

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



DISCOVERED TREASURE

"I can remember after I cut loose, while searching for a landing spot, off to my left and down a bit on the ground, I see a glider with one wing down and his wing caught and he cartwheeled."



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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
roemermmary@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
nww2gpct@gmail.com

James MARPLE
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INTERNATIONAL DIRECTOR

Hans DEN BROK, Netherland
marketc47@gmail.com

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summer 2021 General Order #3



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

NATIONAL CHAIR

Planning for our 50th Annual Reunion in October is in full swing. You should be receiving your registration packets soon with full details, but, as always, our WWII veterans will be front and center. The Executive Council recently voted unanimously to fund any veteran's registration, hotel and travel expenses and we are hoping our turnout will be the best in recent years.

We have added a new resource for our members on our website ww2gp.org/. Selecting the '[Members Resources](#)' tab on the 'Membership' pull down will take you to a log in page. Once there you may access this year's issues of the Briefing (past issues are available to members on request), review the minutes of our E/C meetings since the first of the year, and other topics of interest to members.

One such item is a draft of our Operating Procedures. We will be discussing these and asking for your approval at the General Membership Meeting at the reunion but questions or input are welcome at any time. Gary Stripling is our lead on this project, you can contact him at garylstripling@gmail.com.

Finally, you will soon be receiving an email with a link to take a survey for our Long Range Planning project. I know we all get a lot of requests for surveys, but this one will help your E/C insure that we are meeting your priorities. Please take a few minutes to give us your input.

See you in October!

R Bruce Overman,
National Chair

NATIONAL SECRETARY

We had a successful start to our renewal campaign. Cards went out and the majority of our 2020 members have used the card number to register online. Others registered by mail. Thank you all for your continuing support. If you have been a member and need a card to register let me know and I will send you your card or you may register as a [new member](#). Please continue to check your spam for our emails. We send emails for business, renewals, events, and the Briefing for those whom we have email addresses. The email communication saves us time and money. Most of our WWII veterans receive a printcopy.

Claudia Coggin
National Secretary

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**50TH ANNUAL REUNION
LUBBOCK, TX
MCM Elegaté Hotel & Suites
October 7, 8, and 9, 2021
Hosted by the Silent Wings Museum**

Reservation packets along with the schedule and the many activities that we have planned will be sent out soon to members. Watch your email and spam email. Those without email will be sent by the postal service. We have several veterans hoping to attend, but as Glider Pilot Fred Lunde says, "As it goes..."



It sure was a joy working with Roger Smith's neighbor, Zach Cromley who wrote the featured article of Roger's experience in the usually overlooked combat mission, the invasion of Southern France. Roger sent such wonderful photos and Jean Michael Soldi, Research Team member, helped with the deciphering of information on the photos such as the T and O markings in the aerial photo.

I have been working on updating the Reunion registration form and of course a constant update of the website. Just added the old news to the new website. I continue to work closely with Charlie Day, our Vice Chair and historian to get the important history and the unique stories into the website. It is a little overwhelming and I need to, as soon as I can, put up a site map as well as a time line that is linked to the information. This I think will help with finding the information that seems to get buried. If you have any suggestions let me know. The website does not lend itself to mobile devices because of all the photos. Maybe someday I will have a mobile version.

We are still sending the Briefing to the 2020 and 2021 members but after the fall it will go only to the 2021 members and the renewed 2022 members. So, if you do not want to miss out on this great history make sure you renew your 2020 membership as soon as possible.

We are always looking for people to help with database entry, checking on our

veterans or sending in information about on what is happening in your area regarding WWII Troop Carrier. Please contact me by email patricia.a.overman@gmail.com or phone, 206 778 0993. Same goes for the Briefing, contact me if you have any comments or suggestions regarding the website, information or articles for the Briefing.

Want to have fun or are you needing something to do? Check out Glider Pilot, [Fred Lunde's Solitaire Page](#).

Patricia Overman, NWC

LEON B. SPENCER RESEARCH TEAM

The Leon B. Spencer Research Team has received and responded to 42 requests on for research glider pilots since Jan 1, come 2021. Most from families of glider pilots who now have possession of WWII items, photos, orders, discharge records, and letters, but not always. Sometimes we receive requests from families that have no relation to a glider pilot but have in their possession items that only a glider pilot could have sent back to the States during WWII.

In April we received a request from Jan Sheridan and the story that unfolded over the next days was very compelling. Jan stated in her request that her family wanted to know if glider pilot, Otto Hagemeister survived WWII. She said that he and her mother may have been [INDEX](#)

engaged or very close to that while he was stationed in England and France. She said they never married and her mother never told them much about him but her mother kept a photo of him and some souvenirs from the war that he had sent her. Jan had also found a photo of him from the British Air Museum website and provided it to us to add to his bio file.

The research team jumped on this request and even though not a family member we responded to Jan with as much information as we could find. We shared that OTTO graduated from advanced Glider (CG-4A) Training from South Plains Army Airfield (SPAAF) in Lubbock, on March 31st, 1943 in the Class of 43 06 as a Military Occupation Specialty (MOS) 1026 Glider Pilot having earned his "G Wings".

We confirmed he was assigned to the IX (Ninth) Troop Carrier Command / 53rd Troop Carrier Wing / 436th Troop Carrier Group / 79th Troop Carrier Squadron. We also confirmed he flew three major WWII combat invasions as a Glider Pilot including the NORMANDY invasion in June, 1944, the invasion of HOLLAND in September, 1944, and the RHINE CROSSING in March, 1945. For these three major combat missions he was awarded the AIR MEDAL with Two Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters.

Jan shared with us that Otto had always been a part of their family lore and she never thought to ask her mother the whole story. She said they have several of her letters written to her parents with a young woman's musings about her first true love, her concern for Otto and a little bit of what he was telling her about his experience.

Unfortunately, she did not keep his letters.

Her mother did have a small snap of him in Holland posing by a downed German plane. Jan also sent pictures of the souvenirs he sent her including a pair of wooden shoes and a pair of PJs made for her out of a parachute.

Jan shared that her mother served at Camp Shanks in NY from 1943-1945 and she found it encouraging that her mother's simple letters may have been an encouragement to him during a very lonely and stressful time of his life. And perhaps she gave him something to look forward to when surrounded by the terribleness of war.

We will never know why the relationship between Otto and Jan's mother ended when he returned home to the States but we are so grateful for families like Jan's who honor a WWII glider pilot they never knew.

[Bless Them All](#)

Gary Stripling, Project Manager
Leon B Spencer Research Team

INTERNATIONAL DIRECTOR - Netherlands

Covid, vaccination and reunion

The past few months I received a few messages with a question or remark regarding the reunion. A look at the current situation will show that nothing is certain yet regarding intercontinental travel.

As probably most people, I am in my own bubble. Since March 2020 I have been working mostly from my home office. I did

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meet colleagues for maybe ten times since then. Last summer things looked a bit better, and traveling inside Europe was for us, Europeans, possible again. But the second and third wave came along during fall and winter, and thus more restrictions. Things will get better when the vaccination program started.

The vaccination program in Holland started in January 2021, among the latest of the European countries. Nevertheless, at the moment it is here as average. Some problems were encountered, including a stop of vaccinating with certain brands. The strategy here was to start with those working at hospitals, and the eldest (80+) among us. And then with age-steps going to down (70+, 60+).

My turn is with those who were born between 1961 and 1971, scheduled for May 2021. But, due to the mentioned problems, this has been shifted to June 2021. So, with all that, the October reunion would still be possible for me and other EU based people.

Another important factor is the travel ban. People from the so called Schengen countries, which includes the Netherlands, are not able to enter the USA.

With those facts, it might not be a good idea to try to book a flight. These are the same reasons that traveling to European main land is difficult for UK, US and other country's people. This, without a doubt, affects the number of people attending ceremonies and commemorations. Hopefully the world situation turns to normal soon. Just those heavy last steps.

Hans den Brok, International Director

Dear friends,

Summer may arrive in north Texas eventually, but it has been a chilly and wet spring. It is good to look out and see the fields green, the trees fully leafed out and the roses in bloom. But our vegetable garden is longing for more sun to really get going. Sometimes we all need just a little bit more of something to really flourish. Our need could be a physical one; more space, more time or more resources. Or our need might not be a physical one at all; more friendship, more encouragement, more play or more meditation. Take some time before summer is here to think about what you need to flourish and grow. Knowing what we need is a first step toward growth.



I know that looking out the back door and seeing our resident peacock lifts my spirits! We don't know where he came from, but he hangs out with the wild turkeys here. His colors are magnificent! I keep trying to get a picture of him with his tail unfurled but so far, I am just not fast enough. I am working on being fully aware of the beauty that is around me. Our executive council has been working

hard to plan what we need for our reunion this fall. With the reduction in Covid cases and the availability of the vaccine everything is on schedule to have our in-person reunion this October. Make your plans to join us in Lubbock in October, I know that the reunion will be both educational and fun. Be sure to introduce yourself to me if you are new and, old friends, please say hi. Continue to stay safe whether at home or traveling this summer. Be sure to visit those friends and relatives who have been shut in for so long.

Blessings,

Susan Pinter

Chaplain for the National World War II Glider Pilots Committee

OPERATIONS FOR THE 94TH FLYING TRAINING SQUADRON (94 FTS)

Have a safe summer, from Colorado

Cadet First Class Cole Resnick, Glider Instructor Pilot, recently had an article published in the Air Force Historical Magazine. His research was very in-depth on the Normandy glider serials. Specifically he wrote on the glider serials ELMIRA, GALVESTON and HACKENSACK. These are serials often overlooked. The first wave of paratroopers and the glider serials codenamed CHICAGO and DETROIT are usually the focus of main stream historians. We are very proud of the work he did and his choosing to honor the 94th's FTS heritage.

C1C Resnik has agreed to allow us to reprint the article and so our report this quarter is

Silent Saviors:
Glanders for American Reinforcement
Operations in Normandy, June 1944

The Research Team has added photos that relate directly to these missions. Thank you, Cole, for all your hard work this year.





*Memorial Donations to the
National WWII Glider Pilots
Committee and Silent Wings
Museum Foundation.*

By request, we have added a field to our donation form to allow donations to be made in memory/honor of a specific person or unit. If you donated before the field was added and you would like us to add a name to your donation please send a name to nwwiigpa@gmail.com and we will add it to the next Briefing.

- John Laney in memory of 2ND LT JOHN ARIS **LANEY**
- Mark Vlahos on behalf of the **60th and 314th TC GROUP TUG CREWS**
- Gary & Elizabeth STRIPLING in memory LTC CLAUDE (CHUCK) **BERRY**
- Ken Lamour in memory of SSGT ROBERT **LAMOUR**,
- Steve Knott in memory of F/O GERALD D. **KNOTT (KIA)**
- Dale Duckworth in memory of F/O ROMMIE LEROY **DUCKWORTH**
- William Moline in memory of LTC LEON WILLIAM **MOLINE**
- Thorn Cary in memory of F/O THORNLEY C. **CARY JR**
- Craig Lecce in memory of F/O PETER J **LECCE**
- Sharon Hohmann in memory of F/O EVERARD **HOHMANN**
- Sharon Hohmann in memory TIM **HOHMANN**
- Karen Wall in honor and memory T/SGT EDWARD "BUZZ" **WALL**
- Ria Leonard in memory of F/O THOMAS ANDREW **LEONARD**
- Denis Clark in memory of F/O DANON STILLMAN **JUDEVINE**
- Jim Hooper in memory of FO WILLIAM E. **HOOPER**
- Timothy Summers in memory of 1st Lt ROBERT W. **SUMMERS**
- Alana Jolley in memory of F/O WALTER BERT **LINDBERG (KIA)**
- Robert Barnes in memory of F/O RALPH EDWARD **BARNES**
- Bettye Adams in memory of F/O THURMAN MITCHELL **SCOTT**
- Jeff Schumacher in memory of JOHN J. **SCHUMACHER**
HQ/194 GIR 17th Airborne Division
- Dawn and Lee Gayer in loving memory of 2ND Lt RICHARD J. **ZAPP**
- Bruce and Patricia Overman in memory of PGP Maj. LEE **WHITMIRE**
- Dana Harris in memory of F/O DANON STILLMAN **JUDEVINE**

DOWN AND GONE !! MARCH 1976, SILENT WINGS by Doug SMITH (82n TC Squadron, 436th TC Group)

Before we took off from Tarquinia, Italy, headed for Southern France, the GP's of the 436th sat in a session to hear the tow-pilots being given some very strict order about towing gliders during Bluebird. Like: Keep the airspeed below red-line for the CG4A; don't release gliders at sea; don't this, and don't that.

On that mission we had field telephones in the C-47s and gliders with the sire strung along the towline. But no parachutes, of course.

F/O William H. "Willie" Haynes was riding the dumb side as we went footing along over the pretty blue sea.

Our tow pilot was some light colonel, having distinguished himself on a similar job into Normandy, and Willie took joy in cracking the phone and sweetly telling him that our airspeed was a bit large and that the colonel shouldn't be in such a hurry to catch up.

That didn't work too well. And Willie got upset when the glider on our right wing began to disintegrate and the GPs jumped without 'chutes'.

Haynes being excitable about things like that, and the fact that we were still over red-line got on the ding-a-ling and said (a little loudly): "Listen, you S.O.B., I'm going to count up to ten and if you don't slow down, I'm going to shoot your (censored) right engine out. One...Two...Three..."

It was marvelous the way that pilot grasped exactly what Willie meant.

The rest of the trip was a bit normal.

Down and Gone was a quarterly section in the Silent Wings Newsletter by Doug and usually had a light and humorous flare.

Both 2nd Lt Doug Smith and Flight Officer William H. Haynes flew Normandy, mission Galveston serial #34. They were both on detached service to the 437th. We have documents on the crewlist for the 437th. F/O Haynes flew co-pilot in Horsa Glider #LH 246 and the pilot was Flight Officer Mel Pliner. 2nd Lt. (then F/O) Smith flew CG-4A glider #43-39732 and his copilot was F/O William A Knakal. Of course they flew together in the invasion of southern France and they both flew Holland but with Holland the chances are they flew by themselves with an airborne trooper in the copilot's seat.

SILENT SAVIORS: GLIDERS FOR AMERICAN REINFORCEMENT OPERATIONS IN NORMANDY, JUNE 1944

BY: C1C COLE A. RISNIK
94TH FLYING TRAINING INSTRUCTOR PILOT



NINTH AIR FORCE TROOP CARRIER COMMAND STATION, England, Greenham Common, 438th Troop Carrier Group -- June 6, 1944 just after 18:49 hours a Douglas C-47 tug of the 89th Troop Carrier Squadron, is towing a Horsa glider in Serial #31. The mission is codename ELMIRA. The 438th TC Group, consisting of four squadrons (87th, 88th, 89th, and 90th) is lifting 14 CG-4A gliders and 38 Horsa Gliders loaded with elements of the 82nd Airborne Reconnaissance Platoon, 82nd Signal Company, Hq 82nd Airborne Division, and the 307th Airborne Medical Company. They will be over their target landing zone "W" at 20:21 hours. Note, the dots of planes in the sky are other tugs with gliders circling Greenham Common waiting for all the tugs and gliders to get into formation.



51854 A.C.

The logistical operations immediately following the invasion of Normandy in 1944 helped Allied forces establish a necessary foothold in France. From those beaches, infantry divisions pushed the Germans to Cherbourg in 24 days thanks to supplies dropped by parachute, landed by glider, and sailed ashore by landing craft following D-Day. However, American operations reports gave so much credit to the amphibious resupply missions that they overshadowed the airborne ones. This misconception is common when comparing the volume of equipment delivered by plane versus that delivered by

boat from the invasion to the end of the war. Readers of the reports may fail to realize the ineffectiveness of seaborne operations in the week following D-Day. The invasion planners promised to land 8,000 tons of equipment each day on Omaha Beach. Unfortunately, the amphibious reinforcement missions did not meet expectations until six days after the initial invasion. The need for additional manpower contributed to the slow start. The U.S. Army tasked over 5,000 special engineers with clearing obstacles, constructing beach exits, and establishing staging areas necessary for a lodgment. Most engineers landed on the

beach under fire, so officers reassigned hundreds of them to infantry roles. In an instant, their objective shifted from building a landing area to fighting the enemy. As a unit historian from the 4143rd Quartermaster Service recalled, “the commander told Lt. Fisher... ‘It doesn’t make any difference what type of organization you may be, there is an urgent need for manpower on this beach,’ and [the unit] immediately proceeded shoreward.” Consequently, the engineering brigades lacked the personnel needed to clear the beaches by D+1 as planned.

Without a prepared landing area, the Allies delivered only 13% of the planned inventory of vehicles, ammunition, rations, and other supplies during the first four days. At Omaha, infantrymen anticipated fighting with 32,000 tons of equipment; however, only 4,561 tons made it ashore. None of this made it past the front lines, so paratroopers inland acquired equipment elsewhere. Aircraft could not deliver supplies by landing at an airfield, for bombing runs destroyed all enemy fields within a 150-mile radius. Paratroopers could not wait a week for the completion of a new airfield either. Therefore, the only options remaining were supply by glider or by airdrop. Historians devote much attention to the glider assault missions on D-Day morning, but reinforcement missions thereafter contributed more to the success of the airborne divisions and require a closer evaluation. While awaiting the construction of airstrips or the arrival of armored personnel following the initial invasion of Normandy, the airborne field artillery battalions and ammunition delivered by combat gliders helped outgunned paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne Division hold the surrounding area of Sainte-Mère-Église. All of these reinforcements were part

of the planned combat operation. Airborne commanders trusted gliders more than airdrops because of their ability to deliver heavier equipment behind enemy lines in a precise, cohesive, and timely manner. Although this project focuses on paratroopers in the 82nd exclusively, it is worth noting that two glider serials brought in anti-aircraft anti-tank glider infantry regiments and supplies to 101st Airborne Division. One, in the early morning at 0400 and another at 2100 hours, just before 82nd Airborne’s second glider mission, ELMIRA, on D-Day. However, these missions were much less impactful to them compared to the 82nd. Within hours of jumping, some companies of the 101st linked up with men from the 4th Infantry Division at beach exits. The 82nd, on the other hand, was deeper inland. The need for aerial reinforcement was much greater for that division, so a better assessment of glider effectiveness lies with them.

The 82nd Airborne Division centered its invasion operations on the French town of Sainte-Mère-Église. The town marked the center of a web of roads that connected other villages in the Cotentin Peninsula. Before reaching Sainte-Mère-Église, an army would need to pass over the Merderet River on bridges at La Fièvre and Chef-du-Pont. Although the town itself was an important objective, capturing both bridges was crucial. If successful, American paratroopers could slow German reinforcements coming north from Cherbourg or west from Brittany. This seven-mile buffer protected the vulnerable amphibious infantrymen coming ashore. Therefore, in the morning hours of June 6, the 82nd dropped in and around SainteMère-Église.

Despite the element of surprise, a division of soldiers with small arms could not sustain a fight with the battle-hardened German tank and panzer battalions that lurked nearby Sainte-Mère-Église. The average paratrooper landed with an M1 Garand, an M1911 pistol, a knife, extra ammunition, three days of rations, a few explosives, and other personal gear if their leg bag remained attached after the jump. 13 Some dropped with mortar tubes and bazookas, but these soldiers lacked the firepower necessary to compete with an armored enemy on a consistent basis..

The initial lack of firepower proved troublesome for units like the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment. In order to hold SainteMère-Église, the paratroopers needed command of the surrounding road network that crossed the Merderet River. Of the two bridges, the 82nd tasked the 505th with seizing the one at La Fièrè. The bridge was incredibly valuable. Designed like a bottleneck, it acted as a natural defensive mechanism by forcing the invader to concentrate its forces. Later, they hoped to meet the 4th Infantry Division there, for its tanks would cross the bridge and reinforce the paratroopers. Unknown to the 505th, reinforcement was days away: the 4th Division spent D+1 on the beachhead where they would gain only 2,000 yards. Any confrontation with an armored German battalion without heavy weaponry of their own threatened the success of the 505th. With Allied armored personnel stuck on the beaches, paratroopers required a weapons system that was powerful enough to penetrate tank armor yet light enough for aircraft to deliver behind enemy lines.

In the meantime, paratroopers improvised. They relied heavily on bazookas to counter

German tanks early on. Unfortunately, those were not always accessible. In lieu of bazookas, one team used a combination of gammon grenades and Browning machine gun fire to disable an advancing tank. A gammon grenade was a bag filled with plastic explosives, and it required a paratrooper to sneak up close. He would then throw the bag by the strap and pray that it would not detonate prematurely. Risky tactics like that helped the invaders liberate the city that day. Despite the victory, morale dropped as soldiers realized that, without reinforcement, defending the town would cost them their lives.

Fortunately, glider field artillery battalions carrying 57-mm anti-tank guns answered their prayers. Robert Murphy, a paratrooper of the 505th, described these antitank guns as “God-sent gifts [that] were hauled out and put to excellent use against tank battalions.” Some paratroopers were so desperate for the guns that they spent hours ripping one out of an orchard after its glider slammed into it. Despite landing 32 artillery pieces at dawn on D-Day, only half saw battle. The mangled wrecks of less fortunate gliders swallowed the rest. By noon of June 6, the 82nd positioned four of these guns at La Fièrè and two or three on the outskirts of Sainte-Mère-Église. However, as sunlight faded away on D-Day, so did ammunition for the howitzers. Many crews pulled the firing pin from their 57-mm guns and abandoned them as they awaited the arrival of more rounds. The planned glider field artillery battalions in the next serials would carry more guns and ammunition. As crews stuffed the precious cargo into gliders, the fate of the 82nd rested on the pilots' shoulders.

Starting around 1730 hours on D-Day, the first



HACKENSACK - June 7th - Gliders marshaled for take-off at Upottery Field, England 6 June, CG-4A WACO gliders are at 45 degree angle on the left of the runway, Horsa gliders on on the right, nose to tail. The loading at the time of the photo was in progress. These are the gliders towed from Upottery to Normandy on 7 June 1944 by the 439th Troop Carrier Group. On board were members and equipment of the 2nd Battalion of the 325th Glider Infantry Regiment (GIR) and most of the attached 2nd Battalion of the 401st Glider Infantry, 82nd AB Division.

--Into the Valley - Young Collection pg159 and 162

of serials #30 through #33 anxiously awaited take-off. The entire mission consisted of 356 glider pilots. The mission was crucial but, thankfully, their aircraft could carry the load required. Despite their plywood floor and steel-tube frame, these engineless aircraft could carry thousands of pounds of precious equipment from the sky down to the battlefield. The American-produced Waco CG-4A glider could haul 4,060 pounds. Pilots crammed the glider with different combinations of men and equipment. Typically, gliders carried 13 infantrymen with gear or a quarter ton truck and four-man crew. A glider loaded with a 75mm howitzer could hold an additional seven artillerymen. 105mm howitzers filled the glider with the barrel between the pilot's seats. At times, a one-ton ammunition trailer or a small bulldozer accompanied the pilots on their mission. The

Horsa II could carry twice that load. The British glider could fly with 7,380 pounds stuffed in its fuselage. That equaled 25 infantrymen with gear, four motorcycles complete with eight troops and equipment, or a one-ton supply trailer attached to a quarter-ton Jeep.

The four serials that made up mission codenamed "ELMIRA," were simple: the 178 gliders hooked to C-47s would depart England, fly to the coast of France, and disconnect from their tow planes near the beaches at Normandy. From there, landing pilots needed to spot the landing zone at dusk and the later serials in darkness, establish a proper approach to miss the abundant debris, and touch down on speed, all while managing enemy fire. If executed properly, the gliders would deliver the intended 82nd Airborne



HACKENSACK - June 7th - Photos are troopers of the 325th GIR and 401st Glider Infantry-- Into the Valley - Young Collection pg159 and 162, Silent Wings Museum



ELMIRA - June 6th - Troop Carrier Groups
437th, 438th, 436th and 435th in Serial order
released gliders between 2110 through 2310
throughout the evening and night. -National
Archives
Select map to see landing details

+51618 A.C.

glider troops comprised of the glider field artillery battalions with their equipment. This included: 6- pounder anti-tank guns, vehicles (jeeps) and artillery ammunition and bulk supplies that could be obtained in no other way. Two more missions of two serials each, codenamed GALVESTON and HACKENSACK, would follow the next morning with landing times at 0700 hours and 0900 hours respectively. All three missions landed near the village with 57 guns, 81 tons of ammunition, 121 tons of combat equipment, and 161 vehicles. These six serials quadrupled the amount of men and equipment delivered by glider at dawn on D-Day. Most importantly, the influx of more artillery equipment kept the 82nd fighting for days. In fact, in the midst of the landings during the morning of June 7, two tanks from the German 91st Air Landing Division advanced on Sainte-Mère-Église from the north on a road leading to Neuville-au-Plain. Both posed a threat to light infantry units barricaded in buildings across the village. Without hesitation, paratroopers utilized an antitank gun to disable the lead tank. The second one was a sitting duck, and another gun crew made quick work of it. The credit for these kills does not entirely belong to the crews themselves: a portion of it belongs to the brave glider pilots who delivered both guns only hours before the attack.

For the next few days, wave after wave of German counterattacks pounded the town. American supplies dwindled. Thankfully, crashed gliders served as miniature supply depots. If supplies ran thin during battle, Jeeps and tanks would dash away only to return with trailers overflowing with equipment stripped from gliders. The fresh supplies kept the division fighting until their withdrawal on

on June 11. Ultimately, the glider assault missions of D-Day helped paratroopers and glider troopers survive against an armored enemy whereas the reinforcement missions helped them win.

Undoubtedly, the precision with which pilots landed their artillery-carrying gliders contributed to the success of the airborne troops behind enemy lines. In comparison to the parachute reinforcement missions of D+1, gliders proved more consistent in delivering equipment to the designated area. The airdrop missions attempted to build on the success of the glider assault missions of June 6. Aircraft in Mission FREEPORT would reinforce the 82nd Division at Sainte-Mère-Église by dropping bundles of ammunition, food, and combat gear. In the morning hours of D+1, an armada of 208 planes loaded with 234 tons of cargo departed England for Normandy. Poor weather jeopardized the mission from the beginning. Despite favorable reports, the formation encountered ceilings as low as 300 feet. The weather improved closer to France, and the disorganized formations tightened up. During the chaos, some planes received beacon signals to drop three miles northeast from the designated drop area. The 82nd repositioned the beacon because Germans controlled the proposed drop zone. Half of the aircrews never received the message. Consequently, the 82nd recovered less than 100 tons on D+1 as many bundles fell into German hands. With 40% of the promised supplies missing, paratroopers went hungry on D+2. Fortunately, airdropped equipment followed strict size and weight requirements. Loadmasters could not push quarter-ton Jeeps or one-ton artillery guns out of C-47s, so the paratroopers did not lose equipment of great value.



C-47s towing glider over the Cherbourg Peninsula. Photo taken 7 June 1944 --National Archives Photo

Gliders in Missions ELMIRA, GALVESTON and HACKENSACK redeemed the IX Troop Carrier Command by outperforming the airdrops, for their pilots delivered precious glider artillery troops on target. The D-day evening/night mission and the D +1 daylight glider missions were highly accurate thanks to the capabilities of the aircraft and its pilots. First, both the Waco and Horsa models were highly maneuverable. They needed to be, for military strategists wanted gliders to release from tow between 200 and 300 feet. At such a low altitude, the aircraft could stay aloft for only 30 seconds, so pilots required a responsive yoke that would allow them to maneuver toward the landing zone quickly. General Henry H. Arnold, Chief of the Army Air Forces, attested to its capabilities. He recalled watching a Waco land "...about three

feet from a man [the pilot] stationed on the runway."

Second, glider pilots were just as capable as their aircraft. Before earning their wings, pilots underwent 72 hours of ground instruction and 90 hours of flight training with "...a particular emphasis on spot-landing proficiency." During the reinforcement missions on D+1, the conditions tested both the pilot and the glider. After releasing off tow, pilots struggled for control as dense rain and gusty winds slammed against the canvas gliders. The situation was worse on the ground as pools of water, debris, and German infantrymen littered the landing area. This was an unusual case for the pilots of whom many just completed flight school stateside in picture-perfect weather. Despite these complications, over 50% of

gliders landed within a mile of the designated landing areas near Sainte-Mère-Église. In the last serial to land, “twenty-five...hit the zone, another nineteen were within about a mile of it, and the remaining six were probably not far off.” Simply put, the glider missions compensated for the missed airdrops by delivering artillery pieces where paratroopers needed them the most.

Another advantage to gliders is their ability to deliver men and equipment together as a unified force, whereas airdrops further displaced the paratroopers. In doing so, the landing party could engage the enemy immediately with the equipment accompanying them. Such tactics were impossible for soldiers dropping by parachute on D-Day. The mistimed jumps displaced almost 80% of paratroopers, so many spent

the first two days regrouping. This disposition of the airborne divisions curtailed their effectiveness. Additionally, the jump separated operators from their equipment. Some equipment fell into untrained hands. As Murphy remembered, paratroopers raided bundles and would later “...find the rightful owner of the light machine gun, 60mm or 81mm mortar, bazooka or ammunition [they] acquired and make a swap.” Until then, the unit was ineffective.

In gliders, operators never lost sight of their equipment. This was devastating to the enemy. As former glider pilot William Knickerboker put it, “We were one hell of an asset when we landed...” together as a unit. The reinforcement missions near Sainte- Sainte-Mère Église proved Knickerboker right. In gliders, the 307th Medical Company landed



Paratroopers from the 101st Airborne. Left is Orel Lev and next to him is Richard Knudsen who jumped with his bazooka in a leg bag. Orel Lev posthumously received a DSC in Holland. - Silent Wings Museum photo. Information from Into the Valley pg 136

with medical supplies, the 82nd Signal Company with communications equipment, and the 80th Antiaircraft Battalion with howitzers. As a result, the three units started work immediately: doctors treated the wounded, radiomen reestablished communications with forces on the beach, and gun crews built new batteries. Even isolated, a single glider crew was a formidable force. For instance, upon landing, Technical Sergeant Shimko and his glider team were ready for combat. According to him, within minutes, they "...unloaded the glider and put the equipment and ammunition in hedge rows in the area where we took up a defensive position." Pairing equipment with its trained operator paid dividends for the airborne. While paratroopers attempted to piece together the unit in the hours after landing, glider crews were confronting an armored

enemy with artillery immediately.

This cohesion saved valuable time in the field. Unlike airdrops, glider crews could find, unload, and use their artillery pieces within minutes to reinforce outgunned paratroopers. Leading up to the arrival of gliders, paratroopers wasted time searching for airdropped supplies. Upon regrouping, units would send men to recover cargo bundles. As noted earlier, many of these bundles landed miles away from the paratroopers. Additional time spent locating and unpacking them endangered the lives of soldiers on the beach who relied on the airborne to capture certain objectives by specific times. Even acquiring the means of transporting the equipment back proved troublesome. Only 47 jeeps reached France by glider on D-Day, and most were inoperable after crash landings. Some



GALVESTON H-23- "Flight Officer Ripsom's *Betty*, on delivery of cargo and passengers. Curious Norman cows bunch together as soldiers take careful look at the trees (not shown are numerous other Wacos and Horsas in this field). At wheel is Pf. Nolan, standing is Lt Clark, in back of jeep is F/O Calvin Redfern." - Into the Valley pg 166. --Silent Wings Museum photo.

paratroopers resorted to stealing German vehicles. Driving along the French countryside, they were magnets to friendly fire. After realizing the costs of retrieving airdropped cargo far outweighed any potential gain from the equipment encased, paratroopers began ignoring them.

Compared to the airdrops, the glider reinforcement missions did not steal precious time away from the paratroopers. In fact, most glider crews could unload the equipment within minutes. The glider design saved crews valuable time. In the Waco, a pulley system lifted the nose of the aircraft; in the Horsa, explosive charges would remove the tail section when detonated. The quickness in which units disembarked even surprised the Germans. One glider landed under the muzzle of a German 88-mm gun. Before it could fire on the stationary aircraft, "...its crew calmly got out, raised the nose, and unloaded a jeep

into which they packed their equipment." Crews could even salvage equipment out of crashed gliders in a quick manner. One managed to unearth a buried jeep in 30 minutes. On D+1, this expedience was crucial to paratroopers bunkered down around Sainte-Mère-Église. In fact, a single glider immediately reinforced a platoon outnumbered five to one. Thanks to a precise landing, the glider crew unloaded a 57-mm antitank gun and ammunition on the American position. According to reports, this gun neutralized the enemy force. The fast response and unloading times of the glider crews relieved paratroopers in a way that was impossible by airdrops.

During the first week of operations in Normandy, combat gliders pulled the most weight. Unlike airdrops, gliders could deliver a combat-ready unit on time and on target. Additionally, the glider reinforcement a



GALVESTON B-20- "Loading trailer in Calk 38. This glider was flown by Flight Officer Ralph G Smith, pilot, and towed by 2nd Lt. Clifford L. Savercool (all of the 91st TC Squadron) on the d7 June mission to the area southeast of Ste Mère-Église. The large B-20 painted on the glider was the manifest number of the gliderborne unit, painted large for quick identification. In this case, the glider carried a trailer that was assigned to a jeep brought in by another glider "- Into the Valley pg 160. --Silent Wings Museum photo.

combat-ready unit on time and on target. Additionally, the glider reinforcement missions of D-Day onward brought essential weaponry and ammunition to help an airborne division capture positions defended by an armored enemy. Such tonnage was impossible to drop by air at the time. Moreover, the advantages to gliders far outweighed the disadvantages to airdrops. First, airdrops were inaccurate. Parachute reinforcement missions landed cargo miles away from the designated drop zone, and the enemy recovered several bundles. Gliders experienced far more success. Despite crash landing, over half of glider pilots in a given mission stopped their aircraft within a mile of the appropriate zone. Such accuracy relieved the paratroopers immediately. Second, paratroopers lost equipment on the jump. Operators who received specific training did not have access

to the gear they needed for the first hours of the invasion. Meanwhile, the same operators on gliders never lost sight of their equipment. Upon landing, they put it to use. Third, airdrops wasted time. To recover a single bundle, paratroopers stopped operations to locate it, unpack it, and haul it back. The cohesiveness in the glider saved time. On the ground, many crews unloaded their equipment and started fighting within minutes. For historian Roland Ruppenthal, “The efficiency of a logistic system must be measured not only in terms of the certainty and promptness of reinforcement which it insures, but also by the freedom of action it allows the field forces.” Using that logic and the argument presented above, the combat gliders used to reinforce the 82nd Airborne in Normandy did so in the best way imaginable. □



HACKENSACK - June 7th - Standing in front of this wrecked glider is Flight Officer Arnold Wursten, glider pilot of the 302nd Troop Carrier Squadron, 441st TC Group. He gathered Glider pilots and resurrected the jeep that is sitting on its side. [For the full story read - Silent Wings Museum photo](#)

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A DISCOVERED TREASURE

ROGER WILLIAM SMITH

BY: ZACH CROMLEY



I've never considered myself much of a lucky person, but in January of 2012, my luck changed. At the time, I was working as a civilian contractor flying twin turboprop airplanes around Afghanistan. A few years before that I began my professional pilot career as a flight instructor, and then as a regional airline pilot. The recession caused turbulent times in my industry. In 2010, I found myself in a war zone flying whatever and whoever to wherever the Army decided they wanted. It was a grueling and dangerous job but I was proud to support the US Military in a small sort of way. The most rewarding part of the job was undoubtedly the opportunity to glimpse into the lives of the brave men and women on the front lines. To say it gave me a newfound respect for them is an understatement.

Contracting put an end to my mountain of student loan debt and in January of 2012 I closed on a house in a modest neighborhood in Loveland, Colorado. It was a bank owned, foreclosed home with lots of work to be done. Within hours of moving in, and while enjoying a celebratory Grain Belt on the cracked and crumbling patio, my only adjacent neighbor popped his 88-year-old head over the fence. He was standing on a stump that he had rolled over because he wanted to get a good look at the person who had taken on such a daunting task of cleaning up the place. That was the day that I met Roger William Smith.

The yard was a mess, and Roger was satisfied with my willingness to make cleaning it and fixing up the fence a priority. While on leave, I spent many days working in the yard. Roger checked in on my projects daily. With both of our backgrounds, it didn't take long for us to connect on a personal level. We chatted nearly every day when I was stateside. Sometimes

about nothing, but most of the time about airplanes. I learned very early on in our friendship that Roger was an MOS 1026 Glider Pilot. I just didn't realize at the time how big of a deal that was. Roger is proud of his military career and never hesitates to tell people what his license plate means.



It didn't take long for me to take up an interest in Roger's WWII experiences. My own grandfather was a flight engineer on B-29's. I'm even named after him but, unfortunately, I never got to meet him. This has always fueled my desire to read and learn as much as I can about the greatest war and the greatest generation. Perhaps this propelled an even stronger interest in Roger, or maybe it was my newfound respect for the men and women in uniform. Whatever it was, I knew that I could not miss the opportunity while Roger was still young, to get his story. At first, I was eager to learn about the gliders and their mission. Upon Roger's recommendation I took along "Silent Wings" (Devlin 1985) on a deployment. Like

most, I never realized the impact gliders had on the war. I was dumbfounded. I dove into the world of gliders and am still borderline obsessed. I read what I could about the history and operations. I wanted to have a foundation of knowledge before I got serious about engaging Roger in more than those front yard conversations. He was forthcoming anytime I grazed the subject of his military career but I knew all too well that sometimes we can ask too much.

After a couple of years of friendship with Roger and on a beautiful summer day, I had an unusual opportunity. A very good friend and mentor of mine from the Afghan job was volunteering for the Collings Foundation. He had the rare opportunity to fly their beautiful consolidated B-24J named Witchcraft. As luck would have it, they were doing a Wings of Freedom Tour stop at the airport just minutes away from where Roger and I live. On the day before the event when all of the planes were staged for the show, I took Roger along to meet the crews and check out the airplanes. He loved it, and they loved him. As we were preparing to leave Roger was approached by a historian from the Collings Foundation. He invited Roger to participate in a video documentary of Roger's war experience. I was ecstatic at the idea. Roger seemed to hate it, and refused.

We didn't talk much on the short ride home from the airport that day. I think Roger appreciated the trip, but all I could think about was how I could catalogue his glider mission if he wasn't interested in telling his story. I had all too much experience with knowing not to ask those questions if they could bring back some demons. However, I couldn't stand the thought of allowing Roger's story to go

untold. I decided to work on improving Roger's trust and respect for me. To do this, I worked hard at our friendship and performed neighborly tasks. As I busied myself around the Smith house, I thought about what it must have been like for him. What it was like in that ship for weeks on the way to Europe, not knowing if or when he would return. What it was like sitting in that pre-mission briefing looking at the pictures of the landing zone while being told "reconnaissance has detected significant amounts of anti-glider pole emplacements." What it was like watching another glider cartwheel through a vineyard moments before touchdown. And what it was like the moment his glider came to rest in that field in Southern France.

In a year like none other, in the fall of 2020 Roger's beautiful and devoted wife of 77 years, Glenna, fell terribly ill. Roger and Glenna met growing up as neighbors and married in Cherryville, New Jersey five days after Roger graduated Advanced Glider Pilot Training. When Glenna became ill, I was still employed but had not flown for a few months. This gave me extra time with my young family but it also gave me extra time to devote to Roger. On a rainy day in October, Glenna was taken to the hospital. In the middle of a pandemic, and under the advisement of his family, Roger stayed home. I didn't go over there that day with anything in mind other than keeping Roger company. I just hoped the small talk and friendly banter would take Roger's mind off of reality. Roger was eager to chat and I could sense it. I'll never forget the feeling I suddenly had sitting in Roger's living room that day. Now or never. I knew it was time.

Within a matter of hours, on his dining room table there sat a large stack of pictures,

documents, and original orders dated August 1944 stamped “Top Secret”. Roger answered all of my questions and seemed to hold nothing back. Perhaps it was the stress of the situation, or maybe he was just eager for someone to listen. Either way, I’m still in shock at his openness.

I left Roger’s house that day regretting that I had not asked his story sooner, but I was relieved at how much information he was providing. Roger loaned me some photos to take and show the family that day which he’d taken near Le Muy, France on August 15th and 16th, 1944. I really had no idea what was in my possession at the time. After doing a bit of research on the Glider Pilot Committee’s website I reached out to the Leon B. Spencer Research Team. A long discussion ensued and my understanding of Roger’s treasure trove of history became clearer. I have no idea how many glider pilots might have taken a camera along with them on their mission(s), but my guess based on what I have seen and now know is “not many”. How many of those that took a camera along in World War II are still able to provide context to each picture? I hope the rhetoricity of that question is obvious. The last I was told by the research team, there are perhaps only a few more than 20 living glider pilot veterans. Did I mention luck?

In late December 2020, at 95 years old, Glenna Smith passed peacefully at home with Roger by her side. I was flying my first trip back at work in nine months. It’s always difficult to get that sort of news on the road, but Roger has a large and loving family who were able to grieve with him. I arrived home a few days later and immediately went to see Roger. Standing 5’7” tall, weighing in at possibly 100lbs (If you include his lap dog Fritz), I always tell my other friends that Roger could still beat me up in a fist fight. And I truly mean



it. His current physical presence fails to reflect the man and human that he is. Roger loved Glenna with all of his heart and in that moment when I told him I was sorry, he was more worried about how I was doing. The last few months of Glenna’s life were difficult for Roger and I did what I could to help. He was so focused on making her comfortable and being with her. Now that she was gone, he seemed a bit anxious and lost.

In the meantime, I had been communicating with the Leon B Spencer Research Team and just starting to get some clarity as to how important Roger’s pictures, documents, and memorabilia were to the preservation of the WWII glider history. I now knew better than to wait any longer. During the month of January 2021, I interviewed Roger for a of number hours and, at the request of the Research Team, he loaned me his documents and pictures for me to scan and share. Since then, we have met nearly once a week to clarify and add context to, so far, only a portion his material. He seems settled and excited when we meet, and it’s usually the highlight of my week.

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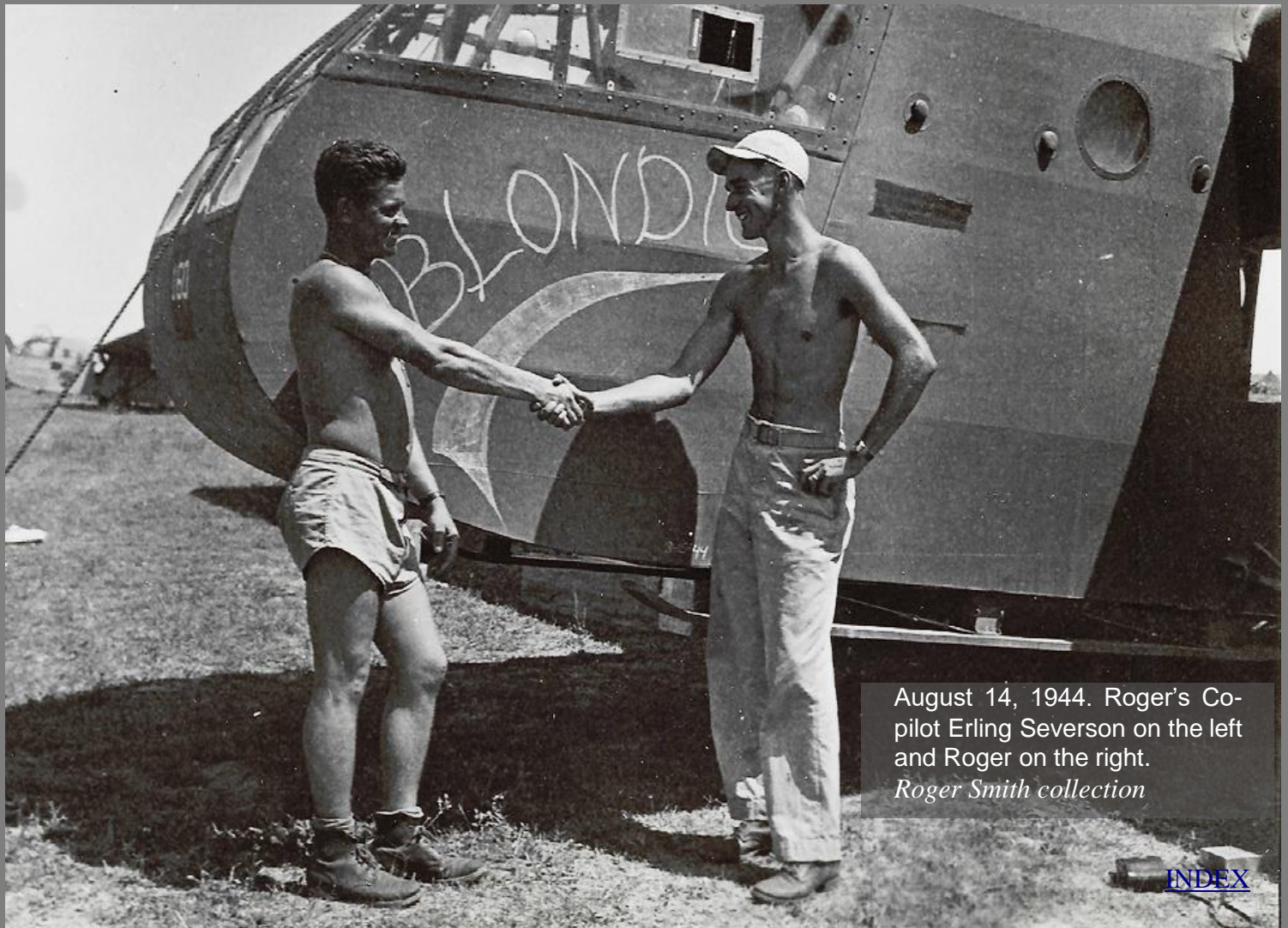


*The coin tossed for both the dress rehearsal and the invasion of Southern France
Roger Smith collection*

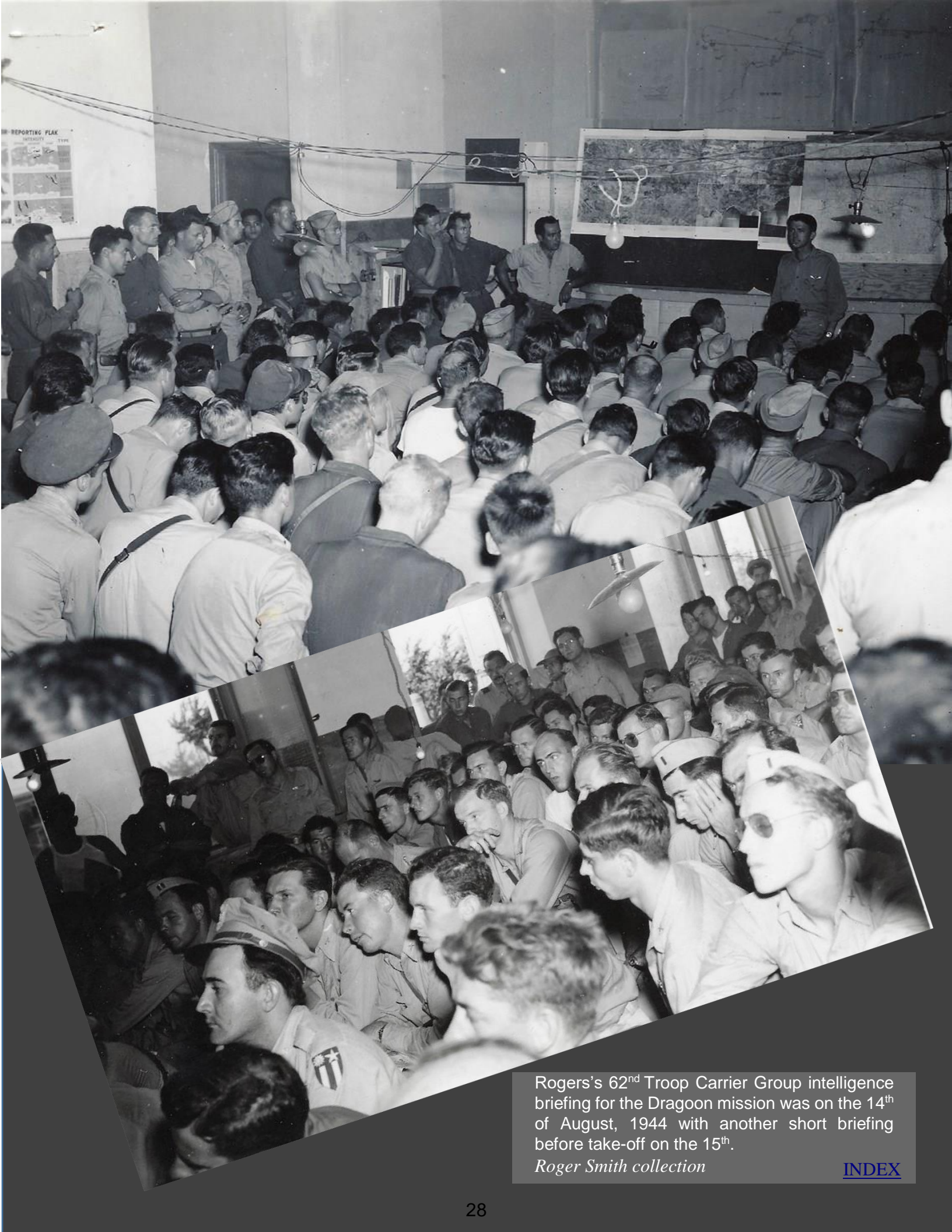


Roger William Smith graduated Advanced Glider Pilot Training in Lubbock, TX on October 26th, 1943 in class 43-16. Five days after that appointment to Flight Officer he married his childhood sweetheart Glenna (aka: Blondie) in Cherryville, NJ. He departed Newport News, VA in a Navy Transport on March 31st, 1944 and stepped foot on land again on April 9th in Casablanca. At the end of April, after a train ride across Africa, he again boarded a vessel to Naples. After the Germans bombed the harbor his first night in Naples they left for Palermo. A few stops and a couple months later, he was in Rome with the 8th Squadron of the 62nd TCG preparing for Dragoon. Four weeks to the day after his 21st birthday on the morning of August 14th 1944, Roger and his Co-Pilot Erling Severson flipped a quarter to see who would fly their CG-4A for the final Dragoon dress rehearsal. Erling won the toss.

The dress rehearsal went smoothly and true to his word, Erling, who was slated to pilot the CG-4A glider in the combat mission, codenamed DOVE, again flipped the same quarter to see who would be at the controls of their CG-4A when they departed in the afternoon of the 15th. In one of Rogers most precious pictures of all, he, as the pilot, kneels proudly



August 14, 1944. Roger's Co-pilot Erling Severson on the left and Roger on the right.
Roger Smith collection



Rogers's 62nd Troop Carrier Group intelligence briefing for the Dagoon mission was on the 14th of August, 1944 with another short briefing before take-off on the 15th.

Roger Smith collection

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Rogers's 62nd Troop Carrier Group consisting the 4th, 7th, 8th, and 51st Squadrons. Men from the 8th squadron stay cool before take-off on the 15th. *Roger Smith collection*



Rogers's 62nd Troop Carrier Group before take-off on the 15th. *Roger Smith collection*



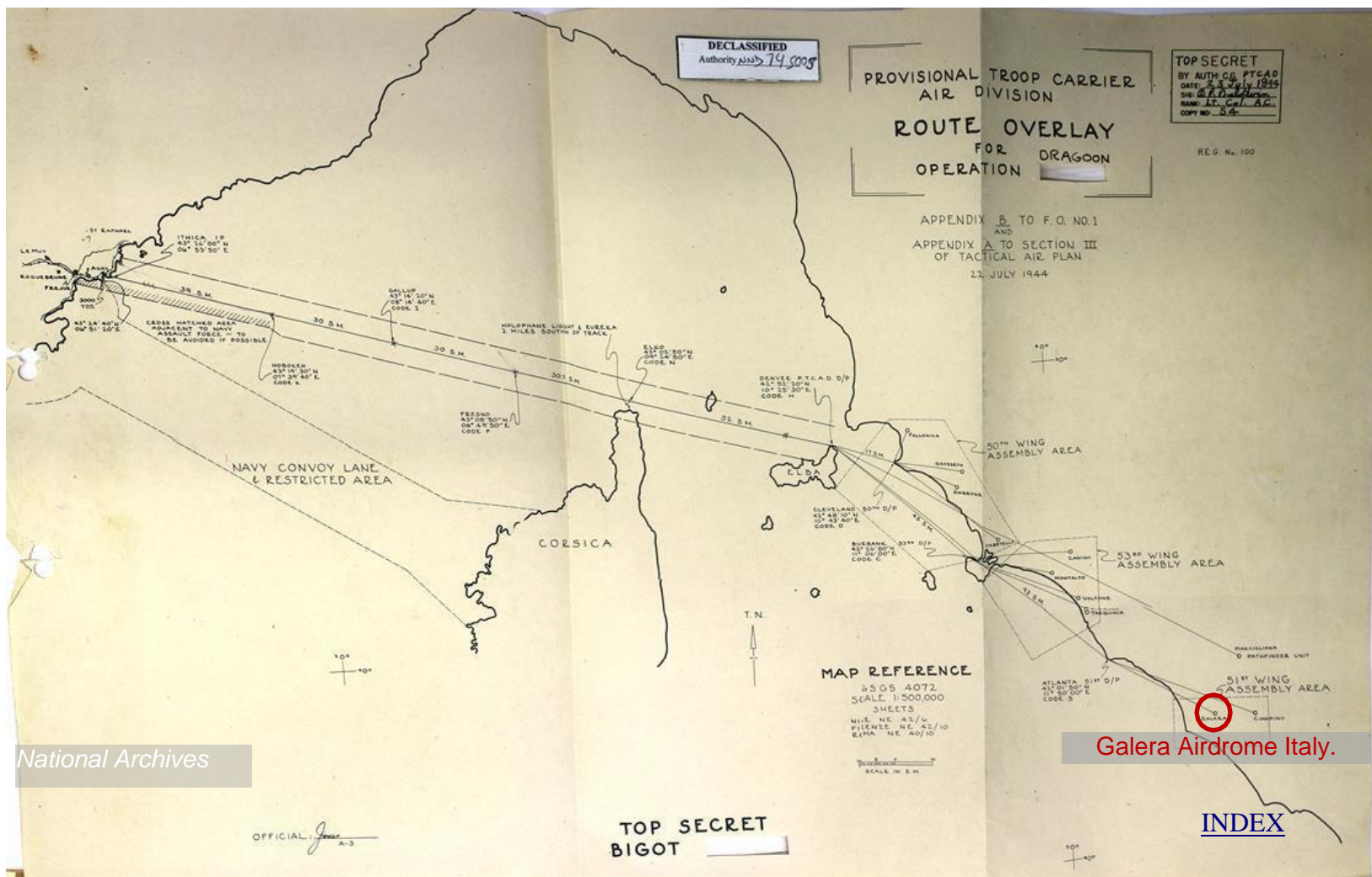
Rogers's 62nd Troop Carrier air field. Take off from Galera Airdrome in Italy. Note the amount of dust in the air. *Roger Smith collection*

next to his artwork adorned on the left side of glider No. 42-79160 he nicknamed "Blondie". With a hole drilled through it, and dangling with his dog tags, that quarter is one of very few things Roger brought home from Europe. On the morning of August 15th, 1944 Roger awoke to the sights and sounds of C-47's returning from Southern France. Aircraft returned from mission code named Albatross, a Paratrooper drop. Roger, his squadron mates, and others members of the 62nd TC Group made final preparations for the glider operation. Their serial, number 22, was made

gliders (born down with personnel and heavy cumbersome equipment) took off in elements of two (2) at twenty (20) second intervals. The serial was formed as it passed back over Galera Airbase on course at 1620 hours. Its formation was a pair of pairs echeloned to the right, with gliders in trail, and with 1000 feet between elements. Major Jones, the Group Executive, with Col. Edris as his copilot and Capt. Omart of the 8th Squadron as his Navigator, led the formation. ... The route flown was identical with that of this morning's paratrooper mission, and the LZ was the field where the paratroopers had dropped LZ O. The altitude enroute to the I/P was two thousand feet MSL. After crossing this point it varied from one to two thousand feet MSL.

One (1) glider was seen in the water at Gallup about 100 yards from the ship. All checkpoints were clearly visible. The haze, battle smoke and scattered clouds at 1000 feet cut down visibility after crossing the I/P. The LZ was clear of the smoke and haze, and the red "T" (see aerial photo) and the green smoke were clearly visible on the LZ.

62nd Troop Carrier Group Narrative for DOVE: Beginning at 1545 hours on August 15th, forty-eight (48) of this Group's (all of which were assigned to its 4 squadrons) C-47s and forty-eight (48) of its CG-4A gliders, being Serial number 22 in the PTCAD lineup, began their takeoffs from Galera airbase. Aircraft and



National Archives

Galera Airdrome Italy.

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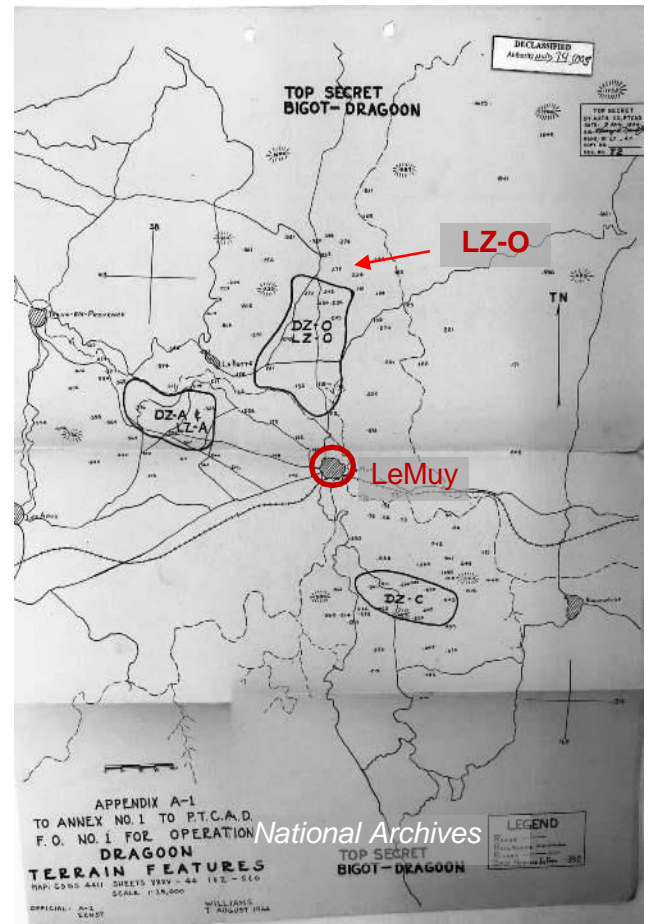
All gliders cut loose over the LZ at altitudes of 1000 to 2000 feet on a heading of 282 degrees between 1854 hours and 1900 hours. The tow planes dropped their ropes in the field W. of the LZ. The LZ did seem crowded, but our crews felt our gliders landed without excessive difficulty.[]

up of 48 tow ships towing 48 gliders. Roger was in glider number 32 and it was loaded with engineering equipment from the 887th Airborne Aviation Engineer Co. This was the next to last serial scheduled serial to begin departure at 15:45 hours and to reach a very crowded landing zone at 18:58 hours.

The departure went smoothly and Roger was even able to snap a few pictures with the camera he had tucked away with his issued gear. The three-hour transit went quickly and was over the LZ at almost exactly the scheduled release time (18:59 hours) Roger's tow ship signaled for release at 1000' above the ground. Roger said: *"I can remember after I cut loose, while searching for a landing spot, off to my left and down a bit on the ground, I see a glider with one wing down and his wing caught and he cartwheeled."*

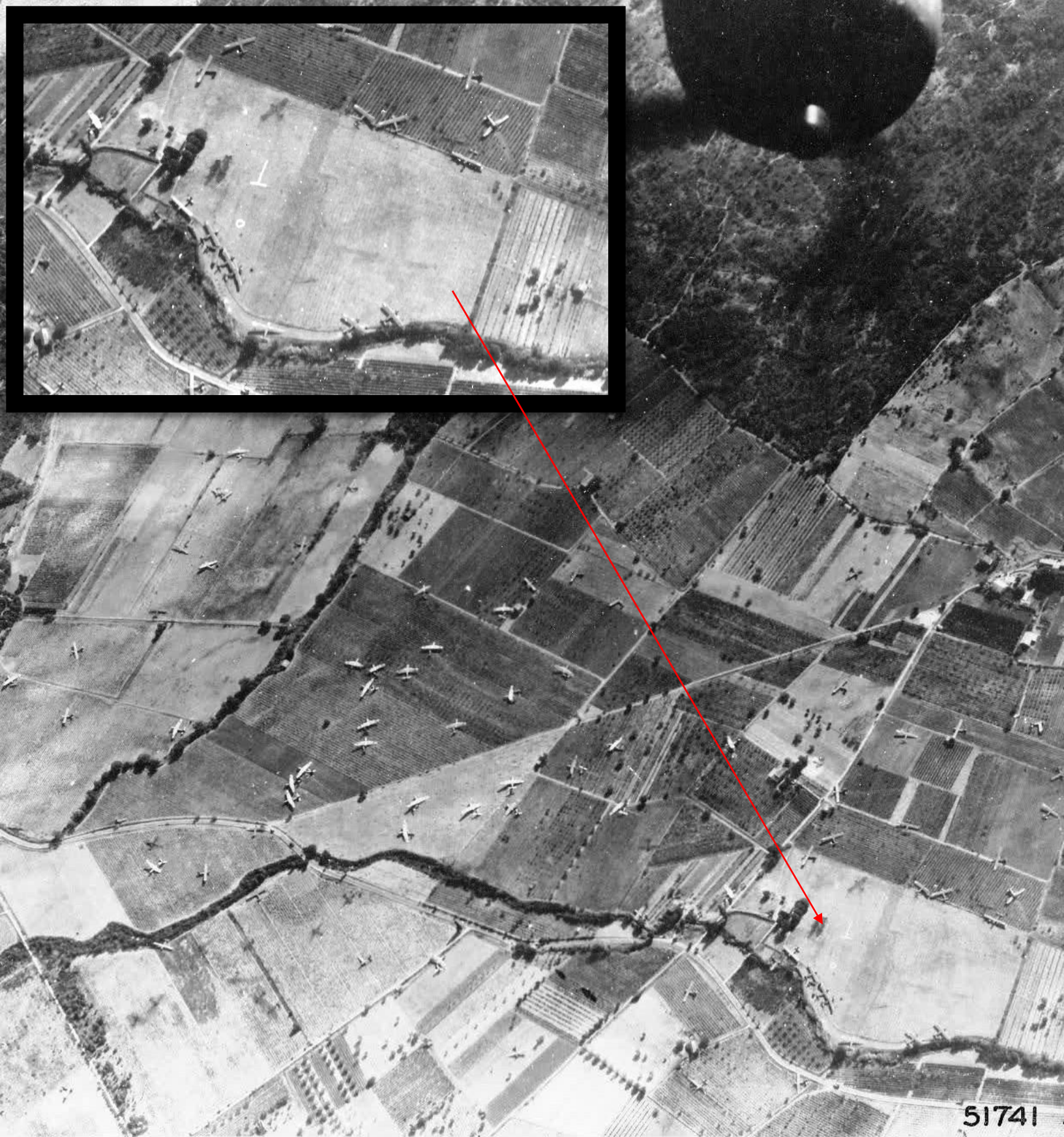
Despite the shock of that moment, Roger made a successful landing. They touched down in a vineyard and came to rest in a dirt field. He eliminated two Rommel's Asparagus emplacements with his left wing and he said *"It made a hell of a noise when you hit those"*. The water purification unit, one airborne trooper, and the rest of the cargo area that was *"so full you couldn't crawl back there"* made it to the intended LZ fully intact, thanks to the skills of Roger Smith, and Erling Severson.

Once on the ground and sure of no enemy engagements, Roger snapped a photo of



Zane Graves stands by Rommel's asparagus, in LZ-O, intended to destroy the gliders as they landed. Under the Service Travail Obligatoire (STO) were young and old French citizens who could not work in Germany as forced laborers were made to put up the poles. When the Germans were not looking they set the poles only two feet into the ground. Gary H. Graves collection

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Caption: "These Gliders, towed by Douglas [C-47s] of the Troop Carrier [Groups] of the Twelfth Air Force, landed in this field in Southern France, and the airborne troops dug in to take over enemy positions from the retreating Hun". --National Archives photo. [Editor's Note: The picture in the upper left shows the T and O identifying Landing Zone O. This was identified by Research Team member Jean Michael Soldi who lives in and studies Southern France. He also pointed out that because the LZ was so small compared to the number of gliders that the pathfinders who set up the O and T signal moved their gliders out of the way. You can see them lined up along a hedge just below the O. A similar photo was taken by Roger two weeks later flying copilot in a C-47 but the T and O was no longer visible but the gliders still lined the hedge. No gliders were retrieved from Southern France.]



Roger Smith, Erling Severson, Chalk 32 of the 8th Troop Carrier Squadron, 62nd Troop Carrier Group, 51st Troop Carrier Wing, 12th Troop Carrier Command. Photo taken D+1 Aug 16.
Roger Smith Collection.

“Blondie”. But he was so excited that he double exposed it. He snapped a roll of film on the mission including another picture of “Blondie” after it was unloaded the next day. He also took pictures of other gliders on the ground. Some fully intact and some quite the opposite. Until evacuation they dug foxholes, guarded POW’s and then made the four hour [hike back to the beach to St. Raphael](#) where within four days they were evacuated to Corsica. Roger was able to hook up with his training buddy Flight Officer Virgil Sorenson, 7th TCS, for the rest of the mission.



Aug. 15, 1944
Sorenson & his home.
Good old Fox hole

“Aug. 15, 1944 Sorenson & his home. Good old Foxhole.” Roger Smith Collection.

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62nd Troop Carrier Group Narrative for DOVE cont:

On August 19 glider pilots from the 62nd Group began to return. GPs who had landed in Southern France on D-Day were [evacuated by boat to St. Catherine](#) A/D in Corsica. From there to Ciampino and then Galera Airdromes. Preliminary survey indicates there were eight casualties. [1st Lt. Joseph Andrews in Chalk #28, 4th TC Squadron, was killed.]



On the Riviera: Glider pilots waiting for a boat to Corsica then a C-47 back to their home base in Italy. *Hans den Brok Collection.*

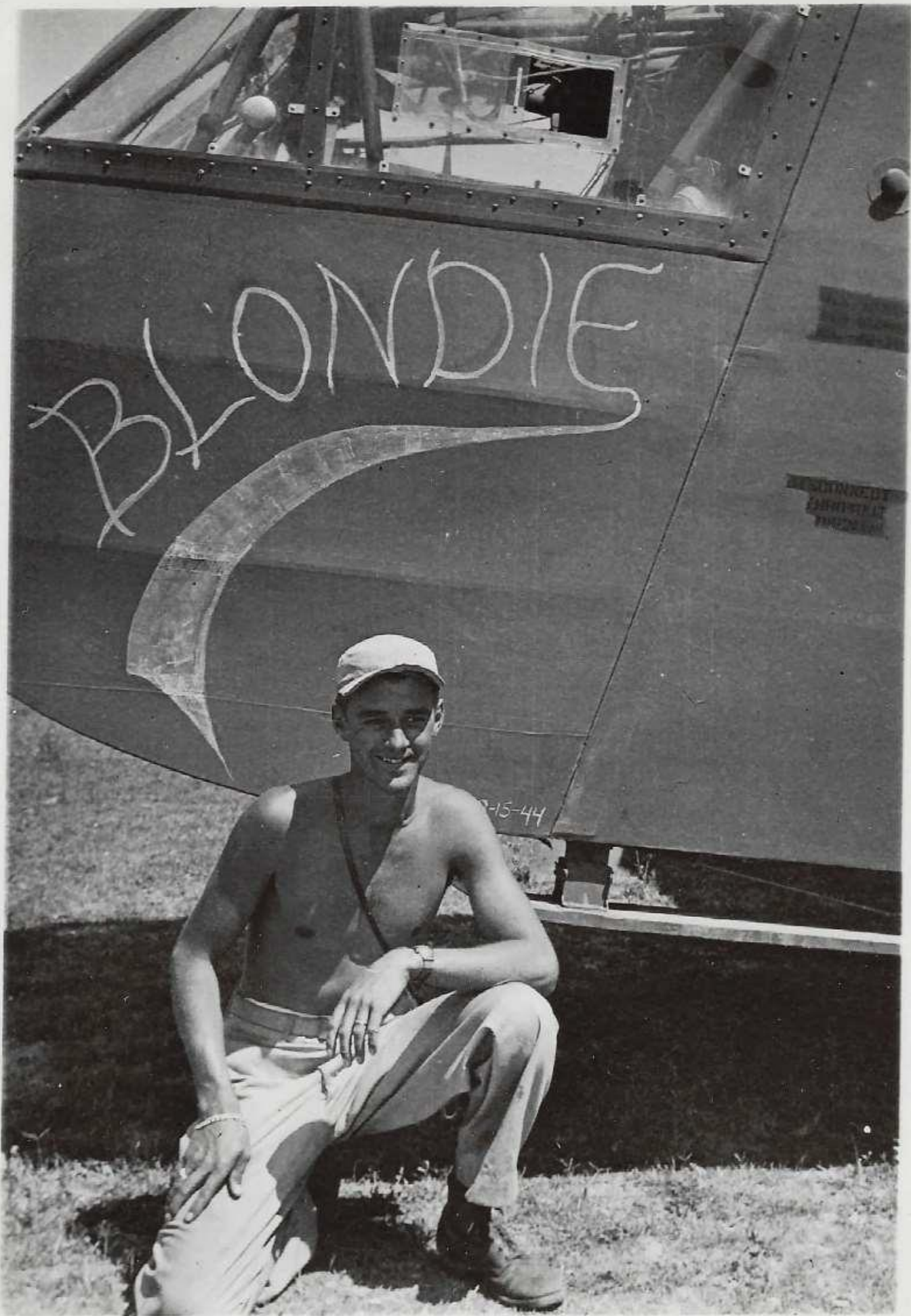
Four months after the War ended in the ETO and four weeks after the Japanese surrender, Roger boarded a Navy coal collier in Livorno, Italy, on September 30th, 1945, and stepped back onto American soil 14 days later. Roger stayed in the service and had an extensive military career beyond Europe, but September 19th, 1945 was the last time anything went into his flight record.

I've had the distinct pleasure to share a number of Roger's pictures with the families of glider pilots. It's my honor to share these memories with the families and it makes Roger happy every time I tell him who I've been in contact with. When the research team asked me to write this article I didn't think twice. In my son's lifetime the last World War II veteran will likely be gone. With them, the remaining heart and soul of this country's greatest generation. I refuse to let those remaining go without honoring their sacrifice and making sure they know that it's appreciated with all my being. I promise to continue the legacy that these brave men and women deserve and one day I'll share stories with my son about the greatest neighbor anyone could ever ask for.

As for Roger, he's doing fine. He will turn 98 in July and I keep telling him when he turns 100 we're going to have a major party. He walks his best friend Fritz every day and shoots skeet 2-3 times a week. When it snows, he has my sidewalk shoveled before my first cup of coffee. He still checks in on my projects but mostly it's just to greet a good friend. He's a humble man and I've come to the conclusion that that reason alone is why he didn't want his story documented by the Collings Foundation. But not to worry, I'm here to tell his story for him. I have never met a better model of a man than Roger William Smith. His work ethic, his integrity, his love of family and country is unparalleled. I thank God every day for making my journey in this life cross paths with Roger.

I was recently asked by the research team if I could get Roger to the next Glider Pilot Reunion. I promised them if there's anyway it's possible, we will be there. When that happens, please say hello and let me introduce you to one of my best friends, and MOS 1026 Glider Pilot, Roger William Smith. ■

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Untold WWII Troop Carrier Stories from the Secret War in the Balkans

By Colonel Mark C. Vlahos (USAF – RET)
Research Assistant Leon B. Spencer Research Team

Authors Acknowledgement: Very few folks are aware of USAAF Troop Carrier units supporting the Secret War in the Balkans during World War II. The intent of this article is to highlight a few of these missions flown from Italy in 1944. Later this year I hope to publish “Leading the War to Victory – A History of the 60th Troop Carrier Group 1940 – 1945.” This work will provide a more in-depth study of Troop Carrier Operations in the Secret War in the Balkans. I’d also like to thank Mr. Steve Wright of the British Glider Pilot Regiment Society for sharing information on Operation BUNGHOLE. Steve provided the names and pictures of three of the six British Glider Pilot Regiment pilots who flew this mission for this article. However, United States Army Air Forces records refer to a code name of Operation MANHOLE for the same glider-tow mission into Yugoslavia. Enjoy the read.

When the Germans invaded Yugoslavia, Albania and Greece in 1941, they obtained a quick victory; but they could not hold these countries completely in subjection. The waging of small-scale guerilla warfare commenced with very active involvement by the British Special Operations Executive (SOE) and later the American equivalent Office of Strategic Services (OSS).

In Serbia Drjoljub (Draza) Mihailovic, an officer on the General Staff raised the banner of the Cetnicks, a guerilla group that fought the Turks in the 19th Century. He quickly became a popular and highly visible figure among the Allies. Mihailovic even was on the cover of *Time Magazine* in May 1942! In late 1941 following Hitler’s attack on the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia’s Communist Party joined the resistance. Unlike Mihailovic, the Communist leader Marshal Josip Broz (known as Tito) remained a shadowy figure out of the limelight the next two years. Thus, even the success of Tito’s Partisan fighters the next two years was credited to the Cetnicks.

At first the Cetnicks and the Partisans acted in cooperation against the Nazi invaders, but soon this arrangement broke down. By the end of 1941 the two groups were fighting a civil war that would last until the end of World War II.¹

By late 1943, British disillusionment with the Cetnicks rose to the point that a decision was made to shift support from the Cetnicks to the Partisans. The British determined they were getting no military return on their investment of dropping supplies; in fact those supplies were more likely to be used against the Partisans than the Germans. This shift in Policy was confirmed at the Tehran Conference.² Shortly after the beginning of January 1944, the British ordered their liaison officers to cease contact with Mihailovic’s forces.

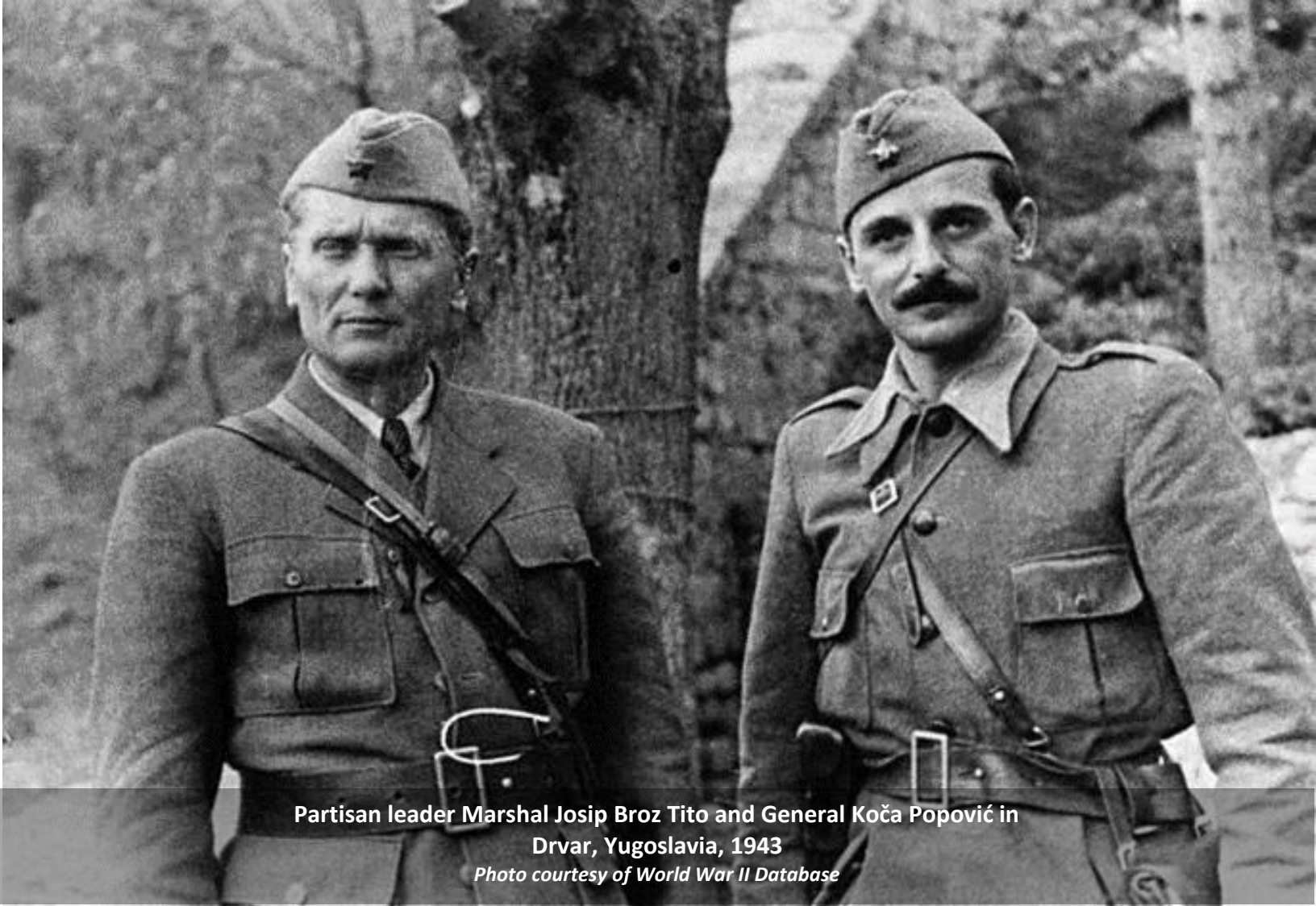
Also, at the beginning of 1944, Partisan resistance under Tito in the Balkans stiffened and a “secret war” commenced. In January 1944, Lt. Gen. Ira C. Eaker, newly appointed commander of Mediterranean Allied Air

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Forces (MAAF) decided that Americans should “get some credit delivering knives, guns and explosives to the Balkan patriots with which to kill Germans.” On February 9, 1944, the 7th Troop Carrier Squadron (TCS) and 51st TCS of the 62nd Troop Carrier Group (TCG) were placed on detached service at Brindisi, Italy with the 334 Wing, RAF to begin USAAF support for this mission. Both of these squadrons would fly some of the very first insertion missions into the Balkans under the code name Operation BUNGHOLE. Late in the

month of February, the 7th TCS received orders to infiltrate a group of American meteorologists and equipment into Yugoslavia. The USAAF wanted better weather data and forecasts to support bombing operations by the Fifteenth Air Force against enemy targets in central and Eastern Europe and improve efficiency and mission success rates of resupply efforts in the Balkans. Soon after the Tehran Conference, OSS recruiters went to Cairo, Egypt to interview meteorologists assigned to the 19th Weather Squadron. Six officers



Partisan leader Marshal Josip Broz Tito and General Koča Popović in Drvar, Yugoslavia, 1943

Photo courtesy of World War II Database

and fifteen enlisted men volunteered for the hazardous duty, and were given nine days of parachute training with the British at their school in Ramat David, Palestine.

Operation BUNGHOLE got underway on February 23, 1944; two C-47s piloted by 7th TCS Commander Major Paul A. Jones and Capt. John A. Walker flew from Brindisi to OSS Headquarters at Bari, Italy and then flew 60 miles north across the Adriatic where they prepared to drop two, three-man weather teams into Bosnia. The two C-47s were escorted by 24 P-47s. The C-47s made landfall on the Dalmatian coast, just south of Sibenik, then proceeded inland.

Flying through a heavy snowstorm they soon reached the area of the drop zone northeast of the town of Prekaja, near Tito's headquarters at Drvar. Captain Walker could not descend due to heavy cloud cover and returned to Bari. However, Major Jones managed to letdown through the overcast and leveled off at 3,000 feet; he then spotted eleven signal fires in the shape of a "V" - the signal for the drop. Major Jones made four passes dropping the meteorologists and their equipment. The weather team consisting of Capt. Cecil E. Drew (forecaster), Sgt. Joseph A. Conaty, Jr. (observer), and a radio operator made contact with local Partisans who brought them to the OSS mission at Drvar.³

The team soon began making four observations a day, which were coded by two cipher pads and transmitted to Bari. The OSS would eventually deploy six more meteorological teams in Yugoslavia.

That same day, the 51st TCS conducted Operation MANHOLE, a special mission to transport Russian military representatives led by Lieutenant General Nikolai V. Kormeyev and Major General Anatoli P. Gorshkov to Yugoslavia. The mission was driven by the Russian's political desire to reinforce their support for the Partisans. Kormeyev's leg had been badly wounded at Stalingrad, so parachuting in was a no go. The landing zone was in the middle of rough, mountainous terrain, so gliders were the only option. For this daytime mission, three (3) 51st TCS C-47s Led by Lt. Col. William T. Duden, 62nd TCG Operations Officer, pulled three (3) CC-4As piloted by glider pilots from the 2nd Independent Parachute Brigade (British) from Bari under escort of twenty-four (24) P-40s and twelve (12) P-47s. In the lead CG-4A "Waco" glider was Capt. Cornelius "Crash" Turner with Sgt. Newman as the co-pilot. The other two gliders were piloted by Staff Sergeant Andrew McCulloch (P), Sgt. Hall (CP), Staff Sergeant Will Morrison (P) and Sgt. Reginald McMillan (CP).⁴ Once crossing landfall, the C-47s towing the gliders had to climb to 7,000 feet to cross mountains. After release at an altitude of 3,000 feet, the gliders landed at Partisan-held, snow-covered Medeno Polje landing zone in Bosnia where they offloaded 23 Soviet and 6 British officers. The landing zone was marked by red flags and 12 smoke fires.⁵ After glider release, the C-47s also dropped

10,500 pounds of equipment for the operation.⁶ Despite near zero visibility, the mission was a total success. Captain Turner and four of the glider pilots returned to Bari, Italy the next month when an RAF C-47 was able to land on the frozen LZ; Sgt. Reginald McMillan stayed behind as a Liaison Officer to work British SOE Force 133.⁷

During the last week of March 1944, USAAF commitment to the Balkans significantly increased when all four squadrons (52 C-47s total) of the 60th TCG relocated to Brindisi, Italy, relieving the 7th TCS and the 51st TCS from the 62nd TCG. By the time the 60th TCG arrived at Brindisi, the number of Yugoslav Partisans numbered 300,000, up from 200,000 six months prior and resupply requests multiplied.⁸

Planning for operations in the Balkans was carried out by the British, and liaison with the various partisan groups was handled by them. The Troop Carrier units involved simply carried out the instructions passed down to them by the 334 Wing, RAF from the SOE and OSS. By arrangement with the British, Lt. Col. Clarence J. Galligan, the 60th TCG C.O. maintained operational control of his Group; he could accept or deny any mission tasked by the British. The 334 Wing operated with a mixed allotment of Halifaxes, Wellingtons and Liberators, and conducted operations as far as Crete, France, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Romania. A polish squadron was part of the 334 Wing, RAF as well. However, the great bulk of partisan missions went to Italy, Yugoslavia, Albania and Greece. The

emphasis of the operation was now so predominantly on Yugoslavia that the name Balkan Operations came to be applied to all of these operations performed by the 334 Wing.⁹ These missions were flown under the strictest of secrecy and the men in the 60th TCG were not allowed to write home about their new location or the mission. The western press mentioned nothing of the ground war in the Balkans or the aerial resupply missions to the Yugoslavian Partisans. The 60th TCG was now part of the secret war in the Balkans.

Balkan flying conditions demanded the best of flying skills, and the tenacious German defenses in this troubled region complicated the challenge even more. The missions were flown at night over unfamiliar territory; the drop Zones were amidst towering mountains. The airstrips, on which the C-47s occasionally landed were small, hastily constructed and subject to enemy attack. The C-47s were unarmed and unarmored and enemy night fighters lurked near the secret partisan airstrips. These were dangerous missions to fly. On the average, there were 15 targets per night, but as a rule, one or two of the target areas were given priority and special attention.

Normally, the C-47 carried between 3,000 and 4,000 pounds, including approximately 150 pounds of propaganda leaflets. Normal supplies included guns, food, clothing, medical items, dynamite and ammunition for the partisans. On occasion these items were supplemented by mail, radios, jeeps,



Operation MANHOLE British Glider Pilots

Photo courtesy of British Glider Pilot Regiment Society

Top left Capt. Cornelius "Crash" Turner, top right Sgt. Reginald McMillan, bottom right S/Sgt. Will Morrison; on the bottom left is a typical Partisan

oil and mules! The transportation of mules required special handling. Temporary wooden stalls had to be constructed within the cabin of the C-47, and large quantities of straw were placed on the floor. The mules were loaded from a motor truck which was backed up to the cargo door. On reaching the destination, the crew opened the door and the mules jumped to the ground where mule skinnners took over. The average mission duration was 5 hours long and all aircraft were planned to be back over friendly territory by daylight.

The briefings for these operations called for making landfall on the Balkan coast between 6,000 and 10,000 feet; dead-reckoning (DR) to the target area, circle while at the same time flashing a pre-arranged letter of the day from the aircraft. Upon seeing the letter, the ground forces proceeded to light a set of fires (usually

representing a letter of the alphabet), then flashed a different ground-to-air letter in answer to the aircraft. Thus, three conditions were essential to the drop. More frequently than not, the signal fires on the ground were already lighted when the aircraft approached the target area and thus served as a valuable navigation aide to the C-47 crews. It sometimes happened that the receiving party was surrounded by the enemy or in imminent danger of being detected, so that the fires could not be safely lighted until the aircraft was heard and had identified itself. Not infrequently, the enemy discovered the ground forces just before, during or after the fires were lit, chasing them from the area. In such cases, the missions were necessarily unsuccessful, for although the fires might be properly lighted, and taken over, the ground-to-air letter would not be forthcoming. This factor frequently saved the valuable stores from falling into enemy hands.¹⁰

On the afternoon of July 2, 1944, 1st Lt. Harold E. Donohue, 28th TCS attended his flight briefing for the night's mission; six (6) C-47s would land at an airstrip in a valley code named PICCADILLY LIGHT 106. A single line of nine (9) fires would mark the 1,300 foot long landing strip. Pilots were briefed to land on the north side of the fires, and beware of the 500-foot hill to the south and the mountain to the north. After dark, the C-47s departed Brindisi in two-minute intervals. Lieutenant Donohue headed north over the Adriatic at 11,000 feet. Passing north of Zagreb, he headed towards the airstrip. His crew spotted the line of 9 fires; gunfire was observed to the east and a wrecked, burning aircraft was



Typical Drop Zone with fires lit in Mountains of Yugoslavia
*Photo courtesy of Troop Carrier Operations 1944,
HQ Twelfth Air Force*

spotted to the west. After receiving the correct signal to land, he set up his aircraft for the approach. As soon as the aircraft came to a stop, he was swarmed by Partisans to unload the 4,500 pounds of blankets and ammunition. Gunfire could be heard nearby and the British Liaison officer on the ground told him that he landed in a “sticky situation.” None of the other aircraft had landed and as soon as the aircraft was unloaded, the Partisans were going to abandon the airfield and melt into the hills. The partisans would be unable to take a group of children with them and the Germans would probably kill them. Could he help? “Of course” 1st Lt. Donohue said yes. The children were then led out of the darkness; some had no shoes, others just in nightshirts. None of them complained. Three nurses then arrived carrying babies; the line of children seemed endless. Donohue then made his way back to the

Children evacuated from Yugoslavia
by 1st Lt. Harold E. Donohue, 28th TCS on July 3, 1944
Photo courtesy of AFHRA



cockpit; children were strewn across the aircraft floor and he was careful not to step on them. He did not know how many were on the aircraft, but did not want to know either. Lieutenant Donohue started the twin 1,200 horsepower Pratt & Whitney engines. Holding the steering column close to his stomach, he set half flaps, stepped on the brakes and advanced the throttles. When he could no longer hold the aircraft, he released the brakes and roared down the runway. Passing the fifth fire, Lt. Donohue tried to coax the aircraft off the ground, no joy. Passing the seventh fire and slowly gaining speed the aircraft skipped a little. Reaching the final fire, he jerked the aircraft off of the ground and the propellers' bit into the air. The aircraft shuddered, but managed to clear the hill. After gaining altitude, he leveled off at 11,000 feet and set a course for Bari, Italy. Once at altitude, crew chief Jennings B. Harrell came up and told him he was carrying sixty-nine (69) passengers, three nurses and sixty-six children!¹¹

During the summer of 1944 rescuing downed Airmen became a priority for the 60th TCG. In May the 15th Air Force began a major bombing campaign against the Ploesti oil field located in Romania – the source of more than ¼ of Germany's petroleum. By August 1944, more than 350 bombers were shot down, but many of the aircrews survived. Some came down in Partisan territory, while others found refuge in Serbia with the Cetnicks. Using over 300 workman and 60 oxcarts, the Cetnicks under General Mihailovic, and the downed Airmen lengthened and widened a grass strip on a narrow plateau on the side of a

mountain in Pranjane. [Authors note: Ironically, with a civil war going on in the Balkans, the 60th TCG found themselves working with both Tito's and General Mihailovic's forces who were fighting against each other! Both were fighting the Germans as well.] The field was surrounded by a dense wood on one side and a sheer drop off on the other; a pilot's nightmare. Planned by the British SOE and American OSS agents, Operation HALYARD was the code name given to the mission to rescue Allied Airmen in Yugoslavia.

Later that night, six (6) 60th TCG C-47s departed Brindisi. Two aircraft had to turn back with engine trouble, but the other four landed on the tiny strip. Airmen and Serb villagers rushed the C-47s screaming in celebration and urged the crews to hop out so they could be welcomed to Pranjane. As the four planes were loading, those going home said their good byes to their friends and shouted "See you in Italy." Due to the elevation, night operations and short runway length, the C-47s were restricted to carry out only twelve (12) Airmen each. Many of the men on the first flight of 6 C-47s were wounded. The aircraft departed the grass strip, barley clearing the treetops around midnight and 48 downed Allied Airmen were saved. The aircraft circled over the strip to gain enough altitude to clear the mountains for the trip home. The rescued Airmen were dropped off in Bari, Italy for medical treatment and debriefing. Just after dawn the next morning, six (6) more C-47s all from the 10th TCS, led by their new Squadron Commander Capt. Caleb P. Moberly departed for Pranjane.



60th TCG C-47s on the ground in Pranjane, August 10, 1944

Photo courtesy of Mr. Boris Ciglic of Serbia



60th TCG C-47s on the ground in Pranjane, August 10, 1944

Photo courtesy of Mr. Boris Ciglic of Serbia

Rescued American Airmen enjoy a snack on a C-47s enroute to Bari, Italy from Pranjane, Yugoslavia
Photo courtesy of AFHRA



Rescued American Airmen warm their feet in canvas bags because they gave their shoes to locals before leaving Pranjane, Yugoslavia
Photo courtesy of AFHRA

The C-47s were escorted by twenty-five P-51s and P-38 fighter planes. While the fighters attacked targets in the local area to give the impression that a normal airstrike was in progress, the C-47s landed on the grass strip in broad daylight at 10:47 a.m. The fighters attacked anything German within a 50-mile radius of the airstrip to give the C-47s the needed time on the ground. The scene from the previous night was repeated, but this time there was more of a sense of urgency. The transports picked up and flew out another 117 joyful downed Allied Airmen. An hour later, a second wave of six (6) C-47s from the 12th TCS, led by their C.O. Major Joseph F. Wimsatt and escorted by fighters repeated the process. In all the morning's work, a total of 192 Allied Airmen were rescued.¹² When the 12th TCS C-47s returned to Brindisi, the English controllers in the tower hit the roof! The six C-47s flew in formation fifteen feet over the ground! The flight leader, Major Wimsatt then shot straight up, slow rolled and started his let down. Each plane followed in turn, actually too closely. They landed so closely that four were on the runway at one time with the fifth one touching down.

Three more missions were flown into Pranjane, two in August and one in September, retrieving another 75 Airmen. A total of 512 downed Allied Airmen were rescued during Operation HALYARD. This was the largest and most successful rescue mission in World War II and the 60th

TCG played a major role in it. However, there was no fanfare or publicity; the press was not told about Operation HALYARD. The mission could not be jeopardized because more men would need to be brought out in the future.

October 17, 1944 also brought an end to the 6-months of the 60th TCG's detached service to the 334 Wing, RAF. From April 1 – October 17, 1944 the Group flew 3,307 successful missions, 631 of which were landing missions. The Group dropped or landed 14,246,260 pounds of supplies, evacuated 9,322 personnel, and delivered 728,602 pounds of propaganda leaflets. The cost to the 60th TCG was 10 C-47s lost and 28 Airmen killed in action. This equated to one aircraft lost for every 458 sorties – a remarkable achievement that testified the pilot's skill at evading enemy flak and night fighters while flying at night in dangerous mountainous terrain. In November, the 60th TCG would receive a Presidential Unit Citation for their contribution supporting the Secret War in the Balkans. This meant the men of the 60th TCG could now wear the much - coveted blue ribbon on the right side of their uniforms. On October 12 – 17, 1944, the 60th TCG and the entire 51st TCW also played a major role in Operation MANNA, the invasion of Greece, by airdropping British Paratroopers and airdropping supplies at Megera Airfield, outside of Athens, Greece. This Operation also included another 23 British gliders being towed by the 62nd TCG.



Brigadier Charles Pritchard, Commanding General 2nd Independent Parachute Brigade and Brigadier General Timothy J. Manning, 51st TCW Commander discuss the success of Operation MANNA

Photo courtesy of AFHRA

Even after declassification, Troop Carrier Operations in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations continue to be a mystery today. The reasons for this are many. First, the press was focused on the war in Europe. Thus, many more photographs and documentation of first-hand accounts exist due to the number of embedded reporters and hometown news releases from the European Theater of Operations. Very few historians are aware of the contributions, or write about the achievements, of the 51st Troop Carrier Wing under Twelfth Air Force. I hope to soon change this with the publication of my next book. ■

¹ William M. Leary, *Fueling the Fires of Resistance - AAF Special Operations in the Balkans in World War II*, p. 4.

² *Ibid*, p. 7.

³ *Ibid*, p. 10

⁴ *Operation Bunghole* by David Pasley, courtesy of British Glider Pilot Regiment Society.

⁵ Operation MANHOLE AFHRA Reel 2562.

⁶ 51st TCS AFHRA Reel No. A0980.

⁷ *Operation Bunghole* by David Pasley, courtesy of British Glider Pilot Regiment Society.

⁸ William M. Leary, *Fueling the Fires of Resistance - AAF Special Operations in the Balkans in World War II*, p. 16.

⁹ *Troop Carrier Operations 1944*, Headquarters Twelfth Air Force, p. 5.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 14

¹¹ *Ibid* and William M. Leary, *Fueling the Fires of Resistance – AAF Special Operations in the Balkans during World War II*, p. 20.

¹² 10th TCS MF Reel No. A0968.

Joan Abrahamson

For several years now the Association would send commendations to students K through College who presented or reported on WWII Troop Carrier and Glider Pilot history. Joan Abrahamson has volunteered to take on this project. The job is not easy, as in the past we have always tried to include the commendation with the students' school awards assembly. Joan just took the job over and she has already received the attention of the local American Legion. Commander, George Greiner of the Greene County American Legion in New York, found out about the commendations and he asked Joan to come to their next meeting to give a talk about our organization. She happened to mention the work she did with the [Missing in America Project involving Glider Pilot Clearance Korthof](#), (highlighted in the fall 2018 Silent Wings Museum Newsletter). Thanks Joan for your dedication.

Jean Michael Soldi (JM) and Philippe Arakelian (Patrcia Overman's cousin) celebrated our American Memorial Day

JM and Philippe went to the [Rhone American Cemetery](#), in Draguignan, France, before Memorial Day to photograph the crosses of four of the [glider pilot graves](#) located at the Rhone American Cemetery. It is a beautiful Cemetery and if you go to see JM on a Southern France invasion tour you must visit this cemetery. The photos will go into each glider pilot's record. All were KIA Southern France invasion.

John Laney

Lt. Col. John Laney, USAF (Ret) spent Memorial Day as he does every year, at [Arlington National Cemetery](#), where his father, Major John Aris LANEY (USAF Ret), is buried. During WWII Maj. Laney served as a glider pilot in the 100th and 302nd Troop Carrier Squadron, 441st Troop Carrier Group. His WWII combat missions included Normandy, Southern France and Holland. After WWII he stayed in the military and fought in the Korean conflict and retired from the Air Force as a Major.



Richard M McFarland
Flt O 16 SQ 64
TRP CARR GP



Ralph E La Valle
Flt O 84 SQ 437
TRP CARR GP



Paul R Kimball
2 Lt 99 SQ 441 TRP
CARR GP



Horace F Leaman
Flt O 86 SQ 437 TRP
CARR GP



Alfred G Thompson
Flt O 97 SQ 440 TRP
CARR GP



Glenn H Allen
Flt O 92 SQ 439 TRP
CARR GP

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FRANK T BRANDON
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BILL S CHEOLAS
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JACK W TEMPLIN
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JOSEPH J. TURECKY
MARSHALL W. WILLIAMS
WILLIAM WEAVER
JAMES R WINNIE

MISSIONS

THANK YOU TO THOSE FAMILIES AND FRIENDS WHO HAVE THIS QUARTER CONTACTED THE
LBS RESEARCH TEAM TO PARTNER ON RESEARCHING WWII TROOP CARRIER HISTORY.

Jeff Schumate researcher F/O Daniel H MARTINE

Michael Murphy son of F/O Thomas James MURPHY Jr

Heather Rose Colston great great-granddaughter of F/O Alton Bert COLSTON

Skye Walker granddaughter of 2nd Lt Raymond G SCHOTT

Francis Duffy son of 1st Lt Richard L DUFFY

Paul Killenbeck researcher 2nd Lt Glen Edward MCPHERREN

Brian Barclay grandson of F/O Leonard Samuel THOMPSON

Dave Nelson son of 1st Lt John H NELSON

Robert Miller nephew of 2nd Lt Curlan MCNEIL

Shelly Buhl daughter F/O George N BUHL

Elizabeth LoPresti Eimandoust niece of Charles LOPRIESTI *

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Terry Kalet son of F/O James Hackett STEELE

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David Reginaldi researcher 2nd Lt David Orville LAIDLAW

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Lisa Keith-Lucas historian-museum 2ndLt John Eugene REILLY

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Dan Borriss son of F/O Leonard "Red" BORRIS

Thomas Parker grandson of F/O Thomas Edison PARKER

Jan Sheridan F/O Otto Frank HAGEMEISTER

Carol Prussa daughter of Robert Henry SCHEIDIES

*Members of the National WWII Glider Pilots Committee

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"Glider troops preparing to load Horsa gliders, 7 June 1944. These gliders were part of a formation of 30 Horsas and 20 CG-4A Wacos towed from Upottery to LZ W southeast of Ste Mère-Église by the 439th Troop Carrier Group. The 82nd Airborne Division troopers consisted of the 2nd Battalion, 325th Glider Infantry Regiment, and most of the 2nd Battalion, 401st Glider Infantry Regiment, which was at this point attached to the 325th and served as the Regiment's third battalion." --Caption from Into the Valley, Photo from Silent Wings Museum

ON THE CALENDAR Upcoming missions:

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

BASTOGNE
December 23-27, 1944

BURMA
March 5, 1944

REMAGEN
March 22, 45

RHINE CROSSING
March 24, 1945



COVER PHOTO: The cover photo was taken by glider pilot Roger Smith on 14 August 1944 before the Southern France invasion. The art work on the nose is the 8th Troop Carrier Squadron patch. The 8th was a squadron in the 62nd Troop Carrier Group. The air field is Galela, Italy.

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