

# EX-POW BULLETIN

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American Ex-Prisoners of War

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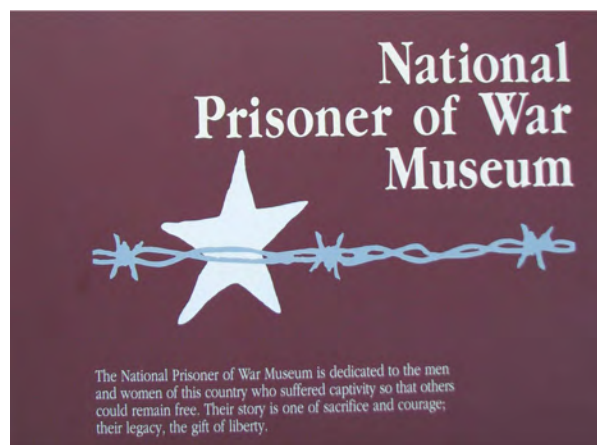
April~May~June 2023

Gold  
Transparency  
2023

Candid.



*We exist to help those who cannot help themselves*



*National Prisoner of War Museum at Andersonville, GA  
Entrance Panel*



# National Prisoner of War Museum dedicated April 9, 1998





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## April-June 2023

April is the 81st anniversary of the founding of AXPOW. On April 14th, a small group of mothers, whose sons had been captured on Bataan, met with the goal of providing relief to those imprisoned. We've come a long way since then and each one of you can be proud of our accomplishments. The National Prisoner of War Museum at Andersonville National Historic Site is one and I hope you take a look back to the opening on April 9th, 1998 in this issue.

### Happy 100th Birthday Bernard Mayrsohn



4000 Towerside Terrace  
Miami, FL 33138  
106th Infantry Division, captured in the Battle of the Bulge  
Stalag 4B Muhlberg Sachsen 51-13

When he was born...  
It was the Roaring 20s

Average life expectancy for men was 47.

Fuel for cars was only sold in drug stores.

Only 14 percent of homes had a bathtub.

Only 8 percent of homes had a telephone.

The tallest structure in the world was the Eiffel Tower.

The average US worker made between \$200-\$400 each year.

INSIDE COVER PICS: Thanks to the National Parks Service and AXPOW Members.

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## 50 Years of Freedom

Fifty years ago, on January 29, 1973 the Paris Peace Accords were signed, bringing an end to the Vietnam War and freedom for prisoners of war held on both sides of the conflict. The PPA was signed by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam), the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam (PRG, aka Viet Cong), the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam), and the United States of America.

On 1 February, the POWs in Hanoi were told to bathe and to shave. All facial hair had to be removed; and we were to put on clean clothes. In the afternoon all the POWs in the Zoo were brought into

a large theater or auditorium. When we were all assembled, the camp commander made the official announcement that the Paris Peace Accords had been signed. All prisoners were to be released on both sides within 60 days of the agreement.

We were elated! Linebacker II had been successful, and the lack of bombing for the last month had not signaled a failure or another ill-advised bombing halt. We would be going home no later than 29 March. We were now officially SHORT, and could start a real countdown to release (i.e. 57 days and a wake-up).

When 10 February rolled around, we were all on edge. We had speculated we might be first, since we were in the best shape; but the prisoners code insisted that it would be first in, first out. I had argued in vain with the camp authorities that two of our guys needed bone and tendon repair and should go home with the first group. That morning, we knew they were going nowhere. During the afternoon lockdown, we heard in the distance the distinctive whining of C-141 engines. Immediately, we were at the windows watching it make its approach to the airport – a beautiful gray and white transport with a big red cross on its tail. At the last minute it made a missed approach, turning right toward the Zoo. As he approached, he waved his wings in salute to us and reentered the landing pattern. We were shouting and jumping for joy. The guards tried to quiet us down, but it was no use. Operation Homecoming was now underway.

The second release date was scheduled for Saturday, 24

February; but no C-141s arrived. What had gone wrong? Our fears of a new stalemate grew exceptionally large as we speculated and our hope for an on-time release fell into the cellar. An announcement over the camp radio claimed that the U.S. had violated the terms of the treaty by failing to sweep the mines out of Haiphong harbor. That meant to us that the NVN government had probably done something to test the U.S. government. When the 141s appeared on Monday, the crisis was over. We would later learn that NVN had refused to release four men captured in Laos but held in Hanoi, claiming they were Laotian prisoners. With the threat of renewed BUFF strikes, they relented.

The 17 March release occurred on schedule, and we grew increasingly restless, anxious, hopeful, and defiant. On the 28th, two events occurred. One, we were issued new clothes (dark blue slacks and light blue shirt, belt, socks, shoes) and a vinyl tote bag. The second event was the freedom flight for half the camp.

The last release of American prisoners occurred on 29 March 1973 exactly 60 days after the Paris Peace Accords had been signed. We were placed on buses and taken to Gia Lam Airport. A host of spectators were gathered, so we were kept behind the hangars until things were ready and the C-141 was on the ground and prepared to pick us up. We were driven to the front of the terminal, climbed out of the bus and formed two lines in order of our shoot-down dates. When our names were called we marched across the tarmac to a USAF Colonel, saluted, reported in, and boarded our Hanoi Taxi to freedom.



## commander, cont'd...

Nine of us NAMPOWs will return to Vietnam in mid-February 2023 along with family and friends. Our time in the prisons range from 86 to over 2,600 days. The four with the shortest time were B-52 crewmembers. In addition, the Military Officers Association of America is sending their video documentarian to record this important return to the past and the remarkable changes that have occurred in the last half-century.

We will fly into Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), board a Uniworld River Cruises boat and travel for ten days up the Mekong into Cambodia, through the "killing fields" and on to Siem Reap and the Angkor Wat ruins. From there we will fly into Hanoi for a few days to tour the remains of the "Hanoi Hilton," John McCain marker, Kham Thein B52 Memorial, Hanoi Hilton Museum, the vestige of Son Tay prison camp and the ancient village of Duong Lam.

This sixteen-day excursion will be a bittersweet time as we visit with each other, get to know our family members and friends, and revisit the place of hardship and deprivation of those long-ago years. In 1995 the USA and Vietnam established diplomatic relations, thanks in part to the efforts of former POW Senator John McCain. The first US Ambassador to be assigned to our embassy in Hanoi was former POW Pete Peterson.

Fifty-year anniversaries are always important milestones in our lives. In 2022 Robbie and I celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary. Six weeks after our wedding, I was deployed to Andersen AFB on Guam to fly B-52Gs over Southeast Asia. My crew was scheduled to return to the States on 18 December, but that date was also the first day of Linebacker II. On 15 December we were notified that all rotations were suspended and all crews were to enter crew rest. So, on the very day we were to fly east to the USA, we flew west to Hanoi and were the first of fifteen B-52s to be shot down over the next eleven nights.

As we return to Hanoi this year – along with our wives this time – we can "close the loop" as we show them the places we were held and experienced some of the terrors of those days. All of us returned with honor and have lived our lives in freedom and gratitude, most of us with the same wives who stood by us during the dark nights. We know the people of Vietnam are very different from those we know so long ago. I know I am very different from the young warrior I was then as I have lived my post-Vietnam life as a pastor and advocate for veterans.

Commander Certain

## president

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My dad always used to say that "God Loves the POW".

25 years ago, on April 9th that was so, so true.

After a long drive down to Americus, Georgia in 1998, our ceremonies for the Grand Opening of the National Prisoner of War Museum at Andersonville National Historic Site were held under a tent in a deluge. The skies were black and the rain seemed like it would never stop.

April 9th, morning broke with clear blue skies and sunshine. Thousands of Ex-POWs and their families witnessed dignitary after dignitary extolling the sacrifices made by POWs from all wars and then got to spend the day as honored guests touring the museum.

It was especially moving for me because along the back wall, my parents' videotape is one of those playing. My mom talks about her wait; my dad breaks up speaking about the letters that were so slow coming from his Ruthie.

Every time I come back to the museum, I head first for that section. I miss them every day, but once a year or so, I have the rare advantage of seeing them on tape.

And I can't wait to see them when Michael and I go to Andersonville for the 25th Anniversary of the National POW Museum.

Fondly,  
**Cheryl**



# from the CEO



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## CEO Column

I truly hope this Bulletin finds each of you and your family to be well. As described in the last Bulletin, my article will consist of my CEO and Legislative responsibilities.

On April 22, 2023 the Andersonville National Prisoner of War Museum will be celebrating its 25th year. The Museum holds a special place in all of our hearts and serves as a focal point for our lasting legacy. I encourage all of you to consider making the trip with family and friends to join and support the celebration.

As part of our transition, we often refer to our lasting legacy as the National POW Museum in Andersonville Georgia however it is far broader. The Museum houses the stories of ever reducing number of EX-POWs but our legacy stretches across our country and beyond. The legacy has many forms and has been built by the efforts of the EX-POWs during and after the war, for the many contributions of the NOKs, and what other veterans and advocates have done to honor those that have served and held captive by the enemy. In every state, I am certain there are many examples

and I encourage you to seek them out and draw attention to their message. I want to use three examples not to single out individual efforts, because none would want the attention, but rather to remind you of how much has been done. In the 1980s, President Reagan signed into law a Bill that provided presumptive health conditions for all EXPOWS. An accomplishment of this size takes the efforts of so many and EX-POW Chuck Williams much of the impetus - providing the political lobbying and driving force. That legislation is a legacy for all future POWs to be treated fairly by the VA for what they had to endure. Having lived in New Jersey for most of my life, I am most familiar with state level activities and wish to share two such examples. Under the leadership of our National AXPOW Director Moe Moyer, commemorative POW/MIA chairs have been located in high public visibility areas. Princeton University, Rutgers University, high schools, and countless other locations throughout New Jersey and his leadership and support for the Commemorative Chair placed at Emancipation Hall in the US Capitol Visitor Center in Washington DC now contain an everlasting legacy to POWs. Past National Commander, Charles Susino, Jr. obtained the required approvals and self-generated funding for EX-POW monuments in VA Hospitals, town halls, and local Memorial Parks throughout New Jersey. While these men never looked for recognition for their efforts, it would be wrong to exclude their names in describing these examples of legacies. Further, there are countless examples by EX-POWs, NOK's, and others throughout each state in the country. The purpose of raising the issue is to encourage all of you to seek these examples, appreciate them for what they are, and continue the work and awareness.

Each of you know many examples showing how 1000's of individuals contributed in their own way to the lasting legacy of the EX-POW. There is no greater way to show our respect.

Changing to national politics with the new Congress, the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs has announced its members. Rep. Mike Bost (R-IL), a Marine Corps veteran, will lead the committee as chairman. The former chairman, Rep. Mark Takano (D-CA) will stay on a Ranking Member. On the Senate side, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs has announced its members. Sen. Jon Tester (D-MT) has returned as chairman, and Sen. Jerry Moran (R-KS) has returned as ranking member. They serve as a point of contact on any veteran issue you wish to draw attention.

Feb. 1, 2023 ended the "Widow's Tax" Survivor Benefit Offset whereby surviving spouses enrolled in the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) program receive their full payment from Department of Defense and their full Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) payment from Veterans Affairs. This will be the first SBP annuity payday after the SBP-DIC Offset is fully eliminated, which took effect on Jan. 1, 2023. This penalty offset was eliminated as part of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2020 following many years of lobbying by the Veterans Service organizations to remove this unjust penalty.

Locally and globally, our world is an ever-increasing dangerous place. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all of those impacted by military conflict, violence, and hardship. Stay safe.

Charles A Susino



# andersonville



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Greetings from Andersonville. There are times when everything just works; we are grateful for a highly successful year so far. The year started during the holidays when The Friends of Andersonville, AXPOW, Bennett International/Taylor Foundation and Truist Bank came together to honor our veterans in a big way for Wreaths Across America. We had roughly 2,000 attendees and laid 20,300 wreaths in 15 minutes! Our most attended event in recent memory.

Visitation is up 52% from last year: we attribute most of this to school trips and staff rides which have picked up significantly. The National Park Foundation funded an intern to work on the "Women Who Saved Andersonville". Our intern developed impressive new Women's Relief Corp displays for the museum as well as an interpretive program on this topic. We are in the process of hiring a permanent museum technician to help with the curatorial workload and allow us to change temporary exhibits more frequently.

We will be removing the metal fencing along highway 49 and replacing it with split rail except at the funeral entrance. We believe this will allow us to maintain a better appearance since the fence is

always getting hit by cars and wildlife. We are also working towards renovations to the museum restrooms, a new HVAC system, and the replacement of the internal working of the water feature at the museum. We expect we will need to close the museum for up to 2 months during the HVAC installation. We are focused on minimizing any closure time and look forward to being better able to control the humidity in the museum to preserve artifacts.

Staff are working diligently to prepare for the April anniversary event 25th Anniversary of Museum Opening and 50th Anniversary of Operation Homecoming. See the invitation below and follow us on social media for other programs happening in April.

We are so grateful for the support of AXPOW and our other philanthropic partners as we work to meet the park mission of telling the story of all American Prisoners of War. I hope to see many of you on April 22!

## *Museum Under Construction*



Andersonville National Historic Site invites you to join us on Saturday April 22nd for an afternoon honoring POWs and commemorating the 25th anniversary of the opening of the National POW Museum. Programming for the day will begin at 1:00 pm with Meredith Funderbirk, ACE intern, presenting a talk about the 50th Anniversary of Operation Homecoming in the museum's theater. Following the talk, please join us outside at 2:00 pm under the big, white tent as we commemorate the opening of the museum with speeches by former superintendent Fred Boyles and other notables who were a part of its creation. Light refreshments will be available. Please call 229 924-0343 to RSVP.





## *Friends of Andersonville*

### The Role of the Friends of Andersonville in the Development of the National Prisoner of War Museum

By, Fred Boyles  
Chair of the Board, Friends of Andersonville

Being a participant in the development of the National POW Museum was one of the greatest privileges of my life. From 1989 until 2009, I served as Superintendent of Andersonville National Historic Site, so had a front-row seat to process of planning, design, and construction of the museum, all of which culminated on April 9, 1998. The American Ex-Prisoners of War (AXPOW) joined as the park's principal partner in the museum's development, and a small locally based group called the Friends of Andersonville joined as well.

In 1988, the Friends of Andersonville (FOA) was established to support the historic site. Nearly every one of the 400+ units of the National Park Service have support organizations like the Friends that provide financial, volunteer, and other forms of support for the park sites. The FOA had a modest start that profoundly changed when Carl Runge became the President of the group. Carl had been a POW in Germany and enjoyed a long career in the entertainment business and in sales. His first goal was the give

the park a larger image. He did that by convincing his old friend, Ted Turner, to make a television movie about the Andersonville story. The four-hour film made of TNT aired in early 1996. Its effect was immediate in the recognition that it brought to the park. In four premieres of the film, the Friends raised \$50,000 for its newly established endowment fund called the Andersonville Trust.

The Friends were also proactive in fundraising for the Museum's construction fund. They successfully solicited donations from Georgia based corporations. Carl secured the largest single donation towards the project from the Woodruff Family of Foundations for \$250,000. For Carl, raising money for the museum was like a sales call. He knew how to make the call and close the sale.

The Friends were successful in helping the local community to come together and support the museum project. Once construction began on the museum, the dream of a fitting place to honor all POWs in American history was coming to Southwest Georgia. Planning for a fitting grand opening event began almost one year before the planned date. A committee made up of key members of AXPOW, the Friends, the Americus Sumter County Chamber of Commerce and the National Park Service all started working on an event to mark the occasion. Because numerous people had worked diligently on getting the museum built, it only seemed proper that those who had a part in the opening event should reflect that

same spirit of support. We selected the ribbon cutters from all the different organizations who had supported the project. Elected officials included two members of Congress, three US Senators, the Governor of Georgia and the Director of the National Park Service. All had speaking roles in the ceremony. Roughly 4,000 people attended the event, most of whom were former POWs. C-Span, Fox News, CNN, and MSNBC aired the event live and it was covered with news stories on ABC and NBC nightly news broadcasts. The community helped organize a simple lunch for all those who attended. What made the event so meaningful was that it reflected that the nation was recognizing prisoners of war who had sacrificed so much for the nation they loved. It really was a great day for America.

That event 25 years ago will always be a high point in my life. But it is what has happened since that I believe is much more important. Daily the National POW Museum has welcomed visitors. Many of those coming to the museum for the first time are students who likely knew little about these stories. Through films, displayed objects, oral histories and exhibits, it has exposed them to the narratives of POW history from the Revolution through our recent wars in the Middle East. That is the legacy that former POWs and the Friends of Andersonville wanted to share with an audience that needs to know about this story of sacrifice for the nation we love.





## Operation Homecoming ... A Young Wife's Perspective

Operation Homecoming was not on my radar screen until I had the need! Then I paid attention.

Before I knew I would have the need, my life circumstances had somewhat prepared me ahead of time. I grew up in Blytheville, Arkansas that had a B52G Air Force base. I was quite aware of the plane and its mission starting as early as my elementary years. I had witnessed the arrival of the first plane, seen the "red phone" needed for war time, been friends of Air Force officers and their children. Through this early exposure, I felt very comfortable with the military and the life it afforded. I knew that B52s could carry nuclear weapons. I also knew they were very safe airplanes with excellent records.

I had never dated a young officer until July 1971. I had returned home after graduate school to teach. It was love at first sight. After 10 nights of dating, my future husband left for Thailand. Robert was a navigator bombardier. He flew missions for four months without incidence. After all, the B52G was invincible! He returned home at Thanksgiving, and we were engaged by New Year's Eve. A perfect time to wed was of course, June. Plans were made for the elaborate event. It was to be a large wedding because Blytheville was my hometown. Life was progressing with little difficulty, school was winding down for the summer and I was ready to marry my young, capable, officer.

B52s and their crews stood alert for seven days a month. The planes had to be ready to defend our nation at a

moment's notice. Wives, girlfriends, and families had visiting privileges. One Sunday evening in May, I went out to visit Robert. The evening did not go as planned for either of us. Robert had been informed earlier in the day that all planes would be leaving for Guam by the end of the next week. This meant I could marry Robert by the week's end or wait until he returned 6 months later. What a week for all of us. Call me crazy, but I made an important decision to marry him 5 days later. This event is important to the rest of the story but of course, I had no idea what was ahead.

Robert and I married on May 25, 1972. As luck would have it, we had six weeks of marriage before he left for Guam. We communicated daily by letter. We had two phone calls in six months. After all, it cost \$6.00 per minute at that time! I kept myself busy teaching two sessions of kindergarten daily and teaching community college two nights a week. Robert was due home the 1st week in December but his orders were cancelled. The next date for return was December 18th. I was so excited and decorated the house with a tree and a manger scene he had made in the base hobby shop. He likes to say it made it "between bombing runs." A Colonel brought this to me mid-December. Life was looking up and we were both ready to resume our young marriage.

BAM ... my world changed December 18th, 1972. No matter how much you think you know, no one is prepared for notification of wartime status of a loved one. It was Christmas break and I had gone home to have lunch with my parents. I had planned to pick up my husband the early morning of the 19th. I was excited; it was a good day. While I was eating lunch my mother answered the telephone and was told that military officers had been by my father's furniture store and were looking for him. Our salesman asked that my father stay home and wait until the officers arrived. At that point, I knew something was wrong. I felt like I couldn't eat and began pacing the



## homecoming, cont'd...

floor wondering what's going on. Of course, my parents were saying don't worry, but I my stomach knew better.

Earlier the pilot's wife had prepared me to never worry until you see white top cars. Well, two white top cars were sitting outside our front door with at least six officers. This was my worst nightmare ... my mother and father had their arms around me as the notifying officer read a letter to me explaining that Robert was shot down over Hanoi and was classified as Missing in Action. I had never heard that B52s were flying over North Vietnam. Robert had not warned me that he would not be home on the 18th and yet he was suspicious of the activities that would be happening from Guam. Information was hush, hush and the crews had not been informed ahead of time. The whole world exploded for me and other family members. Fortunately, I was surrounded by family. The mood rapidly changed from happy to sad. The officers expressed condolences. In shock, we visited with the military officers. At that time, my father and mother were serving as liaison officers to the base so there was a lot of respect and concern given to us. Just as I was going to rest another phone call was received and it had better news for me; Roberts's Social Security number was being released by Radio Hanoi. The next morning Robert's picture with five other officers was shown around the world in every major newspaper. We were all learning about the United States attack on

Hanoi. President Nixon hoped that the bombings would bring North Vietnam back to the bargaining table to end the war and bring home all the POWs. This was the beginning of Linebacker II. The bombing of Hanoi lasted for 11 days. My husband just happened to be on the first airplane to go down over Hanoi and was the first one captured.



*Day after capture...  
December 19, 1972*

**This was the beginning of Operation Homecoming for me.** I had no idea when my husband would be home but I had been notified by the military and they were supporting me with information. My job in life was to live it as a schoolteacher and a wife with a husband that was in the Hanoi Hilton. I have always felt grateful for the decision to marry my husband before he went to Guam. I am sure I would not have known this information as quickly as a fiancée. I never really realized until later in life that in essence, I was a war bride like those young women of World War Two.

The good news was the fact that the bombing did the trick. Unfortunately, over 30 men were killed in Linebacker II. The peace

treaty was signed in January and life was looking hopeful. For me, anxiety was at the forefront of my hopefulness. My husband has a dry sense of humor and was also a very determined young man. I always wondered if he would get out alive of Vietnam because of something he said or made the guards angry.



*Gia Lam Airport, Hanoi  
March 29, 1973*

We didn't know how Operation Homecoming would work but we were notified that we would be informed when the men were coming home. As the releases came, I was notified that he was or wasn't on the airplane. By the second release of POWs I had figured out that the last ones in would be the last ones to come home. It was only fair but each time I would receive a message that he was not on the airplane my stomach was in knots. Robert was on the last airplane out ... whew! When he arrived in the Philippines, he called me and oh was that a happy day for me. I knew it would be a few more days before I saw him. He was to come to Scott Air Force Base in Belleville, IL. That was the closest major hospital to Blytheville Air Force Base. I don't remember much about the driving trip except I know that I had 30 pieces of paper orders in case I needed them while I was on the base. I was greeted by our escort



## homecoming, cont'd...

officer and his wife. When I arrived at Scott AFB I had a cold, cough, and runny nose. Maj. and Mrs. DeCamillo took me to the hospital for additional medicine. They were delightful and treated me well.

The next day Robert was to arrive. President Nixon had corsages for all the wives to wear when running to meet our husbands. I was not aware that my teaching assistant had a red carnation corsage made for me to wear from my kindergarten students. Children had brought in pennies, nickels, and dimes for the corsage.



*Scott AFB, Apr. 2, 1973*

I chose to wear the carnations which meant so much to me. (The children knew all about the shoot down and my husband being in prison. Many children knew about relatives being in jail ... my husband was a hero). The life lesson I learned that day has

stayed with me through the years; stress can cause illness. After Robert got off the airplane, hugged me and the cold was gone! We were fortunate to have Robert's parents, my sister and her husband, very good friends from Blytheville AFB, and even Robert's 2nd grade teacher lived in the area and came to welcome him home.



*Blytheville AFB, around Apr. 5, 1973. My parents, Robert and Margaret are greeting us.*

The event was joyous, surreal, and heavy. As happy and elated as we were, we knew that three of his crew members did not come home. One was MIA, one reported killed and another's body was shown to Robert in North Vietnam. Throughout this experience I was always very mindful of the sacrifices other men and families had made. Some children would never know their fathers. Robert and I were newlyweds and I felt how blessed we had been, but my joy was measured with emotions for other families.

Robert and I had turned 24 and 25 when this event happened.

Our marriage of 50 years has survived through the challenges of life. We live at Blue Skies of Texas in San Antonio, TX. (Formerly known as Air Force Village) We have one son and one daughter and son-in-law with two teenage children, all living in Little Rock, AR .

A more detailed version of this story can be found on YouTube. Search: Robbie Certain Atlanta History Project





# pow/mia

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## Recovery work returns to normal

At DPAA, 166 sets of remains were identified by the close of FY 2022.

Fiscal Year 2023 started Sept 30, 2022. To date (end of February), twenty four identifications have been announced.

Fourteen for WWII were named. Two were Army, eight were Army Air Force, one Marine, and three Navy. The Korean War had seven Army soldiers identified. Vietnam had only one identification, from the Army.

In November, History Flight announced it will return to Tarawa, continuing the mission to leave no man behind.

Paul Schwimmer, a retired Army Special Forces veteran said "“Don't tell us these men are not recoverable, give us a chance to go after them.”"

"In the decade since its first dig, History Flight has led to the identification of 96 American service members killed on

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As of Feb. 28, 2023, the number of Americans Missing and Unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War remains at 1,581.

There are 81,613 still unaccounted for US Military personnel since 1941.

Tarawa, according to the branch of the Pentagon charged with finding US military remains, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency."

Also announced was the discovery of five WWII era bombers off Croatia by Project Recovery. Three of those 5 losses are associated with 23 still missing crew.

Thirty wrecked warplanes may be in that same area. Many are only at a depth of a few hundred feet.

In December, the last three WWII POWs were accounted for from Lithuania. Joint partnerships resulted in the recovered and transfer of the remains found near Stalag Luft 6 despite the camps destruction by the Soviets in 1955. The area returned to farmland. Now, they lie in the USA in hallowed ground.

In January, DPAA announced the retirement of Johnie Webb. He was the face of the Pentagon's effort to bring closure to family members for almost five decades, serving in multiple positions over the troubled times, agency name changes, negotiations, resignations and frustrations.

Just after serving as an Army Officer in Vietnam, Webb was assigned to the Army Identification Lab in Thailand. He was 77 years old at retirement, stationed at Joint Pearl Harbor-Hickam in Honolulu where he had been in charge of the forensic lab.

In early February, the National League of Families surprising announced it was dissolving its organization. Then, on February 12, 2023, a letter posted on their website stated "headquarters office in the Metropolitan DC area will re-open March 1, thanks to a very generous anonymous benefactor." Status of the organization is unknown!

In February, South Korea conducted a repatriation ceremony, once again, transferring remains to the United Nations Command, for analysis in the DPAA labs. More than 7500 remain unaccounted for from the war.

## Skyler Needed Help

Last issue I introduced you to Skyler.

"At each of the reunions, a 10 year old young man, named Skyler, approached the veterans with a small gift.

His Facebook page<sup>2</sup> said: "...My journey with veterans started 3 years ago. I started learning veterans go unappreciated for some of the things they went through for our country...."



## pow/mia cont'd...



In November of 2022, he joined us again in Branson to continue his mission. While he had a great time, met thousands of veterans, posed for pictures, shook hands, and handed out his fishhook charms, little did he know how evil and mean some people can be.

Someone stole 17 fishing rods and tackle off his porch while he was gone. No rods and reels = no fishing trips with veterans to say thank you! To say he was devastated would be an understatement.

Just before Christmas, we met his Skylar and his parents and presented a brand new rod and tackle box, donated by Bass Pro. But we didn't think, or we should say, we knew, that it was not enough to cover what thieves stole.

So our mission at the POW Network, became collecting what we could of those fishing items local residents used in the past, but didn't any more. Yesterday, before trout season opens here, we asked Skylar and his family to meet us in Branson for "a veterans meeting."

Little did he know the meeting was for him. More than 50 individuals, businesses, and pro-fisherman came thru, from as far away as Tennessee and Wisconsin.



Tables lined with the donated gear filled the room. We surprised Skylar with enough fishing tackle and gear to last him quite a while.

He just kept smiling.

There were 30 rods, a dozen+ tackle filled boxes, more than \$1K cash, \$500 in related (Bass Pro and fishing) gift cards, etc. The Veterans of the Ozarks intend to take him shopping for whatever may have been missed after needs are assessed. He has a guided fishing trip pledged, more goodies yet to come.



The trip home had to be noisy with chatter, or very quiet as a young man may just have fallen asleep with all the excitement of the day.

Mission accomplished.

<https://www.facebook.com/skylersfishingadventures/posts/pfbid0xxztQDmCKE3jGp2wHPoSsYsXX386sbjm76wneYdmHhfYigxSeVB8dUwqruL6i2B3>



# Civilian

## Santo Tomás Liberation

By Prof. Martin Meadows

Originally published in the *AMCHAM Philippines Business Journal*, February 2022, Vol. XCVII No. 2

It has been 77 years since the liberation of Santo Tomas Internment Camp (STIC), but most of the details of the eventful night of 3 February 1945 remain forever etched in my memory.

During the afternoon and evening of that Saturday, we heard distant gunfire and explosions of various kinds, and we could see evidence of conflagrations in the form of heavy smoke in the distance. Of course there were always internees ready, willing and able to concoct alleged “explanations” of those events; but in such a notorious rumor mill as STIC, we had long ago learned to pay no attention to such talk.

Regardless, that evening there seemed to be a different kind of feeling in the air, as the blackout-enforced darkness enveloped the camp’s buildings. An indefinable premonition, a feeling that something out of the ordinary might soon happen, was intensified by two things. One was the famous episode — knowledge of which quickly spread throughout the camp — of the U.S. aircraft pilot who had flown low over the camp and dropped goggles with an attached note, whose message “Roll out

the barrel” hinted at impending liberation. On the other hand, it was widely feared (with good reason, as it turned out) that the Japanese planned to “terminate” the residents of STIC before they could be rescued. Thus there was a sensation of combined foreboding and anticipation in the air.

As a result of the feelings aroused by these conflicting possibilities, after the nightly roll call I did not follow my usual routine of hanging out with fellow teenagers for a couple of hours or so before going to bed. Instead, at around 8 p.m. I was sitting and talking with my parents at our “dining room” — folding chairs at a card table placed next to the hallway’s inner wall (that is, the wall next to the Main Building’s west patio), across the corridor from my mother’s room. Her room was on the first floor (whereas my father and I were in a room on the third floor); it was located at the front of the building, at the juncture of two long hallways.

One hallway, perhaps 30 or so yards long, led directly to the building’s large, high-ceilinged lobby, where the front entrance was located. Thus we could easily hear (but in the darkness we could not see) that there was a very large and very noisy crowd of internees (possibly imbued with the aforesaid sense of foreboding/anticipation) milling around in the lobby and spilling into the adjoining hallways. The other and much longer hallway, which was at least twice as long, led toward the rear of the building, where hardly anyone could be heard that night.

Suddenly, shortly before 9 p.m., we heard a loud roar coming from the lobby, and I could make out shouts such as “They’re here!” and “It’s our boys!” and “Look at those tanks!” Realizing that the building’s front doors somehow had been opened, I jumped up and, leaving my parents to follow, hurried toward the lobby. There I managed to squeeze myself into the unruly mob, whose surge through the front entrance carried me out onto the spacious plaza in front of the Main Building.

I then witnessed a scene that aroused what can be only inadequately described as a sensation of incredibly unbounded jubilation. That feeling is impossible to put into words, so I will not even attempt to do so; however, I can certainly describe the scene in front of me. What I saw were several tanks (later I learned there were five of them), which had smashed through the gates at the camp’s entrance and were coming up the driveway toward the plaza. They were flanked by soldiers on foot, and their spotlights were playing around the area. Those GIs looked like gods to this 14-year-old, and I sought to join the deliriously joyful internees ahead of me who were rushing to meet them.

But just at that point I heard authoritative shouts above the crowd’s uproar warning that the situation was extremely dangerous, that we were impeding the work of the GIs, and that we should get back into the building immediately. Not everyone obeyed, but I was among those who did.



## civilian, cont'd...

Once back in the building, I excitedly paced on a euphoric high back and forth along the hallway between the lobby and my mother's room. In the process, I tried to absorb the realization that at long last we had actually been liberated after more than three years of captivity. While doing that, I had to keep dodging in and out of the melee in the packed corridor; I assumed my parents also were embedded somewhere in the crowd — I do not recall having seen either of them since leaving our card table.

What I certainly do recall seeing, however, was an extremely sobering counterpoint to the events of the night, so much so that it actually dampened my sense of exultation over our liberation. That was the sight of a half-dozen or so dead Japanese and American soldiers, whose bodies were placed in single file along the hallway's outer wall (that is, the wall closer to the front of the building).

Thereafter, I was perhaps subconsciously motivated to seek to at least partially compensate for that grim spectacle. In any event, in due course, after I had somehow managed to squeeze myself into the jam-packed lobby, I was able to receive a few of the candy bars and chewing gum sticks being passed out by the handful of GIs who were crammed in the midst of adoring, almost worshipful (ex-)internees.

Eventually, as the night wore on, at the insistence of my parents when we finally met up at my mother's room, I very reluctantly went upstairs to get a few hours of sleep. I awoke early the next morning, fully prepared and anxious to savor the benefits of our newly-attained freedom, gastronomical and otherwise. Nor has my resulting heightened appreciation of those benefits been dimmed in the slightest by the passage of 77 years.

## News

### Veterans can now access their disability benefit decisions online

Veterans can now access their disability benefit claim decision notice letters electronically on VA.gov, empowering them to quickly and easily see their disability decisions.

Before this option was available, Veterans had to wait for a paper copy of their decision notice to be mailed to them. While previous iterations of VA.gov allowed Veterans to access benefits summary letters, they could not access the full copy of these decision notification letters from their electronic claims folders.

This service became available to Veterans on VA.gov on Jan. 17. Since launching, nearly 280,000 decision notice letters have been downloaded.

"Veterans now have access to their benefits decisions anytime, anyplace — right at their fingertips," said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. "VA disability benefits can also open the door to other federal and state benefits, so quick and easy access to a decision means quicker access to the additional benefits Veterans deserve."

The new electronic option is also expected to reduce calls to the National Call Centers, freeing up call center respondents to answer other questions and requests from Veterans and their families.

### VA relaxes masking requirements at medical facilities

The Department of Veterans Affairs announced it has relaxed the masking requirement at VA medical facilities. This update ensures the safety of Veterans while accommodating individual masking preferences and aligning with CDC guidelines.

Moving forward, VA will base its masking guidelines on the [VHA COVID-19 Health Protection Levels](#) (low, medium, and high) and healthcare facilities' conditions. When health protection levels are high, masking will remain required. However, when health protection levels are low or medium, medical center leadership will conduct a facility risk assessment to determine if it is appropriate for masking to be optional in certain areas at their facility. Previously, masking had been required at all times in VA medical facilities, regardless of health protection levels.





# NATIONAL PRISONER OF WAR MUSEUM

*Andersonville, Georgia*

*Dedication, April 9, 1998*



DEDICATION STATION  
APRIL 9 1998  
NATIONAL PRISONER OF WAR MUSEUM  
ANDERSONVILLE, GEORGIA 31711

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

February 24, 1998



Warmest greetings to everyone gathered to dedicate the National Prisoner of War Museum. This remarkable project marks the culmination of a partnership between the American Ex-Prisoners of War, the Friends of Andersonville, and the National Park Service. I am honored to join you in your efforts to tell the story of American prisoners of war.

Today, we have the privilege of living in a free country. But that freedom does not come without a price. The National Prisoner of War Museum will honor the men and women who paid that price with their own freedom. The legacy of America's POWs will be forever preserved in this museum, reminding generations to come of the sacrifices made by these American heroes.

It is fitting that the National Prisoner of War Museum should be dedicated on the anniversary of the fall of Bataan, when we observe National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day. I join you in paying tribute to all Americans who have been held as prisoners of war for the sake of our freedom -- their sacrifice will never be forgotten.

Best wishes to all for a memorable dedication ceremony.

*Bill Clinton*



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EMBASSY OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
HANOI

AMBASSADOR

April 9, 1998

To: Fellow Supporters of Andersonville

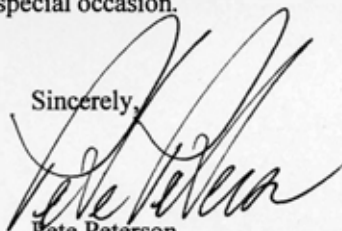
Greetings and welcome to the Grand Opening of the National Prisoner of War Museum, a museum made possible by your purchase of the POW Commemorative Coin, by thousands of individual contributions and grants from foundations, corporations, and the State of Georgia. The hard work by this project's many dedicated supporters will insure that the history of all of America's POWs will not be forgotten. When I sponsored the Coin Bill it was my wish and that of my colleagues in Congress to establish an endowment fund to augment federal funds to ensure perpetual maintenance of this world class museum and these hallowed grounds.

An endowment fund known as the Andersonville Trust has been established by former American POWs and leaders of the communities of Macon and Sumter Counties. Contributions already total \$250,000 towards the goal of one million dollars. Your generous support made this museum possible and this moment a reality. Your continued support is needed to assure the success of the museum in the future. Your tax deductible gift may be sent to The Andersonville Trust, Andersonville, Georgia, 31711. The high purpose of the Trust has caught the attention of Senators Sam Nunn and Bob Dole, General Colin Powell and Georgia's native son, the Honorable Griffin B. Bell. Each of these distinguished Americans have agreed to serve as Honorary Trustees.

Destiny has marked this remarkable place for high purpose. It is our legacy and the legacy of all Americans throughout our Nation's history that were POWs that we honor here. The National POW Museum will serve to educate this and future generations about their sacrifices and will capture in its displays a vivid picture of the high cost of freedom.

Thank you for being a part of this special occasion.

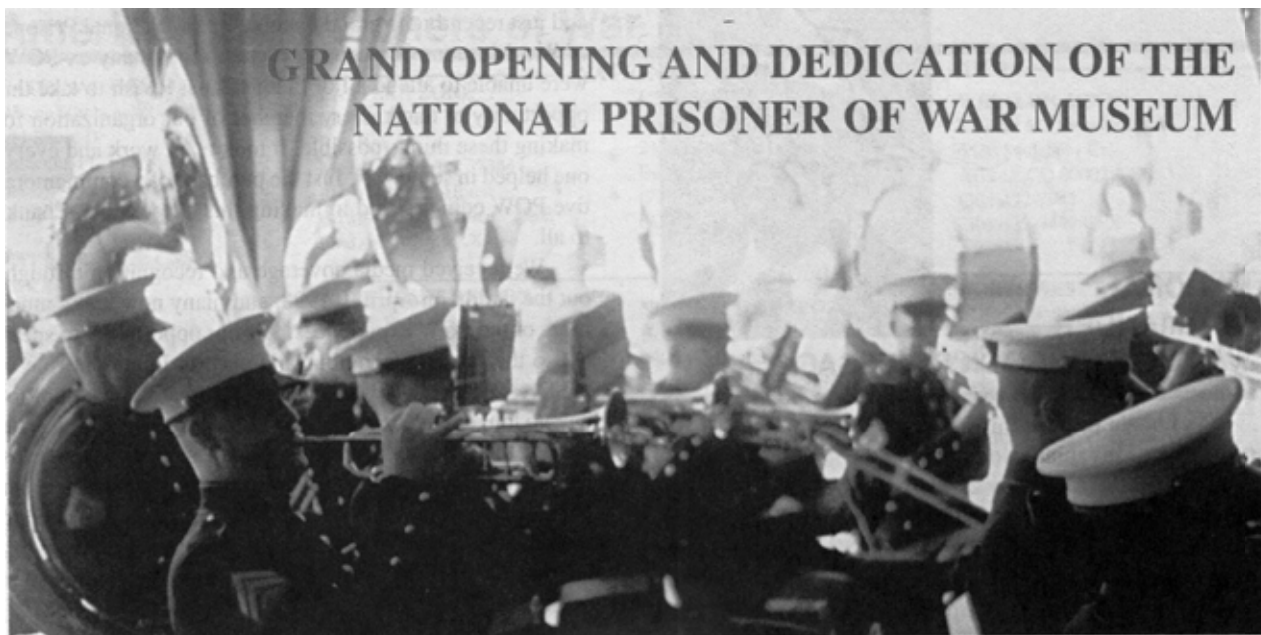
Sincerely,



Pete Peterson  
Ambassador



## GRAND OPENING AND DEDICATION OF THE NATIONAL PRISONER OF WAR MUSEUM



Coinciding with the 56th anniversary of the Bataan Death March, the nation honored its former prisoners of war with the grand opening of the National Prisoner of War Museum at Andersonville National Historic Site (ANHS) in Andersonville, Georgia. Located at the site of the notorious Civil War prison camp, the museum serves as a salute to America's forgotten heroes. The \$5.8 million 10,000 square-foot facility features photos, videotaped interviews, narrated letters, interactive exhibits and other memorabilia from the more than 800,000 Americans believed to have been imprisoned since the Revolutionary War. Federal and Georgia state

funds, private donations and congressionally authorized sales of commemorative POW coins helped finance the museum. Over 4,000 persons attended the grand opening of the museum, and an additional 14,000 visitors came during the month of April 1998. The opening of the museum was covered favorably in newspapers and magazines throughout the nation, including *US News & World Report* and front page of the *New York Times* and *The Stars and Stripes*. The museum opening was covered by at least twelve news stories on national television networks.



*Over 4,000 attended the grand opening ceremony of the National POW Museum in Andersonville on April 9, 1998.*





*Bill Fornes, Andersonville Coordinator, presented the Memorial Book to Jerry Belson of the National Park Service.*



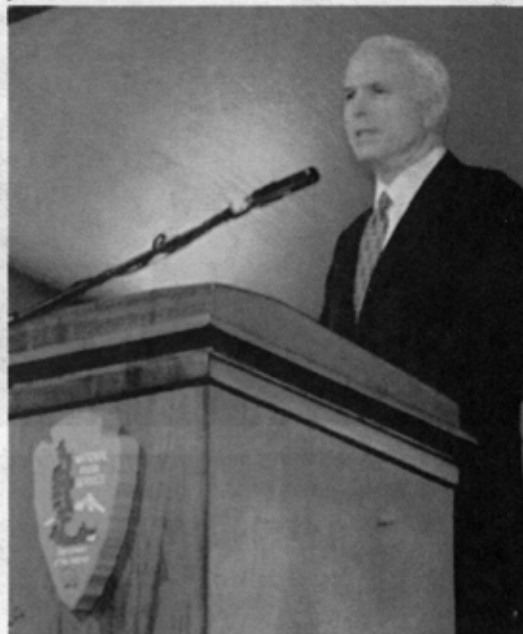
*Superintendent of ANHS Fred Boyles received special recognition from the National Park Service.*



*National Chaplain John Romine gave the invocation.*

Over 2,500 ex-prisoners of war, their families and friends viewed the unveiling ceremony of the courtyard artwork the evening of April 8, 1998, from the lobby of the National POW Museum or the huge tent with video monitors provided by the National Park Service on the north side of the building. The courtyard, funded by the American Ex-POW organization, contains a meandering stream recalling the water themes common to many POW experiences, and three relief sculptured brick panels which form the backdrop for a bronze prisoner of war figure, from whose hands a trickle of water falls to the stream. The courtyard provides a place for visitors to contemplate the emotion-stirring POW experience exhibits within the museum. It was as if heaven, too, was weeping on April 8th as rain drenched the unveiling ceremony. Bill Fornes, ANHS coordinator for AXPOW, and PNC John Edwards, chairman of the ANHS Committee for AXPOW, gave remarks and assisted artist Donna Dobberfuhr in the ceremony.

Sunshine welcomed the 4,000 plus who attended the dedication and grand opening of the National POW Museum the following



*Senator John McCain was the keynote speaker.*

*Ribbon cutters included, left to right, Carl Runge, Friends of the Park; Sally Morgan, Civilian Internee WWII; Col. David Eberly, USAF Ret., Desert Storm POW; Col. Wayne Waddell, USAF Ret., Vietnam POW; M/ Sgt. Jim Petty, USA Ret., Korean War POW; M/Sgt. Roy Gentry, USAF Ret., Pacific WWII POW; and Col. John Edwards, USA Ret., European WWII POW.*





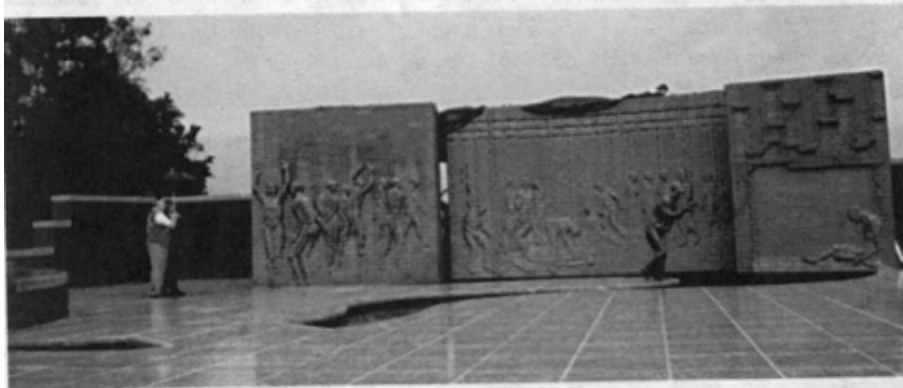


With that the National Prisoner of War Museum was opened to the public, culminating a concept that began in 1970, when Andersonville was made a national historic site and mandated to tell the story of all POWs in American history in legislation passed by Congress.

**NOTICE:** Now that the National Prisoner of War Museum is officially open, the Andersonville account will be closed. The remaining funds on hand will be sent to the Andersonville Trust. This is necessary for AXPOWs to make a final disbursement to the National Park Service for the amount of funds remaining in the Andersonville Fund. This is essential for two reasons. First, it is a provision of the Memorandum of Agreement with the Park Service. Second, all donations to the fund were given toward the planned National Prisoner of War Museum. It would be wrong for the remaining funds to be spent for other purposes.

The Trust is an endowment fund established to support the National Prisoner of War Museum and the education, outreach and operations of the park. The Trust is the best way to insure that the legacy of the former POWs is continued in the future. Hereafter, all donations for Andersonville are to be made to the **Andersonville Trust** and mailed to the National Park Service, R#1, Box 800, Andersonville, GA 31711.

- Nat'l Cmdr. Wayne Hitchcock



Above, the bronze statue and the courtyard with the brick panels. Bill Fornes assists artist Donna Dobberfuhr during the unveiling of the artwork in the rain on April 8, 1998. Photos by The Citizen & Georgian newspaper of Montezuma, GA.



At right, Dixon Poole of the Military Shop rented the town hall of Andersonville, and graciously gave AXPOW space to sell merchandise. Those assisting in the sales are pictured.





## NATIONAL PRISONER OF WAR MUSEUM



*Standing at the main entrance to the National Prisoner of War Museum are, left to right, Bill Caruso, Louis Loevsky, and SVC Jack Jones. Photo courtesy of The Citizen & Georgian newspaper.*



*Inside the tent set up for the grand opening ceremonies, Congressman Sanford Bishop (center) visited with the wives of former prisoners of war, left to right, Marguerite Fyler, Mary Rolen, Anne Caruso and Lucille Jones.*

*Below, the audience at the ribbon cutting ceremony that officially opened the National Prisoner of War Museum to the public.*







An overhead mural of prisoners of war surrounds the upper perimeter of the museum lobby. Pictured below is the entrance from the lobby to the exhibit area.

Photographs of the National POW Museum dedication were contributed by Robert G. Noble, *The Citizen & Georgian* newspaper, the *Americus Times-Recorder* newspaper, Leonard E. Rose, Jane and Bob Fredrickson, Lou Loevsky, Mary Rolan, Anne Caruso, PNC Bill Bearisto, Ruby Smith, Don Price, Dixon Poole, and Sue Langseth.



Former Stalag XVII-B POWs Dan Westmoreland and Don Price found each other in the crowd at the opening of the museum. Westmoreland was being interviewed when Price recognized him.



Members of the Texas Panhandle Chapter of AXPOW that attended the opening of the National POW Museum in Andersonville.



Executive Director of AXPOW Bill Rolan, Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs Hershel Gober, and PNC Bill Bearisto, pictured inside the tent at the opening ceremonies.





*Gloria Noble, commander of the South-eastern Massachusetts Chapter of AXPOW, and Past Cmdr. Bob Noble of the Department of Massachusetts, are pictured in front of the entrance to the museum, following the ribbon cutting ceremony.*



*The audience at the ribbon cutting ceremony on April 9.*



*At left, PNC John Edwards spoke during the unveiling of the artwork on April 8.*

*The Welcome Center at the town of Andersonville featured a huge banner with a blow up of the POW/MIA stamp. Molly and Lou Loevsky are pictured below, standing in front of the banner.*





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# The Evolution of the National Prisoner of War Museum

Fred Boyles  
Superintendent  
Andersonville National Historic Site

THE IDEA OF A MUSEUM TO COMMEMORATE THE SACRIFICES OF ALL POWs IN AMERICAN HISTORY TOOK ROOT MANY years ago. The real beginning of this idea goes back to the mid 1960s. At that time the United States Army operated the National Cemetery and Prison Park at Andersonville. The Army focused most of its attention on the operation of the Cemetery and not on hosting the increasing number of visitors coming to learn about the Civil War prison. The 100th anniversary of the Civil War and the 1955 publication of McKinley Kantor's novel *Andersonville* had caused increased visitation to the site. It was about this time that the Army let it be known to the community that they would like to withdraw from the operation and give the site to some other entity.

A group of local citizens took up the cause to have the area designated as a unit of the National Park Service. This seemed a logical step because of the national significance of the area's history. This group did not have an easy task. To create a National Park requires an act of the Congress. Quickly the group started to rally the support of the Georgia delegation on Capitol Hill. They had to deal with detractors as well. The United Daughters of the Confederacy, and other groups still sympathetic to

the Southern cause, were concerned that National Park status would again open old wounds for the South about the horrors of Andersonville and that the site would forget the sufferings of Southerners held in Northern camps. The group worked closely with Congressman Jack Brinkley of Georgia and Georgia Senator Richard B. Russell.

When asked why the legislation to create Andersonville is worded to commemorate the sacrifices of all POWs in American history, former Director of the National Park Service George Hartzog told an interesting story. Mr. Hartzog credits President Lyndon Johnson with that idea. In a conversation with the President on the subject, Senator Russell was given the idea to word the language of the bill to make Andersonville a memorial to all American POWs. It is interesting to think of this in light of that time period, as more Americans were showing increasing concern for those held captive by the North Viet-





name. Russell placed the language in the bill and worked hard for its passage. The bill passed in 1970 and the property was transferred to the Interior Department, becoming a National Historic Site as a memorial to all prisoners of war throughout our nation's history.

Park Service managers were busy in the 1970s telling the story of Andersonville and

*... the Park Service sought two important goals. First, to build something that would be a fitting visitor center for the public and give visitors a total understanding of the story of all POWs. Second, to interface with AXPOW in all matters of design.*

operating the National Cemetery. Little attention was paid to the larger story of all American POWs. Budgets were limited and there was much to be done at a new unit. However, one important event took place. Georgia Governor Jimmy Carter (one of the citizen activists who had pushed for designation as a National Historic Site) commissioned the state of Georgia to erect a monument in the National Cemetery dedicated to all POWs. This plan was unique because there had been no monuments placed in the park by Southern states and this one was to be dedicated to all POWs, not just those who were held at Andersonville. Despite op-

position from traditional Southern groups, the monument was unveiled in 1976.

It wasn't until the early 1980s that the American Ex-Prisoners of War (AXPOW) came onto the scene. The Historic Site's Chief Ranger Alfredo Sanchez recognized that the park was ignoring its larger mission of commemorating all POWs and contacted AXPOW. He met and established an early relationship with AXPOW Historian Helen Smith. This relationship was cemented by two important elements. First, AXPOW recognized that Andersonville would be the National Memorial to all POWs. This was not easy for everyone to accept. The old North - South concerns were still alive. The other element was that a museum should be built on site to tell the larger story. A formal agreement was signed in 1984 between the National Park Service and American Ex-Prisoners of War which stated that AXPOW would help raise funds (\$2.5 million) for the museum. Thus the Andersonville Fund was established; however, not everyone was convinced that this was the right direction. Park Superintendent John Tucker did two important things to set the course toward a National POW Museum. A new General Management Plan for the park was written that identified the construction of the museum as its ultimate goal. This clearly set the intentions and direction of the Park Service. Also, through the special talents of Chief Ranger Sanchez, a small building in the park was converted to a POW Museum containing exhibits on recent wars and POWs.

It wasn't until 1990, when a Congressional appropriation was received, that planning for the museum began in earnest. A team of National Park Service architects and



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engineers from the Denver Service Center were appointed to develop the design. National Commander John S. Edwards represented the AXPOW and headed the Andersonville Task Force Committee to work with the Park Service. The committee was composed of representatives from WWII (ETO and PTO), Korean War and Vietnam-era POWs. In subsequent years, exhibit design was also addressed. In each case the Park Service sought two important goals. First, to build something that would be a fitting visitor center for the public and give visitors a total understanding of the story of all POWs. Second, to interface with AXPOW in all matters of design. On March 15, 1989, a Memorandum of Agreement was signed by John Tucker, Superintendent, Andersonville National Historic Site, National Park Ser-

vice, and PNC John Edwards, American Ex-Prisoners of War, to establish a museum and to raise funds.

The continuity was always maintained through Andersonville coordinators Bill and Nancy Fornes. They worked tirelessly to raise funds, maintain detailed records and gain support for the project.

When it came to working with the National Park Service, AXPOW always had a voice and a strong one. It was always agreed that the AXPOW Committee would be involved in the larger issues of the building and exhibits, and that the details would be the responsibility of the Park Service who had the expertise in the operation of museums. The AXPOW Committee helped choose the overall design of the building, and approved the exhibit design concept.

The Georgia Monument was dedicated in 1976 to honor all Americans held as prisoners of war. It was designed by William Thompson of Athens, Georgia. Photo courtesy of the National Park Service.





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But nowhere did the Committee become more involved than the design of the courtyard. The courtyard was an integral part of the museum from the beginning. The designers and AXPOW believed that a place was needed to contemplate the POW's often difficult story in a reflective vein. An initial concept of a water feature and sculpture was developed and approved by AXPOW. Because art is difficult to procure via government contracts, AXPOW took full responsibility for that aspect of the work. An artist was chosen and work began under the close supervision of AXPOW.

In 1991, it was recognized by the principal partners that the local community's involvement in the project was very limited. The small but supportive group, The Friends of the Park, stepped in under the leadership of Carl Runge (also a former POW) to raise

also did something that was needed: they developed national publicity for Andersonville and the museum. The Friends also solicited the aid of the state of Georgia and support from the Commissioner of the Department of Transportation. A grant from the Georgia General Assembly for construction of the new park entrance road accounted for roughly 17 percent of the total cost of the \$1.25 million project. The Friends led the effort to secure the DOT's help in getting the work funded. This all came together in 1994. Also, through Carl Runge's initiative, the movie *ANDERSONVILLE*, which dramatized the conditions in Camp Sumter during the Civil War, was produced by Turner Productions. The movie, which first aired in March 1996, was widely viewed. In addition to the Friends, the museum project acquired other supporters. The Americus-Sumter County Chamber of Commerce along with the Macon County Chamber of Commerce formed the POW Museum Task Force to rally support as well.

Congress, in turn, took action in late 1994, giving the Park Service direction to build the museum. With plans completed, a funding mechanism in place, and a new road ready to be built, the project was no longer a dream. Construction began in the summer of 1996.

*The National Prisoner of War Museum is dedicated to the sacrifices of all POWs in American history to instill a new found love of our nation to those who visit Andersonville National Historic Site.*

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***The National Prisoner of War Museum is dedicated to the sacrifices of all POWs in American history to instill a new found love of our nation to those who visit Andersonville National Historic Site.***

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funds and garner support, both locally and throughout Georgia. This group was successful in raising nearly \$400,000 for the museum, and also in getting the local population involved in the project. The Friends



# Request for membership application

## American Ex-Prisoners of War

Name:

Address:

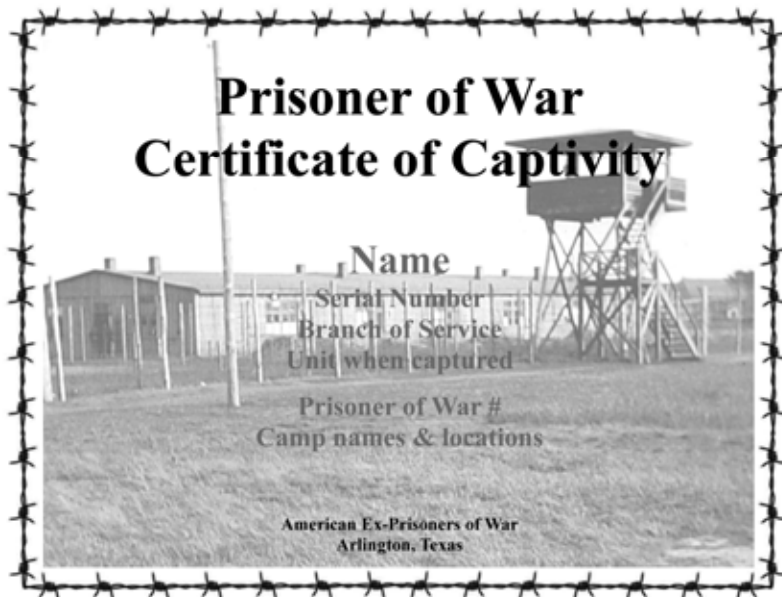
City:

State/Zip:

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

DO NOT send dues with this request for an application.

Mail to: American Ex-Prisoners of War PO Box 3445 Arlington, TX 76007-3445 (817) 649-2979 email: HQ@axpow.org



## Certificate of Captivity

### \$25.00

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 theatre of operation. We will need your name, service number, branch of service, unit when captured, POW number (if known), camp names and locations. You may also include a picture with your order. To receive this certificate from AXPOW, please order from National Headquarters by calling 817-649-2979 or email: axpow76010@yahoo.com.



## 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 our future 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 AXPOW.

You, too can take action today to help ensure that the American Ex-Prisoners of War remains 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 continue our transition to a true 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 3445, Arlington, TX 76007-3445, 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 ensure our future. And feel free to contact CFO Marsha Coke at [axpow76010@yahoo.com](mailto:axpow76010@yahoo.com), or CEO Cheryl Cerbone at [axpowceo@comcast.net](mailto:axpowceo@comcast.net). Phone #817-649-2979.

## Thank You!

## Contributions



please send donations to:

National Headquarters, PO Box 3445, Arlington, TX 76007-3445. Checks must be made payable to AXPOW or American Ex-Prisoners of War.

### DONATIONS

#### GENERAL FUND

John Bodner, Lakewood WA

In memory of Edward L Pack, by Beverly Pack

In memory of Henry J St Pierre, by Roselyn Jeffers

In memory of Irving Lautman, by Alan Lindy

In memory of Richard Jeffries, by Douglas Hardman

In memory of Ruth Eva Wilber Sheaves, by Edwin H Beck

In memory of Wilbur B Sharpe, Jr, by Cynthia Sharpe Burgess

#### VOLUNTARY FUNDING

Cheryl Roberts, Clermont FL

Edward 'Ted' Cadwallader, Elk Grove CA

Shirley L Clark, Kirkland WA





# taps



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

CARTER, Mary Louise McVey, of Sunrise Beach, MO died July 21, 2022. She was 95. She met her late husband, Bob celebrating the end of WWII, shortly after his liberation. Bob was captured while serving as a turret gunner with the 15th AF, 464th BG, 77th BS flying out of Italy. Both were active life members of AXPOW. She leaves 1 daughter, 1 son, 3 grandchildren, 1 brother, 1 sister, several nieces and nephews and their families.

ELLIS, Phyllis Fisher, 94, of Madison, AL (formerly of Weston, Gassaway and Bridgeport, WV) passed away Jan. 1, 2023. She was the widow of Ex-POW Robert. Both Bob and Phyllis were active life members of AXPOW, attending conventions and reunions through the years. She is survived by 1 daughter, 4 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren and their families.

GRABER, Stella F., of Pretty Prairie, KS died Dec. 22, 2022. She was 99. Along with her late husband, Harvey (EX-POW held in Stalag 17B), Stella was an active member of the Air Capital Chapter, Wichita, KS. She leaves 2 sons, 4 grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren, 2 sisters and their families.

HOLLEY, Eugene "Gene" of Salem, OH passed away Jan. 27, 2023 at the age of 97.

He served in the AAC, 464th BG, 8th AF, flying out of England. His plane was shot down; he was captured and sent to Stalag Luft 1, Barth where he was held until liberation. Gene and his late wife, Elinor "Ellie" were devoted to their family – children and the children that followed. He is survived by 6 of his seven children, 14 grandchildren and 20 great-grandchildren.

SHEAVES, Ruth Eva Wilber, of Colorado Springs, CO died Oct. 27, 2022. She was a life member of AXPOW and their Rocky Mountain Chapter where she served as Chaplain, Treasurer and Adjutant. Ruth will be missed by everyone who knew her.

WALTERS, Virginia M. of Austintown, OH passed away Sept. 28, 2022. She was 94. Virginia was an active member of the Mahoning Valley Chapter and the Steel Valley Chapter, AXPOW. She volunteered her time at with the VA. She worked to get the special license plates for spouses of Ex-POWs. She is survived by 1 daughter, 1 son, 5 grandchildren and their families.

In loving memory  
Your presence we miss...  
Your memory we treasure  
Loving you always...





## AMERICAN EX-PRISONERS OF WAR MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTION

To honor a loved one or a former colleague

IN MEMORY OF: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF DEATH: \_\_\_\_\_

GIVEN BY: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO BE SENT TO:

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

DONATIONS TO BE SENT TO:

AMERICAN EX-PRISONERS OF WAR, PO BOX 3445, ARLINGTON, TX 76007-3445



### The National 4th (IVY) Division Association

Formed at Camp Greene, NC, on November 17, 1917 for service in World War I. The "IVY Division" has a long and distinguished heritage that continues through World War II, the Cold War in Europe, Vietnam, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Membership in the Association is open to all former Veterans and currently serving Soldiers of the 4th ID and attached units.

Check our website at [www.4thinfantry.org](http://www.4thinfantry.org) for membership and reunion information.

**"Steadfast and Loyal"**



### The 106th Infantry Division Association

Organized at  
Camp Lucky Strike 1945 active since  
1946

If you are a former 106<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division vet, were attached to the 106<sup>th</sup>, a relative of a 106<sup>th</sup> veteran, you are eligible for membership in the Association.

**The CUB Magazine is published three times per year. Published since 1946.  
Annual Reunions held yearly since 1947.**

Jacquelyn Martin, Membership Chairman  
121 McGregor Ave.  
Mount Arlington, N.J. 07856  
973-663-2410  
E-mail: [jsc164@aol.com](mailto:jsc164@aol.com)



# AMERICAN EX-PRISONERS OF WAR VOLUNTARY FUNDING PROGRAM

The AXPOW Voluntary Giving Program parallels that of other VSOs, whereby the entire membership, including life members, is given the opportunity to contribute to the operation of our organization, based on ability and willingness to contribute. All contributions are to be sent directly to National Headquarters to be used for the operation of the organization. A complete accounting of contributors will appear in the Bulletin each issue.

I am enclosing my contribution to support the operation of the American Ex-Prisoners of War.

\$20.00      \$30.00      \$40.00      \$50.00      \$100.00      Other

Name

Address

City/State/Zip

Phone #

Please make checks payable to American Ex-Prisoners of War - Voluntary Funding  
Mail contributions to: National Headquarters, American Ex-Prisoners of War  
PO Box 3445, Arlington, TX 76007-3445



JEFFERSON BARRACKS POW-MIA MUSEUM  
JEFFERSON BARRACKS POW-MIA MUSEUM

*N is for Never Forget* is a child -friendly book that takes readers on a compelling journey through wartime history. Poignant illustrations and stories capture key people, concepts, and memorials to help readers understand and honor the sacrifices endured by men and women prisoners of war and missing in action on behalf of freedom .

Proceeds from books purchased through JBPM, Inc. (501c3) go directly to restoring \ renovating the former 1896 Officers Quarters Building into the Jefferson Barracks POW-MIA Museum.  
\$21.95 including S/H. Contact Paul Dillon at [rpdcw@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rpdcw@sbcglobal.net); 314-609-9037.



# National Prisoner of War Museum dedicated April 9, 1998







### Challenge Coins

**\$13.00** includes S/H/I



### Bronze Grave Medallions

**\$100.00** includes S/H/I

All orders for products sold by AXPOW, including dues/subscriptions should be mailed to: American Ex-Prisoners of War, National Headquarters, PO Box 3445, Arlington, TX 76007-3445; [axpow76010@yahoo.com](mailto:axpow76010@yahoo.com)

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS FORM

Include your mailing label for address change or inquiry. If you are receiving duplicate copies, please send both labels. If moving, please give us your new address in the space below.

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip\_\_\_\_\_

Phone\_\_\_\_\_ Email\_\_\_\_\_

Please allow 4 weeks to make address changes.

Mail to: National Headquarters, AXPOW, PO Box 3445, Arlington, TX 76007-3445. Email: [HQ@axpow.org](mailto:HQ@axpow.org)