i>Phyllis</i>	<i>J</i>	<i>Thompson</i>	<i>Wife of Glider Pilot Howard M Thompson</i>	
<i>Michael</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>Treichak</i>	<i>434th TC Group</i>	<i>73rd TC Squadron</i>
<i>Roburta</i>		<i>Trexler</i>	<i>Wife of Glider Pilot David Trexler</i>	
<i>George</i>	<i>F.</i>	<i>Wasson</i>	<i>440 TC Group</i>	<i>95TH TC Squadron</i>
<i>Patricia</i>		<i>Welty</i>	<i>Wife of Glider Pilot Ray J. Welty</i>	
<i>Richard</i>	<i>J</i>	<i>Zapp</i>	<i>439th TC Group</i>	<i>92nd TC Squadron</i>

Memorial read by Chaplin, Susan Pinter

LEON B. SPENCER RESEARCH TEAM

Dr. Don ABBE

Hans DEN BROK, Netherland

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Charles DAY Committee Historian

Chuck HOBBS

Fred LUNDE, Glider Pilot, Advisor

Tom MARTIN

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Jeff MCGOVERN

Patricia OVERMAN

Capt. Trevor SHIMULUNAS, USMC

Jean Michel SOLDI, France

Gary STRIPLING, Project Manager

Keith THOMS

Col. Mark VLAHOS, USAF Ret

Many current Air Force units have taken the WWII designated unit numbers to honor those WWII units. Many also take ownership of the unit history. One unit which is often represented in the Briefing is the 94th Flying Training Squadron, which took the unit number to honor and keep the history of the 94th Troop Carrier Squadron of the 439th Troop Carrier Group.



Recently, MSgt Courtney Werth, who is a boom operator on a KC 130 air refueling tanker, became a new member of our organization. Her air refueling squadron took the number 72nd and her Wing is the 434th Air

Refueling Wing. The Squadron honors the 72nd Troop Carrier Squadron of the 434th Troop Carrier Group. Their sister Squadron took the 74th designated number that was also under the 434th during the war.

Courtney is taking the WWII information that we are providing and passing it on by way of posting the history and photos in the ready rooms.

The 434th Air Refueling Wing is located at Grissom Air Reserve Base, located about 12 miles north of Kokomo in Cass and Miami counties in Indiana. The base is very close to our beloved Capt. Billie S “Capt” Cheolas, USAF ret., who lives in Melvin, Michigan and happened to be a member of the 72nd TC Squadron. Courtney, who was very excited about this news, has now been introduced and has contacted Bill.

We hope to post future exploits of Bill’s adventures with the 72nd Air Refueling Squadron!



**THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR SUPPORTING US EVERY YEAR!
WISHING YOU AND YOUR FAMILY
A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

**Found this in the files and even though it says 61st TC Group all the Groups
printed a Christmas wish to the men.**



A GLIDER PILOT'S CHRISTMAS

Oh! Let us speak of Christmas
At Bastogne in 44,
When the Airborne saw Ole Santa come
In Gliders by the Score.

They'd asked him for their presents
Such as shells and gas for tanks.
They also hoped for aid supplies
For the wounded in their ranks.
With Santa flying the tow-plane

And GPs at the glider controls,
The Germans were caught astounded
Below in the snow and cold.

'Twas o're seventy eight years you'll remember,
And the Airborne was in a tight fix,
So forgive them for not seeing gliders,
But a sled that belonged to St. Nick.

If you've gone along with this story,
Then we know that you truly believe,
That there really is a Santa Claus
Bringing love on this Christmas Eve

If you want to send a Christmas card to our veterans please contact me and I will send you addresses. nwwiigpa@gmail.com

Eileen Owsiany—Christmas Cards!



Eileen has again asked her members of the C-47 Skytrain to send her Christmas cards for our WWII Troop Carrier members. Kudos to all the work that she does! Thank you

The Usage of Recycled Gliders

By Hans den Brok

While I was working on the Market Flights books, I knew I had to add one volume that told the story of the glider retrieval operation. The start of that book gives some figures about the cost of one Waco Cargo Glider. The production cost per glider was \$25,000.00.¹

Thus, from an economical viewpoint, it was a good idea to re-use gliders. The idea that the glider was for one-use only can be dropped already when one figures out that many were used in training in the USA and England. And those were used over and over again after being checked and, if needed, repaired.

With this all in mind, it was decided that after a combat operation, repair teams would move to the landing zones to collect and repair gliders back to air worthy state. This proved to be a difficult task. Many gliders in Normandy were damaged beyond repair. Gliders in all combat areas were vandalized by soldiers and civilians. In Normandy the fields to pick up a glider and tow it out were very small.

In Normandy a handful of gliders were recovered. In Holland, 281 gliders were flown out. After the Rhine mission, gliders

were collected and flown to Brussels (more precisely, to an airstrip at Grimbergen).

Now, it is not a secret that gliders were used again in combat missions. But details are missing. There has never been a proper research effort made into this. And it is also true that it would be difficult to research this subject in a way that would provide a 100% review on which gliders were used in two different airborne operations. The best luck will probably be an in depth research into the glider numbers of those used on Market Garden. But then again, problems will pop up (as mentioned before, it is difficult, maybe even impossible).

The reason to start with the Market glider numbers is simple. It is the first time that a large number of gliders were given a chance to appear in a follow up mission again. Thus, the chances that during the Bastogne or Rhine missions a former Market Garden glider flew, is much larger when looking at what happened to the Normandy gliders. Simply because the latter was such a small number. And here we also get to the difficult part. Most of the numbers of those gliders used are not known.

At this point I have mentioned the glider number a couple of times. To make clear,

¹ Average price

this is the number of the individual glider as it appears on the tail of the glider. The first digit of the number is missing. The first two digits are the tax year when the order was placed. So when this was 1943, the first digit on the tail would be the 3. The 19 was obvious and the 4 was omitted in the tail number. But with that, in this example 3xxxxx, it would be a unique number.

Thus, a glider's history can be followed by these numbers.

As mentioned, it will not be possible to get the entire picture complete. At least, not with the information I have gathered in the past 20 years. As mentioned above, the glider number is unique, and that will make it possible to follow. But, back in 1944-1945, the officers active within units were not always accurate on these numbers. The officers I think about are the ones who wrote the official histories (diaries), or the operations officers. One of these probably would have operations orders, but those were not always saved or added to month histories.

So, when looking at the glider (or aircraft) numbers, we can try to look at the files of the Troop Carrier units, but also into those of the Airborne units. Still working from the starting point, Operation Market Garden.

Let's start with the first ones, the Troop Carrier units. It is very clear that most of

these did not keep complete records. This makes it difficult to get our information. We can even split this between those gliders that carried the 82nd and the 101st Airborne Division, which is divided by Troop Carrier Wing. The 101st Airborne was flown in by 53rd TCW. The 82nd was flown in by 52nd and 50th TCW. Of these three Wings, only the 52nd TCW kept the individual glider pilot after action reports (ICS) within their files. Not all of these give a glider number, but it proves to be a better source than the (nearly) non-existing 50th and 53rd ICS's.

It is possible to look at individual Groups or Squadrons, but even then one will find that most records seem to have vanished. A good view on that in the book written by Michael Ingrisano.² The tables compiled by him show that those of the 44th TCS are pretty complete, where those of the other three squadrons are lacking the same details. Simply because the Squadron Commander of the 44th TCS kept his paperwork, including mission orders, whereas those of the other three squadrons did not surface.

Thus, with this, we can be certain to say that less than 1/3 of the needed information can be found in those records. But what about those of the Airborne Divisions. Let's start with the better one, those of the 82nd Airborne Division. Their Market Garden report show a very nice movement table, including aircraft numbers.

² Valor Without Arms, A History of the 316th Troop Carrier Group 1942-1945. ISBN 9781470085155

One would think...yes, that's 50%. But it looks better than it truly is. The glider numbers given in those tables are not very trustworthy. Photo evidence shows glider numbers on gliders after landing in Holland, and those numbers do not show up on those 82nd Airborne tables. Once is bad enough, but it happens more often, and that makes those tables a bit unreliable. At least, I would hardly recommend those to be copied one-on-one as being 100% correct, and publishing them with a disclaimer would not be good. Thus with these records, and those of the 52nd TCW, I would estimate that we are still under the 50% of correct glider numbers used in the Market operation.

Yes, that was the better part. For the gliders used for the 101st Airborne Division, records of one Group are complete, that's 1/6 of all Troop Carrier Groups that were involved in towing gliders with the 101st to Holland (434th, 435th, 436th, 437th, 438th and 442nd). The records of the 101st do not show a table like that of the 82nd, and looking at individual units does not provide more information.

Thus, I estimate that less than 50% of the glider numbers of those used in the Holland mission are known. Of these, a large portion, those who landed at Groesbeek on 18 September, could not be recovered. Making the numbers to research even less than the already estimated low number.



F/O Austin J. Kemski in front of his glider, named "White Man's Brainchild". The chalk number 78-B suggests that this is the glider he flew to Holland, although this is not certain, with this photo taken before the mission (note he's not wearing combat clothes, thus 1 or a few days before the flight). F/O Kemski was with 74th Troop Carrier Squadron, 434th Troop Carrier Group. (Photo Austin Kemski)

There are a few other ways to look at all this. Not that it gets us much further into that “under 50%” number, but it does help a bit. One way is checking photos taken at the time. Glider numbers show up in some photos. Names chalked on gliders show up in photos as well.

Photographic evidence can be tricky as well, as the caption given might be from memory and, thus, may not always be correct.

So, out of these “less than 50%,” we can look for evidence if one of those gliders flew again during the Bulge or Rhine missions. It gives an idea of the pretty difficult research task. It looks simple, but it simply is not. It is, like most researches, time consuming and, even worse, it has to be done with incomplete data.

Here the same glider is pictured in the snowy fields near Bastogne. The name on the cockpit gives it away. The names of Austin and Irene are gone, but the lighter mark between those names is still visible. And, lucky us, the chalk number 23 is visible. That helps us to tell that this glider was piloted by F/O David H. Sill, 92nd Troop Carrier Squadron, 439th Troop Carrier Group. (Photo via Tom Peters)





This photo was published in the book 'Orange is the color of the day', which is a pictorial and written history about the 101st Airborne Division during Operation Market Garden. The location where this pre-mission photo was taken is not certain. Lt. Kennedy of 3rd Bn., 502nd PIR is in the photo, but equipment of that Regiment was flown over in various serials. The name 'Rubye' is clearly visible. (Via Peter Hendrikx)



This is a cropped photo of gliders in a field in Germany, after the Rhine mission. The gliders were collected for salvage or reclamation. In the left red box is the name 'Rubye'. The right red box shows the glider number. This helps to determine that this glider was piloted by F/O Lyle E. Holland and F/O Thomas O. McCay. (NARA)

BASTOGNE
FROM THE FILES
2ND LT. CHARLTON W. CORWIN JR. - 1ST GLIDER MISSION

DECLASSIFIED

Authority *NND 745008*

TROOP CARRIER MISSION
INTERROGATION CHECK SHEET

AUTH CG, IX TCG
DATE: *31 Dec 44*
INIT: *FXK @*

Hq 44pth TR Carr Gp
APO 133, U.S. Army
30 Dec 44

A. GENERAL INFORMATION:

NAME Charlton W. Corwin Jr. Rank 2nd Lt. ASN 0559695
Group 440th sqn 96th Glider serial Single Tow Glider No and
43-40471
Type *X* CG4A F.O No Serial LZ or DZ
Take off Time 1440 Time over Target 1510
Time and date returned to home station 2100, 29 December 1944

B. ENEMY ACTION ENROUTE TO TARGET:

1. Type of attack (Air, Naval, Flak): None
2. Enemy A/C sighted: where None
3. Enemy Naval Craft sighted: Where None

C. ENEMY INFORMATION:

1. A/A Activity:
 - a. Amt of fire: None
2. Other Weapons Used by enemy enroute: None

2nd Lt Corwin and Co-pilot F/O Benjamin F. Constantino flew the first glider mission into Bastogne. This mission consisted of one glider taking in much needed surgeons and medical staff.

The 101st Airborne's, 326th Field Hospital had been captured by the enemy shortly after they set up the hospital. The commanding surgeon asked to move the hospital into the town of Bastogne because he thought they were too far out and away from the 101st but the request was denied by General McAuliffe. During the night of December 19 the hospital was captured.

Wounded were in need of surgery. The 440th Troop Carrier Group, 96th TC Squadron were the ones who flew in the replacement surgeons.

~~SECRET~~

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~~SECRET~~

3. Any points not covered above:

D. DETAILS OF LANDING:

1. What approach did you take: Right hand turn into field. Had to use right hand pattern to get in.

2. Obstacles in field: None

3. Enemy fire on landing: None

4. What kind of landing did you make? 3 point - rolled to stop

5. Damage to glider: None, could be flown out by pick up

6. Personnel Casualties: None

7. Damage to Loads: None

8. Reactions of A/B during flight, landing and in unloading:

Good

9. Number of gliders in field with you: None

10. Precise location of field by coordinates 05 38'E, 50 01'N

11. Was "T" visible? No

12. Difficulties in Evacuation _____

E. SUGGESTIONS AND CRITICISM OF PERSONAL EQUIPMENT:

1. Weapons: OK

2. Other equipment OK

F. SUGGESTIONS REGARDING GLIDER OPERATIONS AND TRAINING: Stress proper identification of LZ's by proper recognition of signals on ground. And see that it corresponds with LZ plotted on map.

G. SNAFUS:

1. Location of Target: 05 42'E, 50 01'N

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H. SNAFUS (Cont'd)

2. Communications: not used
3. Lights and Signals: Used red and Green light. Get green light too early.
4. Other operational Discrepancies: None
5. Was pre-flight preparations and briefing adequate? For information available it was.

I. SUMMARY: In your own words write narrative of your part in the operation from time of take-off to time of return to your unit. Use reverse side of THIS SHEET IF NEEDED:

Take off from A-82 at 1410. Met no enemy action of any kind during flight. Received green light to cut over field which I would say was 2 and $\frac{1}{2}$ mile to 3 miles from the field which I was supposed to cut. We were briefed that our LZ would have a smudge pot signal with a great deal of smoke and a T panel and we had an air photo map of the area showing a pin point location of the field. Coming over this field I saw plenty of smoke. I thought that must be it but I believed that according to the map we weren't there. Bastogne was still off in the distance. As we approached the smoke I took a good look at ~~knex~~ and ~~six~~ satisfied myself that it was not our signal and I was determined to hang on until the ship pulled me into what I thought was the correct target. My co-pilot noticed that I did not cut on green light, so he immediately yelled that I had the green light to cut and that we had passed over the field with smoke and the Panels in it. When I heard the word Panel I accepted that the tow ship was right and cut. Had gone some distance past the field so had to make a 180 degree turn immediately upon releasing and glide back to area over which I received green light. Landing in field next to wood near B Company Position on west perimeter of 101st Airborne Division, 1000 yards from enemy lines. After landing we learned from infantry platoon leader that the field over which we received the signal to release was on panel identification system used to show our fighter-bombers the line of battle so that they would not bomb and strafe inside of that line and hit our own troops. Helped unload glider and hid medical equipment in the woods. Three of the Surgeons received immediate jeep transportation to the Division hospital. The rest of the Surgeons had to wait about an hour before getting a truck, loading the equipment and arriving at Div. I arrived at Div. Around 1730. Was evacuated from division at 1400 the next day. Took prisoners in trucks to 8 Corps Hq at Florenville. From there the next morning, 28 Dec 44 we were given rail transportation to Paris. Arrived at Orleans 2100 29 Dec 44 by train.

Signature of Evacuee Charlton W. Gwin
 Rank 2nd Lt Sqn 96th

Signature of Interrogator Donald J. Denney
 Rank 1st Lt. Section 96 S2

DECLASSIFIED

Authority ND 74 5005

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The 51st Troop Carrier Wing First to See Combat in North Africa

Motto: “Videre est Parari” (To See is to be Prepared)

By Colonel Mark C. “Plug” Vlahos (USAF-Retired)
Member Leon B. Spencer Research Team

Activated on June 1, 1942 at Pope Field, North Carolina, the 51st Transport Wing and shortly later renamed the 51st Troop Carrier Wing (51st TCW), was the first troop carrier wing in the U.S. Army Air Forces (USAAF) expressly organized for overseas deployment in World War II. But why are people not familiar with the exploits of this Troop Carrier Wing?

62nd and 64th Troop Carrier Groups (TCGs) were the first C-47 Skytrain and C-53 Skytrooper units to safely deploy over the northern route to England as part of Operation Bolero (the codename given for the initial buildup of USAAF forces in England for a future cross-channel invasion.) One hundred-fifty-six aircraft total made the transatlantic crossing.

Unit	Constituted	Activated	Deployed
51st TC Wing	30 May 1942	1 Jun 1942	Sep 1942
60th TC Group	20 Nov 1940	1 Dec 1940	Jun 1942
62nd TC Group	20 Nov 1940	11 Dec 1940	Sep 1942
64th TC Group	20 Nov 1940	4 Dec 1940	Aug 1942

The answer is simple - the wing never fell under or was assigned to Ninth Air Force Command and did not participate in Operations Overlord (D-day), Market-Garden or Varsity. But how can this be? Just six months after Pearl Harbor, the wing’s three assigned groups, the 60th,

At the time, the 51st TCW was under the command of Colonel Paul L. Williams and stationed at RAF Greenham Common, England; with its three groups falling under operational control of the U.S. Eighth Air Force. (Note: many of you will recognize the



Brigadier General Paul L. Williams
(Photo Courtesy of American Air Museum in England)

name Paul L. Williams, as he would later go on to Command IX Troop Carrier Command during the Normandy invasion for D-day and all of the major airborne missions in the European Theater in World War II.)

Noteworthy is that the three assigned troop carrier groups of the 51st TCW flew the first combat parachute missions, the first combat glider tows, and the first combat aeromedical evacuation missions in USAAF history. Later, the groups flew special operations missions supporting the British Special Operations Executive (SOE) and American Office of Strategic Services (OSS) as part of the secret war in the Balkans. Studying North Africa is important because it was here that Troop Carrier Command learned most of the tactics, techniques and procedures for C-47 and combat glider operations. It's a shame this wing does not receive more credit, I chalk it up to a lack of knowledge and understanding of Airborne Troop Carrier Operations in the North African and Mediterranean Theater of Operations (MTO). The purpose of this article is to highlight troop carrier operations during the Allies drive across North Africa to Tunisia,

thus setting the stage for Operation Husky - the invasion of Italy.

By the end of September 1942, the three troop carrier combat groups of the 51st TCW had made their way to England. Shortly after arrival in England, the first to arrive and most experienced 60th TCG began flying practice paratroop missions with the 2/503rd Parachute Infantry Battalion (the first U.S. Airborne unit to deploy to Europe in WWII) in preparation for Operation Torch, the invasion of North Africa. (Note: the 2/503rd was renamed the 2/509th the day before Operation Torch kicked off.) Ironically, once the 51st TCW departed England in November 1942 as part of Operation Torch, the wing was re-assigned to the newly formed Twelfth Air Force, then under Major General Jimmy Doolittle and never returned to the European Theater of Operations. The 51st TCW remained in the MTO for the rest of the war.

On the night of November 7, 1942, the USAAF flew its first ever combat paratroop mission as part of the Invasion of North Africa—code-named Operation Torch. Led by Colonel

William C. Bentley Jr., thirty-nine C-47 aircraft from the 60th TCG departed the most southern two RAF airfields in England between 2105 and 2120 carrying 500 men of the 2/509th PIR. Their mission was to seize and occupy the Tafaraoui and La Senia Airfields just south of the Port City of Oran, Algeria where Allied soldiers would land the next day. The airfields were the key to the center of the French position. Depending on whether the French chose to fight or allow the C-47s to land complicated the planning for this mission. Either way, this planned, 1,080-mile mission was near the maximum range of the C-47s; two fifty gallon gas cans were bolted to



**Paratroopers of the 2/503rd Parachute Infantry gear up to board 60th TCG C-47s for a practice jump prior to Operation Torch. 12th TCS aircraft #41-7767 is in the background.
(Photo Courtesy of American Air Museum in England)**



**Paratroopers of the 2/503rd PIR Land in England on a Practice Jump
(Photo Courtesy of 509th Parachute Infantry Association)**

the floor just aft of the forward bulkhead of every aircraft for a fuel reserve. This risky, one-way ticketed mission ended up being not only the first, but also the longest combat parachute mission of World War II. After takeoff, the C-47s skirted the coast of occupied France and flew all night over neutral Spain on their way south towards Oran. Enroute, the crews became disoriented in weather

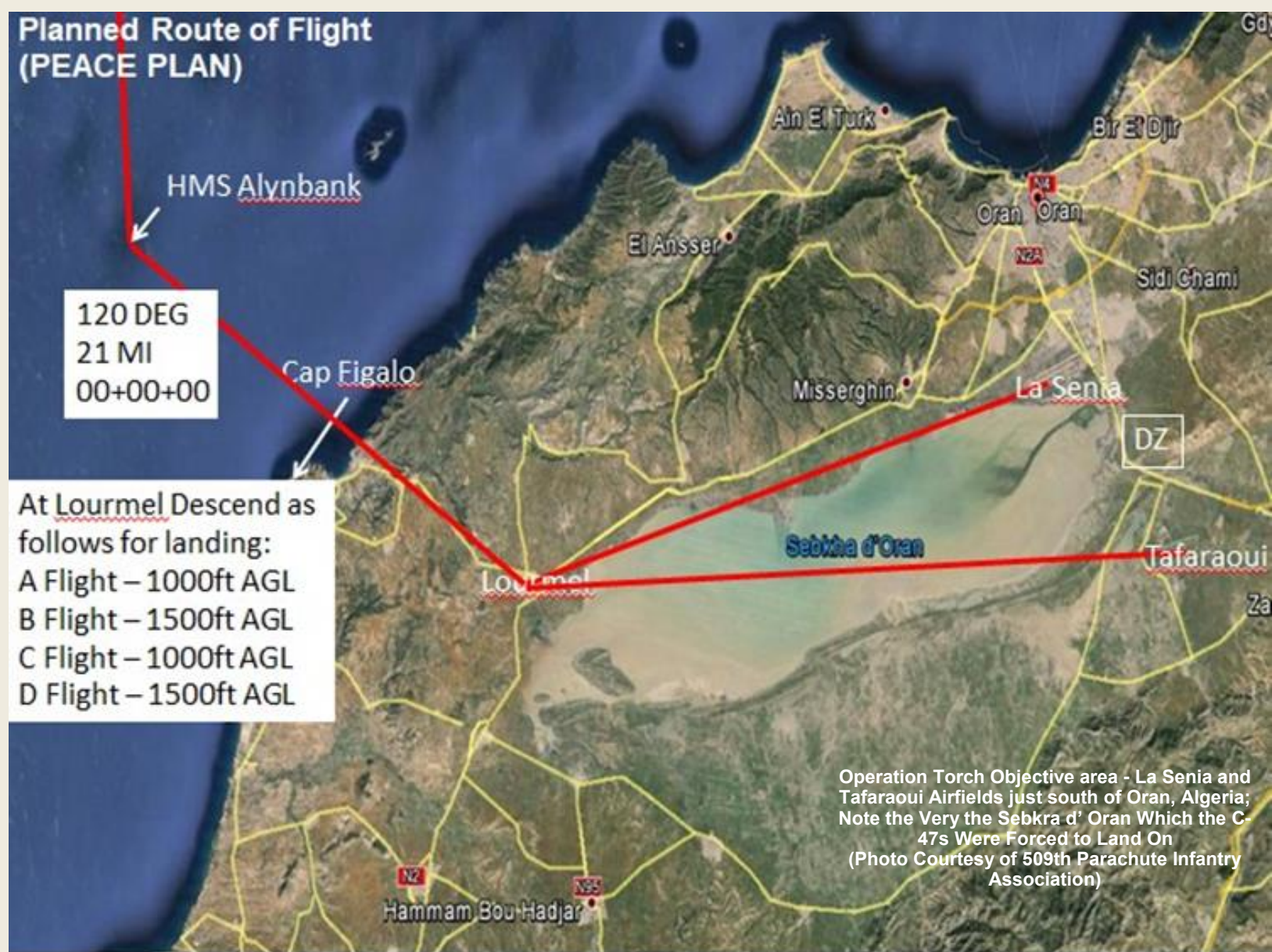
and lost sight of their element leads in the clouds. The formation fell apart. Not every aircraft carried a navigator; four Aircraft became lost, were blown off course and landed in French Morocco where their crews were interned.

The crews were briefed that the French would not resist and the aircraft could safely land on the

French airfields. However, on the morning of November 8, as the broken formation of aircraft approached the coast of North Africa and flew towards the two airfields they were fired upon by the French. With fuel running low the C-47s began landing on the Sebokra d'Oran, a twenty-five mile square dry lake bed near the two airfields. Some of the aircraft were surrounded by French troops and the crews surrendered. Ten



A stick of Paratroopers of the 2/509rd PIR on board 60th TCG C-47s for Operation Torch. Note the two extra 50 gallon fuel tanks behind the jumpmaster sitting in the rear of the photo (Photo Courtesy of Authors Collection)



of the C-47s then formed up, circled the dry lake bed while their paratroops re-rigged inflight to jump. Led by their Commander, Lt. Col. Edson D. Raff they parachuted on to the dry lake bed to attack the French troops. As luck would have it, just after the paratroopers landed, an Allied armor column from the beach landings soon approached and the French surrendered. The C-47 crews

drew a sigh of relief.

By now twenty-five of the C-47s had landed on the dry lake bed. The remaining ten C-47s landed in various parts of Algeria within a radius around the airfields. Once word was received the airfields were now in Allied hands, the C-47s were instructed to fly and land at Tafaraoui Airfield. However, the day was not over and the situation was still very fluid. Three C-47s flown

by Capt. Charles A. Gibson Jr., 1st Lt. Edwin F. Titsworth, and 1st Lt. Joseph A. Beck II (all from the 12th TCS) were tasked to load and fly some of the paratroopers from the Sebrka d'Oran to Tafaraoui. They were forced down and shot up pretty good by six French Dewoitine pursuit planes.

In his recollections, Sgt. Donald B. Hardwick said that 10th TCS Troop Carrier losses were two killed, four wounded (the 60th TCG would later raise the number of wounded to seven), and the 2/509th PIR losses were five killed and twenty wounded during the initial Operation Torch mission.¹ These were the first Airborne Troop Carrier crewmembers and Paratroopers killed in action (KIA) on a U.S. combat airborne mission in World War II. Killed in action were Second Lt. James G. Surges and Sgt. Leon D. Stipe; both from the 12th TCS.² Later, both were posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC).

While the 60th TCG departed with the U.S. paratroopers, the 64th TCG departed England with British paratroops and landed at Gibraltar. On

November 11, 1942, thirty-eight C-47s from the 64th TCG departed Gibraltar and landed 456 British paratroops at Maison Blanche Airfield, Algeria. That same day, Maj. John W. Oberdorf, led a formation of thirteen 60th TCG C-47s, carrying 134 paratroopers of the U.S. 2/509th PIR over to Maison Blanche airdrome as well. The C-47s mission there was planned to last approximately thirty days. After unloading the paratroopers, the aircraft would ferry personnel, freight, and wounded men as needed. Maison Blanche then became a major forward operating airbase for C-47 and fighter aircraft. Of significance is the fact that during this time, 51st TCW C-47s flew the first combat medical evacuation missions, carrying wounded soldiers from the battlefields to newly established hospitals at Maison Blanche, La Senia, and Oran. This mission became a mainstay of C-47 flight operations in World War II and

¹ Donald B. Hardwick, *The Torch Mission—Recollections of the North Africa Invasion*, p. 3, U.S. National Archives, *51st TCW Mission Reports*, 60th TCG, Record Group 18.

²Cpl. John J. Donovan, *12th Troop Carrier Squadron History in Cartoons*, 38–41.



Rare Photo of 1st Lt. Joseph A. Beck II's Aircraft #41-7821 Forced Down and Shot Up on the Sebkra d'Oran. Captain Charles A. Gibson Jr.'s and 1st Lt. Edwin F. Titsworth's C-47s, also Forced Down, Can Be Seen in the distance.
[Photo Courtesy of 509th Parachute Infantry Association]

saved the lives of many Allied soldiers.

While not involved with the first day of Operation Torch, the 64th TCG flew its first combat paratroop mission on November 12, 1942; twenty-six aircraft Departed Maison Blanche and dropped 312 paratroops of a British battalion on Duzerville airfield near Bone, securing the location. The following day, the 64th TCG flew in antiaircraft guns, making the airfield more secure. On Friday November 13, part of the 51st TCW Headquarters arrived at Tafaraoui; the wing would now remain under Twelfth Air Force and in the MTO for the rest of the war.

At 0730 on November 15, 1942, twenty C-47 aircraft of the 60th TCG took off from Maison Blanche

Airdrome. They carried 350 men of the 2/509th PIR and supplies toward the small airdrome of Youks-les-Bains near the Algerian city of Tebessa and on the border with Tunisia. The total distance flown was three hundred miles. The parachutists were dropped en masse, in record time, from an altitude of four hundred feet, at 0945 hours onto the drop zone, a cleared area adjacent to the runway. The drop was made without opposition from the air or ground. After the drop, the C-47s recovered back at Maison Blanche.

As of November 15, 1942, Colonel Paul L. Williams, the 51st TCW Commander and his entire headquarters were now at Tafaraoui as well. The next day, November 16, 1942, the 64th TCG dropped 384



**51st TCW C-47s on the Ground at
Maison Blanche Airdrome, Algeria
(Photo courtesy of U.S. National
Archives) Source: Fold3**



**The 51st TCW fell under
Major General Jimmy
Doolittle, Commander of
the newly formed Twelfth
Air Force for Operation
TORCH. Pictured here is
the general at Maison
Blanche Airfield, on
October 15 1943
(Photo courtesy of U.S.
National Archives) Source:
Fold3**

British paratroops at Souk-el-Arba airfield only ninety miles from Tunis. While the 60th TCG was moving forward to Relizane, forty-four C-47s of the newly arrived 62nd TCG (twenty-seven aircraft) and 64th TCG (seventeen aircraft) departed Maison Blanche and dropped 572 men of the British 1st Parachute Brigade at Depienne Airdrome, Tunisia. The 60th TCG was now based at Relizane, Algeria, the 62nd TCG at Nouvion, Algeria, and the 64th TCG at Blida, Algeria. The 62nd TCG made its first combat paratroop drop on November 29, 1942 dropping British paratroopers to attack enemy airfields in Tunisia.

As the Allied armies advanced rapidly across North Africa pushing the enemy towards Tunisia, the three troop carrier groups of the 51st TCW followed right behind them. The planes of the 51st TCW were much needed supporting the Allied advance to Tunisia; soldiers and staffs were ferried; ammunition, supplies, and equipment were hauled; and medical evacuation flights of wounded from battlefield treatment centers to hospitals were flown. Typically, these flights carried eighteen litters for

patients (stacked up), and a mix of three Army nurses (female officers) and medics (enlisted men) to provide in-flight care. This new capability came in the form of Army Medical Air Evacuation Transport Squadrons (MAETS). Both flying nurses and medics received specialized flight and combat training at Bowman Field, Louisville, Kentucky. The 802nd MAETS, one of the first two operational units of this type, was now operating in North Africa. As the Germans fell back into Tunisia, their resistance stiffened. British and American casualties increased and 51st TCW C-47s and C-53s were needed to fly casualties back to Oran and Algiers, Algeria, for hospitalization, surgeries, and treatment.

The Allies had now kicked the Germans out of North Africa and the stage was set for the invasion of Italy. During the drive across North Africa, 13 officers and men from the 51st TCW were killed in action and 9 officers and enlisted men were wounded. On 22 February 1943, Colonel Ray A. Dunn assumed command of the 51st TCW. In compliance with Northwest

A Wounded Soldier is taken off 8th TCS C-47 #41-18685
(Photo courtesy of U.S. National Archives) Source: Fold3



A Wounded Man Is
Unloaded from 10th
TCS C-47 #41-19473
at Algiers.

(Photo courtesy of
U.S. National
Archives)

Source: Fold3

African Air Forces (NAAF) General Order No. 23, NAAF Troop Carrier Command (TCC) (Provisional) was activated on March 21, 1943.³ The standup of a provisional TCC was necessary to oversee the now-two complete Troop Carrier Wings operating in North Africa and to plan their role in Operation HUSKY - the invasion of Sicily. Reinforcing the 51st TCW for Operation Husky was RAF 38 Wing, under Wing Commander Barton and two squadrons of the 315th TCG (the other two were in England). The newly formed 52nd TCW, comprised of the 61st, 313th, 314th, 316th TCGs under the command of Colonel Harold L. Clark had just arrived from the States. [Author's Note: the 316th TCG actually deployed overseas in December 1942 to Egypt, but was attached to the 52nd TCW for Operation HUSKY.] Again, it was the 51st TCW that paved the way for the 52nd TCW and taught the newbies how to live and operate in the desert.

Under General Orders No. 5, HQ NAAFTCC (Provisional), dated May 18, 1943, Brig. Gen. Paul L. Williams assumed command and reorganized

his staff as follows:⁴ With all the key players in place and gliders and glider pilots now arriving in North Africa, training began in earnest for the invasion of Sicily. (Note: recommend you go back and read Mark's article "A Race Against Time" from a previous edition of the Briefing; this article chronicled the CG-4A glider buildup and training of British glider pilots in North Africa prior to Operation Husky.)

Name	Position
Col. Ralph B. Bagby	Chief of Staff
Col. Peter S. Rask	Deputy Chief of Staff
Maj. George R. Crofton	Adjutant General
Capt. Franklin W. Wilson	A-1
Col. Julius Kolb	A-2
Col. Glynne M. Jones	A-3
Maj. Francis A. McBride	A-4
Lt. Col. J. C. Pruitt	Signal Officer
Lt. Col. Ernest H. Hower-ton	Medical Officer

The three combat TCGs of the 51st TCW were now forward based in Tunisia along with the British 1st Airborne Division. In summary, the 51st TCW played a major role as the Allies marched across North Africa

³ *Report of Operations & Activities Including the Sicilian Campaign, 18 May–31 July 1943*, U.S. National Archives, Record Group 18 .

⁴ HQ NAAFTCC Report of Operations and Activities including the Sicilian Campaign 18 May –31 July 1943.

from Algeria to Tunisia. The wing transported thousands of tons of supplies, ammunition, bombs and personnel to the front, while evacuating wounded to the rear. Many more men would be killed and wounded during the invasion of Sicily. After the invasion of Sicily, the 51st TCW would earn battle honors during combat operations on the mainland of Italy, tow gliders into Southern France

supporting Operation Dragoon, and drop paratroopers and tow gliders during the airborne invasion of Greece - Operation Manna. The 60th TCG would earn a Presidential Citation for supporting the Secret War in the Balkans in 1944. While the exploits of Troop Carrier Command C-47 crews and glider pilots are well known from D-Day forward in Europe, it was in North Africa and the Mediterranean where *they cut their teeth*.

HEADQUARTERS TWELFTH AIR FORCE
A.P.O. 650, U. S. Army

28 November, 1942.

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : Commanding Officer, 51st Transport Wing.

1. The Commander-in-Chief Allied Forces has directed me to commend your Wing for the superior manner in which they have conducted recent operations. The long hours and difficult circumstances attending both maintenance and operations are fully appreciated. The skill and morale of both the pilots and your men has been of the highest order.

2. I desire to add my personal congratulations to all personnel in your group for the excellent work accomplished during the last few days.

3. Operations of this nature often are not accomplished in the heat of combat, but the fact that the personnel are in constant danger of attack makes operations of this kind most trying on morale. Notwithstanding these factors all members of your Wing have evidenced an eagerness for difficult tasks that is most exemplary.

/s/ J. H. DOOLITTLE
/t/ J. H. DOOLITTLE,
Major General, U. S. Army
Commanding.

ANNIKA SMALL Gives Presentation

November 11, 2022 Veteran's Day

In honor of Veterans' Day, Annika Small gave a presentation on her great grandfather, Van R. Hatcher, who was assigned the 87th Troop Carrier Squadron/438th TC Group and sent to the European theater during WWII as a glider pilot. The National WWII Glider Pilots Committee sent a letter of commendation and a challenge coin which was presented to Annika by her teacher, Rebecca Gremillion who teaches the gifted classes at Annika's school. Ms Gremillion said that Annika was so excited to receive the award and be recognized for her presentation.

Congratulations Annika and well deserved. Thank you for keeping the history alive!



If you know a student in grades K through 12 who has educated his or her classmates on Troop Carrier (written report, presentation, diorama etc.) please contact [Joan Abrahamsen](mailto:JoanAbrahamsen) who runs the commendation program. We very much want to recognize these students. Please encourage your budding historian to take up the Guidon. If they need historical information contact our research team. nww2gpert@gmail.com

JOAN ABRAHAMSEN Gives Commendation

November 11, 2022 Veteran's Day



CATSKILL—Joan Abrahamsen, vice chairwoman of the National World War II Glider Pilots Committee, presented David R Darling with a letter of commendation and a Challenge Coin on behalf of the Committee. “Today, we celebrate a hero among us,” Abrahamsen said. “Veterans are aging and their numbers grow smaller. If we don’t carry on their history who will?”

CATSKILL; Retired Catskill police chief David R. Darling has been named Greene County Veteran of the Year, by the county Veterans Services Agency. Chief Darling served in Vietnam and was assigned to the Military Police Battalion where he attained the rank of sergeant. He served from 1966 to 1969.

Joan honored her local police chief with recognition from the National WWII Glider Pilots organization.

Excellent work, Joan!

New York Times bestselling author Scott McGaugh's *Brotherhood of the Flying Coffin* (Osprey Publishing) will debut March 7. Pre-ordering is now available on [Amazon](#).

Brotherhood uniquely focuses on the glider pilot experience and legacy in World War II, based largely on two years' extensive research in the museum and the National WWII Glider Pilot Committee's archives. Excerpts from diaries, letters, oral histories, interviews, family records, autobiographies, and related first-person archival documents are the basis of the book.

Publishers Weekly already has called *Brotherhood* "vivid and inspiring" and "a WWII history that soars." Other reviews have included "first-rate account,"

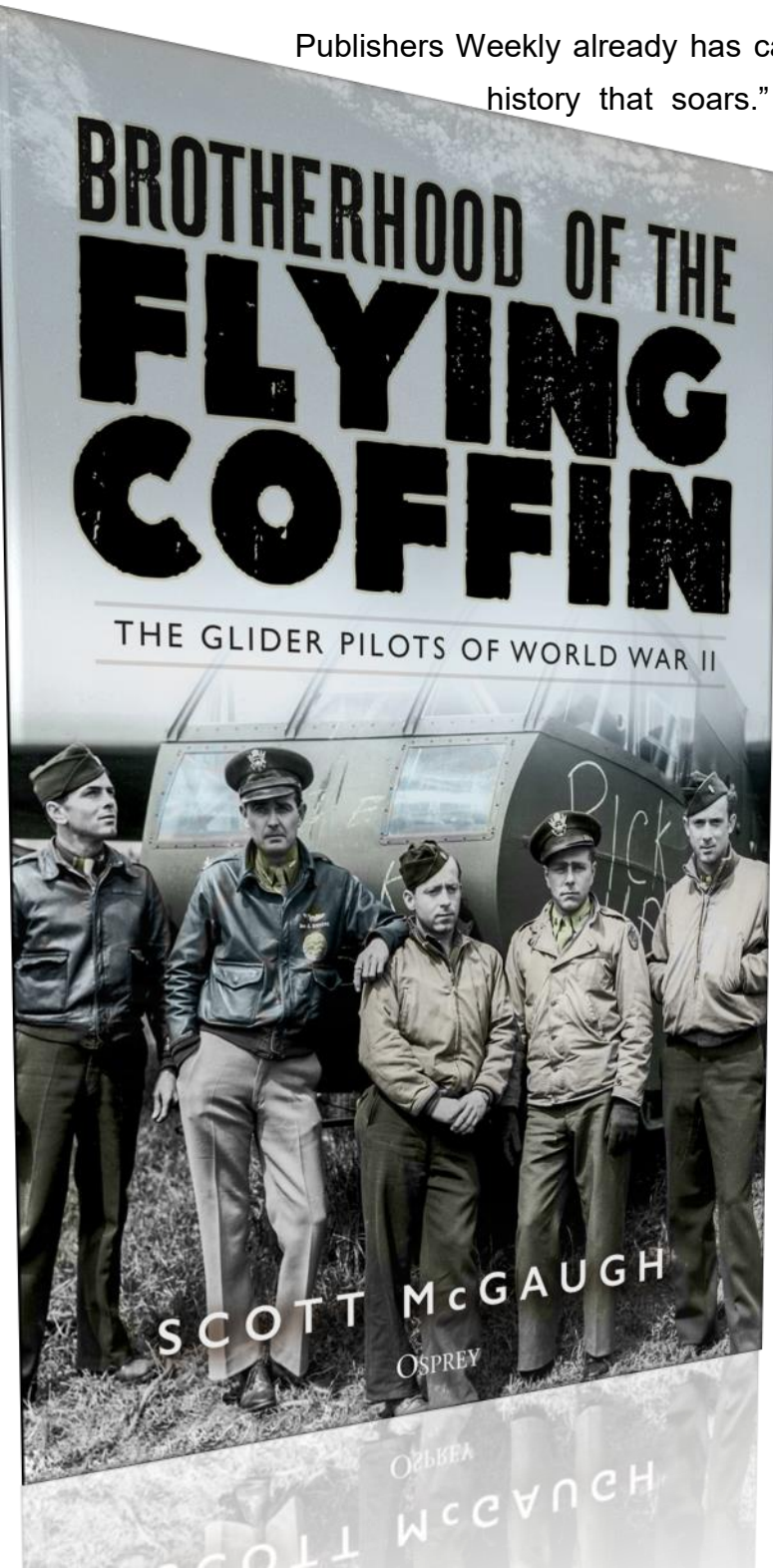
"reads more like a gut-wrenching novel," "heart-rending," and "a riveting, 'you are there' account."

The book's overview reads, "This nonfiction battlefield thriller straps readers into the cockpit alongside the volunteer WWII glider pilots who landed in enemy territory on one-way missions with no motors, no parachutes, and no shortage of guts."

Book updates will be posted at <https://www.facebook.com/AuthorScottMcGaugh> and at <https://scottmcgaugh.com/comingsoon.html> You can contact Scott at author@scottmcgaugh.com to be included on his e-update list.

Scott adds, "It's been my honor to write nonfiction battlefield thrillers about American heroes whose heroism, courage, and sacrifice reflect the best of the American spirit—the kind of people we all want to have over dinner."

This will be Scott's 11th book. In addition to his bestseller, another, *Honor Before Glory*, is in film development.



The December 7, 1941, surprise attack on Pearl Harbor thrust the United States into World War II. Just six months later in May 1942, flying new C-47 transport aircraft, the 60th Troop Carrier Group led the way as the first U.S. TCG to deploy to England and the European Theater of Operations in World War II. Leading the way to victory, the 60th TCG's first mission—dropping U. S. paratroopers outside of Oran, North Africa—was not only the first combat airborne mission in U.S. Army history, but also the longest airborne mission of the entire war. This drop spearheaded Operation TORCH, also known as the Invasion of North Africa, by taking key Axis airfields just inland from the amphibious landing zones. The 60th TCG went on to fly some of the first combat aeromedical evacuation missions and the first combat mission towing CG-4A "Waco" gliders during Operation HUSKY—the Invasion of Sicily. As the new airborne, air land, aeromedical evacuation, and glider missions matured in World War II, the 60th TCG continued to play a major role, paying in blood for valuable lessons learned in the school of hard knocks. The group later flew dramatic missions into Yugoslavia, supporting Partisans as part of the secret war in the Balkans, an episode of World War II history still all but unknown today, and dropped British paratroops in the airborne invasion of Greece. The Group was inactivated at the end of the war.

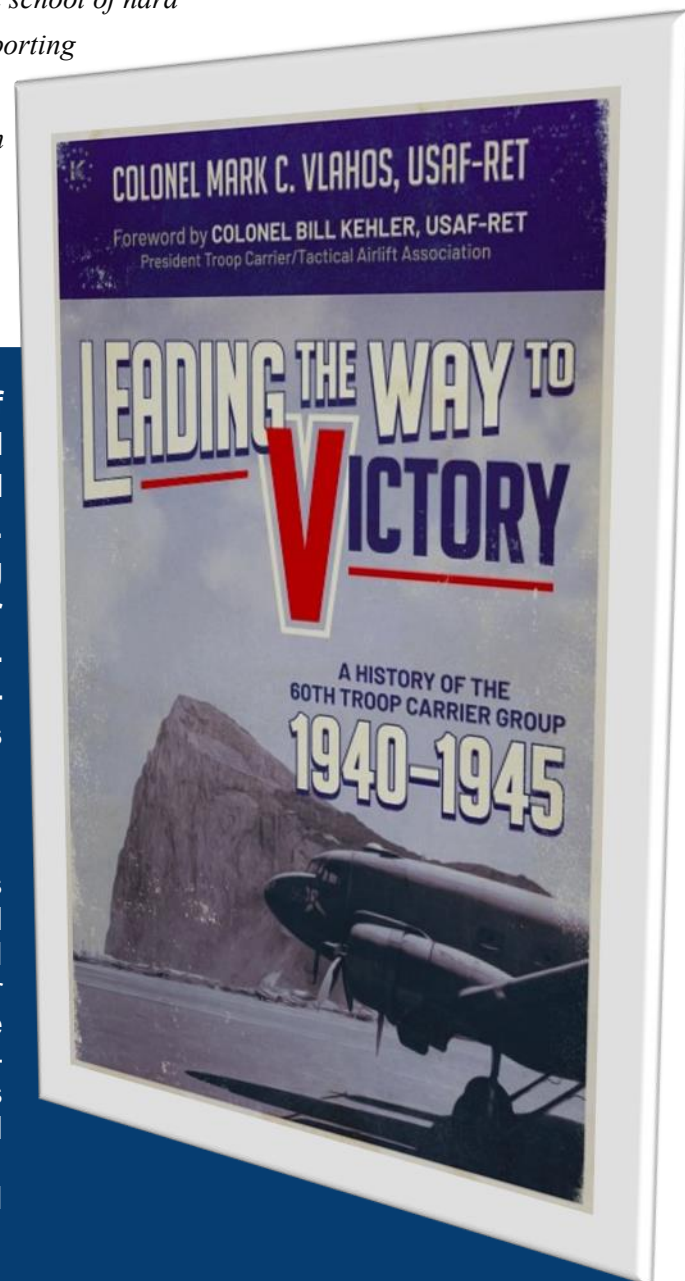
Leading The Way to Victory is the official history of the 60th Troop Carrier Group, featuring unpublished first-person accounts by participating veterans and expertly written by retired USAF Colonel Mark C. Vlahos, combat veteran and former Vice Wing Commander of 314th Airlift Wing at the Little Rock Air Force Base. The book is available now for pre-order. with all major book distributors. Hardcover; 484 pages, over 160 photographs, maps and appendices full of data. List price is \$35

Drawing on official United States Army Air Forces microfilm records, operational records in the National Archives, photographs from both collections, published historical materials, and many personal accounts, author Mark C. Vlahos' expertly written and highly readable volume is certain to become the standard history and go-to reference for the 60th TCG. This work offers scholars and lay readers alike an authoritative, informative, and engaging saga of the Group's battles, adversity, hardships, and triumphs from inception through the Allied victory in Europe.

PRE-ORDER TODAY!

Colonel MARK C. VLAHOS, USAF-Ret, Historian, Author & Speaker, Checkout my website at markcvlahos.com

Also <https://amazon.com/author/markcvlahos>
Member NWWIIGPC Leon B. Spencer Research Team
Email: markc.vlahos@gmail.com



Thank you!

Thank you to those of you for your donations! Only by your generosity to the Committee were we able to bring WWII Troop Carrier Veterans to their reunion in Lubbock.

2022 NATIONAL WWII GLIDER PILOTS DONATIONS TO THE COMMITTEE

RICHARD BRZOZOWSKI in honor of F/O William Ray Daugherty

GARY STRIPLING in honor of Lt Col Claude "Chuckles" Berry

PATRICIA OVERMAN in honor of Major Lee Whitmire, USAF Ret.

R OVERMAN in honor of Major Lee Whitmire, USAF Ret.

ELIZABETH STRIPLING in honor of LTC Claude Berry

THORN CARY in honor of Thornley C. Cary, Jr.

JIM HOOPER in honor of William E. Hooper

STEVE KNOTT in honor of Gerald Knott

CATHY WELTY in honor of Major Ray J. Welty, USAF, Ret.

CATHY WELTY in honor of Major Ray J. Welty, USAF, Ret

MICHAEL SCHELLEY in honor of Jerome H. Schelley

DULCIE NICHOLS in honor of Lt George E. Coutts

CRAIG LECCE in honor of Flight Officer Peter J Lecce

DICK LASKE

TIMOTHY SUMMERS in honor of Robert W. Summers

DALE JOHNSON in honor of Lt Col George H Johnson, USAF Ret

GARY WOODS in honor of Major Willard C Woods, USAF Ret

STEVEN LAUDRILLE in honor of son of Robert A Laudrille

JOSEPH DENISON in honor of Son of Joseph W. Denison Jr

LAURA BRIGGS in honor of my grandfather Capt Paul Melucas

TREVOR SHIMULUNAS in honor of Leroy Shimulunas

TIBBY GOLD in honor of In honor of may dad: 2nd. Lt. Ralph I Wilcox

BETTIE COX in honor of Flight Officer Van R.Hatcher

MARK EARLE in honor of Michael Samek, Otto Lyons, Doug Flynn.

COLIN HENDERSON in honor of Ike Abernathy

JAMES RONAN in honor of This donation is for the Challenge Coin.

STEVE KNOTT in honor of Coin

JOHN LANEY in honor of Maj John Aris Laney, and WWII Combat Glider Pilot.

CHRISTOPHER JELLA in honor of Elbert D. Jella

ANNEMARIE TAYLOR in honor of Paul W. Mousseau

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* GLIDER PILOTS AND GLIDER POWER PILOTS.

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MISSIONS

THANK YOU TO THOSE FAMILIES AND FRIENDS WHO HAVE CONTACTED THE LBS RESEARCH TEAM
TO PARTNER ON RESEARCHING WWII TROOP CARRIER HISTORY DURING THIS QUARTER.
HIGHLIGHTED AND UNDERLINED NAMES BECAME MEMBERS, THANK YOU!

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TROOP CARRIER MOVEMENT

JOIN OUR COMMITTEE AND HELP PRESERVE TROOP CARRIER
AND COMBAT GLIDER HISTORY

ON THE CALENDAR

Upcoming missions:

BASTOGNE

December 23-27, 1944

BURMA

March 5, 1944

REMAGEN

March 22, 45

RHINE CROSSING

March 24, 1945

NORMANDY

June 6-7, 1944

LA LONDE

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LUZON

June 23, 1945

SICILY

July 9 & 13, 1943

SOUTHERN FRANCE

July 15, 1944

HOLLAND

Sept 17 - 26, 1944

DONATE TO THE SILENT WINGS MUSEUM FOUNDATION



Photo collection provided by James Ronan son of Mark Ronan who flew a glider into Normandy, Holland (71st TCS) and the Rhine Crossing.(ds:80th TCS). Look for more photos and information in the next issue.

COLE

HOIEN

COVER PHOTO: Paratroopers of the 2/503rd Parachute Infantry gear up to board 60th TCG C-47s for a practice jump prior to Operation Torch. 12th TCS aircraft #41-7767 is in the background. (Photo Courtesy of American Air Museum in England)

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