

WWII U.S. GLIDER PILOT'S BRIEFING

NATIONAL WWII GLIDER PILOTS COMMITTEE
OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE

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



"THE KID"

In 1944, Jackie Coogan lead a long-range vertical envelopment at the head of 12 gliders loaded with engineers and their equipment deep into the hostile jungles of Burma.

ALSO INSIDE:

A RACE AGAINST TIME, SICILY

THE REST OF THE STORY ON BARBARA

SECURITY AT CHÂTEAUDUN PRIOR TO VARSITY

SEE:

**COUNCIL REPORTS - MEMORIAL DONATIONS -
HONORING OUR VETERANS - OPERATIONS -
MISSIONS - TROOP CARRIER MOVEMENT -
REUNION PLANS - EDITOR'S MESSAGE**

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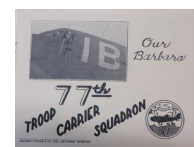


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The rest of the story



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

Editor's Note

Welcome, and welcome back to our readers for this quarter's Briefing! Whether this is your 6th issue or your 1st, we appreciate your interest. Thank you to those researchers and international correspondents who continue to provide this community with valuable insight into the Glider Program's legacy.

In this quarter's pages you will find a follow up to Hans den Brok's previous article on Barbara, who was taken in by glider pilots in England. I found this series extremely touching. Since my own research began I have seen numerous examples of how WWII affected our glider pilots and their families, or how our glider pilots influenced the war, but I think this series on Barbara has been the first account I've read on how our glider pilots influenced the lives of the civilians in the war theaters.

Another insight I received was the importance of record-keeping. I think our readers will find the Twentynine Palms' Condor Field log informative, regarding the struggles faced by the early glider program. My own first duty-station was Twentynine Palms (long after the USMC moved in). Having been responsible for filling out similar logbook entries it's good to see that they are actually useful down the track!

If you have thoughts about a particular article or event that you've seen in our past issues, please send those thoughts to:

briefingeditor.nwwiigpc@gmail.com

Please keep the body of your responses to 150 words or less and please share your city/state so that members can see how wide-spread our publication is! If selected, your letter will appear in the next Quarter's *Letters* section as:

Letter,

About an article.

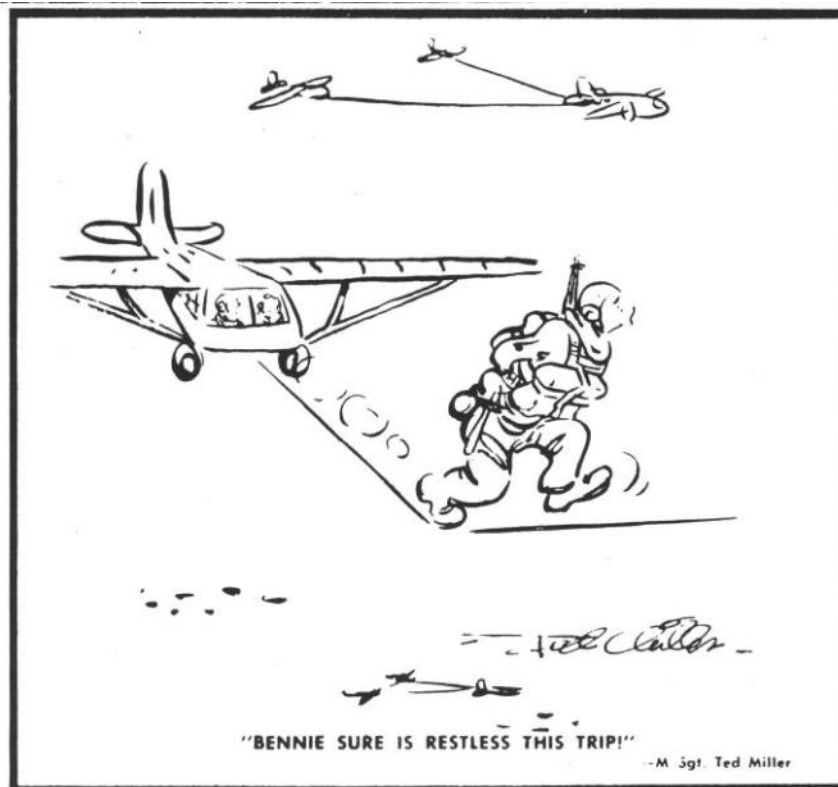
Signed Trevor S.

Lorton, VA

We look forward to hearing your thoughts!

Best,

Trevor Shimulunas



Borrowed from YANK MAGAZINE, issue January 7, 1945

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL CHAIR

It's going to be a GREAT year for our organization. Much has already been accomplished since the 2022 Executive Council (EC) assumed their roles and responsibilities beginning 01 January.

Three new "Members-at-Large" were added to the EC including Tom Martin, U.S. Marine Captain Trevor Shimulunas, and U.S. Air Force Col Mark Vlahos (Ret).

The Executive Council membership now stands at fourteen (14) with ten (10) being direct descendants or relatives of WWII Troop Carrier glider pilots, power glider pilots, glider design and development, and C-47 tow crew pilots.

The EC Monthly Meetings are now OPEN to all members via Zoom with the Minutes of Meetings being posted on our website under Membership Resources.

The Quarterly Briefing is simply world class thanks to Editors Patricia Overman and Trevor Shimulunas.

The Reunion Subcommittee has set the dates of Oct 6 - 8 for the annual Reunion / Symposium in Lubbock, TX. Mary Roemer, our Reunion Chair will report more.

A Membership Subcommittee has been stood up under the leadership of National Wing Commander Patricia Overman with support from Mark Vlahos.

A Scholarship Subcommittee has also been started with a plan and initial options provided to the Executive Council by Trevor Shimulunas with support by Mark Vlahos.

We have an approved 2022 budget provided by our Treasurer, Chuck Hobbs.

Mostly we have great support from our members. Thank you so much as it is with your loyalty that we are able to continue keeping the WWII Glider Program history alive.

It's going to be a GREAT year! Plan now to join us at our Monthly Zoom Meetings and at the Reunion / Symposium in Lubbock October 6 through 8.

Gary Stripling, CHAIR

NATIONAL WING COMMANDER

When I am putting together the Briefing and especially with those members making donations in honor of a veteran, I always look them up in the database and note what work is needed to bring their record up to date. I was looking at Ken Lamour's father's record and began entering his missions into his record. I have always known from talking to C-47 crews that they went in and out of the gauntlet of flak, and small arms fire in the combat zone several times during an operation. I also find that many pop historians take C-47s that have been re-stored over the years and label them as the

possession of the airborne unit that was the load in the C-47 such as the of the 101st Airborne, 82nd or 17th Airborne C-47. This also occurs with Airborne organizations who reference these ships and gliders as belonging to the airborne. This is a pet peeve of mine and Robert F. Lamour, 83rd Troop Carrier Squadron, 437th TC Group, is a good example as to why we as Troop Carrier historians get a little perturbed about this claim of plane ownership.

The 82nd and the 101st Airborne were the load in the C-47s and gliders for two combat flights in the European Theater. This means that each airborne trooper would have been in a C-47 or glider for up to 3 hours per flight, totaling at the most six hours in either a C-47 or a glider. For the 17th Airborne, the time for each airborne trooper totaled approximately two hours and forty five minutes.

So lets look at Robert, who was assigned to the the 437th Operations Mission Order #1 DETROIT, Robert is listed flying as radio operator in C-47 # 42-100577 towing a CG-4A glider # 42-74320 loaded with the 82nd Airborne to LZ-Z. At the LZ Robert and his load have spent around three hours in the glider. On his return to base he has now added another 3 hours totaling six hours flight time in his tow ship or thereabouts, and he has already surpassed the time an individual 82nd or 101st airborne ever spent in a C-47 under combat. He and his crew then turn around that same day, 6 June, 1944 and tow Horsa glider # HG770 in mission ELMIRA loaded with the 82nd Airborne to the LZ and then return again. These are all rough figures but we are up

to around 12 hours in one day.

Robert's next combat mission is Holland. For the MARKET operation he flew three missions. Two glider tows, on the 17th and 18th of September loaded with the 101st Airborne and one resupply mission on the 20th. So a 101st individual airborne would spend a maximum of three hours in C-47 # 42-100577. Not Robert! We are looking at about 18 hours for Holland.

It was not unusual for a crew to fly together in the same plane for the entire war as Robert did. VARSITY is the largest single lift of the war, only one lift for two entire Divisions. It took about 2 hours and 45 min to get to the landing zone. So credit a 17th Airborne glider rider with 2 hours and 45 min. But again Robert has to return so add another 2 hours and 45 min. He is still ahead of the 17th airborne load as far as time in # 42-100577 for VARSITY.

And what about all the resupply missions to the front, and the RON (remain over night) due to bad weather? In the case of RON they eat and sleep in their C-47s. Troop Carrier Squadrons also maintained these aircraft and gliders. What is even more bizarre is that the nose of the C-47 is usually sporting the squadron code which is cool to see on the C-47 but what that code stands for is ignored. I am waiting to see someone write, "C-47 #42-100577 of the 101st Airborne was flown to..."

If you are in the area of Wesel, Germany, the 17th Airborne is putting up a monument to the 17th Airborne in LZ-S at Haus Dudan. They have asked us for the information on our KIA so they may honor them at the ceremony. We also

provided them with maps and detailed information on the landing zone.

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There is an organization looking into building a museum in Châteaudun, France, the home of the 439th Troop Carrier Group. We are looking forward to helping them with information about the 439th Troop Carrier's stay at Châteaudun with documents and photographs. We hope in the future that we may be able to place a plaque honoring the men who flew the 17th Airborne into Landing Zone S on dual tow from Châteaudun. We will keep you posted as to their progress.

~~~~~

I really enjoyed working with Trevor on the Jackie Coogan article. The China Burma India Theater (CBI) was a different kind of war from the ETO and it was very interesting how things were done. This took a lot of research and we were back and forth on the accuracy of the information. Project 9 was all about a new technique of picking up gliders from the ground with C-47s flying by. This "snatch" process was debuted and used more in CBI than anywhere else.



Patricia Overman
National Wing Commander

LEON B. SPENCER RESEARCH

Requests for the Leon B. Spencer Research Team to accomplish research and provide information to WWII glider pilot families totaled 13 from Jan 01 to Jan 31, 2022. For reference, the number of requests in January 2021 was also 13 which set the pace for 100 requests last year.

FAMILY REQUESTS:

Daughter-1

Son-1

Nieces-2

Nephews-3

Son-in-law-1

NON-FAMILY REQUESTS:

Collector-1

Researchers-2

Museums-2

The number of entries made into our database, because of this research, continues on a rapid daily basis that requires significant time by our team. I must mention the countless hours of work put in by Patricia Overman, Tom Martin, Jeff McGovern, and Mark Vlahos to update the on-line database.

Again, I believe I speak for all our research team members when I say we are honored to serve our glider pilot veterans and their families in this way.

Bless Them All

COMMITTEE CHAPLAIN

Dear friends,

Well, here in Texas we have survived another deep freeze of four days but fortunately this year there was no outage of power for us. Outside plants in pots were safely moved into the garage, propane tank was full and a small generator was ready to fire up if we did lose power. Hopefully the arctic weather is past for this year in north Texas. I must admit though that the snow was beautiful! A view of glistening white across the yard and field beyond with only animal tracks to mar its smoothness. We did our part to care for the birds and animals during the cold with lots of corn for the deer and the bird feeders full.

Spring will be arriving soon, what are your plans for this new year? Travel, planting a garden, home improvements or projects? Be sure to include time for yourself whether it be exercise, reading, prayer or time with friends. I am looking forward to attending a retreat in March. Due to Covid I have been unable to go on my required yearly retreat since 2019. Time apart from everyday life is so important to renew ourselves in mind, body and spirit.

Speaking of renewal, remember to renew your membership if you have not done so already! Executive Council is working hard to finalize plans for our reunion in Lubbock in October. They also have some exciting new ideas for increasing awareness of our organization and growth. If you did not know; all members may attend our executive council meetings each month via Zoom. We welcome your input,

suggestions and ideas, log in and see what is happening.

I pray that all of you are staying safe from Covid and looking forward to Spring, hopefully it will be here soon. Be on the lookout for the signs; different birds in your yard as they fly south again, early spring blooming plants, leaf buds on the trees and warmer weather.

Spring blessings of new life,
Susan Pinter
Chaplain

REUNION CHAIR

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Our 50th Reunion/Symposium will be happening in Lubbock, Texas, on October 6th, 7th and 8th. Our hotel will be:

MCM Elegaté Hotel & Suites
801 Avenue Q
Lubbock, Texas 79401

Booking of rooms will not be available until after May 1st. Full details and registration information will be in the next Briefing June 1st. Make sure you have your membership up to date so that we do not miss you. Looking forward to seeing everyone!

Mary Roemer, Reunion Chair



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

94 FTS Midfield Construction

Happy New Year from Colorado!

The 94th Flying Training Squadron (94 FTS) has a rich history of exposing thousands of cadets, their families, and members of the civilian community to the joys of aviation through the soaring airmanship program at the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Every year, USAFA cadets and officers fly thousands of sorties, create dozens of the Air Force's youngest Instructor Pilots, and travel all across the country for air shows as well as aerobatic and cross country soaring competitions. For the past two decades, the 94 FTS has operated in two geographically separated squadron buildings on USAFA's Davis Airfield due to the sheer number of students, instructors, and guests that soar next to the Rocky Mountains every day. In November of 2021, after years of diligent design work and allocation of funds by the 94 FTS, 306th Flying Training Group, 10th Air Base Wing, USAFA and our contracted builders, we finally broke ground on a seven million dollar expansion and renovation project at our midfield building. This project will (at long last) consolidate all of USAFA's soaring operations to a single building while also creating a central location to highlight our airmanship and soaring heritage pioneered by those service members that came before us.

Once it is completed in 2023, USAFA's 94 FTS operations will become a state-of-the-art soaring facility with a singular focus: to inspire the next generation of cadets by exposing them to the joys of airmanship through soaring. Our midfield

building will transform our Virtual-Reality enabled simulator training by incorporating over a dozen Immersive Training Devices ([see 94 FTS Update from the Spring 21' edition of The Briefing](#)) while more than doubling the functioning space dedicated to soaring operations. Additionally, the design team integrated critical enhancements to our operations by adding an external courtyard for cadets to eat and rest between flights, two mass briefing rooms dedicated to our core soaring classes (cadet solo program and cadet instructor pilot qualification), and a redesigned office area to consolidate all operational and administrative mission elements of the squadron. Additionally, there will be a home (i.e. RV parking) for our most valuable piece of equipment, the "Battle Wagon," that we use as a mobile operations center while competing around the country. The operational efficiencies gained by these enhancements will accommodate over 150 cadets and staff while reducing the wasted travel time across Davis Airfield on a daily basis. Even better, the consolidated midfield building will have dedicated space along the interior walls to highlight the past, present, and future of soaring!

The 94 FTS's soaring heritage dates back from WWII when we were known as the 94th Troop Carrier Squadron (94 TCS). C-47s flown by 94 TCS pilots towed CG-4A Waco gliders outfitted with troops and equipment during the assaults on Normandy, Southern France, Holland, and Germany as well as the relief of Bastogne. After years of inactive service, in 1983 the 94 TCS

was reactivated and designated the 94th Airman-ship Training Squadron. In 2004, the squadron was split into several units under the 306th Flying Training Group, including the 94 FTS. From that time, tens of thousands of students



have soared over the Rocky Mountains prior to their military careers as officers in the United States Air and Space Forces. Many of our graduates have led distinguished careers as astronauts, highly decorated combat aviators, commanders, and test pilots. Above all, countless soaring cadets have gained the love and appreciation for flight, just as our predecessors did during the 20th century.



This passion to soar will be truly exemplified throughout the renovated midfield building. The basic strategy is to make the new facility



both the “crown jewel” of Davis Airfield and a soaring center worthy of the hundreds of distinguished guests that visit each year, and most of all – worthy of the cadets and officers who fly at the 94 FTS. The squadron is currently designing museum-quality exhibits to tie our soaring heritage with today’s USAFA airman-ship.

Thanks to all those that came before us, we are confident this new soaring center will continue

to generate a passion for aviation in generations to come. The 94th FTS eagerly awaits the time where members of the WWII Glider Pilots Association and cadets from USAFA are once again able to meet in person to learn from each other’s soaring experiences. Until that time, we hope this publication finds you and your families well.

—CHRIS R. HEISERMAN, Maj, USAF
Chief Pilot, 94th FTS, USAF Academy, CO

325th Glider Infantry Regiment (GIR) waiting for the signal to board for the ride into Normandy by the 439th Troop Carrier Group.



LET'S GO! *Motto of the 82nd Airborne*

As I'm sure you all know by now, the 82nd Airborne Division, our gracious hosts at the 2019 reunion in Fayetteville, have been deployed to Poland in response to the crisis in Ukraine. Please keep the troopers and their families in your prayers.

Actually, remembering the incredible capabilities that we saw on display at Fort Bragg, and hearing the words of Lt. Colonel Stewart Lindsay, Commander, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Brigade, at our Saturday evening banquet, perhaps it might be more appropriate to pray for any forces that might be so unfortunate as to engage them in combat.

That being said, it must still be a stressful time for the 82nd families and our hearts are with them.

(Interesting fact for all you USAFA cadets and graduates, the nickname of the 82nd is Falcons.)

Bruce Overman
Immediate Past Chair



325th Airborne Infantry Regiment the direct descendent of the 325th GIR, waiting to dash across a street in Baghdad, Iraq, as part of their mission, searching for suspected militants.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/325th_Infantry_Regiment_\(United_States\)#/media/File:82ndinBaghdad.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/325th_Infantry_Regiment_(United_States)#/media/File:82ndinBaghdad.jpg)

EIGHTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GLIDER PILOT PROGRAM

1942—1945

BY CHARLIE DAY AND PATRICIA OVERMAN



ON THIS SITE IN MAY 1941 THE FIRST AIR CORPS PILOT OFFICERS REPORTED FOR GLIDER TRAINING. THE SIX OFFICERS WERE LED BY MAJOR FRED R. DENT, JR. WHO LATER WAS TO DIRECT THE DEVELOPMENT AND PROCUREMENT OF MILITARY GLIDERS. THE ELMIRA AREA SOARING CORP. SCHOOL PROVIDED THE BASIC TRAINING USING SCHWEIZER AIRCRAFT CORP. TWO-PLACE GLIDERS. MAJ. GEN. H. H. "HAP" ARNOLD, CHIEF OF AIR CORPS, VISITED SEVERAL TIMES TO LEARN ABOUT GLIDERS TO PREPARE FOR THE MILITARY GLIDER PROGRAM. THIS PLAQUE IS DEDICATED TO THOSE CIVILIAN AND MILITARY PERSONNEL WHO CONTRIBUTED MUCH TO THIS WORLD WAR II PROGRAM.

DEDICATED 16 MAY 1991 BY THE NATIONAL WORLD WAR II GLIDER PILOTS ASSOCIATION.



On this site in May 1941 the first Air Corps Pilot Officers reported for Glider Training. The six officers were lead by Major Fred R. Dent, Jr. who later was to direct the development and procurement of military gliders. The Elmira Area Soaring Corp, School provided the basic training using Schweizer Aircraft Corp, two-place gliders. Maj. Gen. H.H. "Hap" Arnold, Chief of the Air Corps, visited several times to learn about gliders to prepare for the military glider program. This plaque is dedicated to those civilian and military personnel who contributed much to this World War II program. Dedicated 16 May 1991 by the National World War II Glider Pilots Association. Erected: 1991 by National World War II Glider Pilots Association.

Condor Air Field, Twentynine Palms Air Academy, Twentynine Palms, California
Schweitzer glider.



Sailplanes! The sailplane community provided the first trainers and aircraft used by the glider pilots in January 1942. From left to right are students, 2nd Lt. Bob Cardenas, 2nd Lt. Ray Brett, 2nd Lt. Bob Rawl, and 2nd Lt. E. O. Westbrook. All were in the first graduating WWII Glider Pilot Training Class 42-1 at Twentynine Palms Air Academy, Twentynine Palms, California. The Schweitzer sailplane was used for training. The class started on January 19th and ended a month latter on February 19th. Note that these men are all Officers. In fact they are all Power Pilots. In the beginning, it was planned that Power Pilots would be glider pilots until General Arnold, Commanding General of the U.S. Army Air Forces, announced that he wanted at a minimum 6000 glider pilots to be trained.¹ Once Gen. Arnold made that mandate it was realized that the Corps could not give up that many power pilots. It was decided that the glider pilots would come from enlisted men.

1. This is where the "6000" is referenced by many books and journalists, but the National World War II Glider Pilots Association database has to date documented over 7300 glider pilots.



Top Row (L-R):

- 1. 1st Lt. Robert C Rawl**
- 2. 2nd Lt. Dale W Claybaker**
- 3. 2nd Lt. Calvin H Smith**
- 4. 2nd Lt. Edmond P Asmus**
- 5. 2nd Lt. Frederick A Rogers**
- 6. 2nd Lt. Jay C Germain**

Bottom Row (L-R)

- 7. 2nd Lt. Wayne F Trueblood**
- 8. 2nd Lt. E.O. Westbrook**
- 9. 2nd Lt. Charles F Hobart**
- 10. 2nd Lt. Raymond E Brett**
- 11. 2nd Lt Robert L Cardenas**
- 12. 2nd Lt. William S Waltman**

This is the first graduating class from Twentynine Palms Air Academy. In the late 1970s the National World War II Glider Pilot's Association began looking for the names of the men who graduated from 29P 42-1. By September, 1979, Dale W. Claybaker had sent the Pilot Officers graduation roster and the photo of the first graduating class to Bill Horn, editor of "Silent Wings" the Association's newsletter. Now there was a need to identify the men in the photo with the names on the roster. In time the match was made by Floyd Sweet, Jonny Robinson and Robert Cardenas.

The complete roster for all six classes have been added to the [membership resources page](#) as well as the ability to see who was in each class throughout the entire training program.

The summer Briefing will cover more of the training program from the beginning including the opening of Stuttgart, Ft. Sumner, Dalhart, Victorville and Lubbock training fields.

The following is taken from the Condor Air field Log:

Jan 19, '42: Class 42-1 started flying. Class consisted of 12 Officers. Once school owned Schweitzer glider available to fly them by using pulley tow. Operations from two small flight shacks on the lake.

Feb 3, '42: Three Army Schweitzer gliders arrived and put into operations. Class 42-2, consisting of 18 officers started flying. Flying time 12:58 with four gliders.

Feb 5, '42: Double pulley tow tried and proved unsuccessful due to lack of power of tow car.

Feb 7, '42: First emergency landing. Pilot Lt. Hobart, minor damage.

Feb 10, '42: Double airplane tow tried and proved to be successful. Tow plane was L1-A, then designated as 0-49.

Feb 14, '42: First night flight tried and proved successful. Flight was double tow with Lt. Rawl and Lt. Trueblood in the gliders. Lt Adair flew tow plane.

Feb 20, '42 Class 42-1 graduated 100% from the 30 hour course, but seven days behind schedule. Class 42-3 made up of 23 officers started flying.

Feb 21, 42: Lieutenant Salisbury head first landing in Glider number —15 miles from field, walked back and reported major damage to ship.

Feb 22, 42: Wind velocity 42 mph. No flying. Wreckage of one Glider brought in.

Feb 23, 42: Newsreel men here for stories and pictures.

Feb 24, 42: Highwinds. Ship number four blown over on its back while being towed to starting line. Major damage. Two gliders left in operation out of original four.

Mar 5, 42: One new cinema glider arrived and went into operation, nicknamed the "ruptured duck".

Mar 10, 42: Lieutenant Thomas made unauthorized parachute trap, was later eliminated from the course.

Mar 13, 42: Glider in one back in operation, also two new gliders. Lt. Paulson head first landing 5 miles ENE of field, no damage. Glider towed back by tow plane next morning.

Mar 14, 42: Class 42-2 finished 30 hour course, 15 days behind schedule.

Mar 16, 42: Class 24-4 made up for the 24 officers started flying

Mar 17, 42: Two ships flew by winch tow from Deadman Lake

Mar 19, 42: Continued use of two shifts on Deadman Lake as auxiliary field, total of eight ships in operation.

Mar 22, 42: Lieutenant Wojcik in glider 1 flew through telephone lines by parking lot, caused major damage to ship. Lieutenant Wojcik was seriously injured, was picked up by a ship from Douglas aircraft at 11:30 PM and taken to Marfield, where he died a few days later.

Mar 25, 42: Class 42-3 graduated 12 days late. Class 42-5 consisting of 24 officers started flying.

Mar 30, 42: Three more L1-As arrived. April 4, 42: Refresher course started.

- April 5, 42: Two solo ships collided while working a thermal, both landed safely with only minor damage.
- April 6, 42: Class 42-4 finished 10 days before schedule. Class 42-6 consisting of 24 officers started today.
- April 10, 42: Lt. Helm and Lt. Kanak collided in midair in ships 10 and 11. The ships locked together and landed on a pile of rock just over the ridge north of the field. Both students instantly killed and ships total totally wrecked.
- April 17, 42: Flying called off due to high winds. Two ships were unable to get back to field and were blown over on their backs. No injury to personnel. Four gliders left in commission.
- April 19, 42: Class 42-5 graduated nine days behind schedule.
- April 27, 42: Class 42-7 consisting of 22 enlisted men and a lieutenant colonel started flying.
- May 2, 42: Class 42-6 finished eight days behind schedule. Leaving only 42-7 to fly.
- May 18, '42: Class 42-8 (40) enlisted men started flying.
- May 27, 1942. Instructors refresher course started.
- May 29, 1942. Class 42-7 finished four days late.
- June 3, 1942. 51 students, enlisted and officers started flying.
- June 13, 1942. Aviation student Campbell's solo ship became entangled in tow wire while on tow winch at Deadmans Lake, causing him to crash, killing him and wrecking the glider. Winch tow discontinued as of this date.
- June 20, 1942. Class 42-8 completed course eight days late.
- July 3, 1942. Class 42-9 completed course seven days late.
- July 6, 1942. Class 42-12 (51 enlisted men) started flying on new program of 17 1/2 hours in two weeks. Instructors and tow pilots checking out at night flying. Field lighting and plan of night operation worked out and presented to army supervisors for final approval.
- July 10, 1942. Three flight shift started, morning, afternoon, and night.
- July 13, 1942. Class 42-13 (42 students) started flying.
- July 15, 1942. Nine place Glider test flown off this day on field today.
- July 18, 1942. Class 42-12 finish today on schedule.
- July 20, 1942. Class 42-14 (20 students) started flying today.
- July 25, 1942. Class 42-13 completed their course on schedule.
- July 27, 1942. Class 42-15 (64 students) started flying.
- July 28, 1942. Class 42-14 finish four days ahead of schedule.
- August 3, 1942. Class 42-16 (53 students) certified.
- August 7, 1942. Instructor Wells and students landed at Ferry Command field, Palm Springs, Glider hauled back in trailer.
- August 8, 1942. Class 42-15 completed course on schedule. Instructor Tuntland and student had force landing on north end of Deadmans lake just before dark. A search was started and continued until 9:30 PM., at which time it was called off. A short time later the student and the instructor walked in. Instructor Kimball and Morrison ships collided while on double tow at night. Minor damage to ships, no personal injury.

August 10, 1942. Class 42-17 (39) students started flying

August 16, 1942. Class 42-16 completed the course one day late.

August 18, 1942. Class 42-18 (58) students started flying.

August 23, 1942. Class 42-17 completed their course.

August 25, 1942. Class 42-19 (78) students started flying. Government-loaned instructors started working.

September 1, 1942 class 42-18 completed course three days late. Class 42-10 (69) students started course.

September 13, 1942. Class 42-19 completed course eight days late.

September 14, 1942. Class 42-20 (167) students started course.

September 18, 1942. Class 42-20 completed course seven days late.

September 21, 1942. Class 42-22 (75 students) started course. Program changed back to 30 hours in four weeks.

September 24, 1942 Link trainer time started today and incorporated in curriculum.

September 26, 1942. Class 42-21 completed course eight days late.

September 29, 1942. Class 42-23 (150) students start a course.

October 13, 1942. Class 42-22 finished course two days late. Started use of BT-15 as tow planes. Class 42-24 (150 students) started course.

October 24, 1942. Two fields in Operation on night flying.

October 26, 1942. Lieutenant Stockton crashed on Deadmans Lake in a BT while supervising night flight there, killed himself and demolishing ship.

Three gliders being towed by a single aircraft take off from the Army airfield at Twentynine Palms; all will be released from the tow line at altitudes of 4,000 feet or more.

Department of Defense Photo (USAF) AC2553



Image accessed from "U.S. Marines at Twentynine Palms, California." History and Museums Division, HQMC (Washington, D.C: 1989)

This is all of the log that we have for Condor field however it does give a sense of how the program developed and how even though men were being trained it still seemed like an experimental program. In reading this it also seems that there was a lack of monetary support for the program. Not enough gliders (sailplanes) and not enough tow planes. Even though men were being trained to fly a sailplane it was very evident to the Army Air Force that these sailplanes were not the same skills that would be needed to fly a glider carrying a quarter ton truck and (2) or (3)men or a howitzer with (7) men or a complete (13) man load and the CG-4A glider would not be available until the summer of 1943. None of the Officer Pilots in the first six classes ever flew a glider in combat.



WEST COAST AIR FORCE TRAINING CENTER (GLIDER)

TWENTYNINE PALMS, COLIFORNIA

PROCEEDINGS OF THE FACULTY BOARD OF THE AIR FORCE TRAINING DETACHMENT

West Coast Air Force Training Center

29 palms, California

IN THE CASE OF PILOT OFFICERS OF CLASS NUMBER 42-1 THROUGH 42-6

The faculty board met on June 15th, 1942, all members being present (see exhibit "A" attached).

The board then proceeded to consider the Pilot Officers of Classes 42-1 through 42-6 for appointment for the rating of "Glider Pilot", in compliance with paragraph 1.a., RA 95-60 and to also consider the physical, moral and professional qualifications of each Pilot Officers.

The Board findings:

That all Pilot Officers of class 42-1 through 42-6, inclusive, are physically, morally, and professionally qualified for the aeronautical rating of "Glider Pilot".

That all Pilot Officers considered by the board were graduated from the Air Force Training Detachment (Glider) of the West Coast Air Force Training Center on the dates indicated.

PILOT OFFICER ROSTER

CLASS 42-1 GRADUATED FEBRUARY 19, 1942

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>ASN</u>	<u>Home Station</u>
2nd Lt.	EDWARD P. AMUS	0-424706	ACAFS, Dothan, Alabama
1st Lt.	RAYMOND E. BRETT	0-391574	AFTD, Twentynine Palms, Calif.
2nd Lt.	ROBERT L. CARMENAS	0-423198	ACAFS, Kelly Field, Texas
2nd Lt.	H. LE W. CLAYBARGER	0-417096	ACAFS, Luke Field, Ariz.
2nd Lt.	JAY C. GERMAN, Jr.	0-418096	ACBWS, Moffett Field, Calif.
2nd Lt.	CHARLES W. HOBERT	0-420501	ACAFS, Craig Field, Alabama
1st Lt.	ROBERT C. PAWL	0-412878	AFTD, Twentynine Palms, Calif.
2nd Lt.	WENDELL A. ROGERS	0-417106	ACAFS, Stockton Field, Calif.
2nd Lt.	C. L. IN H. SMITH	0-416905	ACAFS, Stockton Field, Calif.
2nd Lt.	WAYNE P. TRUEBLOOD	0-424762	ACAFS, Craig Field, Alabama
2nd Lt.	WILLIAM S. WILMAN	0-424312	ACAFS, Greenville, Mississippi
2nd Lt.	ERIC O. WESTERHOOK	0-429199	AFTD, Twentynine Palms, Calif.

OUR BARBARA—A FOLLOW-UP

BY HANS DEN BROK



Barbara 1944



Barbara today

In the [Spring 2021 issue](#) of ‘WWII Glider Pilot’s Briefing,’ the digital magazine of the National WWII Glider Pilot Committee, is my article about Barbara. Barbara was a war orphan adopted by the 77th Troop Carrier Squadron.

In the article I mentioned that Barbara was still with us, but that I had not yet gotten in touch with her or any of her two children. But not long after publication of the article, I received an email from Barbara’s daughter,

on 16 May 2021. Of course the article was shared, emails exchanged. Barbara remembered the day at Welford Park. Susan, who is Barbara’s daughter, wrote me:

I have had a long & interesting conversation with my mother. I was already aware of some of the facts, as she has obviously reminisced about those times since I was a child. It was very moving however to talk to her in detail about those times. She is just about the last member of the family that can tell us

anything regarding the war.

Let us start with the day she spent at the airbase. She has very fond memories of this day. The Americans were keen to have a 'poster' orphan child & they were keen (my mum has no idea why she was chosen) to have my mother. My mum had lost both her parents at this time, & was living with her grandparents. She would only agree to going if her brother



Mrs. Doris Penning



Mr. Henry Penning

was also allowed to go with her. She spent time & had photos taken with many of the airmen & officers.

She has a vivid memory, that afterwards a beautiful dress was sent to her from one of the American officers, once he had returned to the states. It was a dress that no one had ever seen before in this country. It

had a bright red velvet bodice & a multi colored swaying skirt. My mother loved it.

Both her & her brother, had been taken out of London, with her mother prior to the bombing. Her father had returned to London due to work commitments. After some time her father thought it was safe for them to return back to London with him. Shortly after this their house was bombed. She can remember it was very dark at the time & she was taken from her bed & taken downstairs. Her mother had hold of her in the living room & her father was in the hallway. Her brother was being held by both parents & he was in the doorway to the hall. There was understandably panic taking place. My mum says she could hear the whistle of the bomb, right before it hit their house. Her father was killed outright. Her mother died a short time after while trying to comfort both her children. My Uncle took a very bad knock to his head, which lead to him having to have surgery. My mother was buried alive, holding her mother's hand, when her hand was seen & she was dug out to safety. She was, bless her, in deep shock at the time & hardly spoke. We would recognize her reaction following this event today & she would have had some child therapy. In those days, no one really spoke to her about her parents.

My mother is a remarkable lady.

She doesn't have an exact date when this happened, but she knows it was in February & she was 6 years old. That would put it firmly in February 1944, as she was born in 1937.

I have read your emails to my mother & shown her the article that you sent to me. She really has no concept of how special she really is. She went through so much, at a very young age. She has always felt, like a huge hole is missing for her, being deprived of both her parents.

I can only thank you, Hans for getting in touch with me. Family history is so important, & unless you had contacted me, I would only of had the bare facts.

Thus ends a research started in the fall of 2019. All triggered by curiosity about details, the hope of finding such details, to learn more, and taking action to get to learn more.



FLIGHT OFFICER JOHN "JACKIE" LESLIE COOGAN

OCTOBER 26, 1914 - MARCH 1, 1984

"THE KID"

BY PATRICIA OVERMAN AND CAPT. TREVOR SHIMULUNAS, USMC



Child actor Jackie Coogan poses for a poster for the Los Angeles drive of the Hoover "Starving Children" fund, on page 27 of the March 19, 1921 Exhibitors Herald. Twenty years later Flight Officer John "Jackie" Leslie Coogan will heroically guide a pathfinder glider behind enemy lines into the jungle of Burma and light the way for eleven other gliders to land with valuable equipment and men to help stop the tyranny of the Japanese Army.

Photo from public domain

Photographer unknown.

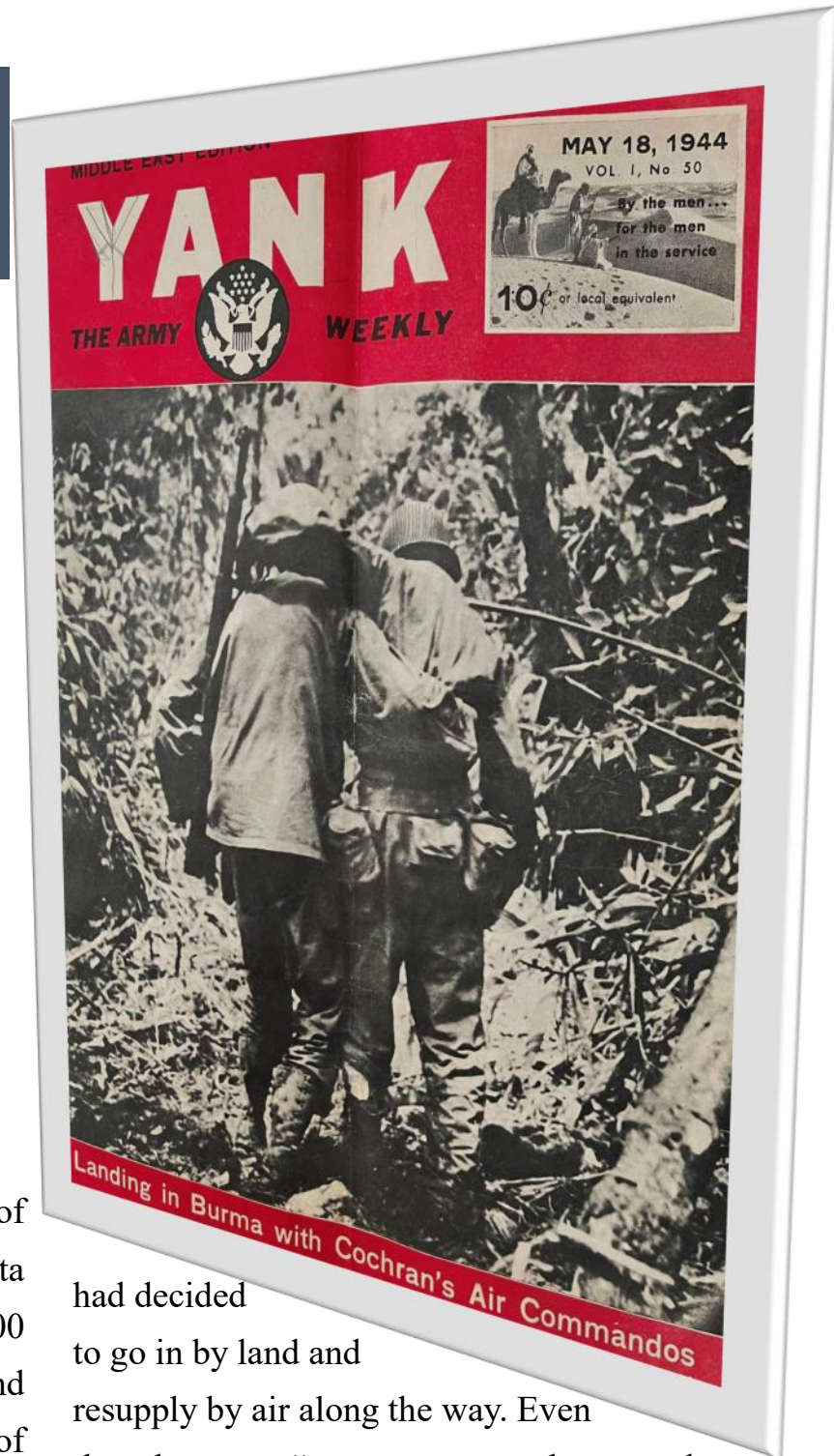
[INDEX](#)

NATURE OF OUR MISSION

5318th Provisional Air Unit¹ Narrative
regarding their arrival in India.

“Although no definite statement has been made by any of the men in power, everyone in the outfit had by this time a more or less general idea of what our mission was all about, it was the general feeling that we were to support General Wingate in his efforts to take Burma. Everyone had heard of his disaster of the previous year, and it was common knowledge that every effort would be taken to prevent a similar occurrence. Comments had been heard to the effect that at the Quebec Conference it had been decided that General Wingate would receive certain American support. This support to be primarily ‘Air in nature.’”

The objective of the British invasion of Burma was simple, to get nearly 600 Dakota sorties and 100 glider sorties conveying 9,500 men of all ranks, engineering equipment and 1,100 horses and mules into the heart of Japanese occupied Burma to extricate the Japanese. However, this task was extremely complicated due to a number of factors: the requirement to fly a fully loaded C-47 over the 8,000 foot Imphal range of mountains, the difficulty of landing in jungle terrain, and the lack of air superiority. General Wingate, Commander of the British forces in Burma,



had decided to go in by land and resupply by air along the way. Even then there was “no easy way on the ground to get around.” No decent way to get a plane loaded with men and supplies into Burma. There were streams, rivers, and an 8,000ft mountain to contend with—not to mention the fact the British did not have air superiority.

At a war conference in Quebec in 1943, Gen. Wingate laid out his plan to engage the

Japanese in Burma in order to relieve pressure on the Chinese. After days of discussion, it was decided that the United States would provide Army Air Forces to support Wingate's Long Range Penetration idea. The original plan for support was primarily casualty evacuation and logistical resupply. However, it did not take long for some American innovation to be presented to the British general. General H. Arnold, Commanding General of the Army Air Forces, put two charismatic colonels in charge of the air group that would support Wingate, Col. Phil G. Cochran, and Col. John R. Alison, both of whom had already distinguished themselves in the service. Col. Alison recalled these instructions from Arnold, "*I am giving you 200 L-5 and L-1 type aircraft. I want you to go in there and take out General Wingate's wounded...I not only want you to do that...but I want the USAAF to spearhead General Wingate's operations.*"

At the time of the Americans' arrival in Burma, General Wingate did not know what the 5318th Provisional Air Unit could do for him. In fact no one in the Theater knew what the American unit could accomplish. Col. Cochran walked in and was told of Wingate's plan to conduct a ground movement through the jungle. Seizing his opportunity, Cochran explained that his plan was instead to fly the Allied troops into the heart of Northern Burma. A long-range vertical envelopment into Japanese held

territory. When asked if he could do this in two weeks, he said he could get Wingate's men into Burma in one week's time or less if needed.

To achieve their goal, Wingate's force would need to set certain conditions. The first would be to establish air superiority with a Bomber group and a P-51 squadron. Then the plan was to fly in gliders with engineers and equipment to build expeditionary airfields on clearings in the jungle – this would allow more rapid buildup of combat power and resupply. The glider waves would also fly in elements of the 77th and 111th Indian Infantry Brigades, composed of British Chindits. The role of the Chindits was to sever Japanese communication and supply lines, cutting a swathe of surprise and destruction that would sow extreme chaos amongst the Japanese occupying forces. After the air fields were built, the DC-3 Crews would bring in the rest of General Wingate's men.

Cochran's plans were considered, and the details of the glider missions formed quickly. Landing zones in the jungle would have to be carefully chosen to allow sufficient landing space for the gliders.

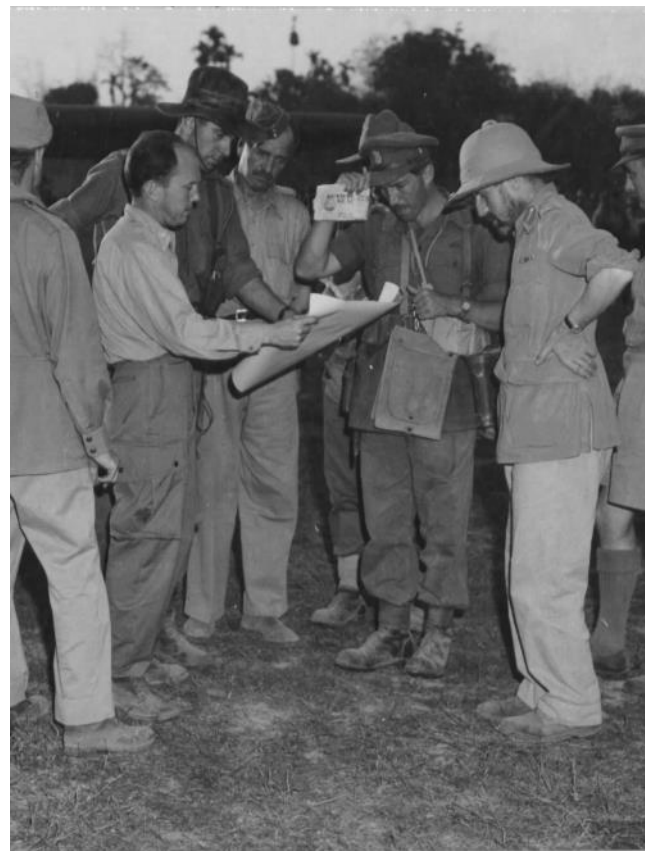
Three locations were identified as good options for glider landings and to build the air strips: PICCADILLY, BROADWAY and CHOWRINGHEE. It was decided to use

PICCADILLY and BROADWAY on the night of March 5 -6 and then go into CHOWRINGHEE on D+1, the night of March 6-7. Crewlists were created with the pilots and tow pilots assigned to each other by Chalk numbers designated by a P for PICCADILLY and a B for BROADWAY. The mission called for 40 gliders into PICCADILLY and 40 into BROADWAY.

On D-Day at 1630 hours, just one half hour before the glider's mission was to begin, the photographic unit attached to the 1st Air Commandos produced a crucial packet of photographs that would change the mission dramatically. Based on a hunch, Captain Charles "Rush" Russhon had convinced Colonel Cochran to allow him to conduct a photo-reconnaissance of PICCADILLY. What he saw must have chilled his blood. His reconnaissance had revealed that the entrance to the landing zone and the entire field was now blocked with teak logs that were hard as rocks. Furthermore, the dragging of the logs had caused deep ruts along the potential site. Rush recounted later that after discovering the problems at PICCADILLY, he was running out of time to get his intel back to General Wingate and the 1st Air Commandos. He flew back from the LZ directly to Hailakandi, where the photo laboratory was set up. Attempts to radio Colonels Cochran and Alison were unsuccessful in the chaos of

the pre-invasion preparations. After the photos were developed, Rush realized there was no plane available to bring him to Lalaghat. "I was in a fine confusion. The only thing I could think of was a jeep, and was about to start on a wild ride for twelve miles, when a fighter plane landed" (Thomas, "Back to Mandalay," p. 202).

The P-51 pilot, an American colonel, had stopped at Hailakandi for directions to Lalaghat. Pressing the photos onto the pilot, Rush told him the stakes and asked for a delivery. By the time Rush arrived back at Lalaghat, Cochran and Alison were already analyzing the picture. PICCADILLY was out.



General Wingate (Right) examines the PICCADILLY photographs with his staff.

This was devastating to Wingate. CHOWRINGHEE would have to be used. Wingate put the decision to Brigadier “Mad Mike” Calvert, commander of the 77th Indian Infantry Brigade. Calvert had this to say, “I am prepared to take all my brigade into Broadway alone and take the consequences of a slower build up as I don’t want to split my brigade either side of the Irrawaddy.” He felt that if the 77th went into two LZ’s separated by the river, their mission would be in jeopardy. So, the 80 gliders were now entirely scheduled to go into BROADWAY the night of March 5-6, 1944.

“I, therefore, decided to start with BROADWAY alone. It was probably fortunate that we did so, since lessons we learned in the glider landings on BROADWAY were put into practice the following night when CHOWRINGHEE was utilized.”
—General Orde Wingate in an initial After Action Report dated March 19, 1944 (National Archives)

FLIGHT OFFICER
JOHN “JACKIE” LESLIE COOGAN

Within the 5318th Provisional Air Unit was the 319th Troop Carrier Squadron responsible for the DC-3s and gliders. In the roster of this squadron was Flight Officer John Leslie Coogan, MOS 1026, Glider Pilot.

John was at Twentynine Palms Air Academy, Twentynine Palms, California, for his basic glider training and graduated from advanced glider training at Victorville Army Air Field, Victorville, California, on Jan 18, 1943. On entering the Army Air Corps, he had a civilian pilot’s license. He enlisted in the Army on March 4, 1941. After Pearl Harbor was bombed and the U. S. entered World War II, John requested a transfer to the Army Air Force. He probably wanted to fly fighters, but he had turned 27 on October 26th, two months before his transfer request. He was too old to qualify for flight training, but with his civilian pilot’s license (and with military gliders bearing no such restriction on his age) the only option left for him was glider flight training.

After graduation, Flight Officer Coogan was transferred to the 5318th Provisional Air Unit, 319th Troop Carrier Squadron. In January 1944, the British and Americans began glider training maneuvers at Lalitpur, India, as a demonstration for General Wingate and Lord Louis Mountbatten. During the time they were at Lalitpur, the glider pilots (including Flight Officer Coogan) slept in their gliders at night. After the demonstration the 5318th Provisional Air Unit returned to Lalaghat Air Field, India, to begin preparations for the invasion of Burma.



Glider training was part of this preparation. A flight of ten gliders landed on the air field at Lalaghat. Each glider had to wait in the hot sun for a jeep to come get them to move them to the glider stand, a protected parking area. The sun was strong and inside the gliders the temperature was reaching 100 degrees. Flight Officer Coogan was rather innovative on this day at Lalaghat Air Field. As Flight Officer Coogan was awaiting his turn he was watching an Indian working with an elephant moving logs.

F/O Coogan asked the Indian to have the elephant tow him and he would pay the Indian with American cigarettes. They hooked up the elephant and all was going well for about 50 yards when the elephant, nervous about the large hulk of the glider following it, stopped and looked back at his burden. To the elephant it must have looked like a CG-4A glider was coming right at him when he panicked and ran for the treeline, taking the

glider and F/O Coogan into the jungle with him. The elephant lost his glider, the glider lost its wings, and the tow rope broke from the glider.

“In an area devoid of entertainment, this incident gave the glider pilots a much-needed laugh and taught them that elephants are unreliable tow-vehicles” (Devlin p. 142).

Flight Officer Coogan’s alternative task was overseeing the maintenance of the tow ropes. This may sound trivial, but it was a very critical job. This was the lifeline between the glider and its tug. Any frays or anomalies in either the rope or the connection apparatus would have been a serious problem. However, even though he could control the quality of the tow ropes, he could not control orders from superiors on the overloading of the glider force. This excess weight was one of the causes behind lost gliders on the BROADWAY mission. (continued on p. 29)



Flight Officer John Coogan, famous child actor of the silent screen, assembles tow rope apparatus. "Jackie", an excellent glider pilot and former glider enthusiast before the war, has complete charge of these precious nylon tow ropes upon which hinge the safety of the gliders and their cargo of the 1st Air Commando force, India. December 1943. —Curtesy of the U.S. National Archives

According to Operational Orders for THURSDAY, Flight Officer Coogan was slated to fly a glider on dual tow into PICCADILLY. His chalk number was 32P.

A HISTORICAL RIPPLE EFFECT

One of the reasons the Burma campaign is so difficult to research is the general lack of administrative records kept by the 1st Air Commandos. Cochran was opposed to “wasting” space and manpower on administration, and took to heart General Arnold when he said, “To hell with the paperwork, go out and fight!” Over the years, this internal neglect has been combined with misreported facts by newspapers and reporters during the war. Historical reports and archives tell us that F/O Coogan was originally assigned to fly into LZ PICCADILLY. He did not fly into LZ BROADWAY, but was assigned as the lead glider pilot for the subsequent flight into LZ CHOWRINGHEE. His was the first glider to land at CHOWRINGHEE. However, a news story was printed back in the west that incorrectly claimed Jackie Coogan piloted the first glider to land in the overall operation (an honor which goes to Glider Leader, Captain Bill Taylor who first touched down at BROADWAY). This mistake, one which was never corrected with a statement from Coogan, damaged the relationship between

Coogan and the other veterans of the operation and continues to surface as supposed fact nearly 80 years later.

From the moment that story was published, Jackie Coogan became a phantom pilot in Burma, appearing in both LZs, flying anything from an L-5 to a CG-4A. In one book, “Strange and Obscure Stories of World War II,” by Don Aines and published in 2020, a General Ferguson [sic] supposedly reports from LZ BROADWAY that Jackie Coogan arrived in a flight of light planes to evacuate wounded the morning after the landing. “This was our first experience of these very gallant light plane pilots, one of whom was Sergeant Jackie Coogan of Charlie Chaplin and *The Kid* fame” (Aines, 92). This would have been impossible for two reasons: firstly, because Jackie Coogan was already on the crewlist for the flight into CHOWRINGHEE that same night and would not have been able to make it to BROADWAY in a light plane and back in time for the coming mission. Secondly, Brigadier Fergusson was not the Brigade Commander at BROADWAY. He was, in fact, the commander of 16th Brigade who had the ground mission in Wingate’s plan. We take the last quote from Aines’ book and compare it to the memoir of Brigadier Calvert, “Chindits: Long Range Penetration,” which was published in 1973, “This was our first experience of these very gallant light plane

pilots, one of whom was Sergeant Jackie Coogan of Charlie Chaplin and *The Kid* fame” (Calvert, p. 35). The quote is the same one from Aines’ book, though Calvert’s memoir was published 50 years earlier. Coogan appears in various other accounts, such as in “War in the Wilderness: The Chindits in Burma 1943-1944” by Tony Redding, where a wounded sergeant explains how he was evacuated by Jackie Coogan flying a light plane after the sergeant was injured in a patrol around the White City (a strongpoint established to block a railway near Mawlu).

So, what really happened? Many glider pilots did fly the L-1 or L-5 in addition to their role in the CG-4A cockpit. Brigadier Calvert did have troops evacuated by light plane from LZ BROADWAY, though Coogan would not have been one of those pilots on March 6th. After his landing at LZ CHOWRINGHEE the night of March 6th, Coogan remained in the theater. White City was established at Mawlu by Calvert’s brigade around March 19, 1944, two weeks after the landings at BROADWAY and CHOWRINGHEE. Therefore, Calvert’s recollection of Coogan flying out some of his injured soldiers could just be a matter of the days running together in his head.

Furthermore, the thought of Brigadier Fergusson having troops evacuated by Coogan is also possible – just not from LZ BROADWAY as was claimed in Aines’ book. To our readers, the list of names from the Burma campaign is long, while historical documentation is short. It seems likely that multiple authors throughout the years have expanded on a few snippets of factual events with misappropriated names and places. We therefore have included the next section of our article about LZ BROADWAY, based on Brigadier Calvert’s otherwise extremely detailed memoir of his time in Burma. We offer this as a framework from which to examine how the Coogan facts get distorted in modern writing, but with the understanding that Calvert’s recollection is within the realm of possible for casualty evacuation of the 77th Brigade – just not by Jackie Coogan on D-Day in LZ Broadway!

BROADWAY: March 5-6, 1944

The commander of the 77th Indian Infantry Brigade, Brigadier Calvert, described in his book, “Chindits: Long Range Penetration” how the excellent skill of the Air Commandos allowed the evacuation of many of his wounded from the BROADWAY landing zone. The unexpected presence of deep ruts and buffalo holes hidden under the elephant grass, coupled with an (continued on p.32)



Front row (L-R): **Flight Officer Samuel F. Steinmark**; **Second Lieutenant H. J. Delaney**; **unidentified**; **First Lieutenant Vincent J. rose**; **First Lieutenant Jackson J. Shinkle**; **First Lieutenant Patrick H Hadsell**; **flight Officer John L. "Jackie" Coogan**. Back row (L-R): **Flight Officer Francis L. Randal**; **First Lieutenant Soloman Schnitzer**; **Flight Officer James S "Mickey" Bartlett**; **unidentified**; **unidentified**; **flight Officer Leo Zuk**; **First Lieutenant James E Sevewr**; **First Lieutenant Steve T. Uminmski** — Names from R. D Wagner's *Any Place Any Time, Any Where* Pg 53.



Photo Caption: *AIR COMMANDOS BUILD FIELD, MOVE TROOPS BY AIR TO FIGHT BEHIND JAP LINE IN BURMA* — *The Air Commando Force was commanded by Colonel Philip Cochran, U.S. Air Force. The Commandos transported the troops of Major General Orde Charles Wingate's British Command to the field where the ground forces were able to begin operations against the enemy. Troops commanded by General Wingate were landed some 200 miles east of Imphal. Glider pilots and some members of the Colonel Cochran's Commandos pose beside a glider just before taking off from the Lalaghat (India) field. Flight Officer Jackie Coogan can be seen at the far right (kneeling).* — Courtesy of the U.S. National Archives

The group photo was taken prior to the discovery that Piccadilly had been sabotaged.

overall congestion of gliders in the landing zone, caused still more gliders to wreck, killing and injuring dozens of Chindits, Air Crew, and Engineers. These wounded men were a grave worry for Calvert, because if it came to a Japanese attack, the 77th would be unable to maneuver against the enemy and also carry their wounded. The day of March 6th, after the initial landing, Calvert recounts that Major Rabori, USAAF, had arrived at BROADWAY with a flight of 12 light planes, L-1s and L-5s. "Rabori gallantly offered to fly the wounded back...This was our first experience of these very gallant light plane pilots, one of whom was Sergeant [sic] Jackie Coogan," he recalls (Calvert, p35).

At 1925 hours when the first troop transports were landing at BROADWAY, one pathfinder glider and eleven others left Lalaghat Air Field for CHOWRINGHEE.

[The authors emphasize that the previous description of Coogan's work on BROADWAY was a misappropriation, and that the following sections are once again solidified in historical fact]

CHOWRINGHEE March 6-7, 1944

After the successful landing in BROADWAY, Wingate decided to exploit the landing zone at CHOWRINGHEE. On D+1, a second group of 1st Air Commandos landed 12 gliders at

CHOWRINGHEE, approximately 58 miles to the south of BROADWAY. The landings were successful despite the loss of one of the crews. However, the LZ had two distinct disadvantages. First, it was perilously near to the enemy air and ground forces and lay in a completely flat, open area of forests that had been traversed by vehicles in all directions. Second, the troops needed to cross the Irrawaddy River westwards before they would be much use for their objective. Upon Wingate's inspection of CHOWRINGHEE, he determined that it had served its purpose after successfully landing multiple columns of the 111th Brigade and providing the Japanese a distraction from BROADWAY, after which he ordered the rest of the 111th be flown into BROADWAY. (AFHRA A8024)

The following is from YANK May 18, 1944:

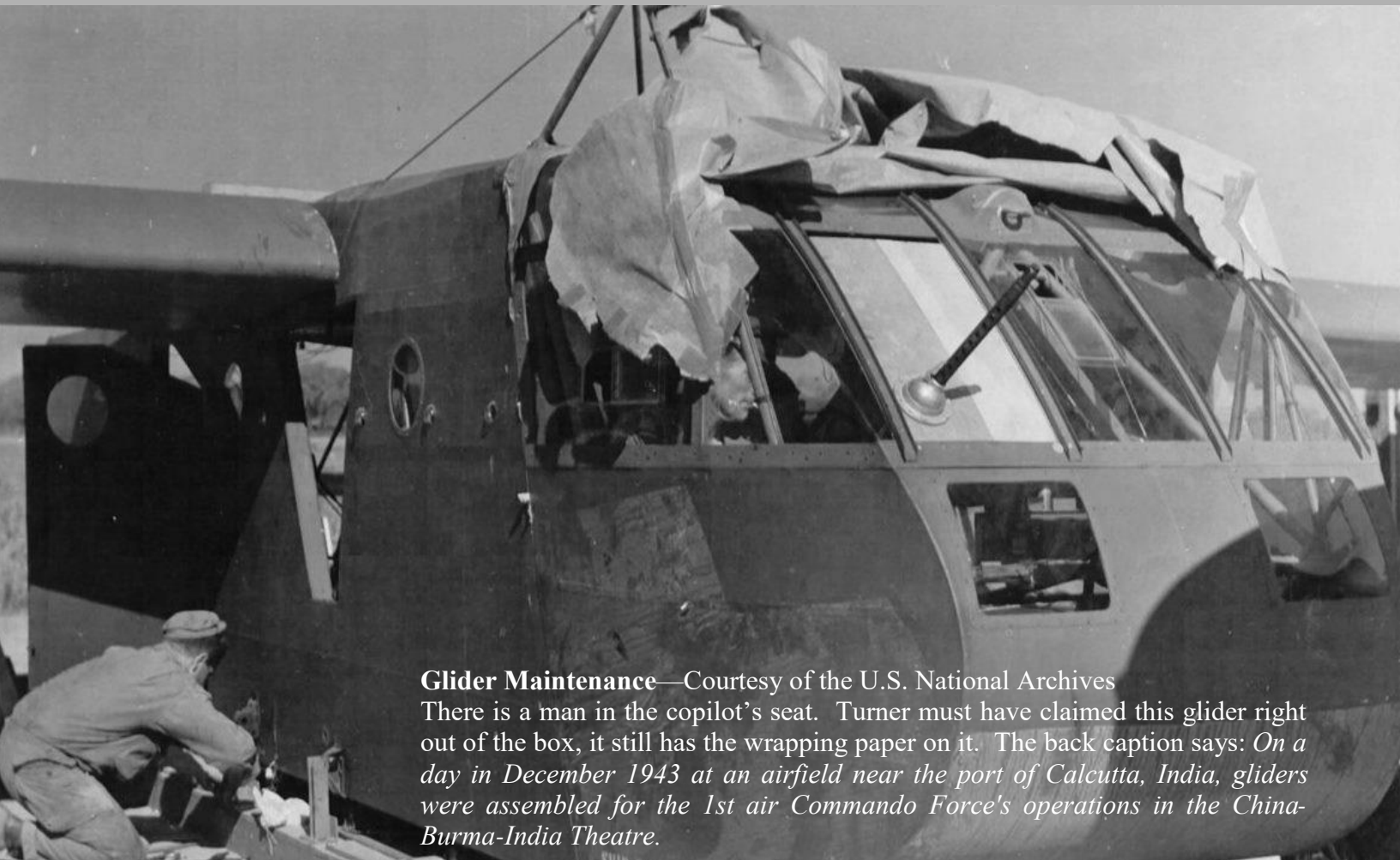
"Sudden up and downdrafts over the mountains force the gliders to sway and dip like flying surfboards. Jap ack-ack guns opened up as the gliders passed over the Chindwin River, but all got through safely. Flight Officer (now 2nd Lt.) Jackie Coogan, onetime child star of the movies, piloted the first glider to land. His tow-plane pilot was Maj. William T Cherry Jr. of Quail, Tx., who had also towed the first glider into the first field [BROADWAY]."

“Coogan cut his glider loose from the tow plane at 1,000 feet, did a 360-degree turn and landed at 120 miles per hour on an unlighted field, covered with four-foot [elephant] grass.”

Immediately upon landing in a dark field F/O Coogan instructed his Gurkhas to the edges of the landing zone to set up a perimeter of the area where an air strip would be constructed. F/O Coogan ran to set out smudge pots to guide the other 11 gliders to the LZ. In these following gliders came then F/O Charles B. Turner, piloting his glider Chalk #9C. F/O Turner had a unique glider. He had taken a machine gun from a wrecked B-17 and had

mounted the gun in the nose of his glider which could be fired, if need be, by his co-pilot: a Gurkha lance corporal. It was the only glider in WWII that was armed in a combat mission.

Seconds after the smudge pots were going the other gliders began landing. Two of the gliders were damaged by a rough landing, one being F/O Turner’s glider which lost its wings and skidded past the other gliders on the LZ. No one was hurt in these two landings. The last glider Chalk #12 was flown by Lieutenant Robert Dowe. He was carrying the most precious and needed cargo; a bulldozer and three engineers to (continued on p. 35)



Glider Maintenance—Courtesy of the U.S. National Archives
There is a man in the copilot’s seat. Turner must have claimed this glider right out of the box, it still has the wrapping paper on it. The back caption says: *On a day in December 1943 at an airfield near the port of Calcutta, India, gliders were assembled for the 1st air Commando Force’s operations in the China-Burma-India Theatre.*

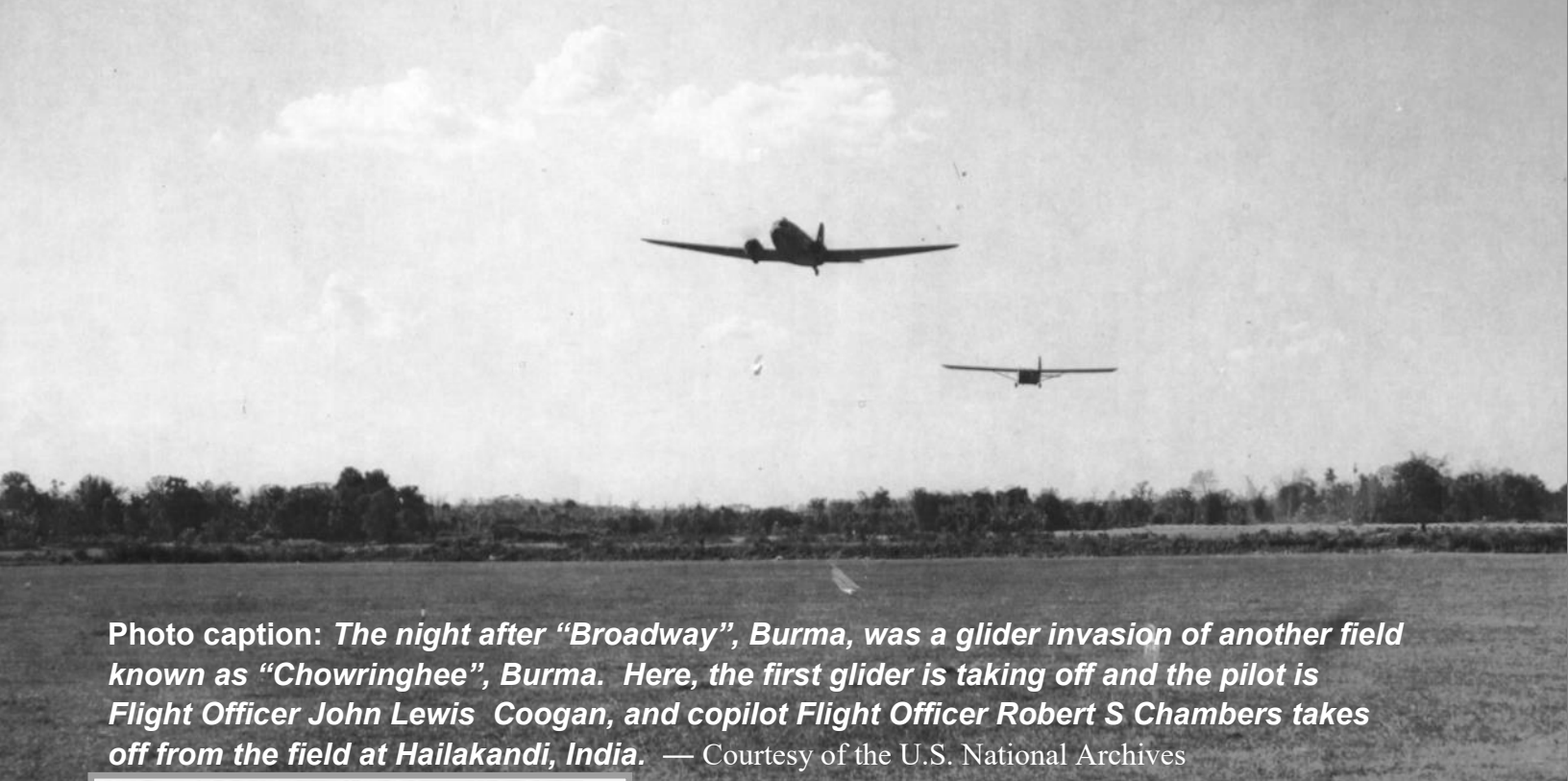
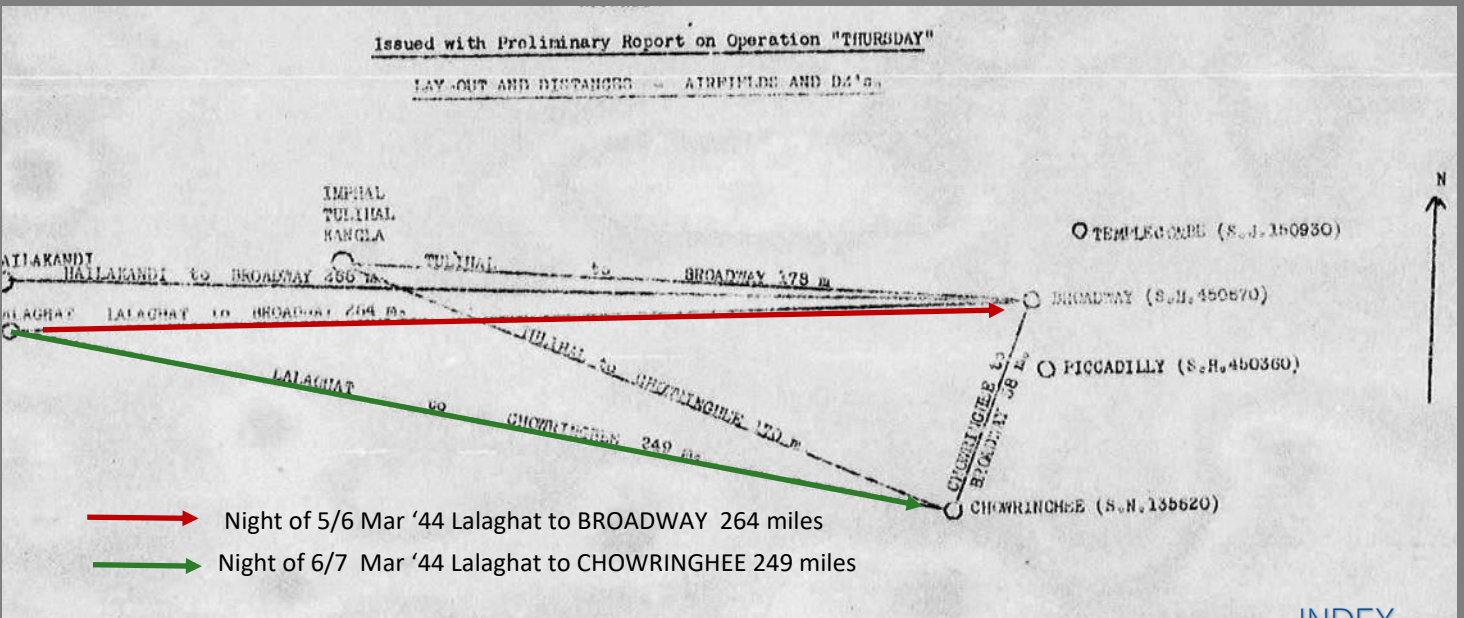


Photo caption: *The night after "Broadway", Burma, was a glider invasion of another field known as "Chowringhee", Burma. Here, the first glider is taking off and the pilot is Flight Officer John Lewis Coogan, and copilot Flight Officer Robert S Chambers takes off from the field at Hailakandi, India.* — Courtesy of the U.S. National Archives

CHOWRINGHEE		
10	Coogan	F/O John L COOGAN
20	Sever	1st Lt James E SEVER
30	McKaig	F/O Harry L MCKAIG
40	HadSELL	1st Lt Patrick H HADSELL
50	Dowe	1st Lt Robert L DOWE
60	Lavarre	F/O Erwin H LAVARRE
70	Healy	F/O William M HEALY
80	Lopez	F/O Edmond LOPEZ
90	Turner	F/O Charles B TURNER
100	Uninski	1st Lt Steve T UNINSKI
110	Zuk	F/O Leo ZUK
120	Chambers	F/O Robert S CHAMBERS

Both Lt. Col Clinton H GATY and F/O Jack U KLARR flew as into CHOWRINGHEE but we do not, at this time, know if they were in gliders or came into the LZ later in light planes. They both received Air Medals. (Price G.O. No.58 dated 24 April 1944 Pg. 7&8.) and Lt. Col Clinton was the commander of the CHOWRINGHEE mission. The caption above is questionable. Was the roster changed again at the last minute? Gerald Devlin, author of "Silent Wings:..." wrote that Coogan flew with F/O Chambers as copilot. Did he get that idea from the above photo caption? According to the Operation's notes Flight Officer Chambers piloted the 12th glider.



construct the dirt landing strip. Dowe approached the landing zone but overshot it on the first pass. He did a graceful 180 degree turn and lined up again with the smudge pots on the runway. But what could not be seen with that approach was a tree at the far end of the landing zone. The nose of Lt. Dowe's glider made a direct hit with the tree and all on board were killed. As the glider tumbled, the bulldozer went through the nose of the glider and was destroyed. The work on the air strip now had to wait for more engineers and equipment. F/O Coogan was ordered to keep his men out of sight until another glider could get to the LZ the next day.

“At sundown the next night, the Gurkhas started cutting down the high grass with their kukri knives. They had cleared 12 acres of land when a glider coasted in at 2100 hours, bringing a piece of engineering equipment from India.

Shortly after, line officers Billy Mohr of Portland, Oregon and Vernon Noland of Port Natchez, Texas flew in with a glider from the first Burma strip, carrying another piece of equipment and Corporal Hybarger to operate it. Other gliders followed with two more pieces of machinery and a Jeep. At 2115 hours, the aviation engineers, under first Lieutenant Jeremy Andrulonis of Shenandoah,

Pennsylvania, went to work. There were just five men on hand to operate the four pieces of equipment, the odd man doubling as mechanic for the other four and a chauffeur for the Jeep, which raced around the field delivering messages or towing Gliders off the runway. Exactly 4 hours after the engineers began work, they completed a 3,000-foot grass runway, on which a C47 set down at 0125 hours with British reinforcements.

Three days after Coogan landed, the Jap bombers came over and ripped the strip to bits. But by this time, it didn't matter much; all the British troops had moved out the night before, headed for a new objective, and the Americans had gone, too, taking along their gliders and engineering equipment. All the Jap did was waste their bombs on what had been only a temporary landing strip for Wingate's Raiders.” --Yank Magazine

According to the 319th historical file six of the gliders that landed at CHOWRINGHEE were retrieved and taken back to base. Four were damaged and the enemy destroyed two.

2ndLt. John Coogan continued in his squadron on missions until June when many of the men in the 319th were ordered to return to the States and proceed on a war bond drive.

After the war, 2ndLt. John Coogan returned to film and TV as Jackie Coogan, eventually

appearing as Uncle Fester in *The Addams Family* 1964 TV series. Having lived a life in theater, of both film and military campaign,

he honorably served his country in one of WWII's most innovative operations. He passed away on March 1st, 1984.



"In 1944 and in 1945, Captain Jett was in charge of a group that flew C-47 and CG-4A demonstrations. At these demonstrations, the government set up a large tent from which it sold war bonds. Jett's group included his favorite CG-4A glider pilot, F/O John Bryant, and F/O John Leslie "Jackie" Coogan who had just returned from duty in the Burma/India theater. In addition, there were a number of Airborne Troopers, other C-47 pilots and a nurse. This group flew mainly in the upper region of the country. Their demonstrations were flown at cities in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Missouri, Kansas, and west to California." — *The Homefront Landing on a Dime: War Bond Drives by the USAAF Troop Carrier Glider and Airborne Demonstration Teams* By

Notes:

1. The Unit name 1st Air Commandos (1ACG) was not used by the Army Air Force, who instead used 5318th Provisional Air Unit. The historical documents started using the 1ACG in late March 1944 as their official title.
2. Jackie Coogan had a civilian pilot license and was an excellent pilot and loved to fly gliders as well as single engine planes. He also was an excellent athlete and while in school at Bowman Field he helped them with all the swimming competitions they had with other College teams.

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OPERATION VARSITY
24 MARCH 1945
SECURITY AT CHÂTEAUDUN- 439TH TROOP CARRIER GROUP
"Horse-high, bull strong and pig-tight"

OFFICE OF THE GROUP INTELLIGENCE OFFICER
439TH TROOP CARRIER GROUP
APO 133, U.S. ARMY

D/Y/1

31 March 1945

SUBJECT: S-2 Section Historical Summary for March 1945.
(Report on security, Varsity mission)
TO : Group Historical Officer, 439th Troop Carrier Group,
APO 133, U.S. Army.

1. AS part of the operation, considerably prior to the arrival of the Airborne, a "Security Plan" was developed and issued to all units, covering in detail the various phases of security as they had to be dealt with from the time the station was "sealed" until the mission was over, and the restriction finally lifted by Command. The Station Security Officer, (Lt. Saltzman), the Provost Marshal, (Lt. Sheehy), and representatives of the C.I.C. and C.I.D. assisted the Group S-2 Section in developing the plan, which dealt in detail with each angle of security, benefitting by our past experiences. The result was that upon the arrival of the Airborne the sealing became effective, and the plan operative.
2. A Security Office was opened in Group Headquarters, manned from 0700 to 1900; an officer was placed on duty at each of the two main gates to assist the MP's; the system of temporary, permanent, and civilian passes began operating, and all personnel were restricted to the "station", which included the field, and, in the case of the 94th Squadron and Headquarters officers, also their respective billets in town.
3. Differently from the past, the primary responsibility for issuing passes was placed on the unit adjutants, thus saving the jam-ups which formerly occurred at the Station Security Office. A goodly number of C.I.C. and C.I.D. men were on the prowl both in Chateaudun and at the field.
4. The streets of the town were bare of American soldiers, except for those in convoys. MP's seemed to be everywhere. At the main gate the MP's meticulously checked not only one's field pass, but one's military credentials. One MP, new to the job, after comparing the photo on Major Bob Martin's AGO card with his

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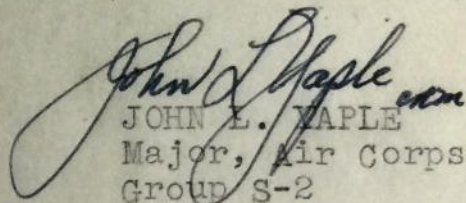
(Ltr, Office of Gp Intel O, 439th Trp Carr Gp,
Subj: S-2 Section Historical Summary for March 1945.) - Cont'd.

physiognomy, respectfully asked him to remove his cap, so he could see if the balding head of the photo was true in real life!

5. Around and on the field bristled our ack-ack, manned constantly; aircraft guards were doubled and tripled; radio jeeps whizzed around on patrol, on the roads in the immediate vicinity of the base, and on the perimeter. All roads except the main Chateaudun-Orleans road were closed off; the Airborne were billeted in a tent area enclosed by barbed wire, patrolled by MP's, and with several determined-looking armed guards at the single gate. No one could make an off-base phone call unless his name was on the switchboard's special list, and in each case he was warned to guard his conversation. This control was so tight that when a switchboard operator found an officer's spelling of his name did not agree with the spelling on his list, he refused to put the call thru.

6. Entrance to the War Room, this time set up in Hotel du Chateau, was again controlled by special War Room pass, with an MP at the door to check the curious. A new wrinkle was used on the main briefing before the mission. Just before getting in the trucks in the respective areas to go to the theater, a careful check was made to insure that only those personnel were there who were required to attend, and then each man was handed a briefing room pass, so that he had no chance to mislay it; and entrance at the theater was only by such pass.

7. All in all, the security at this field was tighter than for any preceding big mission, even Normandy, due probably to the fact that all hands are getting accustomed to the routine, as to any S.O.P., and the diligence of a number of officers and men who worked long hours in order to make the "sealing" "horse-high, bull-strong and pig-tight."


JOHN L. YAPLE
Major, Air Corps
Group S-2

A RACE AGAINST TIME:
ASSEMBLING AND EMPLOYING 500 CG-4A "WACO" GLIDERS IN NORTH AFRICA
AS PREPARATION FOR OPERATION HUSKY – THE INVASION OF SICILY
BY COLONEL MARK C. VLAHOS (USAF-RET)
LEON B. SPENCER RESEARCH TEAM
MARKCVLAHOS.COM

Under G.O. No. 23, Headquarters Northwest African Air Forces (NAAF) dated 20 March 1943 the NAAF Troop Carrier Command (Provisional) was activated on 21 March 1943 under the command of Brigadier General Paul L. Williams.¹ The standup of a provisional Troop Carrier Command (TCC) was necessary to oversee the now two complete Troop Carrier Wings operating in North Africa and to plan their role in Operation HUSKY - the invasion of Sicily. The 51st Troop Carrier Wing (TCW), comprised of the 60th, 62nd, 64th Troop Carrier Groups (TCG) under the command of Brigadier General Ray A. Dunn was operating in North Africa since November, 1942. Reinforcing the 51st TCW for Operation HUSKY was RAF 38 Wing, under Wing Commander Barton and two squadrons of the 315th TCG (the other two were in England). The newly formed 52nd TCW, comprised of the 61st, 313th, 314th, and 316th TCGs under the command of Colonel Harold L. Clark had just arrived from the States. Note: the 316th TCG actually deployed in December 1942 to Egypt, but was attached to the 52nd TCW for Operation HUSKY.

The idea and approval for Operation HUSKY, the code name later given for the

invasion of Sicily, was decided at the Casablanca Conference in January of 1943. By late April, preliminary invasion plans called for the use of paratroops in both American and British operations prior to amphibious landings of ground forces. The final allocation of airborne forces saw the American 82nd Airborne Division assigned to support General George S. Patton's sector and the British 1st Airborne Division assigned to support the British Commander, Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery. In preparation for Operation HUSKY, the NAAFTCC (Provisional) then directed a heavy training program to be undertaken between all C-47 and Airborne units from 1 April 1943 until 30 June 1943. Toward the later part of the period, a series of combined training exercises was carried out between the 51st TCW and the British 1st Airborne Division and between the 52nd TCW and the U.S. 82nd Airborne Division. In May 1943, orders were issued for the first time in the history of the USAAF requiring the tactical employment of gliders.² Specifically, glider employment between British Airborne and American Troop Carrier units was directed to the 51st TCW.

As part of the Operation HUSKY buildup, the first U.S. glider pilots began arriving in

North Africa in March 1943. By May 1st, there were 105 American glider pilots, 50 glider mechanics, but only four (4) CG-4A “Waco” gliders in North Africa. These four had been ferried by 60th (1 glider), 62nd TCG (1 glider) and 64th TCG (2 gliders) C-47s a distance of 3,800 miles from Accra, Gold Coast Colony (now the capital of Ghana) to airfields in Algeria. The route flown was: Accra, Roberts, Dakar, Atar, Tindouf then to the assigned fields of the Groups.³ The task to assemble and ferry the first four American “Waco” gliders from Accra to Relizane was given to 60th TCG glider pilots 1st Lt. Bennett Y. Allen, 2nd Lt. Irvin C. Kinney, Jr., F/O Russell D. Parks and F/O Jerry S. Sonken, glider mechanics, and Engineering Officer Capt. George F.

Brinkman from the 10th TCS. [Author’s note: the story of the journey of these first four gliders is worth an article in itself! Look for details in my next book.] At this time, the 60th TCG along with part of the 1st British Airborne Division and British Glider Pilots from the 1st Airlanding Brigade were stationed at Relizane and Thiersville, Algeria.

Soon more gliders, packed in crates, glider pilots and mechanics began arriving at five aerodromes in North Africa. The assembly of a large number of gliders was the first challenge NAAFTCC (Provisional) had to overcome. The first four gliders that arrived in Accra had sat outside for five months, had



American Glider Pilots in front of a CG-4A “Waco” Glider #247 at Relizane, Algeria; #247 was the first glider to land in North Africa (Photo Courtesy of F/O Don Fritz Collection)



“By May 1st, there were 105 American glider pilots, 50 glider mechanics, but only four (4) CG-4A “Waco” gliders in North Africa. These four had been ferried by 60th (1 glider), 62nd TCG (1 glider) and 64th TCG (2 gliders) C-47s a distance of 3,800 miles from Accra, Gold Coast Colony (now the capital of Ghana) to airfields in Algeria. The route flown was: Accra, Roberts, Dakar, Atar, Tindouf then to the assigned fields of the Groups.”



Crane lifting crates with glider parts. This photograph is probably taken at Greenham Common where many of the gliders for the ETO air lifts occurred. It does show how the crates were moved from ships or trains. (Photo Courtesy of National Archives, USAAF photograph)

not been ventilated, and water had gotten into the crates. Metal fittings and flight controls had rusted, gluing became loose, and fabric deteriorated. The repair and assembly work required (basically a total rebuild of the glider parts) took the glider pilots and mechanics who arrived with the four tow planes a month to complete.⁴ If the remainder of the 500 gliders arrived in the same condition, NAAFTCC (Provisional) would have faced an impossible task. Thankfully this did not happen. On April 22, 1943, at 11:55 a.m., the first CG-4A glider #247 from Accra, piloted by F/O Jerry S. Sonken landed at Relizane.⁵ That same day Capt. John E. Lyons of the 7th TCS, 62nd TCG landed at Nouvion towing one CG-4A glider. The other two C-47s from the 64th TCG encountered difficulty after taking off from Atar and were delayed reaching their airbase.⁶ Shouts of joy erupted from the U.S. glider pilots as this was the first CG-4A they had seen since flight training back in the States.

While the gliders were being assembled at Accra, the next and much larger shipment of gliders arrived at North African ports now under Allied control. These gliders had only been crated a short time and were in much better condition. However, the challenge now for NAAFTCC (Provisional) was that glider crates arrived at six different ports. The crates were then shipped via rail or truck to three major Air Depots, run by NAAF Service Command. The Air Depots were already maxed out and did not have enough qualified people to assemble the large shipment of gliders.

Two glider pilots, 2nd Lt. Charles E. Knoblauch II, 314th TCG (52nd TCW) and F/O Jerry S. Sonken, 60th TCG (51st TCW) were then assigned to the NAAFTCC/A-3

All boxes needed to match serial numbers. Note this the front box serial number is 43-12107. (Photo Courtesy of National Archives, USAF Photograph)

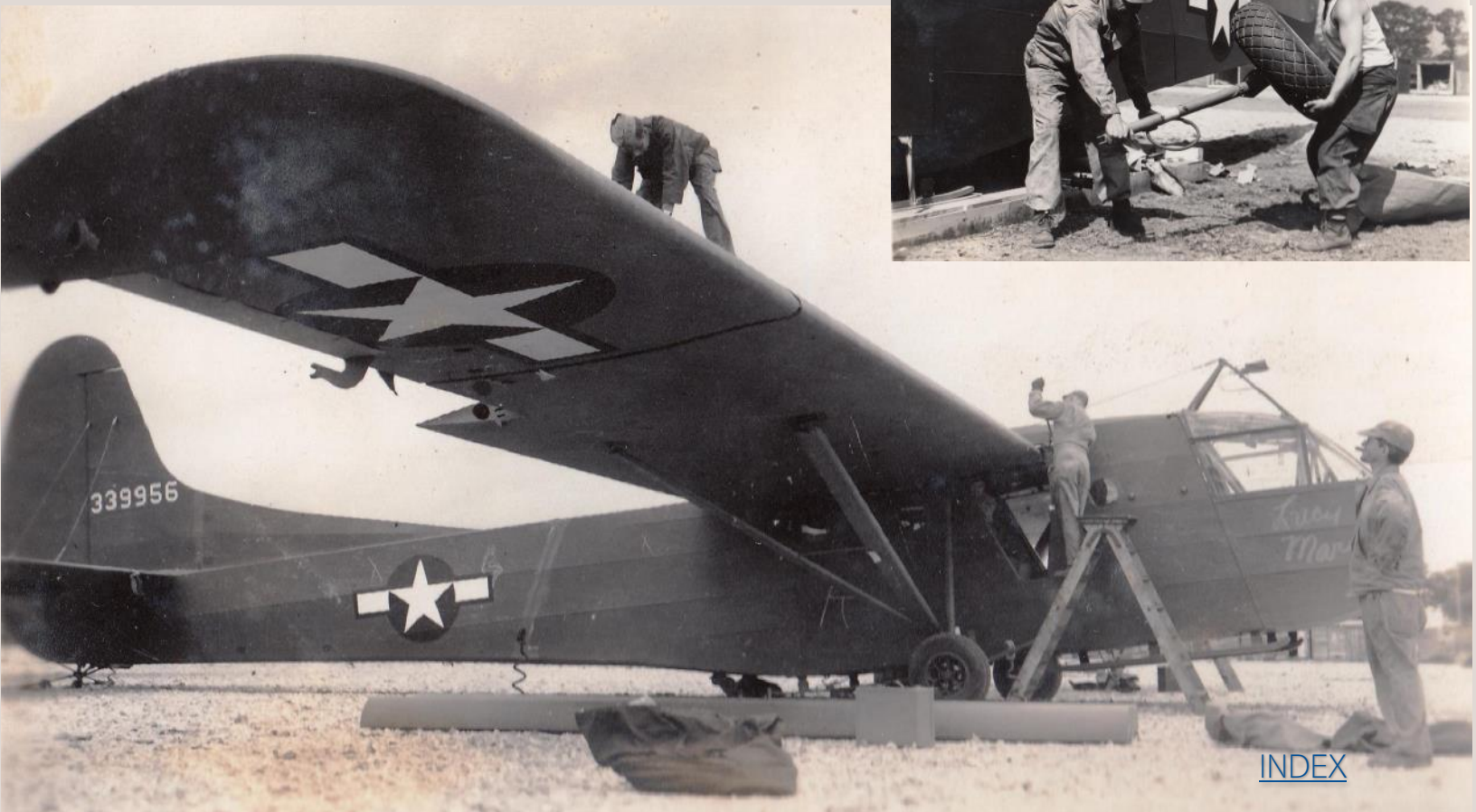


Section as Glider Operations Officers.⁷ These two men had the very important job of tracking assembly status, scheduling pickup and distribution of all gliders in North Africa. Additionally, they were responsible for the maintenance status of all gliders assigned by Group and solving parts and supply issues related to keeping gliders airworthy. The importance of their work cannot be underestimated. While these two men may not have flown as many combat missions as other glider pilots with their date of rank, the work they did in North Africa laid the foundation for the success of all glider operations in the European and Mediterranean Theaters of Operation in World War II. The three major

Air Depots for glider assembly were located at Casablanca, French Morocco, La Senia Airfield, Algeria and Maison Blanche Airfield, Algeria. Each glider required five different crates for packing and shipping, thus by June 1943, 500 gliders arrived in North Africa in 2,500 crates not without logistic problems. Except for the Ford Company, all the other gliders were each individually made and the part in each crate needed to match with its partner crate by serial number. The largest of the five crates were 24 feet long, 8 feet tall and 8 feet wide. Dock workers in the States loaded ships without regard for keeping the five crates



Glider Mechanics re-assembling gliders.
(Photo Courtesy of National Archives)



for each specific glider together. Their concern was loading the ship properly for weight and balance and facilitating a quick offload at the destination port. Obviously, this caused logistical problems finding each box with its matching serial number once the crates arrived in North Africa. To assist Service Command, Troop Carrier Command sent nearly every glider mechanic on detached service to assemble gliders. There was no standardization between assemblies at the three Air Depots; the one utilizing an assembly-line type process was able to produce 12 gliders a day.⁸ Inspectors had to sign off each assembly step by the mechanics and upon completion a glider was given another thorough inspection before a flight test. An untrained crew would be considered fully trained after completion of 2 or 3 gliders. It is documented that thirty (30) men could assemble a glider in a day for a total of 250 man hours. Tractors and cranes for handling the large crates and moving heavy sections into place were required.⁹

Wood was very scarce in North Africa and the men used the wood from glider crates to make tent floors and tables for the mess tents. Troop Carrier units would fly C-47s into the Service Centers just to load up on the prized wood!

Finally, once a glider was assembled, it needed to be flight tested and then a C-47 was needed to ferry it downrange to Troop Carrier Groups in Algeria. Again there was a shortage of tow ropes and qualified ground crew trained to prepare and hook a glider up for take-off. Due to the late arrival and assembly of gliders in North Africa, ferrying had to be done at the same time airborne training was being conducted. A tow ship

would circle the field at the assembly point as gliders had not been test flown. If the glider was not in perfect condition, the glider cut off to land, otherwise they would proceed on to their destination. Even once assembled and deployed forward, equipment and qualified maintenance personnel shortages challenged glider operations. Many of the gliders did not have a complete tow rope and there was always a shortage of sister links and release plugs. Tension meters were not available and had to be shipped from the United States and England. Tools, wood working equipment, spare parts, fabric, and dope were not available. There were never enough vehicles for ground handling. The intercom systems between the glider and tow plane arrived in theater almost too late to be utilized on Operation HUSKY.

As planning for Operation HUSKY progressed, the first-ever large-scale Allied glider assault mission was built into the plan. With a code name of LADBROKE, the mission was tasked to the British First Airborne Division to execute. British planners quickly discerned that the probability of 6 pound anti-tank guns being landed in close proximity to the objective, at night by two separate gliders, and pulled by two separate tug aircraft was minimal. This was the major tactical limitation of the American "Waco" glider when compared to the British Airspeed "Horsa" glider. Lieutenant Colonel Chatterton, the commander of the British Glider Pilot Regiment (GPR) deemed the steep dive capability and the load carrying capacity of the "Horsa" essential for Sicily Coup de Main operations. However, in April 1943, the British had the same problem as the Americans: there were no "Horsa" gliders in North Africa. The nearest

serviceable “Horsa” gliders were 1,350 miles away in England. Due to technical difficulty and lack of space, transferring “Horsa” gliders by sealift was not possible. Thus, in May 1943, the British initiated Operation BEGGAR, the dangerous and long-range towing of “Horsa” gliders by Halifax bombers to North Africa. Just like the Americans, the British found themselves in a race against time. [Authors note: I highly recommend reading Mike Peters’ excellent book *Glider Pilots in Sicily* for an account of these dangerous missions.] By July 7, two days prior to Operation HUSKY commencing, the British had successfully ferried only 27 “Horsas” from England to North Africa.¹⁰

Due to the lack of available “Horsa” gliders and a July invasion date, the only option for the British was to fly American CG-4A “Hadrian” gliders (the name given to the CG-4A by the British). Not only was there a race against time to assemble and forward deploy

CG-4As, but British GPR pilots had to be trained to fly them as well. Complicating the challenge even more was the fact that the British GPR contained only pilots and was totally dependent on American units to furnish maintenance and ground handling operations. The majority of personnel were untrained and sufficient time was not available for training. There were not enough mechanics to assign a crew chief to each glider.



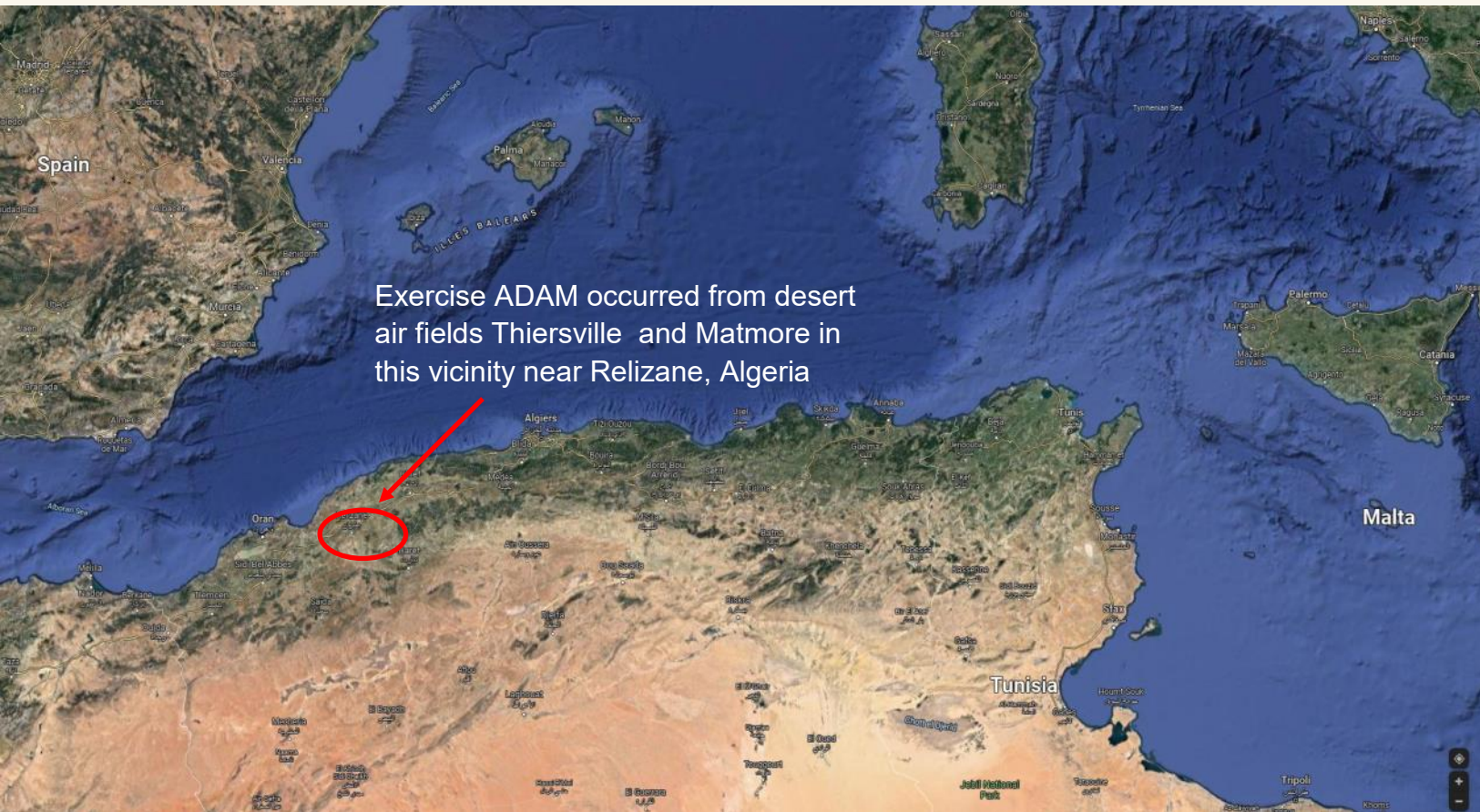
British soldiers of the 1st Airborne Division practice loading a jeep on an American CG-4A “Waco” glider prior to Operation LADBROKE
(Photo from authors’ collection)



Flight training for British GPR pilots became the priority while combat training for American glider pilots suffered. It is known that 53 American glider pilots, mostly from the 60th, 62nd and 64th TCGs, provided flight training for the British.¹¹ A six-week, intensive flight training program for the British GPR, utilizing USAAF C-47 tug crews ended just two weeks prior to the invasion. These last two weeks were needed to forward deploy the American TCGs and British 1st Airborne Division to Tunisia and the departure bases for Operation HUSKY. Each British GPR pilot received an average of 4.5 hours of flying, 16 landings and 1.2 hours of night flying in the CG-4A.¹² Two large-scale tactical Missions were flown. On June 14, 1943, less than a

month prior to D-Day, Exercise ADAM took place with 56 “Waco” gliders and C-47 tug crews involved. Exercise ADAM was launched from the strips at Thiersville and Matmore. On June 20, Exercise EVE took place with 72 “Waco” gliders and 632 Officers and men of the British 1st Border Regiment. This time the American C-47s were augmented by Albemarle aircraft from 296 Squadron RAF.

By June 25, 1943 a total of 375 CG-4As were assembled and operationally deployed to American 51st TCW bases. This remarkable feat was completed in less than 60 days and just in time for Operation HUSKY. The 322nd and 329th Service Groups attached to



Exercise ADAM occurred from desert air fields Thiersville and Matmore in this vicinity near Relizane, Algeria

NAAFTCC (Provisional) were extremely valuable during the preparation phase of operations. The service and support rendered proved conclusively that each Troop Carrier Wing should have a Services Group attached to it.¹³ On June 27, 1943 the final phase of LADBROKE began – the forward deployment of the “Wacos,” “Horsas,” and the entire British 1st Airborne Division from Algeria to Tunisia. This was no small task for NAAFTCC; the trip would average 650 -750 miles and fully-loaded



Airborne Artillerymen hook tow rope to glider.—HQ Northwest African Air Forces, Courtesy of the National Archives

glider and tug combinations needed to climb above 9,000 feet to cross the 7,000 foot-tall peaks of the Atlas Mountains. Sadly, one “Waco” glider crashed shortly after clearing the Atlas Mountains; the tail came off the glider and it nose-dived into the ground killing all 14 onboard from the British 1st Airborne Division. In addition to the fatal crash,

another two gliders made forced landings en-route, fortunately with no casualties. These long transit flights provided valuable experience over a relatively long transit route; much needed prior to the LADBROKE and FUSTIAN missions. The FUSTIAN mission was a planned follow-on combined Paratroop – Glider mission executed (cont.p50)



**Airborne Troops Entering glider...Troops of the Glider Field Artillery Battalion, enter a glider for invasion maneuvers. June 1, 1943...
(Photo Courtesy of National Archives)**

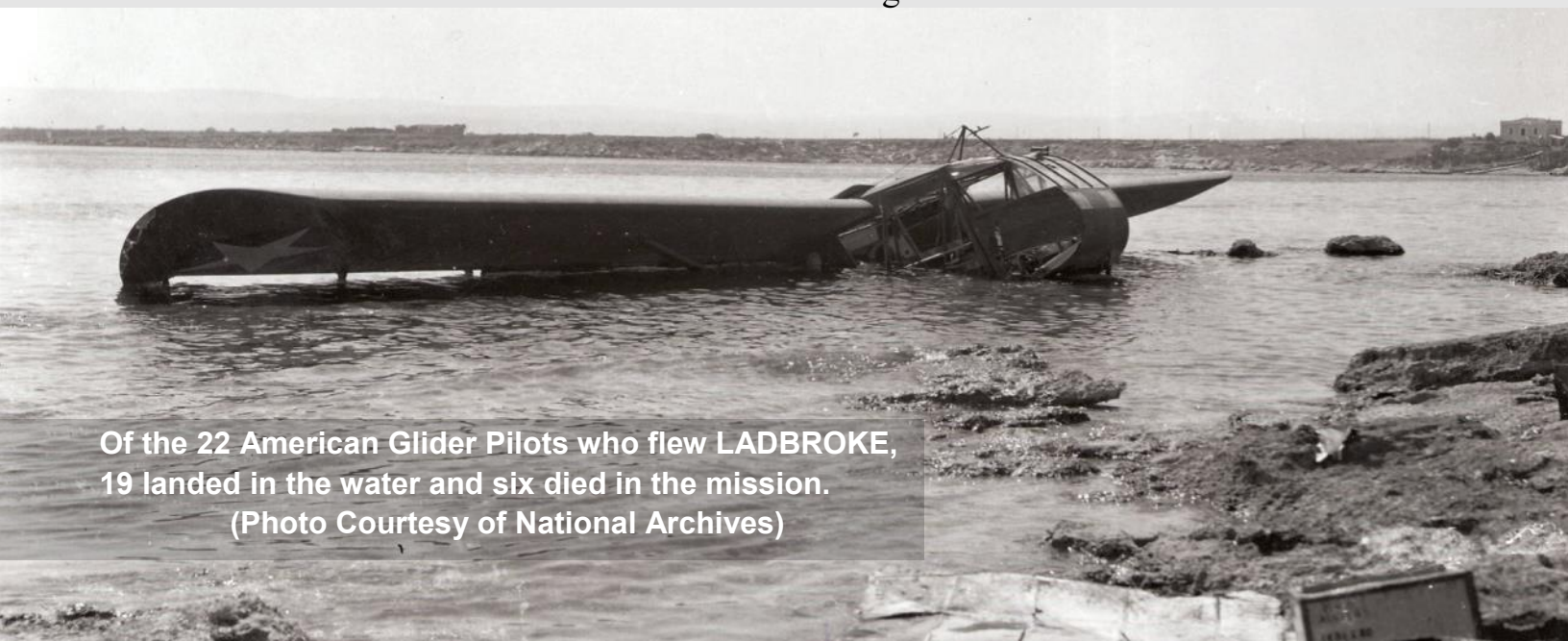


**A C-47 from the 60th TCG takes off from Relizane, Algeria
Towing a CG-4A "Waco" Glider
(Photo Courtesy of F/O Don Fritz Collection)**

a few nights after LADBROKE. Finally, the training and transit of the tug-glider combinations proved itself a strategic weapon, with a range of 1000 miles.

The hard work accomplished by American and British Army personnel enabled a launch of 129 “Wacos” and 8 “Horsas” on LADBROKE. Due to a shortage of qualified pilots in the GPR, 26 American glider pilots volunteered to fly as co-pilot on both LADBROKE and FUSTIAN. While there were some prob-

lems on initial takeoff with loads shifting and gliders having to cut off, not one “Waco” glider experienced mechanical difficulties (not counting the late-to-arrive intercom systems) worthy of a mission abort. A testament to the effort of all the American Glider Mechanics and Crew Chiefs assigned to NAAFTCC (Provisional). While the results of LADBROKE were disastrous – the majority of gliders were cut loose too far offshore to make land – never again was a release point planned 3000 yards off shore at night on a glider mission.

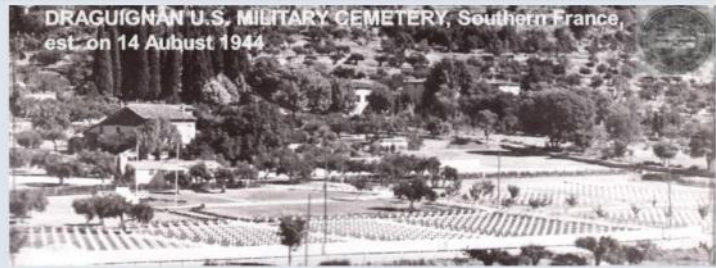


Of the 22 American Glider Pilots who flew LADBROKE, 19 landed in the water and six died in the mission.
(Photo Courtesy of National Archives)

1. Reel No. A6000, page 5
2. Ibid, page 12
3. Reel No. A0967, p. 2111, Capt. John E. Lyons Trip Report.
4. Reel No. A6000, page 13
5. Reel No. A0969, F/O Jerry S. Sonken, 11th TCS Trip Report.
6. Reel No. A0967, p. 2111, Capt. John E. Lyons Trip Report.
7. Reel No. A6000, various pages
8. Reel No. A6000, page 13
9. Ibid
10. Peters, Mike. Glider Pilots in Sicily, page 87; 1st Battalion GPR War Diary.
11. National WWII Glider Pilots Database
12. Reel No. A6000, page 13
13. Ibid, page 25

Memorial Day 2022 [Burial locations link](#)

We currently have burial information for 267 records and we add more every week. Check and see if you have a glider pilot or veteran of Troop Carrier resting in a cemetery near you, that you could honor on Memorial Day. Find out if you may place a flag. Small flags are usually available in May. Let us know about your visit.



ORGANIZATION ▾ MEMBERSHIP ▾ EVENTS ▾ THE WAR ▾ 94th FTS RESEARCH

BURIAL LOCATIONS

WE ARE SLOWLY ADDING THE CEMETERY AND BURIAL LOCATIONS OF ALL OUR TROOP CARRIER WWII VETERANS THAT WE HAVE RECORDS ON NOT JUST THOSE KILLED DURING A CONFLICT. THIS IS A WORK IN PROGRESS.

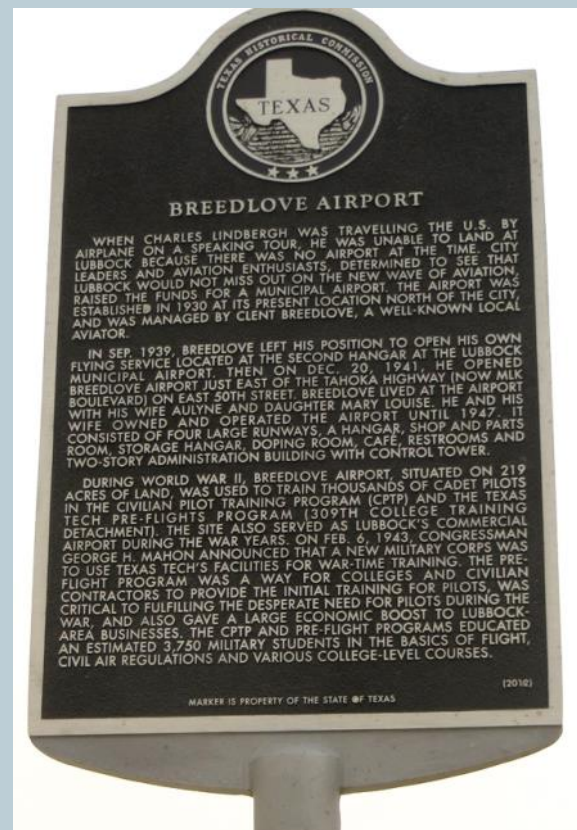
STATUS RANK	FIRST	LAST	SORT COLUMNS		CITY	STATE	COUNTRY
			CEMETERY	BURIAL			
CPT	James Harold	AASE	Fort Snelling National Cemetery	Section U-2, Site 1002,	Hennepin,	MN,	USA
MAJ	Roland W	ABBOTT	Fayetteville National Cemetery	21, O, 31,	Fayetteville,	AR,	USA
2LT	Willard Allen	ACREE	Arlington National Cemetery	Sec. 70, Site: 1585,	Arlington,	VA,	USA

KILLED IN ACTION
KILLED / LINE OF DUTY
FIND A BURIAL LOCATION

John McCullough

In our celebration of the 80th Anniversary of the Glider Pilot Program we recognize the work John McCullough has done to establish Texas State Historical Markers at the Civilian Pilot Training Program (CPTP) air fields. So far he has seen two Texas Historical Commission (THC) markers, one for Breedlove Airport at 2210 E 50th Street in Lubbock, and one for Dagley Field at 34th Street and Toledo Ave. Both are primarily for CPTP and pre-flights pilot training. John's third THC marker has been approved by the Hale County Historical Commission in Plainview for FINNEY FIELD, which was a primary pre-glider or "dead stick" school from June 1, 1942 until April 14, 1943. It should arrive in Plainview by June this year. FINNEY FIELD was located six miles north of Plainview, Texas.

We hope to have photos and information about the unveiling of this marker in the Fall Briefing.



Philippe Esvelin



Our dear friend and long time member has been spotted by Charlie Day. Philippe resides in the Southern France and has been a member for over 20 years and has attended about that many reunions. He is visiting the United States these last few days and we hope to see him at the 50th Reunion in October along with all our other international members. Philippe had the opportunity to see Charlie and Joyce and said they are doing well. In the photo Philippe is with the late Mel Pliner (82nd TCS/4436th TCG) who flew four combat glider missions.

Brodie and Colin Henderson

At the request of the Executive Director of Wings Over the Rockies Museum in Denver, Colorado, Committee members Lt Col Colin Henderson (94 FTS graduate) and Maj Brodie Henderson, USAF (Air Force Academy graduate) will be taking their open cockpit 1950 Slingsby T.21 RAF Air Cadet training glider to a Glider Showcase event at the museum on 23 April 2022. Colin said, "We heard that the 94th might also have a static display at the event, so this could be another interesting connection and opportunity to build awareness about the Committee and WWII glider history."

This year the RAF Glider Pilot Regiment (GPR) is also honoring the start of the GPR.



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

Thank you to those of you for your donations! We very much appreciate your support.

2022 NATIONAL WWII GLIDER PILOTS COMMITTEE

GARY STRIPLING in memory of **CLAUDE "CHUCKLES" BERRY**
PATRICIA OVERMAN in memory of **LEE WHITMIRE**
BRUCE OVERMAN in memory of **LEE WHITMIRE**
ELIZABETH STRIPLIN in memory of **CLAUDE BERRY**
JIM HOOPER in memory of **WILLIAM E. HOOPER**
STEVE KNOTT in memory of **GERALD KNOTT**
CATHY WELTY in memory of **RAY J. WELTY**
MICHAEL SCHELLEY in memory of **JEROME H. SCHELLEY**
DULCIE NICHOLS in memory of **GEORGE E. COUTTS**
CRAIG LECCE in memory of **PETER J LECCE**
DALE JOHNSON in memory of **GEORGE H JOHNSON**
LAURA BRIGGS in memory of **PAUL MELUCAS**
TREVOR SHIMULUNAS in memory of **LEROY SHIMULUNAS**

2022 SILENT WINGS MUSEUM FOUNDATION

RICHARD BRZOWSKI IN memory of **WILLIAM RAY DAUGHERTY**
GARY STRIPLING in memory of **CLAUDE "CHUCKLES" BERRY**
PATRICIA OVERMAN in memory of **LEE WHITMIRE**
BRUCE OVERMAN in memory of **LEE WHITMIRE**
THORN CARY IN memory of **THORNLEY C CARY, Jr**
JIM HOOPER in memory of **WILLIAM E. HOOPER**
STEVE KNOTT in memory of **GERALD KNOTT**
CATHY WELTY in memory of **RAY J. WELTY**
MICHAEL SCHELLEY in memory of **JEROME H. SCHELLEY**
CRAIG LECCE in memory of **PETER J LECCE**
DICK LASKE in memory **UNCLE ECHERT**
TIMOTHY SUMMERS in memory of **ROBERT W. SUMMERS**
DALE JOHNSON in memory of **GEORGE H JOHNSON**
GARY WOODS in memory of **WILLARD C WOODS**
STEVEN LAUDRILLE in memory of **ROBERT A LAUDRILLE**
JOSEPH DENISON in memory of **JOSEPH W. DENISON JR**
LAURA BRIGGS in memory of **PAUL MELUCAS**
TREVOR SHIMULUNAS in memory of **LEROY SHIMULUNAS**



HONORING OUR TROOP CARRIER MEMBERS

FRANK T BRANDON

CURTIS R. CAMERON

BILL S CHEOLAS

ERNEST E DUTCHER

RICHARD T FORD

JOHN H GEIST

JAMES O HAMMERSMITH

PHILIP R HOWLAND

JOHN LAMM

FRED H LUNDE

JAMES W MAGEE

JOHN JOSEPH MASON

EUGENE E MENKING

JUDSON W. PITTAM

LAWRENCE ALDEN SIDLER

ROGER W SMITH

JACK W TEMPLIN

WILLIAM WEAVER

MARSHALL W. WILLIAMS

JAMES R WINNIE

MISSIONS

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



Tony Farrar nephew of F/O JOHN HENRY ZELLE

Brad Anderson St John's Military Academy

Brook Gruszka daughter of F/O LAVERNE WESLEY COLBY**

Bonnie Crozier niece of 1st Lt EMIL MENDENHALL CROZIER

John Black Museum Director researching F/O PHILIP V LIVINGTON

Donald Doubek son of F/O FRANK RUDOLPH DOUBEK

Jim Kunst nephew of F/O GERALD J BUIST

Mike Luck son-in-law-wife's grandfather of F/O WALLACE L BUTTS

Joe Wilson nephew of F/O EUGENE W REED

Barbara Lewis niece of Capt PAUL ROBIN KIMBALL

Leendert Holleman researcher giving information on Market KIAs

Larry Bayer Museum Director

Jeff Gray step-grandson of F/O JOHN WOODWARD

Rolland Swank requesting info on F/O ARTHUR LETHRIDGE

Kelvin Wursten grandson of F/O ARNOLD LEE

Don Chambers son of F/O DONALD ST. CLAIR CHAMBERS

Robert Dubos grandson of 1st Lt MACK STRIPLIN

Jason Morden grandson of F/O FRANK LELAND KEHR

Jenni Fischer grand-niece of 2nd Lt CLIFFORD RAYMOND PALKIE

Diane Daniels daughter of F/O EDWIN THEODORE TUCKER

**Current Member—Thank you for your support!

TROOP CARRIER MOVEMENT

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



ON THE CALENDAR

BURMA

March 5, 1944

RETAGEN

March 22, 45

RHINE CROSSING

March 24, 1945

NORMANDY

June 6-7, 1944

LA LONDE

June 10-13, 1944

LUZON

June 23, 1945

SICILY

July 9 & 13, 1943

SOUTHERN FRANCE

July 15, 1944

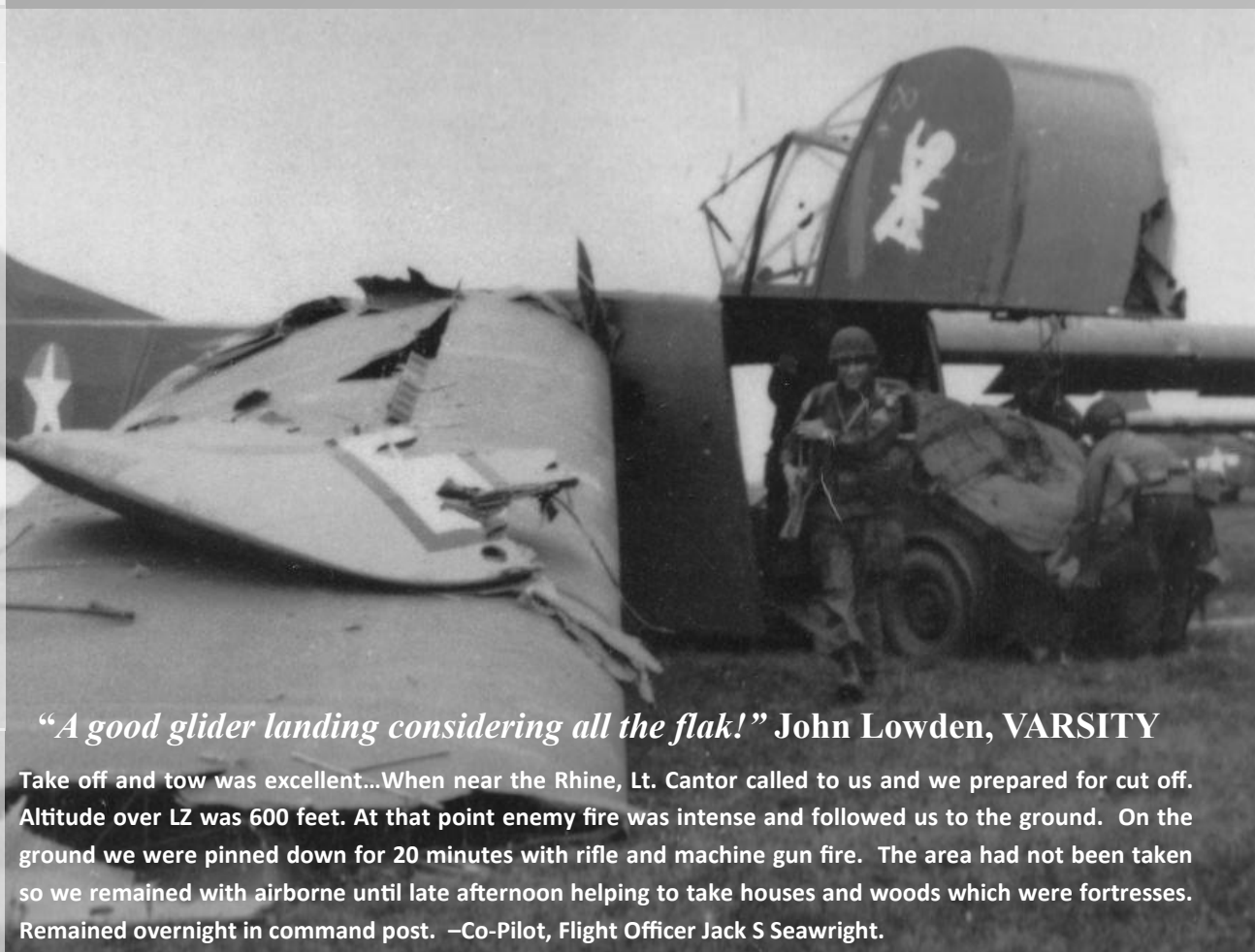
HOLLAND

Sept 17 - 26, 1944

BASTOGNE

December 23-27, 1944

DONATE TO THE SILENT WINGS MUSEUM FOUNDATION



“A good glider landing considering all the flak!” John Lowden, VARSITY

Take off and tow was excellent...When near the Rhine, Lt. Cantor called to us and we prepared for cut off. Altitude over LZ was 600 feet. At that point enemy fire was intense and followed us to the ground. On the ground we were pinned down for 20 minutes with rifle and machine gun fire. The area had not been taken so we remained with airborne until late afternoon helping to take houses and woods which were fortresses. Remained overnight in command post. —Co-Pilot, Flight Officer Jack S Seawright.

Enemy fire was intense and accurate. The weapons were of 50, 30, 88, and 20 caliber in the LZ. —Pilot, 2nd Lt. John L Lowden

Glider number 43-36885, Chalk #5, 98th Troop Carrier Squadron/ 440thj Troop Carrier Group. [photo shows chalk 8 so this may have been a glider that landed nearby Lowden in the LZ. Both 2nd Lt. Lowden and F/O Seawright marked on their report: *no damage to glider.*—English collection. Courtesy of the Silent Wings Museum.

COVER PHOTO: Still promoting the American comedy drama film *Trouble* (1922) with Jackie Coogan, on page 78 of the March 25, 1922 Exhibitors Herald. —[Exhibitors Herald \(Dec. 1921 - Mar. 1922\)](#) on the Internet Archive , [Public Domain Wikicommons](#) . Photographer: Shirley Vance Martin