

EX-POW BULLETIN

the official voice of the
American Ex-Prisoners of War

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We exist to help those who cannot help themselves



April 9, 1998~ grand opening of "our" museum at Andersonville National Historic Site



Opening Day, April 9, 1998
National POW Museum

Apr/May/June 2018

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Happy Birthday, AXPOW! April 9, 1942

In the Philippines... American General King surrenders 75,000 men (12,000 Americans) to the Japanese. A death march begins for the prisoners as they are taken to San Fernando, 100 miles away. Many thousands of them die on the march. Resistance continues in isolated areas of Luzon and other islands. General Wainwright and his troops continue to hold out on Corregidor Island.



At home... Information was leaking out about the atrocities and subhuman treatment that American prisoners of war were receiving in Japanese prison camps in the Pacific. It was Mrs. Charles W. Bickford and Mrs. Fred E. Landon who, on April 10, 1942, persuaded other parents and relatives to hold a mass meeting. They formed an organization to get relief to the captured boys on Bataan. On April 14th, the *Bataan Relief Organization* began with Dr. V. H. Spensley, as Chairman.

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Deadline for the July-Sept 2018 issue is June 1, 2018.

Please send all materials to the editor at the above address.



It has been 20 years since we dedicated "our" museum at Andersonville and we're going back to celebrate! The National Park Service has grand plans for the 20th anniversary. There's more information in the Andersonville column in this issue. If you haven't been to the museum yet, this is the perfect opportunity to see the POW experience is portrayed...if you were there for the grand opening on April 9, 1998, come on back! The AXPOW Board of Directors will be having their mid-year meeting in conjunction with this event and all members are welcome to attend that as well.

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Charles Susino, Jr.

I hope this bulletin finds you and your family in good health.

I often take this opportunity to review recent or upcoming events of particular interest to our mem-

bers. So very often it is personal or military related which is of great interest.

First, March 6th the American AXPOW was invited to Washington to provide public testimony to the Senate VA subcommittee along with many other Veteran service organizations. Please take the time to read the Legislative Article which represents the words submitted. The actual testimony is slightly different and can be heard on the Senate VA subcommittee website.

Rarely is there an event which encompasses both personal and military related interest to all of us! In April, Andersonville National Prisoner of War Museum will be celebrating its 20th year of operation. The facility is a source of pride for each of us and our family. Further it is a source of pride, patrio-

tism, and education for all that visit. How great would it be to spend time at the Museum when there are so many people present. Those that are present from the public are the ones most interested in history, most interested in the stories, most interested in meeting with veterans who were prisoners of war. I can't help but believe it will be one of our most rewarding experiences. I realize it is not easy to travel and I too have health issues which are very challenging to me.

To all, please give it your best effort to be there!!

—Remember—

news from hq



Clydie Morgan
Chief Operating Officer

Spring is finally here. Hope you all survived the winter well.

With spring comes the opportunity to participate in town parades and events. If you are asked to speak or appear, please make an effort to do so. It will be good for both you and your audiences.

2018 is the 100th anniversary of the end of WWI. In order to raise funds for the completion of the memorial honoring these heroes,

the WWI Centennial Commission has released a commemorative silver dollar to honor the 4.7 million who served. If you would like to purchase it, please contact the US Mint directly: 1-800-USA-MINT.

One thing we've noticed this year has been the number of our members who have reached the magic 100 years! A couple years ago, PNC Jim Cooper turned 100; this year, we had a request from a daughter to honor her dad's milestone. We were glad to do so with a certificate of appreciation and notice in the magazine. Loreto Lazo will be 100 on April 10th and we wish him a very happy birthday. If you know of a member turning 100, please let us know at least 90 days in advance and we'll make every effort to make note of it.

As you know, Marsha, Cheryl and I are working out of our homes.

This has saved the organization thousands of dollars and that, combined with your continued donations to AXPOW, have kept us in the black. We do depend mightily on your contributions, however, and are very grateful for your generosity.

A note to you who have named AXPOW in your wills, please notify your executors of the organization's new address. Using the old address causes delays in the paperwork and sometimes missed deadlines. We appreciate your consideration and generosity. Thank you.

Clydie



from the CEO



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Spring and New Opportunities

Signals of an approaching Spring are budding in the Colonial Capital and our feathered friends are chipping the news of fresh opportunities.



As I write this the gardens around town are alight with Daffodils leading the charge toward warmer weather, and our Tulip Magnolia blooms daring to open in spite of another frost.

Our Red-Shouldered Hawk has returned to catch an early worm, several of our adopted deer appear on the path to parenthood, and our tee times are no longer plagued by frost delay.

As you read this, your AXPOW officers and staff are preparing for new opportunities with the board of directors - and welcome visitors - at Andersonville National Historic Site in conjunction with

the 20th anniversary of The National POW Museum.

During the past twenty years, few Americans have been held Captive—although civil strife in areas of the world carry political and economical challenges. Our challenge is to foster through educational programs at The Museum the heritage and legacy of the men and women who *continued the fight* in on marches, in camps, and prisons.

On the local level, if you are a returnee, I encourage you to tell your story, participate in an oral history program, and tell others about our terrific expanded web site.

Nationally, take this opportunity to join us April 7th and 8th at Andersonville or simply renew your support to AXPOW so that together we may *help those that cannot help themselves*.

David

treasurer's news



Marsha Coke, CFO
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It's been three full months since moving the office to our homes. With the first month, just getting set up and then the holidays in late November-December, I feel like this month is really the first "regular working from the home"

month. So far, so good! I've attached a picture of the office at my house. The office, which I thought would take up some space in Elizabeth's old bedroom, actually ended up taking up the whole room and the small walk-in closet. However, it is working out well for me. The second picture is the printer/copier/scanner and 4-drawer file cabinet, which is in the far left side of the first picture.



As a reminder to everyone, many of you make dedicated donations to AXPOW, and an increasing number are leaving bequests to us. Please make sure your attorneys/banks/executors use our PO Box.

Thanks!
Marsha



Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis is a disease that weakens bones to the point where they break easily—most often, bones in the hip, backbone (spine), and wrist. Osteoporosis is called a “silent disease” because you may not notice any changes until a bone breaks. All the while, though, your bones had been losing strength for many years.

Bone is living tissue. To keep bones strong, your body breaks down old bone and replaces it with new bone tissue. Sometime around age 30, bone mass stops increasing, and the goal for bone health is to keep as much bone as possible for as long as you can. As people enter their 40s and 50s, more bone may be broken down than is replaced.

A close look at the inside of bone shows something like a honeycomb. When you have osteoporosis, the spaces in this honeycomb grow larger, and the bone that forms the honeycomb gets smaller. The outer shell of your bones also gets thinner. All of this makes your bones weaker.

Who Has Osteoporosis? Risk Factors and Causes

Although osteoporosis can strike at any age, it is most common among older people, especially older women. Men also have this disease. White and Asian women are most likely to have osteoporosis. Other women at great risk include those who:

- Have a family history of broken bones or osteoporosis

- Have broken a bone after age 50
- Had surgery to remove their ovaries before their periods stopped
- Had early menopause
- Have not gotten enough calcium and/or vitamin D throughout their lives
- Had extended bed rest or were physically inactive
- Smoke (smokers may absorb less calcium from their diets)
- Take certain medications, including medicines for arthritis and asthma and some cancer drugs
- Used certain medicines for a long time
- Have a small body frame

The risk of osteoporosis grows as you get older. At the time of menopause, women may lose bone quickly for several years. After that, the loss slows down but continues. In men, the loss of bone mass is slower. But, by age 65 or 70, men and women are losing bone at the same rate.

What Is Osteopenia?

Whether your doctor calls it osteopenia or low bone mass, consider it a warning. Bone loss has started, but you can still take action to keep your bones strong and maybe prevent osteoporosis later in life. That way you will be less likely to break a wrist, hip, or vertebrae (bone in your spine) when you are older.

Can My Bones Be Tested?

For some people, the first sign of osteoporosis is to realize they are getting shorter or to break a bone easily. Don't wait until that happens to see if you have osteoporosis. You can have a bone density test to find out how strong your bones are.

The U.S. Preventive Service Task Force recommends that women aged 65 and older be screened (tested) for osteoporosis, as well as women under age 65 who are at increased risk for an osteoporosis-related fracture.

A bone mineral density test compares your bone density to the bones of an average healthy young adult. The test result, known as a T-score, tells you how strong your bones are, whether you have osteoporosis or osteopenia, and your risk for having a fracture.

How Can I Keep My Bones Strong? Preventing Osteoporosis

There are things you should do at any age to prevent weakened bones. Eating foods that are rich in calcium and vitamin D is important. So is regular weight-bearing exercise, such as weight training, walking, hiking, jogging, climbing stairs, tennis, and dancing.

If you have osteoporosis, avoid activities that involve twisting your spine or bending forward from the waist, such as conventional sit-ups, toe touches, or swinging a golf club. Learn how to exercise safely with Go4Life, the exercise

medsearch, cont'd...

and physical activity campaign from the National Institute on Aging.

Those are the best ways to keep your bones strong and healthy. Learn more about keeping your bones strong to prevent falls.

What Can I Do for My Osteoporosis?

Treating osteoporosis means stopping the bone loss and rebuilding bone to prevent breaks. Healthy lifestyle choices such as proper diet, exercise, and medications can help prevent further bone loss and reduce the risk of fractures.

But, lifestyle changes may not be enough if you have lost a lot of bone density. There are also several medicines to think about. Some will slow your bone loss, and others can help rebuild bone. Talk with your doctor to see if medicines might work to treat your osteoporosis.

In addition, you'll want to learn how to fall-proof your home and change your lifestyle to avoid fracturing fragile bones.

Can I Avoid Falling?

When your bones are weak, a simple fall can cause a broken bone. This can mean a trip to the hospital and maybe surgery. It might also mean being laid up for a long time, especially in the case of a hip fracture. So, it is important to prevent falls. Learn how to prevent falls.

Do Men Have Osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis is not just a woman's disease. Not as many men have it as women do, maybe because most men start with more bone density. As they age, men lose bone density more slowly than

women. But, men need to be aware of osteoporosis.

Experts don't know as much about this disease in men as they do in women. However, many of the things that put men at risk are the same as those for women, including family history, not enough calcium or vitamin D, and too little exercise. Low levels of testosterone, too much alcohol, taking certain drugs, and smoking are other risk factors.

Older men who break a bone easily or are at risk for osteoporosis should talk with their doctors about testing and treatment.

Veterans and Osteoporosis

Purpose

Less than 24 percent of Veterans received appropriate evaluation and/or treatment for osteoporosis within 6 months of an index fracture. An electronic consult (E-consult) service was implemented at 3 Veterans Affairs Medical Centers to facilitate identification of and to recommend management for patients with recent fracture.

Method

The E-consult service used clinical encounter data based on ICD9 diagnosis codes to prospectively identify patients with potential osteoporotic fractures. Eligible patients' medical records were reviewed by a metabolic bone specialist and an E-consult note was sent to the patient's primary provider with specific recommendations for further management. Recommendations were initiated at the provider's discretion.

Results

Between 2011 and 2013, the E-consult service identified 444 eligible patients with a low-trauma fracture who were not already on treatment. One hundred twenty-nine (29.1%) consults recommended immediate bisphosphonate treatment and 258 (58.1%) recommended bone density assessments. Primary providers responded by prescribing bisphosphonates in 74 patients (57.4%) and by ordering bone density testing in 183 (70.9%) patients. At the facility level, prior to implementation of the E-consult service, the rate of osteoporosis treatment following a fracture was 4.8% for bisphosphonates and 21.3% for calcium/vitamin D. After implementation, the treatment rate increased to 7.3% for bisphosphonates ($P = 0.02$) and 35.2% for calcium/vitamin D ($P < 0.01$).

Conclusion

While feasible and relatively low cost, an E-consult service modestly improved the rate of osteoporosis treatment among patients with a recent fracture. These results suggest that a program with direct patient interaction is probably required to substantially improve treatment rates.

For More Information on Osteoporosis

National Institutes of Health Osteoporosis and Related Bone Diseases National Resource Center
1-800-624-2663 (toll-free)
1-202-466-4315 (TTY)
NIHBoneInfo@mail.nih.gov
www.bones.nih.gov
National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases
1-877-226-4267 (toll-free)
1-301-565-2966 (TTY)
niamsinfo@mail.nih.gov
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legislative



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Testimony before Joint House/Senate Veterans Affairs Committees, March 6, 2018.

Chairmen and members of the House and Senate Veteran's Affairs committee and guests, my name is Charles A. Susino, National Director of the American Ex-Prisoners of War. I am speaking today on behalf of my father, National Commander Charles Susino, Jr. Many of you know him from his previous testimony over the years. My dad joins me in thanking you for the opportunity to express our comments today.

We are grateful for your efforts over this past year. This Congress has stepped up and passed several key pieces of legislation in support of our veterans with respect to health care, compensation, and public awareness in the case of approving a location for the Operation Desert Storm memorial. Your time is scarce and other major Congressional agendas often displace the attention on veterans' needs so we ask for your patience, persistence, and unwavering support.

Several pieces of new legislation are important and continually improving all facets of the Veterans Administration operation is necessary. We often speak at this hearing about how the VA needs to improve and model its methods about particular successful and efficient industries. We need to get to where we use the term operational excellence and VA

2017-2018 Legislative
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in the same sentence. For an organization that large it takes time, but we need to focus on select areas to build some successes to point at.

Our legislative agenda has been very consistent year to year. It is based on the earned benefits of the veteran for serving their country, never using the word "entitlements" in the same sentence as veteran. Its center is healthcare and fair compensation to the veteran and their family.

Studies of society conclude the country's population is getting older. That is also true of the veterans as well, especially those that served in WWII, Korea, and Vietnam. The typical WWII veteran is in their 90's along with their spouse and as people are living longer so does our veteran and this creates some unique challenges for the VA. In our organization, we have members in that age group. I am always surprised how little is actually provided for the elderly veterans who are sickly, even those with 100% rating disability.

In 1986, Congress and the President mandated VA health care for veterans with service connected disabilities as well as other special groups of veterans. It included veterans up to WWI, some 58 years after the end of the war. WWII ended over 72 years ago. We have asked you for the better part of the last decade to revisit the special groups and update to include veterans of WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Cold War, and our recent conflicts in the Middle East. We have requested for many years with no movement on the part of Congress. With President Trump's support of our military, this President may see it appropriate and fair treatment for those that have kept our country free.

We also draw your attention to several bills which we believe have special merit and request your active support.

H.R. 27: Ensuring VA Employee Accountability Act. All veterans in all VA facilities deserve adequate care from VA employees.

H.R. 4369: To amend title 38, United States Code, to codify the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to assign a disability rating of total to a veteran by reason of unemployability, and for other purposes

H.R. 299 and S. 422 : To amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify presumptions relating to the exposure of certain veterans who served in the vicinity of the Republic of Vietnam, and for other purposes.

H.R. 303 and S.66: To amend title 10, United States Code, to permit additional retired members of the Armed Forces who have a service-connected disability to receive both disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs for their disability and either retired pay by reason of their years of military service or combat-related special compensation.

S. 339: A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to repeal the requirement for reduction of survivor annuities under the Survivor Benefit Plan by veterans' dependency and indemnity compensation, and for other purposes.

HR 1472 and S. 591: Military and Veteran Caregiver Services Improvement Act of 2017

S. 1990: Dependency and Indemnity Compensation Improvement Act of 2017

S. 544: A bill to amend the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 to modify the termination date for the Veterans Choice Program, and for other purposes.

Thank you for your time and attention and most importantly your unwavering support of ex-POWs and all veterans – deserving heroes every one.

God bless our troops
God bless America

andersonville



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This winter had been an exceptionally cold one, with a rare snowfall covering the cemetery, prison site, and museum on January 17th. Despite the cold winter, our Wreaths Across America event was a great success, with a record number of wreaths placed in Andersonville National Cemetery.

Park staff are now gearing up for a busy spring. Thousands of students will come to the park over the next few months to learn about Andersonville and the experiences of American prisoners of war. On March 10-11, living historians will gather at the park to portray Union prisoners and Confederate guards during our Living History Weekend. The Avenue of Flags will be raised March 30th and continue through April 11th for National Former POW Recognition Day.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the National Prisoner of War Museum. The park will offer special items and programs throughout the year to recognize the importance of the museum and its mission to preserve and interpret the stories of all American prisoners of war. A special passport stamp and free commemorative envelope and message will be available to visitors all year. An anniversary banner will hang above the entrance to the museum's central hallway. A series of special programs will be offered during the year, with the first program, "African Americans at Andersonville" on February 3rd. The park will also offer free showings of selected films about American POWs in the museum theater during the year, beginning with a film focused on the Revolutionary War on April 7th and continuing with a film focused on the Civil War on May 5th. A series of monthly Facebook posts will feature some of the many objects that have been donated to the museum collection over the years. Two temporary exhibits will be offered at the museum, with the first focused on the opening and history of the museum and the second displaying the objects featured in our series of Facebook posts.

The Grand Opening of the National Prisoner of War Museum, which took place on April 9, will be recognized April 7-9 with several activities and programs offered in partnership with AXPOW, Friends of Andersonville, and Eastern National. The walkways leading to the museum will be lined with small American and POW/MIA flags. A special free showing of a film about American POWs held during the Revolutionary War will be offered on Saturday, April 7th. On Sunday, April 8th, activities will begin with a performance by the Army Ma-



neuver Center of Excellence ceremonial band at 1:30 pm. A commemorative ceremony will be held at 2:00 pm featuring guest speakers Seymour Lichtenfeld, who was held prisoner by Germany during World War II, and David Eberly, AXPOW CEO and former POW during Desert Storm. Other scheduled activities include a performance by a local high school NJROTC drill team, a special presentation by a Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape (SERE) Program Specialist, a flyover of military aircraft, and a static display of a UH-1 Huey helicopter. On Monday, April 9th, we will invite area schools to bring their students to the museum to meet and talk to former POWs.

Park staff would like to extend an invitation to all former POWs to be our honored guests at the commemorative event on Sunday, April 8th. We hope you will attend and allow us to thank you and honor your service and sacrifice for your country. We also invite you to meet and talk with area students on Monday, April 9th. For more information, please contact Jody Mays, Chief of Interpretation and Resource Management, at 229-924-0343 ext. 115 or jody_mays@nps.gov.

"There is nothing so American as our national parks.... The fundamental idea behind the parks...is that the country belongs to the people, that it is in process of making for the enrichment of the lives of all of us." -Franklin D. Roosevelt (1936)

Ex-POW Bulletin
Apr-June 2018

andersonville, cont'd..

A Record Year for Wreaths Across America Event and Other News from Andersonville NHS

By Charles Barr,
Cemetery Administrator



Credit: Hugh Peacock

Wreaths Across America was held on Saturday, December 16th, 2017 in Andersonville National Cemetery at 12:00 pm. Wreaths Across America is a national program that encourages individuals, community groups, and families to sponsor wreaths for placement in national cemeteries throughout the United States. These wreaths may be placed on specific graves, or left undesignated to place on one of thousands of unvisited graves. Wreaths may be purchased and sent to Andersonville National Cemetery by visiting www.wreathscrossamerica.org. Wreaths may also be purchased from local florists or home improvement stores and placed at the Cemetery throughout the month of December.

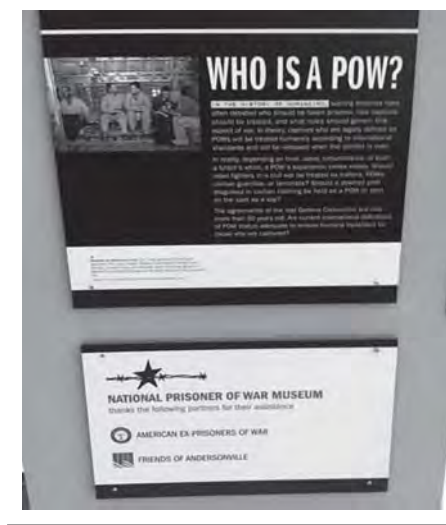
On December 16th the Civil Air Patrol conducted a beautiful ceremony for Wreaths Across America, with Lt. Col Robert Kelly (Civil Air Patrol) and Superintendent Charles Sellars both giving keynote addresses to over 250 people who were present. Once

the ceremony was completed, the volunteers moved to Sections D, E, and F to place the wreaths on the headstones.

In total there were approximately 3,660 wreaths placed throughout the National Cemetery. This total included 3,340 wreaths from Wreaths Across America; the rest were either bought from local florists or were handmade. This was a record number of wreaths for

our Cemetery, and with the continued support of Wreaths Across America and private citizens we can hopefully one day reach our goal of a wreath on every grave in the Cemetery.

This year Superintendent Sellars shared the story of a special burial we had in 2017 for Private Harold Hirschi, who served in World War II. He was captured by the Japanese in 1942 in the Philippines, and survived the Bataan Death March. He died as a prisoner of war at Cabanatuan prison camp and was buried in a mass grave with 13 other prisoners. In 2017, 75 years after his death, Private Hirschi's remains were returned to his family. He was laid to rest with full military honors in Andersonville



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The Traveling POW exhibit, "Victory from Within", is still traveling around the country for visitors to see. This past year it was at the Civil War Naval Museum in Columbus, GA. And from there it traveled to the National Naval Aviation Museum in Pensacola, FL. From Pensacola it will travel to the Rice County Historical Society in Kansas where it will stay for the remainder of 2018.

Several Special Events are coming up at Andersonville National Historic Site and National Cemetery. On March 10th and 11th we will host our annual Living History event where people from all over the United States come to spend the weekend to witness historical reenactors portray Andersonville Prisoners or Guards. The First Avenue of Flags for 2018 will be going up on March 30th through April 11th in honor of former POW recognition day.



On April 8th we will commemorate the 20th Anniversary of the National Prisoner of War Museum. Our second Avenue of Flags will go up from May 18th through May 30th in honor of Memorial Day. Our Memorial Day weekend starts on Saturday May 26th through May 28th where we will place a flag on every grave and host our Memorial Day Observance ceremony on Sunday May 27th.

All events held at Andersonville National Historic Site are open to the public and are free of charge.

namPOW news



Richard "Beak" Stratton

Maison Centrale *1 Pho Hoa Lo, Hanoi, Vietnam*

In the Fall of last year (2017) two events caught my eye: a news item in the Manchester Guardian and a PBS program announcement. The Guardian reported that more than 30 of Saudi Arabia's most senior and elite figures, among them blood relatives of senior rulers, were locked inside the five-star Riyadh Ritz-Carlton hotel, accused of corruption." This news gave me one of those Yogi Berra moments: "Its déjà vu all over again." For it was 50 years since I too had been checked into Hanoi's Maison Centrale for a six year's stay as a Yankee Air Pirate, Blackest of All the Criminals in the DRV. And any time PBS claims to be executing a "documentary" it is guaranteed to be a screed slanted against our country.

In 1965 one of the earliest North Vietnam shoot-downs (Bob Shumaker?) had made the facetious and infelicitous designation of the Maison Centrale

as "The Hanoi Hilton". To the citizenry of Hanoi it was known as the Hoa Lo Prison; ostensibly so-called for being located where pottery furnaces used to be. However it was really so tagged by the slang usage of Hoa Lo as "fiery furnace" referring to the prison's reputation for miserable treatment of those incarcerated therein for over the past 100 years. At the time I arrived (1/6/1967), as I found out later, it housed in addition to administrative personnel and their families, US & RVN prisoners, female civilians, crooks, street people and political prisoners. As far as Maison Centrale went, a Hilton Hotel it was not; five stars were not even in the firmament.

In 1970 a basket of deplorables (Communist Designation) were settling into Cell Seven as part of a massive relocation of prisoners in North Vietnam. [After the Son Tay Rescue Raid the Communists decided to ship the younger studs up to the Chinese boarder and place us old fuds downtown Hanoi, on ground zero, in case of massive raids and an invasion. American POWs had by then attained a measure of value as hostages.]



*1967 Maison Centrale,
Hanoi Vietnam*



1967 Main Entrance Hoa Lo Hanoi

An Air Force Ace, Jim Kassler (RIP) was regaling me with war stories from Korea and Vietnam. In the process he observed that just before his shoot down his crew chief remarked, while strapping him in to his aircraft: "Don't worry if you get shot down, sir. I understand that they are putting you up in the Hanoi Hilton until the end of the war." Jim allowed as how we were going to have trouble with that Hotel designation in our dotage. Today I feared future generations would consider us to be in the same situation as the Saudi Princes currently find themselves – all of us allegedly having been ensconced in the 5 star accommodations of a prestigious hotel chain.

As Jim had predicted revisionist pundits posing as professors, if they teach about the Vietnam War at all, manage to remove the quotation marks around "The Hanoi Hilton" when referring to the POW main prison location. In PBS's ersatz 18 hour "documentary" *The Vietnam War*. Burns and Novick totally distort the Vietnam experience by coating grains or truth with truckloads of lies and innuendo. My granddaughters attending colleges and watching TV are being indoctrinated, not educated.

maison, cont'd...

Jim and I started our own reality check by matching stories about our first few weeks after check-in to the Maison Centrale. There was no lounge, lobby or check in area. We were placed in a holding room with knobby walls designed to attenuate sound, a hook in the ceiling and a couple of hooks in the walls. There was one light hanging from a wire out of the ceiling. There was a rusted bucket in the corner obviously for human waste. The surfaces were stained with human fluids. The air was stale, fetid and cloying. I was to spend a week there in my skivvies – “checking in”.



Knobby Room Torture Chamber

After about a week in the Knobby Room I was transferred to a private accommodation in the maximum security wing appropriately named by the old timers as “Heart Break Hotel”. This cell had hot and cold running rats through a rat hole (drain) at the base of a courtyard wall. I had my own private toilet – a rusted bucket but with a lid. There were two cement bed pads built against the wall with leg stocks at the end of each. It appeared to be a space about 6 feet wide, 8 feet long and 14 feet high. There was a bared and boarded window high up on the outside wall and a strong door with a Judas hole on the passageway side. I had two meals a day with random hits on the head and interrogations at unpredictable times through any 24 hour period.

There was no medical care. Once they determined that I was going to live they issued me some go-aheads made of rubber tires for soles and inner tubes for an arch strap, T shirt, skive shorts (boxer), mess dress uniform (striped PJs), a hand towel, a see through blanket and a straw matt. I was a thing of sartorial splendor.

Interestingly enough, I had no injuries resulting from the blowing up of and my ejection from the A4E Skyhawk. There were no injuries resulting from the parachute landing or the succession of beatings administered by the rather irate peasants that captured me. Every wound on my body was the direct result of the Check-In process. There were puncture wounds on the back of my wrists that went to the bone inflicted by the primitive gear and screw handcuffs they used to immobilize my hands. Where the ropes were tied across my elbows my left arm was cut to the muscle and the right elbow to the bone as a result of the sawing motion they used to apply force the various parts of the body. I have those scars with me even to this day. The shackles and bar arrangement they used to immobilize my legs tore away the skin to bone at both ankles. No one of these injuries in themselves or in combination was life threatening until all six became infected. At that point my survival was in the hands of God.

To counter the results of the trauma I decided to check out of my accommodations. Physical escape was not in the cards. However I was able to disassociate. It took a while to



Courtesy of Capt. Mike McGlothlin USMC (Ret.) BPCD

Rope Trick ~
courtesy Mike McGrath

develop this talent. I started by talking to various parts of my body commiserating with them. I scolded the pain saying that we were well aware that something was out of whack and we needed no more prompts. My favorite perch was up on the ceiling where I could look down on myself and observe what was going on with me or if in the Knobby Room what was being done to me. I became a master of critical evaluation regarding my interrogators and torturers



1967 Prison Uniform

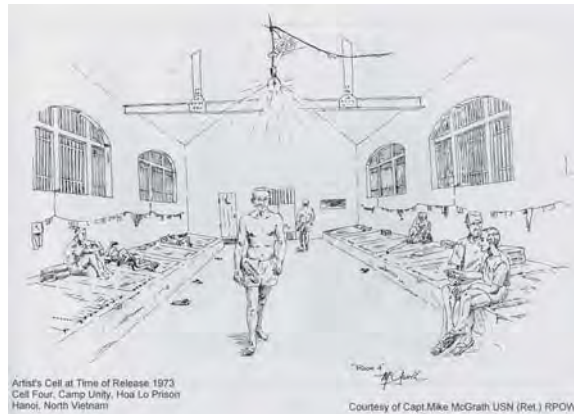
maison, cont'd...

techniques. I was unmerciful in critiquing my performance and reaction to the VC – learning from every mistake and becoming aware of every cue as to their upcoming behavior. It was a grand show! I proved to myself while they might be able to control my body they had nothing to say about my mind. They could bend my will but they could not break me. They being the disease, the germs, the pain or the Communists. I could check out any time I wanted to and they wouldn't even know that I was gone.

If you arrived in Hoa Lo with injuries which they exacerbated as part of their torture regime as they did with Jim Kassler and others, torture was an unmitigated evil. Otherwise, if they tortured you, you either lived or you died. Their intent was not to kill you by torture but to exploit you. So voluntary death was not an option that was on the table. As a result you learned how far you could resist on any one day and took the process to that limit. The concept was to bend to just before they broke you and you did something incredibly stupid to hurt your shipmates or your country. You learned that they also had limitations. Authority for torture came from the highest levels and the individual interrogator may or may not have that authority on any one day. They also were working with time constraints and maybe you could outlast them. And sometime, you could make it



Plantation Prison Warehouse



Camp Unity~Mike McGrath

just too much work for them, given whatever result they were looking for on that day. It was a crap shoot.

Eventually I was moved around to other prisons in the Hanoi area: the Zoo, the Plantation, Hoa Lo – Little Vegas, and Hoa Lo – Unity. At each step the accommodations improved: another cell mate, 3 cell mates, 30 cell mates, 40 cell mates. Torture, as a routine event, stopped around 1969; my last beating was in 1970. I was released in 1973. Food and water became adequate to sustain life. Sporadic mail (6 line forms) exchange was negotiated by Mr. Kissinger.

Eventually I won as had Jim Kassler. After about a year we were of no use to them. They could get no real propaganda value out of Jim the captured "Ace" nor of me "The Mad Bomber of Hanoi". Their efforts to exploit us actually may have done us some good in that they had to produce us or at least account for us at the end of the war.

What is the purpose of this discussion? Certainly my wounds were insignificant compared to the horrific combat wounds experienced by the ground troops.

Ex-POW Bulletin
Apr-June 2018

14

Our living conditions were far superior to those experienced by those captured and held in South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.

I did get to live in the shadow of great Americans: future VP and Presidential candidates, ambassadors, senators, congressmen, politicians, flag & general officers, artists, teachers and captains of industry. I was blessed.

The purpose of this discussion is to document two facts. Americans were not treated as Prisoners of War, they were treated as criminals. There was no Hilton Hotel in Hanoi in which prisoners (or princes for that matter) were ever held captive.

American POWs were held in the Maison Centrale on 1 Pho Hoa Lo, Hanoi, Vietnam. This jail was sort of a cross between Rikers Island, NYC and Sing Sing in Ossining, NY. The remains of the Maison Centrale are now a museum.

In summation, Yogi said it best: "I'm lucky. Usually you're dead to get your own museum, but I'm still alive to see mine."

Thanks to Mike McGrath for the line drawings.



2007~By Fuller with Hoa Lo Cell Door



Mary Schantag, Chairman
P.O.W. Network
info@pownetwork.org

My name is Michael McDonald-Low and I'm asking for your help in bringing attention to the problems at DPAA, (Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency), that are inhibiting MIA recovery efforts in Southeast Asia: Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.

I am a former Army officer who served as an infantry platoon leader and company commander in Vietnam (D/1/20 Inf, 11th LIB, Americal) in 1967 and 1968.

In 2009, I contacted DPMO (Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office) and JPAC (Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command) and informed them that they were going to the wrong location in their search for an MIA from my platoon - MIA case 1165 - Clifford Van Artsdalen. They had sent Investigative Teams four previous times to Vietnam in their search for 1165, without ever contacting me, his platoon leader at the time of the incident.

After three years of contacts with JPAC/DPMO, I was finally able to lead a JPAC Investigative Team to the mountains of the Que Son Valley near Tam Ky, Vietnam in 2012. Our goal was to find the correct location of a soldier from my platoon who was killed there - MIA 1165. The mission was successful, however I am still waiting, like many others, for approval by a DPAA Excavation Decision Board.

In September 2014, after providing advice on other ground loss cases, I was appointed as the first ever Southeast Asia (SEA) Veteran Liaison - the first Vietnam infantry

veteran to be officially involved in the search for MIA's in Southeast Asia.

As the SEA Veteran Liaison, I participate in Southeast Asia MIA case analysis by reviewing existing DPAA background information and investigative reporting related to unresolved ground loss cases in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. I also conduct independent open-source research related to assigned cases, including but not limited to additional Vietnam War era veteran interviews, when applicable.

I was also invited by Alisa Stack to join the government organized PACT (Personnel Accounting Consolidation Task Force) when it was formed to review JPAC/DPMO procedures and methods in 2014. I visited JPAC as a PACT representative to review their mission procedures. I submitted a detailed report based upon those observations. Unfortunately, all of the PACT input (and money spent) had little effect in changing the agencies.

In 2016, my book, *Unaccounted*, was published and released. It is the true story of an American infantryman MIA in one of Vietnam's deadliest locations and the mission to find him 44 years later. It provides a firsthand look at a JPAC (DPAA) IT mission.

Recovering Southeast Asia MIAs is the foundation of the MIA mission, but there is something terribly amiss at mission control - DPAA.

The search for American MIAs of the Vietnam War has been led over the years by the government organization which has gone by many names, most recently, JPAC, DPMO and now DPAA.

After almost 50 years, there are still over 1,600 American military personnel missing in action - and considered unaccounted in Southeast Asia: Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. 1,450+ of these MIA cases fall into categories of pending an Investigation Decision Board (IDB), pending an Excavation Decision Board (EDB), or like most - still in research. There are more than 150 MIAs who have been approved for excavation, but are still waiting. Most of these are not even scheduled for excavation due to a lack of funding, and in most instances, lack of key personnel, specifically archeologists.

The priority of DPAA should be to finish the mission originally founded by the mothers of Vietnam Veterans - POW/MIA League of Families. These cases need to be given immediate priority over all other MIA cases worldwide as there is a diminishing window remaining before disintegration of all skeletal remains in the acidic soil and harsh climate of Southeast Asia.

How the MIA mission of DPAA is failing Vietnam Vets.

1) DPAA Hawaii

It is refreshing to see that Mr. Kelly McKeague is the new director at DPAA. Hopefully, under his leadership things will dramatically change.

Department leadership at DPAA Hawaii has been all about self-preservation of career rather than getting the job done - it is a cult of personality. The same people, problems, attitudes, and processes that forced the creation of DPAA still exist, even after 30 Jan 2015 (the formation date). DPAA kept the same people in the same jobs in Hawaii, but placed them under new department names; the mission continued as it had in the past. The disconnect between DPAA Hawaii and DPAA in Washington, D.C. is obvious and counter-productive. A

POW/MIA

Guest Column cont'd...

fresh direction requires new, dynamic people and leadership at the department level, not the same old career GS JPAC Hawaii "veterans" operating as they have for years.

2) IDB/EDB

The IDB (Investigation Decision Board) and EDB (Excavation Decision Board) process is a nice example of how DPAA Hawaii serves the process rather than the process serving the mission. People with no field experience are voting and running through the ringer those who know what they need to do to accomplish the mission. Policy, and External Relations and Planning have no business being involved in any IDB/EDB. Their input is not relevant to any decision relating to investigations or excavations. Their job should be to review and insure all measures are being taken to successfully accomplish the mission. To insure objectivity and fairness, all decisions regarding IDB's and EDB's should be made by a panel that consists of: DPAA J2, J2 lead investigator, IT/RT case analyst, MIA Case Consultant / Veteran Liaison, DPAA - Washington DC case leader, CIL (Central Investigation Laboratory), American Witness, and headed by Director DPAA.

3) Burden of Proof Protocols

The current recommended Burden of Proof protocols appear overly weighted on aircraft MIA's, metal object losses, and are not appropriate considerations for infantry surface losses. I believe there should be two sets of protocols, or two sets of weighting standards: one for aircraft losses and one for surface losses. It is also important to note that all of the easy MIA cases have been completed. The toughest remaining cases are for the most part infantry surface losses.

4) Ignorance of Battlefield, Enemy Tactics, Infantry Organization, Weapons and Injuries

Prior to the appointment of a SEA Veteran Liaison there were no combat veterans from Vietnam who worked on any MIA case. Consequently, many mistakes have been made over the years by investigators who are ignorant of basic combat tactics, weaponry, wounds, and circumstances they have no ability to evaluate. I have seen cases where no further action was indicated by the investigator, because he/she couldn't identify the possibility (for example) . . . that a human being could not be disintegrated by a 81mm mortar. And yet, that has happened. I believe an accurate analogy would be trying to describe the color red to a blind person.

5) Failure to Properly Interview Veteran Survivors

Vietnam veterans, particularly infantrymen and Marines, are a special group that deserves special handling when you're investigating a fallen comrade. If you can't do the talk, you certainly can't do the walk. If you're an investigator you should be familiar with combat and all that it entails, otherwise you won't ask the right questions or be able to identify information that may or may not help you. In my opinion, one of JPAC's and DPMO's (And now DPAA's) biggest oversights has been their inability to identify a credible veteran witness and then obtain relevant information from that witness.

6) Investigation Team (IT) / Recovery Team (RT)

The IT process needs to be more dynamic and fused. An IT leader in the field should have the authority to be able to run down leads in the field to closure. but

the host nation, due to time constraints and coordination, often times do not allow further pursuit during the operation. This rigid process forces IT to visit a site at least two or more times with approval boards at DPAA in between. Meanwhile, years pass and hundreds of thousands of dollars are spent for multiple trips. An average IT mission is Vietnam carries a hefty price tag - approximately \$250,000.

Ideally, IT/RT should be combined into a single unit for investigation and recovery. When IT successfully locates an MIA location it can be years before an RT visits it. When an RT eventually gets to the site they are depending on field notes and GPS to re-identify the site. This process is haphazard even with GPS. It is absolutely necessary that the IT be involved to positively identify the location, as well as any witness, American or otherwise. This combined unit would have the flexibility in the field that is needed to immediately excavate a site that has a high potential for recovery. This could save years of waiting to return to a site and/or could even save the loss of a site that was in danger. Additionally, the new IT/RT teams should consist of a historian, analyst, Geographic Information System specialist, archeologist, and an external relations person.

7) American Witnesses

An American Witness should always sit on the EDB of his MIA, particularly after providing exact coordinates and leading the team to the MIA site. Further, the input by the American Witness to the EDB will add a sense of place, importance and legitimacy to the proceeding. He should then always be invited to participate in the RT to re-verify that the correct location is being excavated. In the past there has been little transparency at DPAA particularly involving decisions concerning excavation. This shroud should be removed and the inclusion and

POW/MIA

Guest Column cont'd...

participation in an EDB by the American Witness would go a long way towards that endeavor.

8) Central Investigation Laboratory (CIL)

The CIL's control over the use of technology for IT needs to end. IT needs to be free to try any and all technologically that is available. CIL needs to be focused on identifications only and not be given any power over any other aspect of the organization. Senior lab leadership should be removed to improve the culture of the lab and the future version of DPAA. The archeologists should be removed from CIL and moved into the future version of the IT/RT organization.

9) The Center for the Investigation of the Missing and Advancement of Geospatial Methods (CIMAG)

The CIMAG is a program in which DPAA could have served as a nexus to help direct and develop products by universities, NASA, and NGA to develop remote sensing methods to search for MIAs (particularly high altitude aircraft wreckage). The program was a low investment initiative where DPAA would have provided the problem and coordinated with other agencies to establish lines of research funding to solve the problem. Unfortunately, this initiative angered the CIL scientific director and he forced it to be cancelled.

10) Skilled Archeologists - University Battlefields Initiative

There are usually only one or two archeologists working for DPAA, which slows down the IT/RT process. The University Battlefields Initiative was a proposal developed that would focus on using university personnel to conduct battlefield archaeology. The current mode of search and recovery used by DPAA is not geared toward the systematic work required of complex battlefields. The DPAA recovery model had evolved

around the concept of a single location that was defined by a burial or wreckage feature rather than the complexities of a battlefield. The University Battlefields Initiative would establish endowed professorships to head programmatic in-depth archaeological studies of historic battlefields that would be chosen based on the missing casualty densities determined by DPAA researchers. Again, universities would be responsible for establishing their own funding lines through grants or other public and private support under the assumption that their affiliation with DPAA would be a benefit. When presented to several universities, each expressed a high level of interest.

11) Search Methods - Advanced Technology

One of the biggest challenges DPAA will face is the excavation of surface loss cases where the loss location can only be narrowed down to a 25 meter (m) x 25m, 50m x 50m, or larger area. Most of these sites are remote and/or lightly populated where there is little chance of a local Vietnamese or a People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) soldier corroborating an American loss from 50 years ago; too much time has passed, and the ability of a PAVN soldier or local Vietnamese to recall dates and specific locations are questionable.

The MIA remains at a loss location sites are typically small bone fragments or teeth (not metal). Currently, DPAA's only on-the-ground search tool is a metal detector. Metal artifacts (dog tags, weapon, equipment) supporting the location of an MIA are at times discovered, but in many instances PAVN and Viet Cong forces routinely stripped equipment, weapons, dog tags and personal ID of any American left behind.

A larger excavation footprint requires more efficient search methods. Use of Ground Penetrating Radar, Sonic Analysis, Magnetometry, micro aerial drones, and other promising technologies would make searches quicker and more productive in finding remains. Many companies actively involved in the development of these technologies would rush to the opportunity to use their equipment on an MIA mission.

The reality of my mission and personal work experience with DPAA is sub-par and is probably best explained by a letter I sent to Bob Maves, my DPAA senior supervisor in Hawaii. It should be noted that Mr. Maves did not respond.

Nov. 1, 2017

Mr. Maves,

I haven't heard much from you or others at DPAA. In the past year, I have been asked but twice to look into cases. It's disappointing that I cannot be of more service, especially given the limited window of time remaining to find MIA remains in Southeast Asia.

Frankly, I don't see any change at the new DPAA that encourages me about the MIA effort in Southeast Asia. In fact, I'd have to say my skills have been utilized less and less since the reorganization. In some specific cases, I provided detailed information about an MIA that was never acknowledged nor was I given any explanation regarding its value or contribution.

Even the very basics in computer assistance, so I could access case files, has taken almost a year to accomplish.

My credentials expire tomorrow and if I thought things would change, I'd renew them.

I appreciate any assistance you can provide. I have sent a copy of this letter to President Trump and many other Veteran and POW/MIA organizations and media.

Sincerely, Michael McDonald-Low
crossbowdelta@gmail.com

civilians

The Army Nurses in STIC

by Angus Lorenzen
with help from The Army Nurse
April 1945

In her book, *We Band of Angels*, Elizabeth Norman describes the Army nurses who served on Bataan and Corregidor, and after the surrender of Corregidor were transferred to Santo Tomas Internment Camp. On Bataan their field hospitals were sometimes clearings in the jungle subjected to Japanese artillery fire. Just before Bataan fell, the nurses were evacuated to Corregidor, where they served in the hospital wards buried in the tunnels and subjected to heavy Japanese artillery.

When Corregidor surrendered on May 6, 1942, the men captured, including military and civilians, were marched through the streets of Manila to Bilibid, the old Spanish prison which the American Federal Bureau of Prisons had declared unsuitable and had started to tear down before the war. From there they were transferred to Camp O'Donnell, Cabanatuan, and eventually back to Bilibid for transport on the Hell Ships to the slave labor camps in Japan, Korea, and Manchuria. But what to do with the women nurses was a dilemma for the Japanese, and they chose to imprison them with the civilians in Santo Tomas Internment Camp.

On July 2, 1942, the 68 captured Army nurses arrived at Santo Tomas from Corregidor and were temporarily isolated in the dormitory of the Santa Catalina Hospital across the street from the main campus. Shortly afterwards, the Japanese Commandant approved the rental of Santa Catalina as a hospital for the camp. Joining the 12 Navy nurses who had been interned in Santo Tomas since March 8, the Army nurses were assigned



The Nurses board trucks for their departure from STIC

to staff the Santa Catalina hospital as well as the isolation hospital inside the camp and assist at various clinics. In May of 1943, the Navy nurses all transferred to join in organizing the Los Banos Camp.

For the first two years, the medical staff within the camp included doctors and nurses from outside the camp, and with the ability to transfer patients to Manila General Hospital and other hospitals outside the camp, the medical staff was able to work effectively, though with a chronic shortage of medications.

In early 1944, the Japanese forbid any outside doctors or nurses to enter the camp. This put a strain on the camp doctors and nurses, which was further exacerbated by a lack of critical medication and surgical supplies. This would have been a greater crisis if not for the presence of the Army nurses, who had to take on the added burden of the outside nurses who were no longer permitted into the camp.

On February 3, 1945, the night of liberation, the flying column arrived with some casualties incurred on their way into Santo Tomas and during the firefight that ensued when the Japanese took hostages in the Education Building. The Army nurses assisted the Army doctors and corpsmen in operating on these troopers and providing other medical assistance. Their assistance was also invaluable during the Japanese shelling of the camp with the deaths of 21 people and wounding of 100.

On February 9, 100 new Army Nurses flew in from Leyte to relieve them. The ones who had been in Santo Tomas remained on duty with the new nurses to help orient them. Then on February 12, while the Battle of Manila was raging just a little over a mile away, they boarded an Army truck and were taken to a temporary airstrip for their flight to Leyte. The group of 71 included 67 nurses, the physical therapist, the dietitian, and the Red Cross representative, plus the Lt. Col. in charge of the nurses.

Many internees were there to see their departure from camp and to cheer them and wish them luck. They boarded a C-46, which developed engine trouble and landed

civilians, cont'd...

on Mindoro. There they changed to two planes, which landed at the Tacloban Air Strip, where they were taken to a convalescent hospital. Some of the nurses were hospitalized due to malnutrition and fatigue, but the rest stayed at the convalescent hospital located on a wide, spacious beach. There they were issued the latest nurses uniforms, which were quite different from what they had before, which delighted them,

specially since they had been wearing the same shirts and skirts that had been made by the Quartermaster on Corregidor, supplemented by a few items they had picked up during internment.

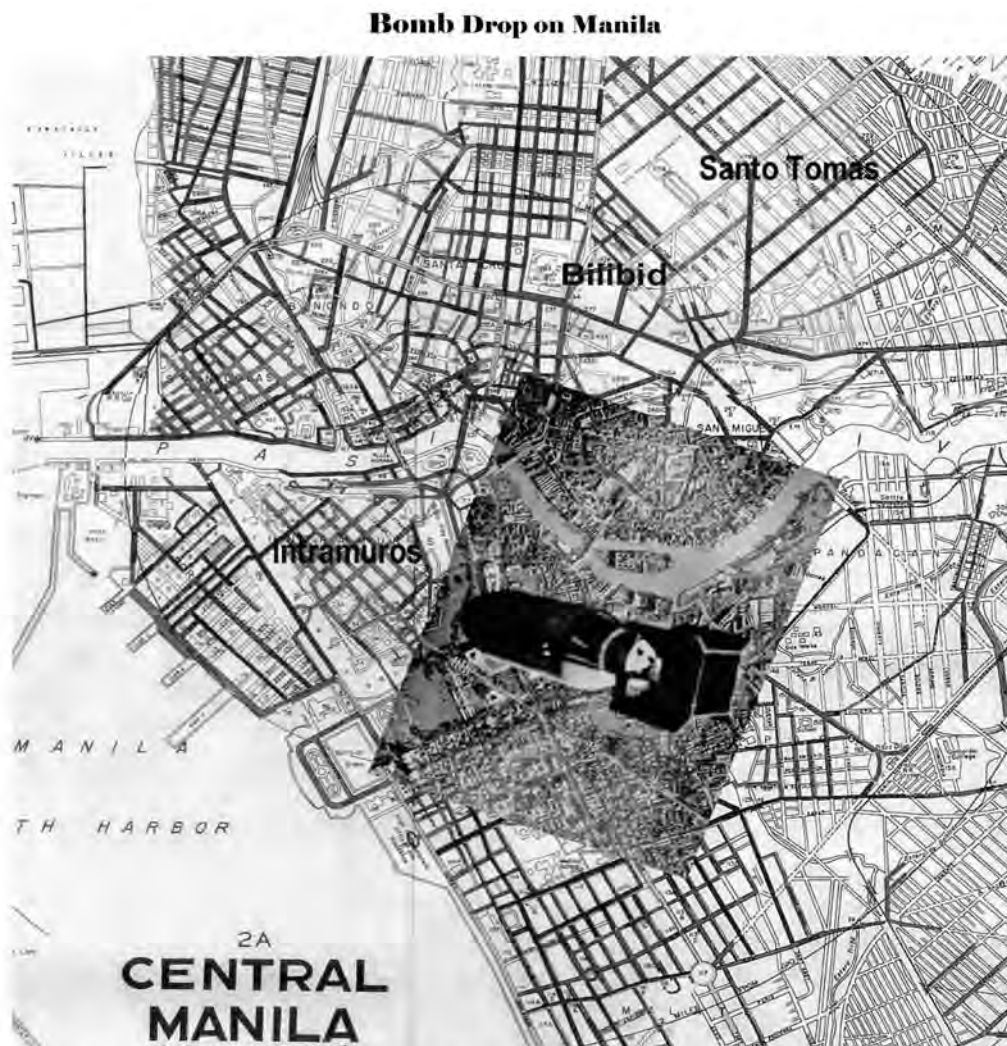
Just before their departure for the U.S. on two deluxe C-54s, they were lined up and awarded the bronze star and a promotion in rank to one grade higher.

Arriving in the States, they realized that they had so much to

catch up with and to learn with the advances in medicine and surgery that had been developed during the war. They had missed a lot, but now had time to catch up with those advances and to continue with their careers. And we will remember what they did for us when we were prisoners of the Japanese.

Reprinted from Beyond the Wire, May 2018

*Angus Lorenzen, Commander
bacepow@earthlink.net*



A photo posted to Maurice Francis's e-mail by Jim Faggiano shows a bomb being dropped over Central Manila. Further information provided by Rod Hall indicates that it is a US Navy Photo taken from a Grumman TBF-1 Avenger bomber from the American aircraft carrier USS Essex during an air attack over Manila on November 14, 1944.

The photo has been overlaid on a military map of Manila, which shows Santo Tomas, Bilibid, and the Intramuros. It is estimated that the aircraft was in level flight at about 225 MPH at an altitude of between 5,000 and 6,000 feet, and the target is what appears to be an industrial complex near the mouth of the Pasig River.

Those who were in Santo Tomas and Bilibid would have been able to see the aircraft, though may not have noticed it since dive bombers attacking the harbor area were much more interesting, and also the Japanese forbid prisoners from observing US aircraft.

News Briefs

Same-Day Service Offered

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced a major milestone, that 100 percent of its more than 1,000 medical facilities across the country now offer same-day services for urgent primary and mental health-care needs.

Same-day services means a Veteran with an urgent need for primary care and mental health-care receives services that may include: a face-to-face visit with a clinician; advice provided during a call with a nurse; a telehealth or video care visit; an appointment made with a specialist; or a prescription filled the same day, depending upon what best meets the needs of the Veteran.

"We made a commitment to our nation's Veterans that we would work to reduce wait times and improve access, and we are doing it," said VA Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin. "We were able to meet this goal, in large part, because of the concerted focus of our staff who care for our Veterans in facilities across the country."

Since 2014, VA has concentrated its efforts on improving access and meeting the urgent health-care needs of Veterans. In 2016, all of VA's medical centers offered same-day services for primary and mental health services.

In addition to offering same-day services, VA has reduced patient wait times. VA also implemented a new process to ensure timely

British Uniform

April 15, 1945 ~ 90 pounds

American serviceman in another country's uniform - with the British Army and in their uniform after escaping from the Germans from Stalag Luft 4 on the 86-day Hunger March.

Bob Teichgraber, age 97
Collinsville, IL



follow-up appointments for time-sensitive medical needs. More than 100,000 such appointments have been completed.

In 2017, Veterans completed over 57.5 million appointments and VA clinicians saw almost 6 million patients.

To view access information about each facility nationwide, visit www.accesstocare.va.gov/.

VA Decision Ready Claims Program Expands to Include More Types of Claims

As part of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) ongoing efforts to modernize and improve Veterans' experience with the disability claims process, VA unveiled its latest enhancements to the Decision Ready Claims (DRC) program, which will expand the pool of Veterans, surviving spouses and service members eligible to participate in the program.

"These enhancements are another key step in modernizing VA's benefits delivery to Veterans to a fully digital operating environment,"

said VA Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin. "With electronic claims processing as a foundation, VA's innovation will improve service to Veterans, their families and survivors."

In addition to claims for increased disability compensation (commonly known as claims for increase), Veterans will now be able to file certain claims for direct service connection, presumptive service connection and secondary service connection. Additionally, surviving spouses will be able to file certain claims for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, and transitioning service members will be able to file pre-discharge claims less than 90 days from leaving the military. Veterans who choose to submit their claim under DRC can expect to receive a decision within 30 days from the time VA receives the claim.

To file under DRC, Veterans must work with an accredited Veteran Service Organization (VSO) representative, who will ensure all supporting evidence — such as medical exams, military service records, etc. — is included with the claim submission. This advance preparation by the VSOs allows claims to be assigned immediately to claims processors for a quick decision.

In the future, VA aims to expand the DRC program, where possible, to ensure more Veterans can get

news, cont'd...

faster decisions on their claims. For more information about DRC or to find an accredited VSO representative, visit <https://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/DRC.asp>.

\$12B Increase in FY2019 VA Budget to Support Nation's Veterans

In the fiscal year (FY) 2019 budget, a total of \$198.6 billion is proposed for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

This request, an increase of \$12.1 billion over 2018, will ensure the nation's Veterans receive high-quality health care and timely access to benefits and services. It also continues to implement reforms that will modernize VA and rebuild the full trust of Veterans.

The FY 2019 budget prioritizes VA's most urgent needs and incorporates internal offsets, modernization reforms and efficiencies to yield the greatest value to Veterans and taxpayers. The budget includes \$88.9 billion in discretionary funding, including medical collections — \$6.8 billion above the FY 2018 budget. The budget also includes \$109.7 billion in mandatory funding for benefit programs, \$5.3 billion above FY 2018.

VA ID Card update

Veterans are once again able to apply for the free Department of Veterans Affairs ID card after technical problems late last year forced a delay to the program. The free ID card, originally rolled-out in late November, was ordered by Congress in 2015 as a way to give veterans proof of service at businesses without carrying a copy of

AXPOW's Fresno Chapter #1 Annual Christmas Party at the Red Roof Barn. Color Guard provided by the Jr. Marine ROTC. L/R: Earl Miles-WWII EUR, Jack Schwartz-WWII PAC (102), Bill Sanchez-WWII PAC (99), Sam Banuelos-Korea, Joel Hinojosa-Korea, Pasqual Reyes-WWII EUR, Jim Gough-Vietnam.



their DD-214 forms. It is available for all honorably discharged veterans, regardless of era or time in service. The link for the application is found at the bottom of the Vets.gov homepage under the words "Apply for Printed Veteran ID Card."

Concierge for Care Program

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced the launch of Concierge for Care, a health-care enrollment initiative that connects with former service members shortly after they separate from the service.

"Our goal is to give transitioning service members one less thing to worry about," said VA Secretary David J. Shulkin. "We know that more than a third of Veterans who haven't yet visited our facilities

indicated they are not aware of VA health care benefits, while a quarter reported they do not know how to apply."

As part of Concierge for Care, VA staff members are personally contacting recently separated service members to answer questions, process their health-care enrollment applications over the phone and help schedule eligible Veterans' first VA medical appointment, if needed.

Each week, VA receives a list of separating service members from the Department of Defense. The goal is to make contact with them within a month of discharge. Certain Veterans who served in a theater of combat operations are eligible to enroll and receive cost-free health care for medical conditions related to their military service during the five-year period after discharge.

Information about VA health care and the application process can be found at <https://www.vets.gov/health-care/apply/>

100 Years Ago...

Apr 1 United Kingdom: the Royal Air Force is created from the Royal Naval Air Service and the Royal Flying Corps.

Apr 1 Henry Miller's Theatre opens at 124 W 43rd St NYC

Apr 3 US House of Representatives accepts American Creed written by William Tyler

Apr 4 Food riot in Amsterdam

Apr 9 Latvia proclaims independence

Apr 12 Loreto L Lazo ex-POW (Philippines), US Army (Ret) was born



Apr 13 Electrical fire kills 38 mental patients at Oklahoma State Hospital

Apr 14 Douglas Campbell is 1st US ace pilot (shooting down 5th German plane)

Apr 15 Georges Clémenceau publishes secret French/Austrian documents

Apr 16 The British House of Commons passes a new Military Service Bill, taking men up to 55 years old and extending to Ireland

Apr 18 Cleveland center fielder Tris Speaker turns an unassisted double play

Apr 20 Manfred von Richthofen, aka The Red Baron, shoots down his 79th and 80th victims marking his final victories before his death the following day

Apr 21 World War I: German fighter ace Baron Manfred von Richthofen "The Red Baron", shot down and killed over Vaux sur Somme in France, Canadian pilot Arthur Roy Brown credited with the kill

Apr 23 Battle of Zeebrugge ends

Apr 23 Dover Patrol overthrows Germany U-boat in East Sea

Apr 23 National Urban League forms

Apr 27 Giants' 9-0 winning start & Dodgers' 0-9 losing streak are stopped

Apr 29 Tris Speaker ties career outfield record of 4 unassisted double plays

Apr 30 Orange Nassau soccer team forms in Groningen



Your Stories



Operation Homecoming as seen through the eyes of the last POW released.

Robert White
Denver, CO
peebster99@hotmail.com

In 1972 life in the camp was pretty good. I made lots of chopsticks, which were sold in the local village. My bird snares and rat trap were productive. One of my guards had a battery powered radio. It was a fairly big radio. It looked like it held 4, maybe 8 D cell batteries. He didn't use it a lot, I think, because batteries were expensive. Over the years I got to listen to a few English broadcasts of Radio Hanoi. Since no one knew English it was hard for them to know the origin of the broadcast. So, I did get snippets of Armed Forces Radio. I remember hearing one DJ, although I don't remember his name. I think he was from Cincinnati. Around December of 1972 Radio Hanoi talked about peace talks in Paris. Then on 27 January 1973 the peace agreement was signed. That was 28 January in the Mekong Delta. I heard Hanoi Hanna read the document word for word. It was particularly exciting to hear that all prisoners would be returned within 60 days.

My ordeal started on 15 November 1969. I was flying an Army OV-1A Mohawk out of Vung Tau, South Vietnam. The aircraft got hit by ground fire and caught fire. After ejecting, I landed on the beach of the South China Sea. Capture was immediate. The

aircraft ended up in the ocean, still burning.

The next two years were a bad time. I got very sick. My weight dropped to about 120 pounds. I was kept in a 4 x 6 foot cage. There was a pallet inside to keep me off the mud. At high tide the pallet was inches above the water. I was only able to sit in that cage. It was not tall enough to stand. I wore a leg iron at night. I got 2 bowls of rice a day. I spent 23 1/2 hours a day for 2 years in those conditions.

We moved to a new camp.

The new camp was better. Still wore a leg iron at night, but no cage. There was a different attitude. I was able to move around more. I snared 50 or 60 birds. My deadfall got a rat a night. I cooked for my guard and myself. We had rice, rat, and an occasional bird. I made close to 140 matching chopsticks. The chopstick business was particularly rewarding. One reward was a toothbrush, a tube of toothpaste, and flip-flops. I was too weak to try to escape, so I made the best of the situation.

After the Paris Peace Accords were signed my captors were in a better mood. I think they were looking forward to life without me. And, maybe, they were happy for me as well. We were all counting down the 60 days. We had no verbal communication, but about 50 days after the signing, I could tell they were wondering why they still had a prisoner. We were hearing about other releases. I remained stoic throughout, but I was getting nervous. On the 60th day, I'm still there, and my captors are noticeably agitated. I'm guessing they sent a courier to

HQ to ask why I'm still there. We'll never know, but I think HQ either thought I was dead, or just forgot about me.

Day 61 brought some activity. I was measured for a suit of clothes. I didn't realize until then that the camp had treadle sewing machines. No electricity needed. They were being used to make North Vietnamese flags. In less than a day I had going home clothes. That evening we got into a boat. I was covered up and we traveled the waterways for a couple hours. We put ashore at a temporary camp. There was a pallet to sleep on, but no cage or leg iron. In the morning I was given some canned meat and bread. That was a first for me. It sure looked like they were trying to make good last impression. That night, another boat ride. I was covered as usual. This time when we put ashore there was no camp. We slept on the hard ground under a tree. That's not a complaint. After more than 3 years in a tidal swamp, hard ground was very welcome.

This new day was 1 April 1973. No joke, it was April Fool's day. Things were looking good. We ate cold rice. My stoic expression



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counting, cont'd...

didn't change, but inside I was beginning to feel like this was going to be a really good day. We walked. We stopped in a sugar cane field, broke off a stalk, and enjoyed the sweetness. The next stop was a small village. I was told later that the village was named Xom Tieu. It was about 2 km from where I was shot down. We went inside a hooch and waited. This was probably around 1000 hours. We sat. The people in the hooch had never seen me before, and probably never heard of me. My existence was supposed to be a secret. Their curiosity was obvious, but there was no conversation. I knew very little of their language, and they knew none of mine. So, we sat and smiled politely. I was given a bouquet of plastic flowers.

I'm guessing it was around noon when we started to get organized. My guards, some of whom I had known for years got into a loose formation. Four on each side of me. They were uniformly dressed and carried AK-47s. We also had a guidon with a small North Vietnamese flag on it. I'm betting the flag was made in home camp. After a very short march we arrived at the release site. It was a good sized area large enough to land 3 Hueys. The area was surrounded by North Vietnamese flags. Several hundred civilians, all in a good mood were there. It was almost festive. A parachute canopy had been pitched as a tent



to provide shade for the negotiating parties. I think it was my parachute. Tables and chairs were provided so the proper documents could be signed and witnessed. An international commission was present to oversee the proceedings. The commission was made up of Poles, Hungarians, Canadians, and Indonesians. I recognized some familiar uniforms, US Air Force and US Army.



While all this is going on, I'm standing out in the hot sun. My guards have melted into the crowd and I'm standing there alone. A thoughtful civilian brought me a stool and a glass of beer. Not wanting to be rude, I sat and enjoyed my beer. Several minutes later I was joined by two officers. One, the chief negotiator, the other an Air Force flight surgeon. The negotiator, a Lt. Col, took my arm and said, "Bob, we're going home."

We climbed on one of the Hueys and took off. The Huey was distinctively marked with orange bands to identify it as a friendly aircraft. The pilots were South Vietnamese. It didn't take long to get to Saigon and Tan Son Nhut Air Base. On the ramp was an Air Force C-9. It was running and

ready for take off. The next stop was Clark Air Base in the Philippines. There was a nice crowd waiting to greet the aircraft. Maybe 50 people. A microphone was set up and I made some brief remarks. This was the first time I'd spoken to a crowd in a long time, but not the last. A bus took me to the hospital.

Once inside the hospital I was treated like royalty. A whole floor had been set aside for returning POWs. I was the only one there. I guess that's fitting since I spent my captivity alone. All the others had got home. I received a physical exam. I was measured for another suit of clothes. This one an Army uniform. Once I had the uniform, it was time for a BX run. I had an entourage. My doctor, and assistance officer, a photographer, and I all went shopping. Next, we visited a school.

I spent 3 days at Clark. I had good food and good treatment. It was time to go. My new transportation was a C-141. It was about midnight on 4 April 1973 when we touched down at Hickam in Honolulu. Another amazing crowd was on hand. I was told 500 people. There was a red carpet and lots of American flags. Inside the terminal I was greeted by several flag rank officers.

Full of fuel we left for the Mainland. Nearing the coast of California I was invited up to the flight deck. Sitting in the jump seat with a headset on I heard San Francisco approach control clear us to 5000 feet. A new clearance was issued about 5 miles out. We were cleared to take up the heading and altitude of our choice. At 2500 feet we crossed over the Golden Gate Bridge. We climbed back to altitude and continued to New Jersey.

National POW/MIA Recognition Day

The RIDE HOME 2018

Did you know that there are only two (2) days on our Julian Calendar that we set aside to recognize all Americans, civilian and military, who have been held against their will by enemies of the United States?

The first date is 9 April, Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day. Why 9 April you ask, because that is the day the largest number of American Military were taken captive by an enemy during combat operations. After a three-month heroic battle in the Philippines, Major General King, Jr. surrendered all troops under his command to Colonel Mootoo Nakayama of the 14th Imperial Japanese Army. The total number varies by reporting source but it is safe to say the total exceeded sixty thousand (60,000) combat troops were taken as Prisoners of War. The second date, The Third Friday of September, came about more as a compromise than any historical significance to the date. It was Commander in Chief Jimmy Carter who initially requested a Joint Resolution from Congress annually to which he provided a Presidential Proclamation. The Recognition Day was held in April, to the liking of the American Ex-POW organization, or in July from 1978 through 1985. The debating parties, American Ex-POW and the Vietnam POW/MIA Families reached a compromise and starting in 1986 the day has been the Third Friday of September in which we recognize all former Prisoners of War (POW) as well as those who are still classified as Missing in Action (MIA).

For well over a decade a small group of POW/MIA advocates from across the country have been extending an invitation to Former Prisoners of War, civilian & military, and to the Families of those who are still classified as Missing in Action with the goal of fulfilling the Commander in Chief's proclamation, which notes:

"I call upon the people of the United States to join me in honoring and remembering all former American prisoners of war and those missing in action who valiantly served our great country. I also call upon Federal, State, and local government officials and private organizations to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities."

In their effort to meet the President's request this group, appropriately named "**The RIDE HOME**" will be working in conjunction with; The National Prisoner of War Museum, located on the grounds of Andersonville Historical Site, Andersonville Georgia, Central Georgia Technical College, Warner Robins Campus, corporations, private organizations as well as individual patriots from the communities of Warner Robins, Perry, Georgia, and Andersonville Georgia.

The Itinerary for this national event begins on Thursday, 20 September 2018, with honored guest checking in early afternoon followed by a Recognition Day Service, open to the public, commencing at 1500 hrs. at the Museum of Aviation located at Warner Robins Air Force Base. Friday morning, 21 September,

following a Law Enforcement escorted ride, service at the National Prisoner of War Museum, open to the public. Friday evening the Hero's Banquet will occur on the Central Georgia Technical College campus. (Dinner requires pre-paid reservation for everyone except the Honored guest.) KEEPING the PROMISE and Candlelight Services follow the dinner and are open to the public. Saturday, 22 September, Recognition Service followed by the FLY-BOY – GROUND-POUNDER Lunch, open to the public, followed by open socials at participating hotels/motels in the Perry/Warner Robins market.

For all the former Prisoner of War Honoree's, the Next of Kin of our Missing in Action Honorees who wish to attend the RIDE HOME 2018, we have included an invitation letter as well as the registration form for this year's event on the following pages. Due to the fact this is a National event all registration applications will be vetted prior to acceptance. If you mail your application to the RIDE HOME Corporate address, noted at the top of the form, we will start the process and you'll be contacted acknowledging your participation at this year's event. Due to popularity of the event all applications will be addressed on a first come first served basis. If you wish to have some of your family or friends join you at the event the RIDE HOME Team will be happy to help you obtain/arrange room accommodations as well as reservations for the two meals for your guest/friends.

We look forward to saying 'Thank YOU!' face to face, for not just your service to this great Republic, but for the sacrifices you have made and continue to make on our behalf.

For Questions or Concerns feel free to contact: Moe – 407 448 1181 or moehog@verizon.net

Until they all come home.....



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The RIDE HOME

3818 Litchfield Loop Lake Wales, Florida 33859
www.theridehome.com



The Ride 2016



Dear Former Prisoners of War and Families of our Missing in Action,

We respectfully request that you join us as our guest at the *National POW/MIA Recognition Day* event, **The RIDE HOME**, to be held 20 - 22 September 2018 in **Americus/Andersonville**. Our goal is to answer the call of every sitting President since 1978;

"I call upon the people of The United States to join me in Honoring and Remembering all former Prisoners of War and those still Missing in Action who valiantly served our great nation."

It will be our privilege to provide your room accommodations, seating for two at both the Heroes Dinner and Ground-Pounder & Fly-Boy luncheon, Military styled recognition for your service, transportation for you and a guest/spouse while you are in Americus/Andersonville as well as fellowship and camaraderie you can only find with those who served this great nation with you.

Take a moment, please, and complete the information sheet on the following page, drop it in the mail and we'll handle the arrangements. If you have a question or concern or perhaps would like to confirm your participation this year verbally, call us and we will do our best to accommodate you.

We look forward to hearing from you and seeing you in September.

Until they all come home.....

Warm regards,
On behalf of the Board of Directors for The RIDE HOME, INC.,
Jim 'Moe' Moyer



The Ride Home 2018

Thursday, Friday, Saturday
September 20-21-22, 2018
www.theridehome.com
The RIDE HOME Inc.
3818 Litchfield Loop
Lake Wales, Florida 33859



YES, I will attend

NO, I will not attend

Please return this form by June 30 2018, to the RIDE HOME address above.

POW or MIA Name: _____

MIA Rep Name: _____

NOK Name: _____

Guest Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone #: _____

Cell Phone #: _____

Email: _____

Branch: _____

Rank: _____

Area of Capture: _____

Date of Capture: _____

Date of Release: _____

Area at time MIA: _____

Date of MIA: _____

Remains returned: _____

Room Accommodations

We will try our best to accommodate your room preferences; however, we cannot guarantee your request.

Room accommodations will depend on availability at the time your information is received.

Your lodging is offered Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights courtesy of The Ride Home.

Please reserve a room for the following dates (check all that apply):

Thursday, September 20 _____

Friday, September 21 _____

Saturday, September 22 _____

Smoking: _____ Non-Smoking? _____

Bed Size: Queen/King: _____ Two Doubles: _____

Special Requirements

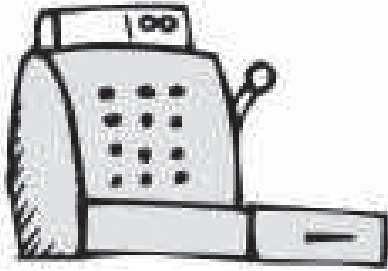
Handicap accessible, handicap shower, etc.

Are you interested in being a passenger on a motorcycle at either of the Escort Rides?

Circle one..... YES NO

Concerns or Questions - Contact Ginny or Moe at 863 324 7268 or moehog@verizon.net

contributions



Please send donations to:
National Headquarters, PO Box
3444, Arlington, TX 76007-3444

Checks must be made payable to
AXPOW or American Ex-Prisoners
of War.

GENERAL FUND

In honor of my stepfather, Rufus Choate,
by Anne Zuehlke

In memory of Autavee "Audie" Hartney,
by Eileen Beuler, by friends of Audie
Hartney

In memory of my dad, James O Cornforth,
by Janell Cornforth

In memory of my dad, John W Fields, by
Deborah Bartlett

In memory of Percy Paget, by Erica & Yuri
DeSimone, by Ken Steigelman, by Mindy
& Chip Gelfman, by Linda & Andy Goff,
by Hunt's Photo & Video, by Claire
Lutkewitte, by Selma Waters, by Douglas
Watson, by D Jean Eason, by Aimmune
Therapeutics, by Rene & Michele Lerer,
by Jody Cukier, by Barbara Cohen

In memory of Carroll Knutson, by Joanne
Molen

In memory of Richard Pelletier, by Rosalie
Pelletier

In memory of Robert N Swift, by Family
and Friends

In memory of Ruth Vest, by Nancy Clarke
and Bradford Clarke

BULLETIN

Brooklyn "Key" Chapter of New York

VOLUNTARY FUNDING

Clayton Nattier, Lakewood CA

Clifford Amrgard, Genoa WI

Erma Jean Bird, Novato CA

Howard Greiner, Wellman IA

Irving Lautman, Monroe Twp NJ

Norman Gustafson, Scotch Plains NJ

Robert Smith, Tomahawk WI

Thomas Wilson, Mequon WI

In memory of our parents, Vernon &
Virginia Rathbun, by Vern and Kathy

In memory of Robert L Jones, by Beverly
Jones

Thank you!

*for the generous donation
from the Brooklyn "Key" Chapter*

When you or your family make a donation to AXPOW, or list us in your will, please make sure
to update your instructions by using our Post Office Box listed above.

The PO does not have to forward our mail after one year.

The Meaningful Gift

A number of years ago, one of our members made the decision to establish a bequest to the American Ex-Prisoners of War. He felt strongly that he truly cared about the future of AXPOW and wanted to leave a legacy to us. He and his wife are now gone, but their generous gift enabled them to demonstrate in a very meaningful way their commitment to the organization. Most recently, Garden State Chapter #1 in New Jersey made a most generous donation in honor of the chapter members and commander Bob Levine. A one-time scholarship to Andersonville and support for the Bulletin became the beneficiaries of that generosity.

You, too can take action today to help ensure that the American Ex-Prisoners of War is there for returning POWs, their families and their dependents through your will or living trust. This gift can be funded with cash or securities, mutual funds or other investments that are not serving your current needs. This special gift will benefit future generations as well as we transition to a legacy organization.

It's very simple to make a bequest to the American Ex-Prisoners of War. Simply share this sentence with your attorney or financial planner and they can add the following to your will or living trust:

"I give, devise and bequeath to the American Ex-Prisoners of War, PO Box 3444, Arlington, TX 76007-3444, the sum of \$_____ or _____(named investment) or _____percent of the rest, residue and remainder of my estate."

Your generous support of our programs over the years has made a tremendous difference to ex-POWs and their families.

Please take a few minutes of your time to help. And feel free to contact CFO Marsha Coke at 817-649-2979/axpow76010@yahoo.com or CEO David Eberly at (757) 508-8453 /eberlydsl@verizon.net

Thank you!

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new members



National Headquarters
PO Box 3444
Arlington, TX 76007-3444
(817) 649-2979

request for
membership application
American Ex-Prisoners
of War

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Membership is open to US
Military and Civilians captured
because of their US citizenship
and their families.

Do NOT send dues with this
request for an application

Mail to:
American Ex-Prisoners of War
PO Box 3444
Arlington, TX 76007-3444
(817) 649-2979
e-mail: HQ@axpow.org



WELCOME!

Norman E Meads, Jr
Upperco MD
Son of Norman E Meads,
Sr, ETO



Prisoner of War Certificate of Captivity

Name
Serial Number
Branch of Service
Unit when captured
Prisoner of War #
Camp names & locations

American Ex-Prisoners of War
Arlington, Texas

Certificate of Captivity

Suitable for framing, this
certificate of captivity,
printed on 8½" x 11" quality
paper, proudly displays your
history as a prisoner of war.
Each certificate background
is personalized to the theater
of operation. To receive this
certificate from AXPOW,
please order from National
Headquarters. If you are
ordering at Convention, you
can place your order in the
Merchandise Room. We will
need your name, service
number, branch of service,
unit when captured, POW
number (if known), camp
names and locations. You
can call 817-649-2979 or
email:
axpow76010@yahoo.com.

You may include a picture
with your order.



taps



Please submit taps notices to:
Cheryl Cerbone, 23 Cove View Drive, South Yarmouth, MA 02664

ANDERSEN, Paul C., of Austin, TX passed away Dec. 3, 2017. He was 100. During WWII, he served with the 564th BS, 389th BG. He was shot down, captured and held in Luft 1, Barth Germany until liberation. Paul leaves his wife of 71 years, Millie, 3 children and their spouses and 2 grandchildren.

ANDERSON, Charles A., 95, of North Reading and formerly of Plymouth, MA died Nov. 23, 2017. He was the beloved husband of the late Edith A. (Smith) Anderson. Charlie was a proud U.S. Army Veteran of World War II and was a POW for two years. He is survived by several nieces and nephews.

BEARDEN, Robert Lawrence, of Killeen, TX passed away Aug. 18, 2017. He was 95. In 1940, Bob joined F Company, 144th Inf., 36th Inf. Div, Texas National Guard. He was called into duty later that year, then joined the Army paratroops in 1942, then assigned to H Co., 507th Parachute Inf. He was captured during the D-Day invasion and held in Stalag III-C until liberation. His first wife, Doris, predeceased him; Bob leaves his wife of 26 years, Debbie, 5 children and their spouses, 14 grandchildren, 6 great-grandchildren and numerous nieces, nephews and lifelong friends.

BURKE, Francis Dewey, of Newton Square, PA died Dec. 5, 2017. He was captured while serving with the 94th BG, flying out of Bury St. Edmunds, England and held in Stalag 17B. He is survived by his wife of 69 years, Marian, 2 daughters, 2 sons, 10 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren.

CUNNINGHAM, Louis E., 93, of Chesterfield, VA passed away Nov. 27, 2017. A member of the 106th Recon Troop, 106th Inf. Div, he was captured during the Battle of the Bulge and spent the rest of the

war in POW camps – XIIA, ID, IA, XB and XC. He leaves his wife of 72 years, Charlotte, 2 sons, 4 grandsons and 4 great-grandchildren.

DIXON, James R, of Bennettsville, SC died Sept. 1, 2015 at the age of 93. He was shot down and captured while serving as a ball turret gunner on a B-17. He was held until liberated by Russian troops in May 1945. Survivors include 1 daughter.

ECKENROD, Gervase, a member of Fresno Chapter #1, AXPOW, passed away Dec, 23, 2017 at the age of 100. Gerry, a WWII veteran, served with the 1st Inf. Div., involved in the invasion of Sicily & Italy in 1943, then landing at Omaha Beach on D-Day 1944. He was wounded three times, the last time during the Battle of the Bulge, captured by the Germans and held. Gerry is survived by his wife, Sherian, three sons, one daughter and one Grandson.

FLETCHER, Robert, of Ann Arbor, MI passed away Feb. 12, 2018. He was 86. "Fletch" went into the service at age 17 and was assigned to an all-black unit in the still segregated U S Army. His unit was one of the first to enter the Korean War on July 10, 1950. They were involved in heavy fighting with high casualties the entire length of the Korean peninsula until, after running out of ammunition and food, being captured on Nov 27, 1950 by the Chinese army near the border of China. He remained a prisoner of war until Aug. 8, 1953. He married his wife, Carol, on July 2, 1962 and she survives. They were blessed with 55 years of marriage during which time they

especially enjoyed, camping, fishing, traveling the country, and life both at their farm home in Scio Township and vacation home in Presque Isle. Fletch remained dedicated to veterans' issues, especially former POWs. He was extremely proud of his 22 years of service on the Congressional Advisory Board for Former POWs, during which time many formerly unrecognized mental and physical health problems resulting from being a POW were reclassified as service connected disabilities by Congress and the VA. He also rose in the ranks of the American Ex-Prisoners of War, serving as the National Commander in 2006-07. He and Carol traveled the country widely while he served in both of those positions. He was the guest of President Bill Clinton at the White House for the unveiling of the POW & MIA stamp in 1995, and of President George Bush twice for the laying of a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery during the Memorial Day and Veterans Day ceremonies in 2006. He appeared in several films for the VA including "POW, Americans in Enemy Hands". Excerpts of interviews with him were included in several books. For the last several years he served on the Washtenaw County Veterans Services Board. He was also a speaker at multiple schools and veterans' related events around the country, relating not only what it was like to be a POW, but also what it was like to be a black enlisted man serving under white-only officers and the glaring lack of recognition of the contributions by black soldiers in battle. He and Carol traveled frequently, including 2 trips to South Korea where he witnessed the amazing results of the country's freedom attained by sacrifices such as his. They continued to attend basketball and baseball games until the last days of his life. He is survived by 4 of his children, Elizabeth

taps, cont'd...

(Michael) Schuchert, Kanda Fletcher, Andrew Fletcher and Angela (Joseph) Eddins and 10 grandchildren, Also by 5 great-grandsons, one newly-born great-granddaughter, his brother-in law and his cat Olive who brought him comfort in his final days.

FORTNAM, Robert W, of Pembroke, NH died Aug. 1, 2017. He was a USAF pilot in WWII, part of the 305th BG, shot down over Belgium, and held POW for 19 months. He's predeceased by his 1st wife, Marion, and survived by his 2nd wife, Janet, and 5 children.

GATES, Henry Cecil, of Monroe, LA passed away Dec. 18, 2017 at the age of 96. He was captured while serving with the AAC and held in Stalag 17B for 18 months. Henry was a life member of AXPOW. He leaves 2 daughters, 1 son, 2 grandchildren, and numerous nieces and nephews.

HARTNEY, Autavee, 92, passed away Friday, January 26, 2018 in Keller, Texas. She met Sgt. Charles "Chuck" Hartney in 1964, and both were at each other's side in love for the remainder of their lives here on this earth. You could not talk about one without the other. Their union brought with it a combined family of 4 children, 12 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren. Audie and Chuck were extensively involved in AXPOW both locally and nationally, holding offices together. She was preceded in death by her husband of 48 years; survivors include her children and grandchildren and a large, loving extended family.

HEREFORD, Keith D., of Westminster, CO died Dec. 23, 2017 at the age of 92. During WWII he served with the AAC and after capture was held in Stalag Luft IV. He was a life member of AXPOW and member of the Mile High Chapter. His partner of 28 years, Betty Griffith, survives him; he also leaves 4 daughters, 1 brother, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

JACKSON, Susanne E., of Loveland, CO died Jan. 18, 2018. She was 89 and the widow of ex-POW Cleo (15th

AF, 465th BG, 783rd BS, held in Luft IV). She was a life member of AXPOW and member of the former Colorado Northeast Chapter. She leaves 2 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren, 1 daughter-in-law and 1 sister.

KANE, Lloyd E., 95, of McClure, OH passed away Jan. 8, 2018. He served with the 15th AF, 97th BG (HV), 341st BS during WWII. He was shot down during the Ploesti Oil Fields run and was held in Bulgaria. His wife, Deloris, predeceased him; he is survived by 2 daughters, 1 son, 6 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren.

KILMER, Ruth Phillips Natvig, 97, a former school teacher and resident of Sun City West, Arizona, passed away Dec. 18, 2017. Ruth was the widow of her first husband former AXPOW National Commander Orlo Natvig, deceased (POW in 17B). With Orlo she helped organize AXPOW Chapters in Iowa and Minnesota prior to moving to Arizona and joining the Agua Fria Chapter, Sun City, where she was Chapter Adjutant for 15 years. In 1996 she married former AXPOW member Lloyd W. Kilmer (deceased). She was also preceded in death by 1 daughter; she is survived by 2 daughters, 1 son, 8 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren.

MARAVILLAS, Ricardo, of Fairfield, CA, died Dec. 12, 2017, at the age of 97. He was captured while assigned to the 12th Medical Battalion (Philippine Scouts) following the surrender of the Filipino-American armed forces at the end of the Bataan Campaign in April 1942. He was a Bataan Death March (approx. five days) survivor. After his release from the Imperial Japanese military's Camp O'Donnell, Philippine Islands, in October 1942, he fought as a guerrilla fighter until liberation in June 1945. Ricardo was predeceased by his wife, Bonifacia; he is survived by five children, ten grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

MOULIS, Ralph E., 94, of Palm Harbor, FL died December 18, 2017. After flying 28 missions with the 306th

Bomb Group out of Bedford, England during WWII, he was shot down and taken prisoner by German forces and held in Stalag 17B. Though he eventually escaped, his 14 months as a prisoner of war left an indelible mark. Survivors includes wife of 34 years, Patricia; 3 sons, 1 sister, and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

MILGO, Betty, of Albany, NY, died Nov 25, 2017. She was the wife of Christopher Milgo, who served with the 8th AF, captured May 12, 1944, and held at Stalag Luft IV. An AXPOW life member since 1991, she and her husband were members of the Northeast New York Chapter. Survivors include her beloved husband, Christopher; 2 daughters, 1 son, 2 step-daughters, 1 brother, 16 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

ODAHOWSKI, Elenor, 90, joined the love of her life, Steve (434th BG, 71st BS, held in Luft IIB, III and VIIA) on Dec. 30, 2017. She was an active member of her Florida chapter and will be missed by many friends.

PAGET, Percy, of Lighthouse Point, FL passed away Dec. 26, 2017 at the age of 96. Percy joined the Army at age 21 and served first as a tail gunner and then as a bombardier in the Army Air Corps, flying missions with the 398th BG out of Nuthampstead, England. He was shot down, captured and held in Stalag 7A until liberation. In 1969, His first wife, Lillian, predeceased him. He is survived by Naomi, his wife of 47 years, 5 children, 5 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren.

POWELL, John of Waltham, MA passed away Feb. 10, 2018. He was 85. Jack served in the Korean War with the 82nd Anti-Aircraft Artillery and was captured there and held in Camps 3 and 5. He and his beloved wife Ruth were active in the Korean Ex-POWs and AXPOW. In addition to his wife, Jack leaves 2 sons and 1 daughter. He was devoted grandpa to 8 grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren and 3 great-great-grandchildren.

taps, cont'd...

RATHBUN, Virginia, of Waterloo, IA died Aug 2, 2017. She was the widow of ex-POW Vernon "Bud" (333rd BS, 94th BG/ 7A, 17B). Ginny and Bud were active members of AXPOW – both nationally and locally. She is survived and will be greatly missed by 1 son, 1 daughter, 2 granddaughters and 4 great-grandchildren.

REDTFELDT, Lucille V., of Fortuna, CA passed away Nov. 18, 2017 at the age of 96. She was a life member of AXPOW with her husband, Gordon (ex-POW, 8th AF, 95th BG/ Stalag Luft 1). In addition to her husband of 74 years, she leaves 2 daughters, 7 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

SKUBIK, Henry A. of Massapequa, NY and Englewood, FL died Jan. 3, 2018 at the age of 94. During WWII, he served with the 8th AF, 398th BG, 601st BS. He was shot down, captured and held in Dulag Luft for interrogation, then Stalag 17B and 13B. As the war was winding down he was marched to Stalag VIIA, Moosburg. His wife,

Kaye, predeceased him; Henry leaves 1 son, 1 daughter and 4 grandchildren.

SUPNIK, Ross Harold, of Framingham, MA passed away Oct. 26, 2017 at the age of 92. Ross served in WWII with the 106th Inf. Div. he was captured during the Battle of the Bulge and held in Stalag 9B until liberation. Ross is survived by his wife of 61 years, Edna, 3 children and 6 grandchildren.

SWIFT, Robert N., of Jamestown, NY (formerly of Harbor Creek, PA) died Oct. 27, 2017. He was 95. He was captured while serving with the 458th AAC, as a bombardier on a B-24. He parachuted over Holland and was taken prisoner and held in Luft I, Barth. His wife of 65 years, Dorothy, predeceased him; survivors include 3 children, 3 grandchildren, 1 great-granddaughter, his good friend and his cat.

THOMPSON, Maynard M., 91, of Sun City, Arizona passed away Jan. 26, 2018. He was a long-time member of the Agua Fria Chapter, Sun City. Maynard served in Company L, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 5th

Division and was held in 13D Nuremberg. He was preceded in death by his wife Doris and is survived by a son and a daughter.

THROCKMORTON, Aletha, of Omaha, NE died Jan. 1, 2018. Jeanne was 97 years old and the widow of Past National Commander Richard (Arbeit Kommando USA #1, 11A). Both Jeanne and Dick were very active members of AXPOW and Jeanne always had a smiling face whenever you saw her. Survivors include 3 sons, 1 daughter, 17 grandchildren, 35 great-grandchildren, 1 sister and a host of friends. (ED. NOTE: I will miss her wonderful Facebook pictures.)

WALLER, Allen Dwight, of Sierra Vista, AZ passed away at the age of 92. Fighting under Patton's Third Army during WWII, Al was wounded, then reconnected with his old outfit – 80th Inf. Div. He was captured in the Battle of the Bulge and walked and took box-cars during the Black Bread March of 1944/1945. He leaves his loving wife of 40 years, Tommie, 2 daughters, 2 sons, 2 step-daughters, 10 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren.

chaplain



Benny Rayborn

I recently visited a friend who showed me his fruit orchard. "I take good care of this orchard to make it produce fruit." I asked "a lot of work?" My friend replied "some work. Two big things are fertilizer and pruning. Surprisingly pruning is good for a tree. It puts the tree under stress, or chas-

tisement. The tree responds with new growth which bears fruit. Lots of fruit. Calling pruning a chastisement is appropriate because the goal of chastisement is to produce a desired outcome. I prune my trees to get a desired result."

Looking at the lives of our AX-POW's, our friends, families and ourselves, we can identify times when we were under stress. We could say we were being chastised because these are opportunities to grow spiritually by trusting God.

Stress (or even chastisement) is a sign that God loves you. With

God's help, you can handle all of the problems of life.

Proverbs 3:12 "For whom the Lord loveth, he correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighted."

Prayer: O Lord, In all of our toils and troubles, cause us to grow deeper in trust and closer to you. For Christ's Sake, Amen

Benny

USE ME, GOD.
SHOW ME HOW TO TAKE
WHO I AM, WHO I WANT
TO BE, & WHAT I CAN DO,
& USE IT FOR A PURPOSE
GREATER THAN MYSELF.



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