

# WWII GLIDER PILOT'S BRIEFING

NATIONAL WWII GLIDER PILOTS COMMITTEE OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE  
SILENT WINGS MUSEUM FOUNDATION

Legacy of the World War II Glider Pilots Association



## **“GLIDER DOWN!”**

**By: Captain Trevor Shimulunas, USMC**

**Going down in the Jungle is one thing, going down in the night without reaching the LZ surrounded by the Japanese leaves you two choices...**

### **INSIDE:**

COUNCIL REPORTS  
FINAL FLIGHT  
COLLECTORS' PHOTO  
CAPTURED BY THE BRITISH  
HONORING OUR VETERANS  
REMEMBERING BASTOGNE  
OPERATIONS  
MISSIONS  
TROOP CARRIER MOVEMENT

## EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OFFICERS:

**R. Bruce OVERMAN**  
Chair  
r.bruce.overman@gmail.com

**Charles L. DAY**  
Vice Chair

**Don ABBE**  
Liaison: SWM Foundation (SWMF)

**Charles H. HOBBS**  
Treasurer & SWMF Rep  
chobbs91@me.com

**Claudia COGGIN**  
Secretary & SWMF Rep.  
claudia.coggin@gmail.com

**Mary ROEMER**  
Reunion Chair  
roemermary@gmail.com

**Jeremy "Maddog" LUSHNAT**  
Liaison: 94th Flying Training Squadron

**Paul "PR" ROBERTS**  
Liaison: 94th Flying Training Squadron

**Patricia A. OVERMAN**  
National Wing Commander  
nwwiigpa@gmail.com

**E. Susan Arnoult PINTER**  
Chaplain

**Gary STRIPLING**  
Research Team Manager  
nww2gpert@gmail.com

**James MARPLE**  
At-Large member

## INTERNATIONAL DIRECTOR

**Hans DEN BROK**, Netherlands  
marketc47@gmail.com

## INDEX

winter Dec. 2020 General Order #1



### 13 COVER STORY GLIDER DOWN!

### 11 Final Flight

### 12 Collector's Photo

### 19 American glider pilots captured by British A/B !

### 20 Honoring TC Members

### 21 Remember Bastogne

### 25 Missions RT Thanks families for this quarters research requests.



## COUNCIL REPORTS:

### 3 Chair's Briefing

### 4 Reunion Briefing

### 4 Secretary's Briefing

### 5 Wing Com. Briefing

### 6 LBSRT Briefing

### 7 International Briefing

### 8 94<sup>th</sup> FTS Briefing

### 10 Chaplin's Inspiration

### 23 Operations What our members have been doing

### Troop Carrier Movement Back Cover: Upcoming missions, membership and donation information

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. To stop receiving publications contact Claudia Coggin at claudia.coggin@gmail.com

## NATIONAL CHAIR

By now you have no doubt noticed some changes to our quarterly *Briefing*. What began as a project to expedite delivery grew into a major enhancement of the layout and content. We must give Patricia Overman credit and a huge thank you for designing and creating the new format.

The content, however, is provided by you, the membership. If you have a story to tell, we want it. No, we NEED it. Maybe all you have is an interesting photo but they alone can often tell a story. If you want to write about a relative that served in WWII our Leon B. Spence Research Team might be able help provide details. Or how about describing the first time you soloed in a TG-16A? It's all good.

And speaking of good, what a great article by one of our newer members, Captain Trevor Shimulunas, USMC. Not only is it an interesting story, it is very well written. This article, and one in the last quarterly newsletter by Colonel Mark Vlahos, USAF RET, sheds some much needed light on the operation in

Burma. The much better known missions in the European Theatre of Operations frequently overshadow the extended operation in the Pacific Theatre and I am very pleased to see this being rectified.

I would also like to recognize the hard work that was done by the Research Team and the Executive Council to make this new Quarterly Briefing possible. Thanks, too, to the Silent Wings Museum for their complete support in moving the publishing of the Quarterly serial to the Committee. This allows their staff more time to work on the day to day activities and report those activities in their new monthly e-newsletter.

On a side note; make sure you catch the important note in the Reunion Chair's report and let's keep our fingers crossed for Lubbock in October.

R Bruce Overman,  
National Chair

P.S. Bill Cheolas says to say 'Hi' to everyone!



Jonah Anestis and Bill Cheolas  
2019 reunion

## NATIONAL REUNION CHAIR REPORT

50TH ANNUAL REUNION  
WILL BE HELD IN LUBBOCK, TX

Tentative Dates are  
October 7,8,9, and 10, 2021  
MCM Elegaté Hotel & Suites  
Lubbock, TX

I have “reserved” the MCM Elegaté Hotel in Lubbock for October of 2021 at the same time I cancelled the booking for this year, so all of our plans remain exactly the same, just a year later.\*

**\*Due to COVID 19 the hotel has not as yet committed to our 2021 dates.**

Updates may be found at: [www.ww2gp.org/reunion](http://www.ww2gp.org/reunion) or on our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/WW2GliderPilots/>

Mary Roemer, National Reunion Chair

## NATIONAL SECRETARY

**Dues notices will be going out soon for the 2021 year.** The strength of our National WWII Glider Pilots Committee resides with our members who have committed to support us by joining our Committee. Although no longer a veteran organization we are still made up of WWII Glider Pilots, Troop Carrier crews, spouses as well as veterans who have served or are currently serving, family members, neighbors, friends, researchers, historians, and authors. We are all dedicated to maintaining the history of the WWII Glider Pilots and WWII Troop Carriers. We thank you for your support.

We need YOU to renew or become a member and express your commitment to our mission to provide and preserve Glider Pilot and Troop Carrier history in order to perpetuate the memory of those men, their service to country, and to keep alive the knowledge of the relatively unknown glider program of WWII.

Your membership also keeps our Committee and research team viable, supports the Silent Wings Museum, and helps support valuable on-going activities such as education; memorials; website and database hosting, and to continue to have a strong reunion conference attendance.

Join or [Renew](https://ww2gp.org/membership) your membership for 2021 <https://ww2gp.org/membership>

Claudia Coggin,  
National Secretary  
[claudia.coggin@gmail.com](mailto:claudia.coggin@gmail.com)  
817/366-3859

[INDEX](#)

## FROM THE NATIONAL WING COMMANDER'S DESK

It has been a sad year for us as we have lost many of our veterans and their wives. Raymond Hughes lost his wife Gladys to COVID 19 in July and I found out that other veterans have also died from this virus. Please protect our veterans and their spouses by wearing a mask and social distancing.

I missed seeing everyone at our reunion, especially those WWII veterans that had said they wanted to come this year. I look forward to seeing them in October 2021 as I keep hoping all of this will be behind us by then.

As many of you know I am also the developer for the website and the Glider Pilot's online database. In 2016 Charlie Day and I worked together to get all the Access Legacy Database (ALD) data into a mySQL database that we call the Glider Pilot Database (GPD). The research team works with the GPD on a daily basis. To maintain the ALD an automatic notification is sent to Charlie whenever a change is made.

The ALD was originally developed by the Glider Pilots using information they started collecting as far back as 1972. This was well before the government had declassified the WWII information. Much of the data was from the veteran's themselves, personal documents and word of mouth from veterans who knew about their brothers. So some of the information added had not been verified. Occasionally information was not remembered correctly; a veteran was put in a squadron of a group but turned out to be a different squadron of the same Group; close but not completely accurate.

Several of our research team members have traveled to various archives (National Archives, Air Force Research and Historical

Agency, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center Library and presidential libraries) to collect copies of the documents needed to update and add to the database. Hans den Brok as far away as the Netherlands has been especially generous in these endeavors. It is these documents that we are using. We also receive documents from families that are very helpful. It is not unusual for a family to give us a document to update a specific record and that document in turn allows us to update several more records.

I am amazed at the amount of work that many of the researchers have contributed to the database. As an example Gary Stripling and Mark Vlahos have verified and added awards to hundreds of the records. In Awards alone, 834 awards were either updated or added to records. Mark has added all the tow crew members for the Ladbroke mission and updated 30 records that were missing from the 60th TCG. This was after he updated all the 314<sup>th</sup> combat crews, awards, missions and detached service information.

In more cases than not, we are adding missions and units that Glider Pilots never had in their records. And all is verified by the 1943-1945 General and Special Orders as well as S-3 Officers narratives. What is really great about having all this data is that it will greatly improve our ability to query statistics.

To speed up the input of data I created several batch upload forms allowing batch updates to record timelines, awards, and documents where the glider pilots were all in the same squadron and listed under the same Special Order, General Order or Personnel Order. To me the most important batch upload has been the glider reports. Often when a family member

781  
**GLIDER REPORT**

HQ. 314th T. C. GROUP  
APO 132, U. S. ARMY  
27 March 1945

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

Name: Hare, Wesley I. Rank: 2nd Lt ASN: 0.1999555  
Group: 314th Sq. 62d Glider Serial: 43-19845 Glider No. & Type: CG4A -2  
F. O. No.: 5 Serial: A-21 LZ or DZ: "NW" Take Off Time: 0930  
Time Over Target: 1233 Time & Date Returned to Home Station: 1830, 26-3-45

makes a request we may find their glider pilot is in a Group that may not have towed gliders in WWII (I know, it makes no sense), or there is no Squadron listed, or the mission they were involved in was not one that his squadron flew. In all these instances we need to start searching for the squadron to which he was sent on detached service. This is very time consuming because of the number of squadrons and the fact that each PDF from the U.S Air Force Historical Research Agency is huge, anywhere from 2,000 to 5,000 pages.

So I reversed the search, I started by creating a table and using the reports to add the squadron, mission and veteran to the table. In the form the squadron is selected and each name in that squadron is listed. The advantage is if there was no name in the list and I had a combat report for that name I could add the squadron to the person's record. Within two days I had updated over 510 records and that was just from two Troop Carrier Groups. One of those Groups happened to be a Group that Mark Vlahos had worked on over the last quarter so that Group was more complete and making it

quick and easy to add the batch uploads. The data is also showing that the glider pilots flew many more missions and were moved around more than I thought.

If there was no squadron, in many cases, there was also no mission. The squadron is the key to the team's ability to do the research, whether he is a glider instructor pilot or a glider pilot sent to a theater. I have also discovered ten more Power Glider Pilots that need records created.

It has been really satisfying to be able to add a squadron and know something about a glider pilot where previously we had only his training information.

You can help us out, by sending copies of WWII photos, letters, and documents to the research team. Our contacts are at <https://ww2gp.org/research/>

We could not do all this work if it wasn't for our members helping us. Thank you so much.

Stay safe!  
Patricia Overman

**LEON B SPENCER RESEARCH TEAM**

Year-end report Nov 23, 2020

There are five advisors: Former SWM Curator Don Abbe, Charles Day, WWII Glider Pilot Fred Lund, SWM Curator Sharon McCullar. Hans den Brok [Netherlands], Richard Chancellor [England], Chuck Hobbs, Tom Martin, Jeff McGovern [stationed in Germany], Bill Moline, Patricia Overman, Trevor Shimulunas, Jean Michel Soldi [France], Gary Stripling, Keith Thoms and Mark Vlahos, make up our research team.

Again, in this crazy year of 2020 RT members have been kept consistently busy researching requests from family members of glider pilots.

#### RESPONSES FROM THE RT TO FAMILIES CONTINUES TO GROW

- 2017 - 174 documents located
- 2018 - 271 documents located
- 2019 - 357 documents located
- 2020. - 413 documents located

#### DATABASE UPDATES:

Patricia reported that there have been 2300 updates made to the on-line database in 2020 which does not include “Batch Loads” of entries for multiple members of Squadrons receiving like AWARDS or TIMELINE events

#### 2020 KEY TAKE AWAYS

- RT SEARCHES FOR RECORDS & UPDATES THE DB FOR EACH GP,
- RT MEMBERS SERVE AS HISTORIANS, GLIDER PROGRAM EXPERTS, LANDING SITE GUIDES AND HOSTS, MEMORIAL CHAMPIONS, AUTHORS OF BOOKS AND ARTICLES,
- FAMILY REQUESTS CONTINUE TO INCREASE AS MORE FAMILIES SEEK INFORMATION RELATED TO GLIDER PILOT ARTIFACTS, MEMORABILIA, ETC. OFTEN TIMES THEY ASK OUR TEAM TO HELP IDENTIFY WHAT THEY POSSESSED.

Gary Stripling, LBSRT Project Manager

### INTERNATIONAL DIRECTOR

Writing this reminds me of the days I was at school. You got some homework, and a week to do it. In the end, it will be rushing to get it done.

As written earlier in the year, COVID affected most of the annual ceremonies. But, it did not stop them. Through the magical social media we could see different events taking place in Normandy, Southern France and Holland. Especially the activities in Southern France looked good. It is admirable that these commemorations took place.

This summer I also learned that there are two replica Horsa gliders in Holland; both are movie props. The first one came from England last year. It was part of an exhibit in Oosterbeek (British 1st Airborne - Arnhem).

props. The first one came from England last year. It was part of an exhibit in Oosterbeek (British 1st Airborne - Arnhem). After that, it moved to the [Overloon War Museum](#). There it will be displayed with a C-47. The other movie prop was used for the film Slag om de Schelde (Battle for the Schelde). A Dutch movie that has just been released. The Horsa is part of the Wings of Liberation museum. I did see the Horsa there when I was interviewed by a filmmaker.

Further, the activities to restore C-47 airplanes has taken a flight. There wasn't much news about such in the past, but again, social media is a window where one hears, or can follow the process, of these restorations. Two planes here in Europe, real Troop Carrier veterans, will be brought back to flying status. Another Troop Carrier veteran C-47, at the before mentioned Overloon museum, will be on static display.

In general, people react disappointed when such an old aircraft is scrapped. Sadly, there simply is not enough time and money to save them all. Each time one is saved, and war time history can be found, is fantastic.

---Hans den Brok, Airborne Troop Carrier



The 94th Flying Training Squadron (94 FTS) has been thriving despite COVID-related challenges, poor inflight visibility due to local and distant fires, and a higher than average number of days with winds well outside of glider operations limits. To counter challenges, the squadron's team of United States Air Force

officers, enlisted members, recent civilians, and Academy cadets has repeatedly leveraged new and emerging technologies to maximize safety and mitigate shortfalls in live flight training. And the team has used any extra "free" time associated with unexpected operational pauses to pursue a variety of projects.



Since the last update, the 94th has executed nearly 7,000 air- and ground-based training events, qualified 52 new glider instructor pilots, and trained 148 glider students, 48 of which earned the opportunity to fly “solo” in the TG-16A glider. As a testimony to the squadron’s incredibly motivating and rewarding training environment, over 180 cadets applied and interviewed to become one of 40 members of the 94th’s next class of upgrading instructor pilots.

Perhaps most noteworthy for this update are the squadron’s simulator-related efforts. Currently, the 94th has the capability to fly in “virtual reality” (VR) environments. Pilots wear head-mounted, wrap-around-the-face electronic screens (also referred to as “goggles”) that display high-definition images of the cockpit and flying environment (e.g., airfield, terrain, sky, clouds, etc...). Everything displayed in the screens moves with and correlates to the movement of the pilot’s head or activation of a physical switch or control that is present in a cockpit mockup; everything displayed and heard is programmed to visually and audibly feel and sound like you are sitting in a real glider cockpit, manipulating real switches and controls.

One of the 94th’s highly-motivated and incredibly-talented “casual Lts” (recently graduated Second Lieutenants who are stationed at the Academy and waiting to go to pilot training), Sam Spangler, took the initiative to dramatically enhance the simulator’s programmed graphics for the Academy’s Davis Airfield and local, normal off-field landing areas. Additionally, Lt Spangler and the team have designed and incorporated emergency procedures and scenarios for and into pilots’ training. Everyone now has the opportunity to experience: severe sink, strong crosswinds, stuck rudder controls, stalls at 25’ above the

ground, and landing at the Academy’s Officer & Enlisted Club’s emergency landing field; unfortunately, the squadron cannot simulate pilots going inside the club to have a beverage after experiencing the stressful event.

Finally, the 94th is happy to have recently added a new type of glider to the squadron’s existing fleet. The new glider, which the Air Force has designated as the TG-17A, was donated to the Academy by the widow of a successful entrepreneur who also had been a glider enthusiast. The civilian designation for the glider is the MDM-1 Fox and [in reputable aerobatics circles] is considered “the world’s best advanced aerobatics glider.” The glider is “incredibly strong, capable of executing +9 and -6 g-force maneuvers, and has a roll rate to impress.” The 94th looks forward to training and qualifying a cadre of pilots in the TG-17A in order to compete and provide aerial demonstrations when able in 2021.

That is all for now! Thank you to Major Chris Heiserman, 94 FTS Director of Staff, for helping make this update possible

Jeremy “Maddog” Lushnat  
National WWII Glider Pilots Committee  
Liaison to the 94th Flying Training Squadron



## NATIONAL CHAPLAIN'S

Dear Friends,

I just reread my last newsletter and it just about broke my heart. It is almost Christmas and here in Texas the COVID-19 virus is surging into numbers that are higher even than in July. But I must say that I see a glimmer of hope on the horizon with the announcement of possible vaccines in the new year. It is so amazing what human beings can do when the desire for good is at work.

I hope that everyone will have a Holiday Season that is safe and filled with gratitude. Even if our families cannot gather as we have in the past, we can still be thankful for all that we have. I have a feeling that as we celebrate the end of year holidays, not being able to celebrate in our traditional ways will become even more frustrating. My children are trying to plan an outdoor gathering for the grandchildren gift exchange. The text messages are flying back and forth with ideas and suggestions. I will let them be in charge.

Fall and winter have always been my favorite seasons. I enjoy the change in nature's scenery and the idea of nature sleeping and waiting for spring. I am finding it hard to appreciate these ideas this year as it seems that all of 2020 has been mostly waiting and hiding out in quarantine.

I repeat here my prayers of the last newsletter:

I pray for those who continue to work; the truck and delivery drivers (where would we be without Amazon?), the health care workers who struggle with over whelming numbers of patients in some areas, the police and fire departments and the grocery workers.

I pray that we can continue to support those who have lost their jobs and maybe their place to live.

I pray especially for all those in nursing or retirement homes who are strictly quarantined with no visitors at all. Their loneliness is so very hard to endure.

I will be meditating on this quote for the rest of 2020 to help me find joy, maybe it will be helpful for you also:

*"Thanksgiving is the lens God means for us to see joy all year round."*  
---Ann Voskamp

To all reading this; stay safe, be kind to yourself and those around you.

Susan Pinter  
Chaplain

# FINAL FLIGHT

In memory of our WW II Glider Pilots and Troop Carrier Personnel, we will keep you in our hearts.

NATIONAL WW II GLIDER PILOTS ASSOCIATION

“We few, we happy few, we band of brothers”

14 March 1991



11 Aug. 1921-1 June 2020  
Lynn COCHRAN  
Power Pilot  
45<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Squadron.  
316<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Group  
Flew C-47 in VARSITY  
Dropping 17<sup>th</sup> Airborne



6 May 1927-29 July 2020  
Alfred HULSTRUNK  
Glider Pilot  
Graduated in Special class Kelly  
Field after graduation was assigned  
to Brook General Hospital as a  
Bioplastic tech. Flew gliders at  
Harris Hills.



James E PRITCHETT  
4 April 1921 - 1 June 2020  
Power Glider Pilot  
81<sup>st</sup> Troop Carrier Squadron.  
436<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Group  
Although James was a Power  
Glider Pilot he had never flown a  
glider until Rhine Crossing.  
Received a Purple Heart for the  
VARSITY operation



Walt RABY  
17 March 1927 - 18 April 2020  
Power Glider Pilot  
810<sup>th</sup> AAFBU Maxton  
Instructor and test pilot at  
Laurinburg Maxton 1945.



Kermit SWANSON  
3 Jan 1919 - 1 Nov 2020  
84<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Squadron  
437<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Group  
He flew three combat glider  
missions, Normandy, Holland and  
the Rhine Crossing (VARSITY)  
Received a Purple Heart for the  
Varsity operation



James D. HAMMETT  
Glider Pilot  
23 March 1920 - 26 Nov. 2020



Flew Normandy,  
Holland and the Rhine  
Crossing.

## Spouses of WWII Troop Carrier Members



Mary C. HOLKER  
1920-11/5/2020  
Wife of Jack C. Holker  
92TCS/439TCG



Gladys Virginia HUGHES,  
6 July 1924- 13 June 2020,  
Wife of Ray Hughes.  
74TCS/434TCG & 86TCS/437TCG



Patricia WELTY passed away on October 11, 2020, joining her beloved husband, Ray J. WELTY, who, at the time of his death in 2012, was National Wing Commander of the National World War II Glider Pilots Association. Mother was my dad's co-pilot and partner in every way. Including active participation in this great organization. Working together, they planned several successful "mini" reunions. In Mother's later years, I brought her to as many reunions as she was able to attend. Ray and Pat are now finally together in High Flight. -- Daughter Cathy L. Welty

COLLECTORS PHOTO  
CHINA BURMA INDIA THEATER  
Lalaghat India



Back caption: *Tow ropes which had been lined on racks bordering the field at Lalaghat, India, were placed in position in front of 1st Air Commando gliders so that as each transport moved into position, the tow line could be attached to the tow plane and the gliders easily.*

--U.S. National Archives

To view a digital version of this photo go to:

<https://ww2gp.org/gpBriefing/collectorsPhoto.php>

Glider Down!  
The Story of Flight Officer Leroy Shimulunas  
By: Captain Trevor Shimulunas, USMC



F/O Leroy Shimulunas

*"The only things that are in my dreams,  
are basketballs and Lorraine it seems"*

-Leroy's graduation quote from 1941 yearbook

Two Rivers, Wisconsin is a small, quiet town on the shore of Lake Michigan, just east of Green Bay. The community is one of close-knit neighborhoods, small local shops, parks and riverways, and a booming fishing industry. Today the city maintains the charm it would have had 80 years ago. There is tranquility there along the waterfront, where Lake Michigan whispers softly and gulls call overhead. Much of this allure would have been lost upon Anton and Amanda Shimulunas in March of 1944. Five of their seven children were at war. Four of them would return.

In the summer of 1941, amidst the rumblings of conflict in Europe and the Pacific, Leroy Shimulunas graduated from high school. A local basketball star who had helped lead the Two Rivers Raiders to victory in the state championship that same year, he was described by teachers and classmates as a “fine, clean cut boy.” A band member, student leader, and athlete, Leroy volunteered to enlist in the Army ten days after he graduated high school. This set him on a journey to Burma that would take more than two and a half years.

Shortly after his initial training he was identified as a promising candidate for the Glider Pilot Program. Though he put on an Army Air Forces uniform, he did not entirely hang up his championship basketball jersey. Leroy continued to play recreationally for the South Plains Army Flying School team and helped them beat their rivals at Lubbock Army Flying School. In February, 1943 Leroy was commissioned as a Flight Officer. This would have been another cause for celebration in his hometown, which kept close track of all their military youth.



1941 State Basketball Champs. Leroy Front Left  
Wisconsin State Journal, 1941

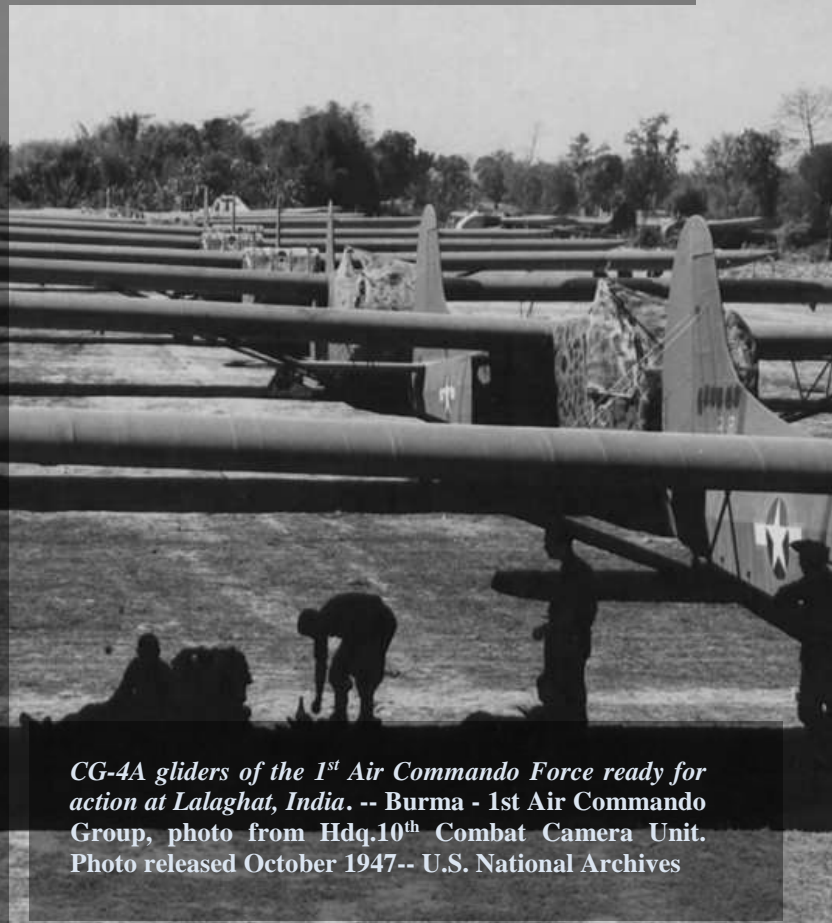
“When I hear how Leroy Shimulunas has earned his wings and is flying down in Greenville, Mississippi, I think ‘*how deadly will be the aim of a state tournament basketball champ once he gets into action.*’” (A.M. Klaus, “The Sojourner,” Vol 1.3 June 1942).

After graduation the young FO received new orders, along with many other young glider crewmembers, to the 5318th Provisional Air Unit, later renamed the 1st Air Commando Group. This new unit flowed into the China-Burma-India Theater.

The nature of their mission in Burma was of vital significance. With the occupation of Burma, and the success of the Japanese military there, access to the Burma Road was cut off. The Burma Road was a critical route used to provide supplies and weaponry to the beleaguered Chinese. Without the ability to support China, it was likely that the Japanese troops there would be victorious and subsequently able to be redeployed in other areas across the Pacific. The Allies' response: Operation Thursday.

This highly classified mission was a daring follow-up to previous Allied attempts to break through Burma to supply the Chinese. Seeing limited success with extreme casualties during ground movements through the dense jungle, General H. Arnold, Commanding General US Army Air Forces turned to Lieutenant Colonel Phillip Cochran to devise a solution.

Operation Thursday was the culmination of that work. A specialized force of fighters, gliders, transports, bombers, engineers, and Chindit commandos was planned to be inserted into various landing zones in the Burmese jungle. Their goal: establish forward airstrips from which to fly resupply missions, set conditions in Burma for follow on forces, and to sow confusion and distress amongst their Japanese enemy. This they accomplished thanks to the bravery and expertise of the operation's glider pilots.



*CG-4A gliders of the 1<sup>st</sup> Air Commando Force ready for action at Lalaghat, India. -- Burma - 1st Air Commando Group, photo from Hdq.10<sup>th</sup> Combat Camera Unit. Photo released October 1947-- U.S. National Archives*

Pilots like FO Shimulunas were expected to be towed by C-47s over an expanse of the Chin Hills, the mountains that separate Burma from India, at an altitude of 8000 feet. They would release from their tow planes and glide into their objective, LZ Broadway. From there they would clear the area and secure the LZ for additional forces. Being towed was dangerous for any glider, but for Operation Thursday the CG-4A Troop Gliders were overloaded due to mission requirements. With such a heavy load, inserting at night, with the blustering cross winds above the mountain ranges, tragedy soon struck. A number of gliders had their tow ropes snap, and others had their tow mechanism ripped out entirely before word could be passed to adjust their tow position behind the C-47s.

On March 5th 1944, after initial difficulty with the tow ropes and congestion at LZ Broadway, the number of casualties was low. Gliders which broke off from their tow planes were left to the mercy of the winds and the pilot's skill to continue towards the objective. Some gliders broke up in the thick tree canopy, others managed a successful rough landing far off course in the Burmese jungle.

It's in that dark glider cockpit, blindly following along on an air current, that I often picture Leroy. I imagine the reassuring drone of the Skytrain towing him, and the excited nervous chatter of the British troops he was transporting. I wonder where he ran into difficulty – was he in one of the gliders that had broken away unexpectedly? Or did his craft encounter a different issue closer to LZ Broadway?

At some point during the mission, Leroy's glider suffered an in-flight emergency. Battling the elements that night, the treetops, and his own glider, Leroy managed to successfully land his craft and passengers in Northern Burma. Insects would have droned on around them as the commandos picked themselves up out of the glider to take stock of their surroundings. I imagine the darkness pressing in around them, isolated, under the trees.

Of course but well-oriented, the British commandos, accompanied by FO Shimulunas and his copilot Cpl Fred Pugh, began their march towards Indaw, Burma.



*Glider pilots of the 1<sup>st</sup> Air Commando Force pose in front of a glider at the Lalaghat (India) base.*

Burma - 1st Air Commando Group, photo from Hdq. 10<sup>th</sup> Combat Camera Unit. Photo released October 1947-- U.S. National Archives [POSSIBLY F/O SHIMULUNAS FRONT ROW, LAST ON RIGHT]



*COCHRANS AIR COMMANDOES MOVE BRITISH FOOT TROOPS BEHIND JAPS IN BURMA. Gliders of the First Air Commando Force, having made a night landing at "Broadway" name for the rendezvous, prepare for the forward air movement under command of Maj. Gen. Orde Charles Wingate. Daylight after the night landing. Not all of the gliders landed without a crack-up. Logs and other natural obstacles were the causes of some crashes. The men awaited daylight to begin work on the airstrip. Burma Press Release 4 April 1944 - 1st Air Commando Group --U.S. National Archives*



After covering some distance in the humid jungle, the patrol stopped next to a body of water to rest, tired from their ordeal and from fighting against the jungle undergrowth. As the Allies recovered, they were surprised by a group of Japanese soldiers. Leroy, like all glider pilots, was charged with the safe delivery of his passengers. Upon being discovered by the Japanese the 21-year-old immediately reached for his rifle and was shot. The party was captured and then interred in a POW camp. Enduring immeasurable hardships they would be beaten and starved, and would not taste liberation until April 1945. One of the men liberated was Leroy's copilot, Cpl Pugh. He had been held in Rangoon Jail, Burma. The Japanese attempted to flee from the advancing British 14th Army, and abandoned their prisoners along the Old Burma Road.



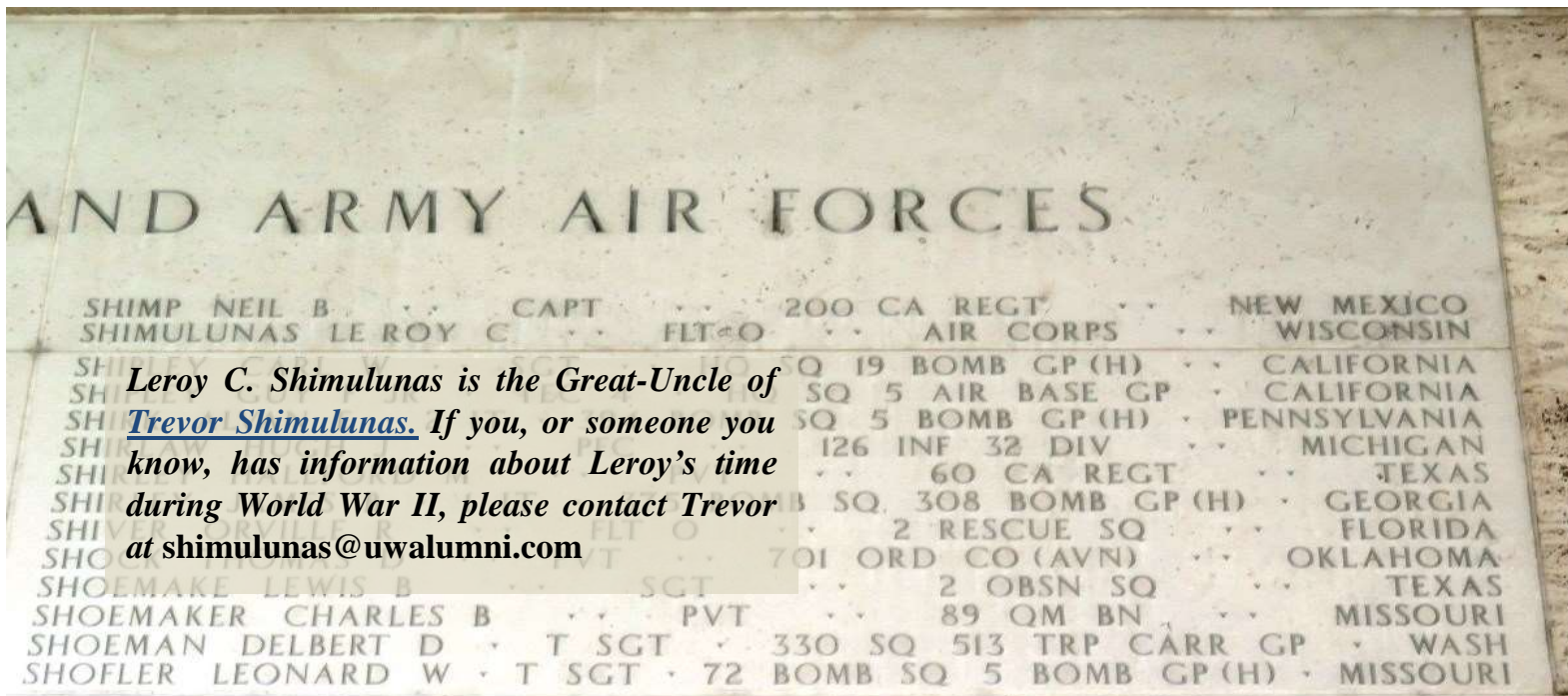
Liberated Prisoners of Pegu, photo provided by Jim Miller. Cpl Pugh, front-center. F/O Robert Hall rear-center. S/Sgt Robert Bicknell, also with 1ACG, rear-left Red Miller Photo

Pugh's story on the day they were rescued revealed that he was captured on March 27th, 1944 after proceeding to the upper regions of the Chindwin. This reveals the possibility that Leroy's patrol operated independently for close to 2 weeks in the Burmese Jungle after the night of Operation Thursday, rather than being ambushed and captured that first night.

It was after their liberation that some member of the Allied party made contact with Leroy's parents, detailing the story of their son's final mission in a letter to Anton and Amanda. It confirmed what the War Department had previously speculated. Leroy was dead. The unknown comrade wrote that as he was being led away, he could see Leroy lying face down in the watery glade where they were ambushed. For the family this was a long-awaited, tearful conclusion to a bright chapter in a small city's history.

For Operation Thursday however, aggressive cool-headed glider pilots such as Leroy were the purveyors of success. Despite extremely difficult conditions and the unprecedented nature in which they were being employed, the gliders and their passengers primarily landed successfully. It has been suggested that a key contributing factor to the success of the subsequent landings was due to those gliders who went off course. These malfunctions during landing served to confuse the Japanese commanders on where the landing zones had been established. Roving patrols of British Chindits attacked the enemy from seemingly every direction as forces continued to flow into the Burmese jungle.

Leroy has not yet been recovered, but he is memorialized on the Tablet of the Missing in the Philippines, as well as in the family plot in Two Rivers, Wisconsin. He left behind a fiancé, Miss Lorraine Shedivy. His other siblings all survived the war, serving in both the European and Pacific theaters.




FURTHER READING: <https://www.ww2gp.org/bio-file/extendedfile.php?getextendedfile=6638>

# FROM OUR GLIDER PILOTS

WILLIAM C. SIMONSEN 1920 - 1996

## AMERICAN GLIDER PILOTS CAPTURED BY BRITISH A/B



Glider Reclamation. Glider engineers living quarters while reclaiming and repairing gliders to be returned to the IX Troop Carrier Groups after the Holland mission. Photo taken on 21 Oct. 1944  
-U.S. National Archives

While we were members of the *Snatch Artists*<sup>1</sup> of Holland we had a day off from flying due to thick fog in the St. Odenrode (sic) area; Jack Littell,<sup>2</sup> our driver Sgt. Porter and I, in a weapons carrier, drove past the American outpost, through which we were expected to return under cover of the fog, and went into a Dutch village which was, of course, deserted. Our mission was to pick up a load of much needed coke for heating. Having quickly acquired the load it was necessary to leave. In so doing, the noise of the weapons carrier invited mortar fire which was coming dangerously close. We took the quickest way out which happened to be through a British outpost. Believing us to be the enemy disguised as Americans, we were relieved of our .45s and cartridge belts and our weapons carrier and were placed in the compound with German prisoners.

Sometime later we were lead out to be interrogated by the British CO. Upon being convinced that we truly were Americans, we were asked what we thought we would have done had we been unable to convince the CO of our identity. Jack nudged me saying "Let's show him." Jack and I had each been carrying a "kicker" in addition to the side arms that had been taken from us. I withdrew the loaded .45 cal. pistol from beneath my winter flight jacket as Jack drew his loaded Belgian Browning 9mm automatic.<sup>3</sup> We had been carrying these in our shoulder holsters. Needless to say, the CO was speechless for a moment, then he returned our other weapons, saying something about, "*You Bloody Americans.*" --signed W. C. Simonsen<sup>4</sup>

=====  
<sup>1</sup> After the Holland glider mission, from October 1944 through February 1945, Service Groups under the IX Troop Carrier Service Wing (Provisional) worked to put as many gliders as possible back together and in flyable condition for snatching gliders back to England. Simonsen and Littell were two of several glider pilots available at Sint Oedenrode , Holland, to fly the snatch gliders. Simonsen referenced themselves as "Snatch Artists". Both Simonsen and Littell would have been at the controls of the gliders when snatched.

<sup>2</sup> Jack Littell graduated from advanced glider flight training on Jan 7, 1943 class 43-1 South Plains Army Airfield and promoted to the rank of Flight Officer. Assigned to the 100th Troop Carrier Squadron, 441st Troop Carrier Group and was sent to the ETO. F/O Littell flew four glider combat missions; Normandy, Southern France, Holland and the Rhine Crossing. He was promoted during the war to 2nd Lt.

<sup>3</sup> The Browning 9mm pistol mentioned that Jack Littell had in his possession has an interesting history. Designed by an American, John M. Browning (who also designed the other pistol mentioned, a U.S. model 1911 in caliber 45 ACP), it was made by Fabrique Nationale (FN) of Belgium and given the model number P-35. Production of the P-35 began in 1935 when it was adopted by the Belgian military. In 1940 the Germans occupied Belgium and took over the FN factory. The P-35 pistol (known after the war as the Browning High Power) quickly became a favorite of both the Waffen-SS and the Fallschirmjäger (paratroopers) so Jack's "kicker" was almost certainly a battlefield pick up. Had the British discovered the P-35 first, Littell and Simonsen may have spent the rest of the war as a British POW.

<sup>4</sup> William C. Simonsen graduated from advanced glider flight training on Jun 25, 1943 class 43-11, South Plains Army Airfield and promoted to the rank of Flight Officer. Assigned to the 100th Troop Carrier Squadron, 441st Troop Carrier Group and was sent to the ETO. F/O Simonsen flew Southern France and Holland.

#### SOURCES:

Silent Wings Newsletter September 1989  
National WWII Glider Pilots Association Database  
den Brok, Hans. Market Flights Volume 16: Glider Retrieval Operation 2020.  
USAFHRA 100th Troop Carrier Squadron Historical Diaries october, November 1944 RG18  
Ibid. 441st Troop Carrier Group Historical Diaries

## HONORING OUR WWII VETERAN TROOP CARRIER MEMBERS

GERALD C. BERRY  
FRANK T. BRANDON  
PETE BUCKLEY  
CURTIS R. CAMERON  
BILL S. CHEOLAS  
GUY DE GENARO  
ERNEST E. DUTCHER  
RICHARD T. FORD  
JOHN H. GEIST  
MYRON GUISEWITE  
JOHN F. GULBIN  
JAMES O. HAMMERSMITH

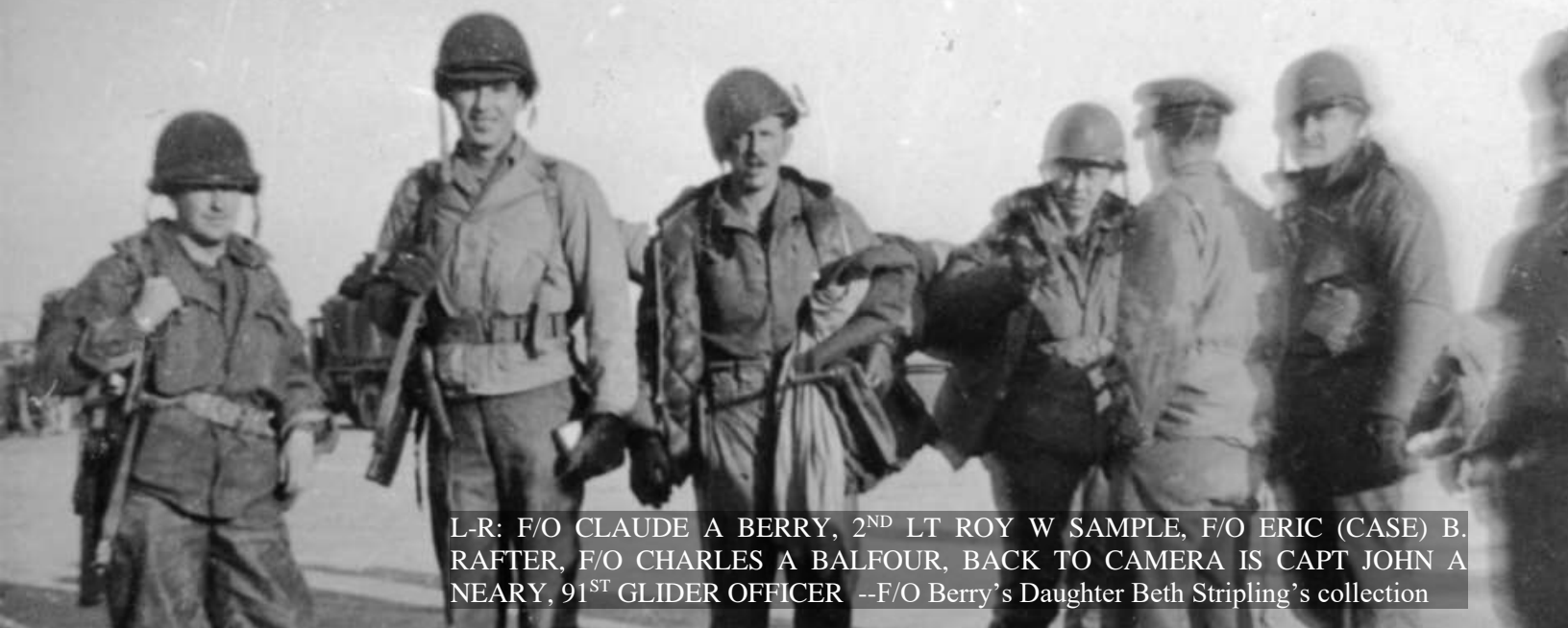
JAMES D. HAMMETT  
PHILIP R. HOWLAND  
RAYMOND J. HUGHES, JR.  
GEORGE M. JOHNSON (RET.)  
DANON S. JUDEVINE  
FRANK KOLOGY  
JOHN LAMM  
FRANK LAWLER  
GEORGE W. LOCKLIN  
FRED H. LUNDE  
JAMES W. MAGEE

JOHN JOSEPH MASON  
JUDSON W. PITTAM  
ERLING L. SEVERSON  
LAWRENCE ALDEN SIDLER  
ROGER W. SMITH  
JACK W. TEMPLIN  
ROGER D. THORSON  
JOSEPH J. TURECKY  
MARSHALL W. WILLIAMS  
WILLIAM WEAVER  
JAMES R. WINNIE  
RICHARD J. ZAPP

# REMEMBERING BASTOGNE

## GLIDERS RESUPPLY THE 101<sup>ST</sup> AIRBORNE DIVISION

### DEC.26<sup>TH</sup> AND 27<sup>TH</sup> 1944



L-R: F/O CLAUDE A BERRY, 2<sup>ND</sup> LT ROY W SAMPLE, F/O ERIC (CASE) B. RAFTER, F/O CHARLES A BALFOUR, BACK TO CAMERA IS CAPT JOHN A NEARY, 91<sup>ST</sup> GLIDER OFFICER --F/O Berry's Daughter Beth Stripling's collection

#### First mission of one glider with medical staff

2nd Lt Charlton W. CORWIN, Jr  
F/O Benjamin F. CONSTANTINO

#### Second mission of 10 gliders flown by:

2nd Lt. Charles Henry LONG, Jr.  
F/O Royal Howard TAYLOR  
F/O Warren de BEAUCLAIRE  
F/O Lowell E. DASHOW  
2nd Lt. Robert H. PRICE  
F/O John Henry WESLEY  
F/O John Thomas CORPENING  
F/O Joseph Dittlof DUBBE  
2nd Lt. Joseph A. PURCELL  
F/O George L. DEKKER  
F/O William Waldeck BRUNETT  
F/O James C. CROWDER  
2nd Lt. Nathaniel J. SHOENFELDT  
Capt. Wallace F. HAMMARGREN (DFC)  
2nd Lt. Richard Emil BALY  
F/O Vernon Douglas CARTER  
F/O Harold William MORGAN  
F/O Russell L. EPPLEHEIMER  
F/O Charles F. SUTTON  
2nd Lt. O. B. BLESSING

#### Fifty Gliders with only one glider pilot in each glider followed on the 27<sup>th</sup>

F/O F. Duke JARVIS  
2nd Lt. Morris Albert GAN  
F/O Claude A. BERRY  
F/O Harold Martin LOOMIS  
F/O Eric RAFTER  
F/O Robert R. BISCH  
F/O Charles A. BALFOUR  
2nd Lt. T. SUMMERS  
F/O Ivan BURTON  
2nd Lt. Roy William SAMPLE  
F/O John W. BURNETT  
2nd Lt. John Drew HILL  
2nd Lt. Herbert B. BAILEY  
2nd Lt. Frank Joseph HYNES  
F/O Joseph Brendan MONKS  
F/O Edward T. CARRELL  
2nd Lt. Bless R. RUSK  
2nd Lt. Frank Simon ARMI Jr.  
F/O Kenneth W. AVERY

Two glider missions occurred on the 26<sup>th</sup> of December and one on the 27<sup>th</sup> as weather permitted. The first glider was filled with medical staff to replace the majority of the 326th Airborne Medical Company having been captured on the 19th of December at the beginning of the German offensive known as the Battle of the Bulge. The second mission on the 26<sup>th</sup> was for the transportation of 3000 gallons of 80 octane gasoline. Each glider would carry 300 gallons of gasoline in five gallon jerry cans. Up till now all glider combat missions had included a pilot and a copilot

F/O Jack D. HANCOCK  
2nd Lt. Hollis W. JONES  
F/O David H. SILL  
2nd Lt. Albert S. PACETTA  
F/O Elisha B. PAGE  
2nd Lt. Charles L. BREMA  
1st Lt. Lloyd CLARK  
F/O Frank W. ANDUX  
2nd Lt. Mack STRIPLIN  
F/O Harold Ken RUSSELL (POW)  
F/O Paul O. HOWER (POW)  
F/O George Wallace JUNEAU (POW)  
2nd Lt. Frank W. HOBART (POW)  
F/O Narcisco Munoz MONJE  
F/O Herbert W. BALLINGER  
F/O Albert Sehman BARTON  
F/O J.B. (JO) HARDIN  
F/O Richard W. BLAKE (POW)  
2nd Lt. Raymond G. SCHOTT (KIA)  
2nd Lt. Henry H. NOWELL  
F/O Pershing Y. CARLSON (POW)  
2nd Lt. George S. FREEMAN (KIA)  
F/O Velton J. BREWER (POW)  
2nd Lt. Douglas C. BLOOMFIELD (KIA)  
F/O Emmett M. AVERY Jr. (POW)  
F/O Francis L. CARROLL (POW)  
F/O Clifton H. KIZER (POW)  
F/O Gerald D. KNOTT (KIA)  
F/O Verbon E. HOUCK (POW)  
F/O Mike SHEFF (POW)

The third mission, involving 50 gliders, had no co-pilots. They carried some medical supplies, but mostly artillery ammo and gasoline. The names of the men in the columns on the left are listed in the order that they flew. By the end of the formation German 88mm batteries had dialed in the correct altitude, taking out not only gliders but the tow planes as well. Flight Officer Narcisco MONJE was in the formation where the worst of the flak and small arms fire began accurately hitting the formation. His report reflects the action from the air. Flight Officer George L. Dekker, who had flown on the 26<sup>th</sup>, describes what was seen from the ground.



Glider being loaded on Dec 27<sup>th</sup> 1944.  
 F/O Claude A BERRY piloted glider No. 4.  
 91<sup>st</sup> TC Squadron, 439<sup>th</sup> TCG  
 Two Missions:  
 -Bastogne and Rhine Crossing.  
 -Glider Photo: Stripling collection

H. SUMMARY: TO and flight enroute were good. Met accurate automatic weapons and small arms fire during last three minutes of run-in. Had no difficulty in landing. Load pick up by AB. I proceeded to Div CP. Was evacuated 1500 A to Florenville where I remained over night. Thence by train to Paris arriving 1200 A 29 Dec 44. Thence by air to A-39.

A Captain of the 4th Armored Div (704 TD Bn?) said " We broke through to Bastogne at 2300 A 26 December 44 and we radioed this information immediately. We have been firing at a battery of five 88's NW of Bastogne and at three to five batteries of AA guns five miles SW of Bastogne but N of the RR track which were right on your course. I do not understand why you came in that way."

Signed Flight Officer Monje



F/O Narcisco Munoz MONJE  
 93<sup>rd</sup> Troop Carrier Squadron  
 439<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Group  
 Two Missions: Normandy and Bastogne

**DECLASSIFIED**  
 Authority *AMS 74 000*

... take off flew out to IP, nearing the IP we saw our fighter escort take off  
 ... to lead us in about five minutes out from the LZ. We got our first flak  
 ... arms 20mm fire and the stuff got worse as we went into the LZ. Made the  
 landing and took cover returning to the glider for my equipment, noticed it was  
 full of holes and had lost two cans of the 60 cans of gas that we went in with. The  
 101st Airborne boys were glad to see the stuff too. That night we tried to rest under  
 a duel of artillery. **[** The next day we saw 57 more gliders and their tow planes coming  
 in on the same course we had taken the day before. They ran into the same concentration  
 of flak and small arms fire. Saw planes shot down all around us. **]** We were sent out  
 of the newly opened road with 700 prisoners to a rail head and then to Paris after  
 28 hours on the train.

**DECLASSIFIED**  
 Authority *AMS 74 5005*

Signature of Evacuee *George Dekker*  
 Rank F/O Sqn 97th TC Sq.  
 Signature of Interrogator *Robert H. ...*  
 Rank 1st Lt. Section SE

Flight Officer George Dekker's report.

Reports are from the U.S.  
 National Archives.  
 For further reading go to  
<https://ww2gp.org/ardennes/>

## Colin Henderson

Colin Henderson was in Normandy and Holland on the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of WWII and did a commemorative jump with the [WWII Airborne Demonstration Team \(ADT\)](#). In Normandy he was in the lead C-47 and his wife, Christin “Brodie” Henderson, was already in France with the ADT supporting team’s ground operation to meet them on the DZ.



Colin is restoring two TG-3 gliders. One, a USAAF 1942 TG-3 that he and Brodie found near San Francisco in the summer of 2018. It is currently in cream paint scheme and they are planning on restoring it to its 1942 training color of Silver. The second is a 1975 TG-3 that has the red, white and blue racing colors. Both gliders are models of Schweizer manufactured 33 years apart. This is an amazing and expensive undertaking and will not happen quickly but they know the spar on the 1942 glider is sound and worth the cost of such a project. Colin is not unfamiliar with flying a glider. He is an Air Force Academy graduate and participated in glider competitions as a member of the [94<sup>th</sup> Flying Training Squadron](#). He graduated in 2002 and was ready to land his 1975 TG-3 on the parade field during the opening of Parents Weekend Parade. However, as we know, the weather doesn’t always cooperate and the flight was cancelled.



1975 TG-3



1942 TG-3

Unfortunately all the original USAAF documents for their 1942 TG-3 were destroyed in a California fire.


## Scott Ramsey

I've had an interest in WWII since I was a kid. Went to the dedication ceremony for the National WWII Memorial in 2004, which led me to begin interviewing WWII veterans for over ten years. Attending reunions and visiting veterans in their homes I have collected over 200 interviews from American, British, Canadian, and German veterans. Having such a passion for WWII history and meeting WWII veterans I would drive a total of about 5 hours to volunteer at the National Museum of Naval Aviation on Saturdays in 2004-2006. My main focus in the past few years has been Troop Carrier Groups, specifically gliders and their pilots.

I have recently acquired two photographs of the same glider with the Griswold nose. There is no information on the back of the photos. I am hoping someone may recognize the photos and give me an explanation. Please contact me at [scott1ramsey@gmail.com](mailto:scott1ramsey@gmail.com) if you know about this glider and how it was used.



## Eileen Owsiany



Eileen, who is a member of our Committee, has again asked members of the Facebook group [C-47 Skytrain](#) to send Christmas cards to our WWII Troop Carrier members. Kudos to all the work that she does! Thank you to the C-47 Skytrain Group!



# Colonel Mark Vlahos (USAF-Ret.)

Mark donned his WWII dress uniform in the character of Colonel Stiles to give a presentation on Veterans Day. Colonel Clayton Stiles was the Commander of the 314th Troop Carrier Group and Mark has studied this Group in great detail. He specifically spoke about the 314th which he recently wrote a book, "Men Will Come." He also described the effectiveness of Troop Carrier C-47s and CG-4As during the war and talked in detail about the training that was done prior to D-Day. "When we arrived in England Prior to D-Day, we started flying. Emphasis was on night formation flying. We flew tight, three-ship element formations." Mark's presentation was covered in a well written article in the Blanco County Newspaper. The Veterans Day Ceremony was co-hosted by the Rotary Club of Blanco County and the American Legion.



Col. Mark Vlahos (USAF-Ret.) in his WWII uniform representing Colonel Clayton Stiles. Mark is a researcher on the LBS Research Team helping families with Troop Carrier history.

## MISSIONS

SECRET

391

THANK YOU TO THOSE FAMILIES WHO HAVE REQUESTED INFORMATION ON THEIR WWII TROOP CARRIER RELATIVE DURING AUTUMN 2020

Mike Simpson, grandson of 2nd Lt Raymond SALKELD

Charles S Roscoe, son of F/O Charles F ROSCOE

Donnas Harbert Farmer, daughter of F/O Russell HARBERT

Kay Colston Bruce, granddaughter of FO Alton COLSTON

David Troutman, son of F/O Robert TROUTMAN

Jack Goodnight, son of F/O Neil GOODNIGHT

Vernon Fulton, son of 2nd Lt Charles FULTON

Jim Hudgins, stepson of F/O Horace MCLIN \*

Brian Curley, son of FO Charles CURLEY

--Leon B. Spenser Research Team

\*Members of the National WWII Glider Pilots Committee

Thank you for your support!

INDEX

# TROOP CARRIER MOVEMENT

“Keep Mobile!” See you next quarter!

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

[ww2gp.org/membership](http://ww2gp.org/membership)

DONATE TO THE SILENT WINGS MUSEUM  
FOUNDATION

Check out our website for further stories  
and information on Troop Carrier, the  
Glider Program and much more at

[ww2gp.org](http://ww2gp.org)

## **ON THE CALENDAR**

**Upcoming missions:**

**BASTOGNE**

**December 23-27, 1944**

**BURMA**

**March 5, 1944**

**RHINE CROSSING**

**March 24, 1945**

**NORMANDY**

**June 6-7, 1944**

**LA LONDE**

**June 10-13, 1944**

**LUZON**

**June 23, 1945**

**SICILY**

**July 9 & 13, 1943**

**SOUTHERN FRANCE**

**July 15, 1944**

**HOLLAND**

**Sept 17 - 26, 1944**

**End Photo: Glider Pilots from the 436<sup>th</sup>  
Troop Carrier Group flying into [La Londe](#)  
with resupplies after Normandy.**

--U.S. National Archives

COVER PHOTO: The First Air Commando Force, Commanded by Col. Philip J. Cochran. U.S. Army Air Forces. The Commandoes transported the troops for Maj. Gen. Orde Charles Wingate's British command to the field where the ground forces were able to begin operations against the enemy. Troops commanded by Gen Wingate were landed some 200 miles east of Imphal. The glider is on tow 8,000 ft. in the sky over the Chin Hills, which form a natural barrier between Japanese and Allied territory. --National Archives Photo

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the Committee. For permission requests contact the National WWII Glider Pilots Committee. [nwwiigpa@gmail.com](mailto:nwwiigpa@gmail.com)

13 December 2020