

EX-POW BULLETIN

the official voice of the
American Ex-Prisoners of War

501(c)3 Veterans Service Organization

Volume 80

www.axpow.org

Number 10/11/12

October~November~December 2023

Gold
Transparency
2023

Candid.



We exist to help those who cannot help themselves



*Wreaths Across America at
Andersonville National Historic Site*



VETERANS DAY

ARMY
MARINE CORPS
NAVY
AIR FORCE
SPACE FORCE
COAST GUARD

NOVEMBER 11, 2023

HONORING ALL WHO HAVE SERVED

table of contents

Officers/Directors	4
National Commander	5
CEO	6
Andersonville	7
Friends	8
NamPOW	9
POW/MIA	13
Civilian	14
Too Many POWS	18
News	21
American Battlefields	22
Wreaths Across America	24
Veterans Day	25
Hitler's Gas Station	26
New Members	30
Contributions	31
Taps	32
Voluntary Funding	34

October-December 2023

*Merry Christmas! Happy
Hanukkah! Feliz Navidad!
Happy Holidays!*



Publisher

PNC Milton M Moore Jr
2965 Sierra Bermeja
Sierra Vista, AZ 85650
(520) 249-7122
tombstone490@gmail.com

Happy 100th Birthday Kenneth Collins

2605 CAMINO DEL MAR #1330
BOCA RATON, FL 33433
15 AF 451 BG 724 BS
LUFT 3 7A NURENBURG



Editor

Cheryl Cerbone
23 Cove View Drive
South Yarmouth, MA 02664
(508) 394-5250
axpoweditor@comcast.net

Deadline for the Jan-Mar 2024
Bulletin is Nov 25 2023. Please
send all materials to the editor
at the above address.

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.

EX-POW Bulletin (ISSN 0161-7451) is published quarterly (four times annually) by the American Ex-Prisoners of War, PO Box 3445, Arlington, TX 76007-3445. Periodical postage paid at Arlington, TX and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: send address changes to EX-POW Bulletin, AXPOW Headquarters, PO Box 3445, Arlington, TX 76007-3445. Founded April 14, 1942, in Albuquerque, NM, then known as Bataan Relief Organization, Washington State non-profit corporation, "American Ex-Prisoners of War", October 11, 1949, recorded as Document No. 133762, Roll 1, Page 386-392. NONPROFIT CORPORATION. Nationally Chartered August 10, 1982. Appearance in this publication does not constitute endorsement by the American Ex-Prisoners of War of the product or service advertised. The publisher reserves the right to decline or discontinue any such advertisement.

© 2023 American Ex-Prisoners of War



axpow board of directors

National Headquarters
PO Box 3445, Arlington, TX 76007-3445
(817) 649-2979 HQ@axpow.org

National Commander ~ Robert Certain
5100 John D Ryan Blvd, Apt 1801, San Antonio, TX 78245
(770) 639-3313 rgcertain@icloud.com

operations

Chief Executive Officer

Charles A. Susino
Lebanon, NJ
(732)221-0073 -Cell
charles.susino@gmail.com

President

Cheryl Cerbone
23 Cove View Drive
South Yarmouth, MA 02664
(508)394-5250 - Home
(508) 360-4090 - Cell
axpoweditor@comcast.net

Chief Operations Officer

Clydie J Morgan
PO Box 3445
Arlington TX 76007-3445
(817) 300-2840 - Cell
hq@axpow.org

Chief Financial Officer

Marsha M Coke
2710 Charon Court
Grand Prairie TX 75052
(817) 723-3996 - Cell
axpow76010@yahoo.com

board of directors

Fred Boyles, Athens GA 30606
912/674-5847 (cell)

Edward "Ted" Cadwallader, Elk Grove, CA
(916) 685-5369

David Eberly, Williamsburg, VA
(757) 508-8453

Pam Warner Eslinger, Hammon, OK
(580) 821-1526

Alan Marsh, Lizella, GA
(478) 951-9247

Milton 'Skip' Moore, Sierra Vista, AZ
(520) 249-7122

Jim "Moe" Moyer, Lake Wales, FL
(407) 448-1181

Jan Williams, Guthrie, OK
(580) 821-2376

national commander



Robert G. Certain
5100 John D Ryan Blvd, Apt 1801
San Antonio, TX 78245
(770) 639-3313
rgcertain@icloud.com

When combat troops come home from war, we have been profoundly changed. Some of that change is not so good; but some of it can lend us a greater understanding of who we are, what society is about and what international relations are about. Our wartime experience can bring a wealth of understanding if we search through it from time to time. A few years ago, my wife and I went on a tour of Alaska, including the famous gold fields. While there we tried our hand at panning for gold. I discovered that it takes a good technique and a lot of patience to wash away copious amounts of mud to find the little flakes and nuggets of the precious metal hidden within. At the end of the day, it was not the technique, the water, or the mud that we valued – it was the gold. Finding the “gold” in combat experience can be accomplished with similar diligence.

In most manifestations of post-combat stress, the veteran is not stuck in the past, reliving the memory of combat. Rather, when the *themes* of warfare repeat in an entirely different set of circumstances, then the resulting decisions will likewise be thematically similar to the decisions made in the initial event. As I reviewed my story of combat and imprisonment, the most vivid, detailed memory was about that final mission over Hanoi that ended in being shot down and taken captive. The themes of that mission were keys to this final transformation of an old liability into a new asset. It was hard work,

much like panning for gold, but with the same result – the dirt was washed away, and I had something important to share.

The point of telling the story of my experience is to give insight to other veterans and their families as they tackle the effects of their own combat long after they have left the field of battle and the military. Most of us come home, leave the service, return to our families and careers, and make good livings and good contributions to society. Even so, the intense experience of warfare leaves us with some important work to do if we are to fully utilize the positive aspects of those days in our life back in the world.

Bringing the troops “all the way home” is not just the responsibility of the Department of Defense, nor even a shared responsibility with the Department of Veterans Affairs. All of us – employers and family members, churches and synagogues, physicians, and veterans themselves – have a vested interest in converting combat liabilities into assets for societal leadership. We all have a responsibility to pan for the gold.

Those of us who have been there have a role to play in the full and complete return of those who come after us. By sharing our experience, strength and hope other veterans may be able to gain insight into their own stories and find new value in the silt of their troubling times. Families, friends, service organizations and faith communities are likely to be the people who facilitate most of this work – as it should be. For those of us who need a little expert help, the VA, Vet Centers, and private medical care are available. We have so much to share; let’s make it count.



NamPOW Wayne Waddell. He's become quite a celebrity of late. The cover of Military Officer (MOAA) magazine features a young Wayne looking defiantly into the camera. MOAA produced a video with it that I encourage all of you to see. It also features AXPOW National Commander Bob Certain and other former POWs.

[MOAA - Vietnam POW](#)

[\(5\) Return to Hanoi: 50 Years of Freedom - YouTube](#)

from the CEO



Charles Anthony Susino
226 Mountainside Road
Lebanon, NJ 08833
(732)221-0073
charles.susino@gmail.com

I hope this article finds all of you and your family well. All of you read and hear about the many growing problems and mounting problems in our country and the world as an ever-increasing dangerous place with the vital role our military plays in keeping world peace. Of course, all of us know too well the sacrifices of our military personnel and their families and AXPOW advocating for the earned benefits of veterans for their service.

I want to focus the majority of this article on the legislative component of my responsibilities. For decades we have been active in putting forth our legislative agenda to Congress each year. For all but the last few, we have been providing Congress our legislative priorities in person to the Veterans Affairs subcommittee. Each of my Bulletin articles have outlined proposed or recently passed Bills into law showing where and how our concerns are being addressed or ignored by Congress. This article will provide a different view. A look back at a Bill passed by Congress to see what it has or has not accomplished. The Law

I have selected is the "Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act". PACT, for short, was signed into law just over a year ago. This law is the most significant change in veterans benefits due to health risks of exposure in decades, albeit way too long in the making.

The objectives of the Bill were to address the timing of veterans' filing of claims and the burden of proving health conditions as a result of exposure to toxicants from contact or inhalation from open burning. This was especially focused on veterans who had served in southwest Asia theater of operations. Claims related to asthma, rhinitis, and sinusitis are among the 23 conditions, Environmental exposures during military service may result in or exacerbate a physical or mental injury or illness resulting in a "disability".

In some situations, a veteran's service or a particular military exposure with their diagnosed condition may be impossible to obtain, not exist, or be incomplete. When this occurs, Congress or the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) may make a "presumption" of service connection for veterans. Presumption of a diagnosed medical condition is defined by dates and locations of service or is based on a specific exposure and allows for veterans to be eligible to receive health care and benefits without having to prove that their disability or medical condition was the result of their military service. Our members know too well the time, pain, and frustration associated with this process proving conditions directly resulting from imprisonment prior to our list of presumptives granted in the 1980's.

PACT led the VA to revise its presumption decision process to ensure it was more scientifically based, fair, consistent, transparent, timely, and veteran centric. In addition, the process was reviewed and reported by the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine is a non-government organization comprised of many of our countries most talented individuals in their respective fields.

As a result of PACT, more than 360,000 Veterans and survivors have applied for their earned benefits, more than 2.1 million Veterans have been screened for toxic exposures, and more than 185,000 Veterans have enrolled in VA health care. In addition, VA has completed 33,276 claims, granting over 25,000 veterans and their survivors benefits for one or more conditions, leading to over \$93 million in retroactive benefit payments

For decades business measures performance and reports on the results and looks for ways to improve to meet its goals. A major milestone is PACT incorporates this same more progressive way to thinking.

All of that information and more is available at the [VA PACT Act Performance Dashboard](https://news.va.gov/116652/va-releases-dashboard-measure-pact-act/) located at <https://news.va.gov/116652/va-releases-dashboard-measure-pact-act/>, which can be viewed on line and is updated bi-weekly. I endorse this new approach by the VA and encourage them to use this approach on all future Bills that lend themselves to monitoring.

Stay safe
Charles A Susino

andersonville



Andersonville NHS
496 Cemetery Road
Andersonville, GA 31711
(229) 924-0343
Gia Wagner, Superintendent
Gia_Wagner@nps.gov

Greetings from Andersonville.

From where I sit, the highlight of this year are the positive changes in the national cemetery. All the monuments have been cleaned and repaired, the historic trees have all gotten lightning protection installed and have had their roots de-compacted using an air-spade. New trees, shrubs, and sod are purchased and will be installed this fall. We have also finished the required compliance for the re-shaping of our final large section in the southeast corner of the cemetery and plan to start this work during fiscal year 24 (October 2023-September 2024). We also initiated the planning for our major project to move the utilities under the road and re-contour the land surrounding the east-west road to allow for additional burials and improve drainage of the national cemetery. We expect this project will be done in fiscal year 25 or 26. All of these projects will ensure a beautiful and reverent final resting place for over 20,000 veterans and their spouses as well as ensuring our historic resources are in the best condition possible. On September 20, we will welcome 50 veterans who also happen to be arborists for Saluting Branches, a day where the veterans will be pruning trees throughout the national cemetery.

In museum news, we are adding a temporary exhibit on the POWs of the Korean War using artifacts from the collections. Dr. Glen Robins, Chair of the History Department at Georgia Southwest University will give a talk for POW/MIA Recognition Day, Friday, September 15 at 11AM. We have a new children's program introduced over the summer, Junior Ranger Days. We plan to continue it every summer in the future. We have developed a new Strategic Plan for the museum and have recently updated our Museum Emergency Operations Plan.

Notably, we continue to prepare for the upcoming temporary closure of the museum to allow for the installation of a new heating and air system. Museum collections on display will be removed and temporarily stored at Jimmy Carter National Historical Park during construction. During this same time, the public restrooms and water feature will be renovated. The water feature was closed 2 years ago as the system does not function in a way that the water can be cleaned, and it was posing a public health risk. We look forward to better conditions for our collections within the museum and the re-opening of the water feature. New windows are also being installed in the library this fall. We are looking at options for a temporary visitor contact/museum station during the closure which is expected to last up to 3 months.

We are honored to attend the re-dedication of the Ft. Moore, Global War on Terrorism Monument on September 9 where we will distribute free lifetime National Park passes for veterans, Gold Star families, and Active-Duty military; we expect to give away passes to 1000 attendees. Other dates of note are: Civil War Living History Weekend, November 4 and 6 and Wreaths Across America, December 16.

I hope each one of you is doing well. We hope to see you this fall or winter at one of our events. Please reach out to me if you ever have information needs.

As always, the National Park Service and the staff at Andersonville are grateful for our wonderful partnerships with AXPOW and the Friends of Andersonville. You make our work possible!

Friends of Andersonville

Marketing Our Museum

About 20 years ago, while watching the popular TV show Jeopardy, Alex Trebek read the Final Jeopardy answer to the three contestants that took me by surprise. The answer was, *This National Historic Site is the location of the National Prisoner of War Museum*. All three contestants gave the correct question, "What is Andersonville?" I was flabbergasted. First that the show had made this a topic and second that the contestants got it right. This was a positive step that there was an awareness that Andersonville National Historic Site is the location of the National Prisoner of War Museum. Not that Jeopardy is the true measure of the public's knowledge of the park, but it was an indication that the Museum that we all worked to develop was a nationally recognized landmark. I am not sure that's still true today. The newness has worn off and visitation to the park has decreased from its peak in 1998, which happens to be the year the museum opened.

Travel and tourism is an important part of the US economy. According to the US Travel Association, tourism directly contributed \$1.2 trillion to the economy and 15 million jobs. That makes tourism one of the largest sectors of the economy. Although tourism took one of the biggest hits during the pandemic, tourism is back from its pre-pandemic levels. In Georgia, tourism is the second largest contributor to the state's economy. But in rural South Georgia, most travelers are in a hurry to drive to Florida in contrast to Atlanta which is the state's biggest draw.

Marketing our museum and the historic site can be challenging. Most people know Andersonville because they were exposed to its

story when studying the Civil War in school. Visitation to Civil War sites has waned in recent years as people are less interested in its story (that is my opinion based on observing trends). The National Park Service is prohibited from using federal funds to advertise as is done by tourism-based businesses (attractions, hotels and restaurants). The park's remote location makes the site "off the beaten path" for north-south interstate travelers. And finally, the story of POWs in history and Camp Sumter's role in that is not a fun experience like visiting an amusement park. Visitors are drawn to the park and museum in a quest to understand the story as an important part of being an American. On a positive note, many visitors are drawn to Andersonville because it's a part of the National Park system and they know from experience that it will be worth their time to visit.

Recognizing this need, the Friends of Andersonville have made it a priority to assist the National Park Service in marketing the museum and the park. We have worked with experts in the tourism field in Georgia to come up with a plan to raise awareness for the park. Of special note is the assistance of the tourism director in nearby Americus. She recently told me that the number one reason visitors come to Americus is Andersonville, which is a positive sign. We have also begun working with CTM Marketing to develop a plan to build awareness for the museum and the historic site to travelers. CTM works in the Northeast, Midwest and in Georgia with a track record of success in marketing attractions. This company studies tourism trends and what works best in advertising to attract visitors in what is a very competitive business.

At the recent Board meeting of the Friends of Andersonville, we took a big step to market the park by

committing funding to this effort. We will produce a rack card in sufficient quantity to distribute to locations where potential visitors can be enticed to visit the site. Rack cards are the industry standard for generating interest for attractions when placed in welcome centers, hotel lobbies and other sites where tourists congregate. The best locations for this are in one of the nine official Georgia Visitor Information Centers where interstate highways enter the state. They draw travelers to the clean restrooms that these facilities provide and browse the racks of brochures for information about things to see. Another important part of marketing is highway signs. Andersonville has many signs at key locations on the roads that approach the park. But over the years, many have faded and been removed for various reasons. Gia Wagner has begun working with the Georgia Department of Transportation to identify those signs that need to be updated and replaced.

All this effort will have the desired outcome of building visitor awareness for the museum and the park. We will work with the park staff and experts in the tourism field to get the best return on our investment of \$15,000 this coming year. These endeavors will be enhanced by social media input that the park staff promotes. Social media is a growing aspect of tourism promotion that appeals more to younger travelers as opposed to older folks. Working with travel writers to promote Andersonville is another important way to sell the museum and the historic site. Taken together, these initiatives will have the desired outcome of exposing more Americans to the story of POWs in the history of our nation.

By Fred Boyles, Chairman, Board of Trustees, Friends of Andersonville



TALES OF SOUTHEAST ASIA Jail Yard Medicine (Hoa Lo's Bac Si & Y Si)

It was the middle of a dark and stormy night. The wind was howling and the rain was falling. One of our fellow prisoners was having a life-threatening asthma attack – choking, wheezing and gasping for breath. His face was turning blue; his spasms were contorting his body into all kinds of weird shapes. There was nothing left to the thirty fellow cellmates of the young Air Force officer to do but throw themselves on the mercy of their communist guards whom they had just alienated the week before with a “prison riot” (church service – another story).



“Camp Unity” Section of Hoa Lo Prison, Hanoi

If they called out “Bao Cao” they would get the attention of a prison guard or maybe a duty officer. But if, in unison, they shouted out – forty strong – “Boxie” [Bac Si], they might just get a medically qualified prison staffer to respond. So indeed, forty to a man, cried out “Boxie”

rapidly, repeatedly in unison risking the onslaught of an armed company to quell a riot as in the previous week, the attention of a malevolent guard, or perhaps at least a medic (corpsman). No swat team guards responded. First came the duty guard, then the duty officer, then – mirabili dictu – a medic. Fortunately for us there was a record of the officer’s ailment, they knew what to do, we had value as hostages, and they provided effective medical assistance.

Effective medical assistance in Southeast Asia has never been a given. For background, a communist insurgency in the process of taking over a country, contrary to their propaganda about winning the hearts and minds of the people, secured its dominance by striking fear into the hearts of their would-be subjects. Anyone who had shown initiative or leadership was marked for extinction – rich peasants, village leaders, teachers, priests, and medical professionals. This was a very effective method of population control but had the downside of leaving the countryside with limited access to quality professional leadership and care.

When Ho Chi Minh, a Russian citizen and Comintern member, was sent from Moscow back to Vietnam via China at the time of World War II, his task was to take advantage of the wartime disruption to build up a Southeast Asian Communist movement subservient to the Communist Internationale. The first ten years of this endeavor was spent organizing the population to resist the French WWII Quislings, the Japanese, the post war Chinese occupiers and the returning French colonial administration.

Essential to this ethnic cleansing was the co-opting and/or destruction of the indigenous communist movement, the Francophile Vietnamese and those leaders and professionals trained and educated by the French. Communist indoctrination and fidelity to the party line became to foremost priority of every educational effort. The end result was a great scarcity of professionals having a solid foundation in their discipline. This was particularly true in terms of medicine and its allied fields.

The governmental solution to the shortage of medical professionals was to train a cadre of men and women in the basics of preventative medicine and emergency first aid – the romantically labeled “barefoot doctors”- Y Si. Their level of training would be akin to the introductory course for Corpsmen or Medics or high school level scouting first aid merit badges. The best of the doctors (Bac Si) with formal foreign medical training were reserved to serve the high-level party functionaries, the next level were assigned to the military, the lower level tried to spread themselves over the general population generally in urban areas.

The aged, the politically incorrect, and the incompetent medical personnel were assigned to serve the prison populations. Naturally, Yankee Air Pirates and RVN [Republic of Vietnam] personnel were on the bottom of the

medicine, cont'd...

prison barrel. The one American Army doctor POW and the two surviving German nurse captives were not permitted to practice their profession within the prison confines. In fact, they were punished for attempting to do so. Fortunately for the American prisoners in North Vietnam, it would appear that some communist medics who had been overextended in combat or wounded were cycled back to Hanoi to recover and were also assigned to the prison system. A call for a "Boxie" was in fact a crashshoot.

When I was captured in January of 1967, it was obvious to me that there was to be no medical intervention in behalf of a prisoner of war until it was determined if he was going to be of some military, propaganda or negotiation value to the Vietnamese cause. All of my wounds had been inflicted by the Vietnamese in a series of torture sequences.



"The Rope Trick" Courtesy of Mike McGrath

I received no treatment for any wounds, infected or not, until they determined that I was going to star as the propaganda saga "The Mad Bomber of Hanoi" (yet another story).

Even then, the medical treatment, which I received in the first three years, was to parts of me that would be visible to the casual observer or to get me in shape to parade before a foreign delegation of peaceniks, American traitors and/or communist fellow travelers.



Hanoi Jane Fonda on VC Gun Mount

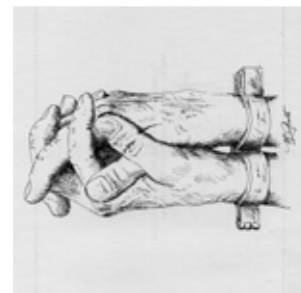
The North Vietnamese were forever trumpeting the "lenient and humane treatment" afforded to captured American servicemen to anyone within range of their propaganda. One time, toward the end of my ordeal, I challenged an interrogator as to the validity of this claim. His reply was instructive. "Stratton, lenient and humane treatment means that we let you live. We do not waste our leniency and humanity on those who do not serve our needs." By that definition, I have to admit that my treatment had been "lenient and humane" as I was still alive.

In all fairness to the working level interrogator, their party line was that American airmen were literally "air pirates". In international law, those caught in acts of piracy upon the open seas can be hung on the spot without any legal proceedings. Being caught in the act was proof enough of guilt to justify execution. So, I guess, given that setting, allowing one to live was an act of leniency.

For about a year after my capture and the publication of a picture in Life magazine of me bowing at a staged press conference, the prison authority found it necessary to trot me out before any and all who had questions as to whether my performance had been the result of brainwashing or drugs. [No one ever seemed to put the concept of torture into the equation.]

While the VC were making up their minds as to what to do with or about me, the open suppurating wounds on my arms and legs

began to fester. Nerve damage to my arms and wrists was extensive enough that I could not raise my arms above my waist level or open my hands without rotating them face up and shaking them open. I could retract my fingers but not extend them. The damage done to my limbs by the manacles, irons and ropes in the torture sequences was extensive and quite obvious to any casual observer.



It appeared to me then as now, that the "camp authority" had decided to simply wait me out to see if I would recover without intervention or would die. They moved me from the main downtown prison, Hoa Lo, to a prison on the outskirts of town, which we called the Zoo and left me to my fate.



Zoo

I honestly do not know to this day why they simply did not just kill me, for certainly I would be an embarrassment to them upon my release. But then again, I think they honestly believed their own 1967 propaganda mantra often repeated to me: "Stratton, you are never going home." Through my own efforts at physical therapy and the grace of God I was able to restore my self to a modicum of working order. Restoration of health was a mixed blessing, as now I would be useful to the

medicine, cont'd...

propagandists in countering the impression I had made with the springtime bow.

The upper arm swelling, scars and wounds were easily camouflaged with loose clothing. The fingernails had grown back in straight. The facial wounds and infections were gone. Socks – not a regular issue,

could cover the ankles. There was one remaining problem to be solved – the infection on the back of my right lower arm, wrist and hand. The manacles used to immobilize my hands during the rope trick were a set of gear operated cuffs, using an Allen-head wrench as a key to snug it down. If applied carelessly, the device punctured the back of the wrist right to the bone when fully engaged. Mine had been carelessly applied.

One of the byproducts was a boil covering the back of my right hand extending from the knuckles up the back of my arm to three inches above the wrist. It was swollen to about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch, had a head on it about the size of a half dollar and was a putrid purple in color. There was not much way to cover it up with clothing, impolitic to use a bandage and impractical to try flight gloves. I had made no complaint; I called for no Boxie, as it was unwise to call attention to one's self in any respect. Apparently the propaganda imperative overcame their desire to see me suffer and I was, unbeknownst, to me scheduled for "surgery" to effect a cure.

One day the guards came to my cell at the prison and signaled that I should suit up in my mess dress (striped PJ's) and get ready to go out for an interrogation.

POW Mess Dress



Two guards hustled me out which was unusual as they normally only sent one. I was left alone in an interrogation room to contemplate my sins for a period of time, a normal procedure. The room was equipped with one stool, one table, one chair and a dim light bulb hanging from a fixture in the ceiling.

In walked a medic (Y Si) – he was the one with the gauze facemask – with the two guards. There were no English speakers present. The medic grabbed my right hand squeezing and intently palpating the boil with seeming abandon. One guard stood behind me and

the other next to the medic held my right hand immobilized on the edge of the table. My elbow was in my lap and my fingers were on the table.

Out of a filthy sack the medic extracted a small curved dish, some small unlabeled bottles and a fist full of medical instruments – tweezers, scalpels, probes, etc. – and rolls of bandages & gauze pads. He put his instruments in the dish, covered them with some liquid and set fire to it. It burned with a flame like that of alcohol and was an obvious move at sterilization – an encouraging sign.

As the alcohol burned itself out, the medic reached into the dish and pulled out the scalpel burning his fingers in the process. He dropped the scalpel to the floor, reached down and picked it up, and prepared to execute his procedure. It was not a very auspicious start as it was obvious that I was to be the patient and it seemed that he was not at the top of his medical class. He pressed down on either side of the head of the boil, deftly and, thank God, swiftly made a one-inch incision, and had the good sense to step back as the putrid goop exploded out of the open wound.

He then again palpitated the entire area of the boil driving the puss towards and out of the incision. Then he grabbed a probe out of the dish [by now cool] and proceeded to clean out underneath the surface of the boil by placing the probe through the incision, under the skin and running it around the infected area pulling out chunks of goop that had not otherwise been expelled.

This was a rather painful process and the guards were enjoying my obvious discomfort and strenuous attempts to make no sound. Any noise on my part was an immediate invitation or mandate to beat on me. All authority to torture had to come from the camp authorities. However, beatings seemed to be able to be administered at will to maintain what they considered to be good order and discipline. For example, a standing order was that prisoners were to not talk or make any form of noise. You made noise – you were beaten. The only restraint t

medicine, cont'd...

The guards seemed to have in my regard was to not leave any more visible marks.

Having finished the exploratory portion of the operation, the medic picked up a small dark bottle, squeezed the lips of my incision open and poured the contents [iodine?] into the wound once again palpating the skin to make sure it reached the furthest extent of the wound. I let out a yelp that must have been heard by the Seventh Fleet two hundred miles off shore. I levitated to 120,000 feet earning my astronaut wings. The guard behind me thumped me on the top of my head with enough force to drive in the main piling of the San Francisco Bay Bridge and twisted my left arm up behind my head. I was motivated to regain my composure – all pain is relative.



Line Drawing – Courtesy of Mike McGrath

The medic then calmly used the tweezers to pick up a gauze pad, which slipped loose and fell on the filthy deck. He then delicately picked up the gauze from the floor with the sterile tweezers and placed the now compromised pad over my wound. He then wrapped the wrist area extremely tight with a mile of gauze bandage. Fortunately it was not done in such a way as to cut off all circulation even though it was grossly uncomfortable.

The guards and the medics packed up their gear and left me sitting to

contemplate the leniency and humanity of the communist reeducation program on the way to making me a good man. After a while, a single guard retrieved me and marched me back to the cell.

Sure enough, within the week I was paraded before a gaggle of foreign communist sympathizers. The medical attention was all for show. It was apparently politic to show a bandage applied in the process of controlling infections. Go figure.



Plantation Prison – David Dellinger (Chicago Seven)

I still have the scar of the incision visible on the back of my lower arm. The small scar is straight as an arrow and smooth as silk – nary a bump to be felt. In retrospect, I guess I must have got one of the front line medics who were back home on recuperative leave. None of the residual torture damage I have to my right arm, wrist and hand is the result of that medic's ministrations. Like that young Air Force Captain, I guess I owe some of these medics a debt of gratitude for their professionalism and competence.

Richard A. Stratton October 14, 2006 Atlantic Beach FL In Honor of "Max" Nguyen Quoc Dat, Republic of Vietnam A-1 Pilot Extraordinaire Friend and Fellow Prisoner in Hanoi

Drawings reprinted with permission of Naval Institute Press, book "Prisoner of War—Six Years in Hanoi" by John McGrath

I am working on a new book on the November 1970 POW rescue mission at Son Tay and would like to hear from former Vietnam POWs their thoughts of the raid, how they heard of it, and how it affected their morale. I would appreciate it if you could post this message for your members.

The book will be published in 2024 by Osprey Publishing as part of their Raid series.

Thank you,
Justin W. Williamson
justinwwilliamson@gmail.com

pow/mia

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



What do we owe?

It is always and truthfully stated, that we owe every service member, veterans and their families a huge debt of gratitude for our freedoms and this country.

In the last decade, patriotism has fallen off, church attendance declined, conversation and dialog replaced by text messages and understanding and tolerance of others opinions has gone out the window.

Understanding this country's grand march to independence is a necessity. The same is true for the conflicts and World Wars we have been involved with.

Perhaps it's time for Grandparents to step up and remind the younger generations what life was like in the Depression, how it felt to live with ration cards, to hear the news on Pearl Harbor or see the killing field of Pol Pot. How it felt to be captured, away from your loved ones, and to come home – to freedom again.

As of Sept. 8, 2023, the number of Americans Missing and Unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War remains at 1,578.

There are 81,612 still unaccounted for US Military personnel since 1941.

Do you remember seeing the first pictures of Auschwitz? Or did you join the celebrations on the streets after WWII? Do you have the letters you, your dad/mom or relatives wrote home in a time of war? Did you have a WASP in the family long before women were welcomed with open arms in the military?

Why not make a memory book? Find the letters, the pictures, the torn-out news articles saved in a box in the attic. If not a Birthday or Christmas gift, sit down at a visit and talk about it all. If you can't do that, leave it as a legacy gift, so they see your life, feel it and understand the highs and lows of how you shared in this country's most historical times.

Wander into a book store and look for children's old style history stories. Paul Revere, the Liberty Bell, Betsy Ross, ships and planes of WWII or Korea, the story of Willie Johnson (Civil War 11 yr old drummer boy who went on to receive the Medal of Honor) or the history of women in military service can all fill the void of history classes now minimized in school. By the way, reading those books with your grandchildren would be a gift never forgotten. Many parents just don't have time, or hand their kids a video game now-a-days.

Fly the flag – gift a flag! Be the one to teach that great-great grandchild the Pledge of Allegiance. Here, in the Ozarks, College of the Ozarks (Hard Work U) offers a free home-made ice cream cone to any little one that can say the Pledge!

With little history, little payer, and little Constitution taught in schools anymore, we truly have to take up the task of making sure our family is informed. One step – we all need



to take one small step. We need to do this for our country – no one else will. We owe it to the next generations.

Another, harder task, is maintaining contact with your Senators and Congressman, to make sure they stay focused on “Leave No Man Behind.”

It’s budget time again, and right now DPAA is asking for a \$46 million dollar budget increase, to enable increased field and recovery operations around the world.

In 2012 – eleven years ago, The Spokesman-Review in WA, ran an AP article that stated, “ ...Military officers briefing Panetta at the command’s office said they had five to seven years to complete their excavation work. The acidic soil in Vietnam erodes bones quickly, leaving in many cases only teeth for the military teams to use to try and identify service members, one of the team members said. In addition, many of the potential witnesses with information about remains are getting older and their memories are fading. There are about nearly 1,300 cases that are still unaccounted for, and officers briefing Panetta said about 600 of those remains could be recoverable....

Only 170 of 1500 remaining MIAs are now in the laboratory awaiting (still) identification. They are “believed” to be human remains, but are already “highly degraded” according to the DPAA website.

Since 2020 – only EIGHT men have been identified from the Vietnam War.

We understand Korean War and WWII families wait. Many of the WWII remains are resting at home, not in ground held by our enemies. A stalemate exists in recovery efforts in N Korea. And the clock is running out of the chance of finding remains in SE Asia.

Take the time to call or drop a letter to your elected official. Let them know how important it is to recover our war time lost or killed. Budgets, POW/MIA flags to show support, pressure on DPAA to focus on urgent needs of recovery are all points of conversation.

Many wonder why recruiting numbers are down. Many answers are in this column. If our children and grand-children serve – can we guarantee them they will come home sooner than is happening now? That too, we owe them.

civilian

STIC Signature Songs (and Sources) by Martin Meadows Music in a WWII Internment Camp Part II

At this point, a brief detour is necessary to correct three erroneous ideas about the identity of the mystery band and/or its vocalist(s). As context for understanding those errors, the key fact to keep in mind is that the vocalist(s) on the STIC GMGM recording was/were female(s). Unfortunately, however, I cannot recall the number of singers on the recording; nor has anyone else been able to provide an answer. Regardless, it is generally accepted that the vocalist(s) was/were female(s), and that fact helps explain two of the three aforesaid misconceptions, as shown next.

One error is that the Andrews Sisters were the vocalists on the STIC recording. For example, Margo Tonkin (Shiels) so stated in her 1999 book, *Bends In the Road* (see page 8 of the online excerpts of her book). So did Rupert Wilkinson, in *Surviving a Japanese Internment Camp*, p. 71. But that belief is easily refuted — the Andrews Sisters never recorded GMGM, as an internet search of their discography proves conclusively.

A second error derives from the very first performance of GMGM, in the form of a duet by Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney, in the 1939 movie *Babes In Arms*. (Here is a link to a colorized version of the Garland-Rooney duet):

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9mRVWNYM-Dw.\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9mRVWNYM-Dw.)

That duet apparently has led some to assume that Garland must have also recorded a solo version of GMGM, and that hers was the STIC version; but there is no such title listed in her discography prior to 1947, when she left Decca Records.

[Sidebar. I cannot say the same for the post-1947 period, which is literally impossible to check, as evidenced by the following quotation (from one of “The Judy

civilian, cont'd...

Room" site's "subsites" titled "Judy Garland Discography"): "To say that Judy Garland had one of the most prolific recording careers in the history of American music would be an understatement. Over the years, literally hundreds of records and CDs have been released, and yet there is still a large number of recordings that have yet to be officially released." Also worth noting is the site's current subtitle: "The Judy Room: Judy Garland Centennial 1922-2022."]

And a third error, cited for the record and for the sake of comprehensiveness, concerns the confusion that occasionally arises from the fact that a 1952 movie, the classic *Singin' in the Rain*, revived GMGM with a bang, in the form of an outstanding Gene Kelly-Debbie Reynolds-Donald O'Connor dance number. (Here is a link to that dance number: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GB2yiIoEtXw>.)

Having dealt with misconceptions about the version of GMGM which bedeviled STIC internees, I will now sort out my own ideas about the identity of the mystery band. I have found a total of seven big-band versions of GMGM, any one of which hypothetically could have been by the mystery band; all were recorded in 1939, after *Babes in Arms* was released. Of the seven, three can be excluded from consideration because they were recorded by British bands (those of Jack Hylton, Joe Loss, and Harry Roy), and it is reasonable to assume that mostly American records would have been more widely available than British records in the Philippines before WWII. (Besides, males were the vocalists on the Loss and Roy versions; more on the Hylton version below.)

Of the four American bands, two — those of Jan Savitt and Sammy Kaye — can be eliminated, because their GMGM vocalists were not females. The vocalist for the third American band, that of Abe Lyman, was Lyman's wife, Rose Blaine. The vocalists for the fourth band, that of Horace Heidt, were the "Heidtlites" (a.k.a. Heidt-Lights), a quartet composed of one male (Lou) and three females (Fay, Jane, and Mary); and as the voices of the three clearly were dominant, the Heidt band should not be ruled out of consideration as the mystery band, along with Lyman's band.

[Sidebar. Here are links to the Lyman and Heidt versions of GMGM.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=knGP3rVjg-Q> (Abe Lyman)
- https://archive.org/details/78_good-morning_horace-heidt-and-his-musical-knights-heidtlites-fay-jane-mary-lou-gbia0093409a/Good+Morning+-+Horace+Heidt+and+his+Musical+Knights.flac (Horace Heidt)

It is time to call an end, or at least a provisional halt, to the fruitless search for the identity of the mystery band. That is mainly because those former internees who might have known the answer are long gone. Too, I have (as noted) sought suggestions from Maurice's vast audience; I have repeatedly scoured the internet; and I also made sure to check with Tom Moore, whose website provides song recordings for those on his extensive listing of former internees — no luck there either. I have to conclude, therefore, that a definitive answer to this question is no longer possible. But that does not preclude presenting my own views on the issue.

If forced to choose between the Lyman and the Heidt versions, purely as a matter of personal preference I would pick the former, chiefly because of its somewhat faster tempo. On the other hand, and apart from Sascha's aforementioned impression supporting Heidt, there is an additional pro-Heidt consideration that should not be overlooked: the voices of the three female vocalists in the Heidtlite quartet conceivably could have misled those who thought the Andrews Sisters were the vocalists on the STIC version. Whatever the case, I am reasonably confident that the mystery band was either Lyman's or Heidt's. [Note: To hedge my bets with a dark horse pick, it is not inconceivable that Jack Hylton's excellent version, with vocalist Dolly Elsie, was the STIC version. Here is that link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2wZ9-QGKUe>]



Signature Song #3. Next we turn to the second of the two songs that would (or at least should) be included in any STIC Hall of Fame. As many readers may already have guessed, that song is — drum roll, please — the de facto (many would say de jure) STIC theme song/anthem, "Cheer Up, Everything's Gonna Be Lousy." It was introduced quite early in the Camp's existence, during a 24 March 1942 STIC stage show, by the Camp's Entertainment Supremo himself, the much-acclaimed Dave Harvey.

In this instance, initially it seemed that two key facts about the song

civilian, cont'd...

were well-known from its inception — its name (unlike the case with the long-forgotten Signature Song #1), and its source or creator (unlike the case with Signature Song #2). Nevertheless, after the previously-described email exchanges on GMGM, I decided to look into the question of whether there had been an outside influence on Harvey's masterpiece. Now of course some might well wonder why this should have been a question at all, since it might seem obvious that Harvey was the composer. After all, what non-STIC source could there possibly have been of a song with title and lyrics so descriptive of, and so applicable to, Camp life?

Despite those considerations, the question arose because of my previously-cited familiarity with pre-WWII music. To be specific, it seemed to me that I had once run across a similar song title in my ancient and hallowed jazz record book — a well-worn copy of French jazz expert Charles Delaunay's *New Hot Discography* (1948 edition, acquired that same year at the U. of Oregon bookstore). Combing assiduously through the pages of that jazz bible, eventually I hit pay-dirt. The entry I had been searching for stated that in 1935 an individual named Chick Endor had recorded a song entitled "Cheer Up, Everything's Going To Be Lousy" (using "going to" rather than Harvey's "gonna").

I then tracked down the Endor recording and learned that not only the title, but the music and some of the lyrics (as detailed below) had influenced Harvey's version. I then forwarded what I thought was this startling news of a remarkable discovery — along with a link to the Endor recording — to Maurice Francis, who as usual posted my email to The Gang. Cliff Mills soon responded with the only comment

my find elicited; he cited the similarities between the Endor and the Harvey versions, and he added a useful PDF of the Harvey lyrics (taken from Liz Irvine's book, *Surviving the Rising Sun*).

When Cliff's was the only reaction to my discovery, I thought that something should be done to arouse more interest in the subject of STIC-related music. But I put the matter aside until recently, when I decided to revisit the Endor-Harvey connection. The first task was to check more closely on the extent to which Endor's version had influenced Harvey's.

The titles, obviously, needed no attention, as they were identical, aside from the trivial change from Endor's "going to" to Harvey's "gonna" — "Cheer Up, Everything's Going To [Gonna] Be Lousy" (hereafter cited as "Cheer Up"). As to the song's lyrics, the main thing to keep in mind is context — Endor's song was a response to the Great Depression, which had eased only slightly by 1935. On the other hand, the emphasis on context is relevant only to Endor's chorus, or middle sections; it does not apply to his intro and outro (concluding) sections, which do not refer specifically to the Depression. As a result, Harvey was able to incorporate the latter two sections into his own version of "Cheer Up"; to drop Endor's context-specific chorus; and to substitute his own STIC-centered material.

Finally, I learned the most important fact of all — in effect, the clincher: Endor not only was the vocalist on "Cheer Up," he also was its composer. Actually, at this point it is time to broach a (mildly) complicating factor — namely, that Endor's long-time musical partner, Charlie Farrell, was both co-composer of and co-vocalist on the original (1935) "Cheer Up" recording. Thus the latter should be called an Endor-Farrell work; however, discographies and other listings usually name only Endor, at the expense of poor Farrell. It is justifiable, therefore, to simplify matters hereafter by citing only Endor.

In view of the foregoing, it is entirely valid to describe Dave Harvey's version of "Cheer Up" as in reality a hybrid Endor-Harvey (technically, Endor-Farrell-Harvey) work. On the other hand, the situation is quite different when it comes to pride of place. It is my opinion — or rather, it is very clearly evident — that precedence definitely, positively and inarguably should and must go to Endor. After all, this is indisputable: no Endor version, no hybrid/Harvey version of "Cheer Up" — indeed, likely no version at all, or certainly nothing comparable. Nonetheless, let me emphasize that the preceding does not — nor is it intended to — minimize Dave Harvey's contributions to the hybrid version of "Cheer Up." On the contrary, not only was he skilled enough to convert Endor's version into one relevant to the STIC scene, but the fact that he was able to do so within a short time after STIC's inception, and in the midst of such an initially hectic environment, speaks highly of his talents. So, trusting that should mollify any pro-Harvey extremists, we can move on. [Note: There will be more on Endor in the aforementioned future article on Dave Harvey.]



civilian, cont'd...

Signature Song #4. We now turn to the last of the Signature Songs. As both its title and its source — meaning the band that recorded it — are known at the outset, it requires relatively brief coverage compared with that devoted to the first three. Another minor point is that, from the standpoint of balance or “equal time,” each of the Camp’s two major sources of music has contributed (not by design) two of the four songs: stage shows (songs #1 and #3), and the public-address system (songs #2 and now #4). But enough for trivialities, and again on with the (musical) show.

Initially, one potentially complicating matter involving the public-address system needs attention. As described earlier, one of that system’s functions was to air entertainment programs. Of particular relevance here is that every evening the system broadcast 90-minute “concerts” of recorded music (selected from a collection of more than 3,000 assorted records). Weather permitting, that made it possible for internees to spread out on the Camp’s spacious front lawns (on folding chairs, mats, or just the grass) and relax while listening to the music — until the closing song signaled it was curfew time.

The aforesaid complicating matter requires a resolution of the following apparent conflict: On the one hand, I am now saying that the public-address system aired a future Signature Song (i.e., #4); on the other hand, I had earlier asserted that records played only transiently — as in the case of the nightly concerts, for example, or of the records used to refer to WWII events — “cannot validly be regarded as a significant part of STIC history.” But there is no

conflict here, because the quoted statement does not apply to a recording that was played not transiently but after every evening concert — because it was an appropriate one to indicate it was time for internees to return to their quarters. Before naming the song in question, one more point should be addressed.

Although internees were familiar with the melody itself, I suspect it is likely that they were unaware of, or after liberation soon forgot, the song’s *title*. That surmise is supported by the fact that said song had received virtually no notice whatsoever in the U. S. from its inception in 1937. It was recorded by only two bands that I know of, and when I sought to check on them, I was shocked — shocked, I say — that absolutely *nothing* turned up. But here is the absolute topper: on a listing I examined of nearly 200 popular songs recorded in 1937, *it does not even appear on the list!* Thus what is most surprising to me is that the recording was even in the STIC record collection at all.

But as far as the source question is concerned, it does not matter whether STIC alumni have been unaware of or have forgotten the name of #4. Whatever the case may be, it is extremely — and unexpectedly — fortunate that the names of the song in question, as well of the band that recorded it, are on the record, thanks once again to F. H. Stevens. In his invaluable book, Stevens states that the title of the nightly concert-concluding song — another drum roll, please — was (and still is) “Toodle-Oo.”

There — just as I said, nobody remembers that song title (which, by the way, should not be confused with such titles as “Toodle-Oo, So Long, Goodbye!” and “Toodle Loo on Down” — both also from the 1930s.) Unsurprisingly, the title

“Toodle-Oo” has no entry, for instance, in Wikipedia (which does, however, helpfully include two somewhat similar titles: Duke Ellington’s well-known “East St. Louis Toodle-Oo” and — trigger warning — “Toodle-F*****g-Oo” from the HBO series “The Sopranos”). And that is more than enough (attempted) levity.

Interestingly Stevens also notes that the version of “Toodle-Oo” heard nightly in STIC was by the Russ Morgan band; and he even adds (in a footnote) that its music and words are by (Carmen) Lombardo and (John Jacob) Loeb, respectively. Of course I had intended to include a link to the Morgan version here, but that was nowhere to be found. However, I did find basic information about it — Morgan’s band recorded it in 1937, and his vocalist was the beautiful and multi-talented (e.g., one-time ballerina) Bernice Parks.

Conclusion. Fortunately for the finale of this survey of STIC-related music, I finally did manage to unearth the only other known recording of “Toodle-Oo” — by the Dick Robertson band, whose version I prefer to Morgan’s, due to its faster tempo, personnel (including Jack Teagarden and Bobby Hackett), and Robertson’s smooth vocal. Here is its link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J2m9oXMWDnU>. And, by way of a suitable conclusion to this account of STIC Signature Songs — works that both reflected and influenced the Camp’s tortuous history — the Robertson recording is conveniently available. It provides an appropriate coda to this extended musical note — capped by its very last line: ♪♪♪ Nighty-night ♪♪ sleep tight ♪♪ toodle-oo ♪♪♪ — much as it did for so many internees on so many evenings so many years ago.

Too Many POWs in the VA

September 2023

This document will attempt to determine if the VA has more Vietnam era POWs enrolled in their system than an actual count. It will also discuss the number of POWs from conflicts after the Vietnam Conflict. It does not accuse anyone of a wrongdoing. Let's look at the background:

Documentation of POWs from WWI, WWII and Korea is difficult as those wars occurred before the advent of computer databases. The National Archives and Records Administration retained POW records in punch cards. NARA documentation shows that the records were digitized and presented to VA on a transmittal record dated December 18, 2002. The total WWII POWs Returned Alive was 111,695. By 2006, VA had upped their total to 116,129. Reason unknown.

Following the return of the remaining 566 Vietnam era POWs during Operation Homecoming, February 12, 1973-March 29, 1973, Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) took on the task of determining the exact POW count from the Vietnam War, July 8, 1959 to May 15, 1975. Their work was good but was improved upon when the task was taken over by Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office under the Secretary of Defense. DPMO's publication, entitled Personnel Missing, Southeast Asia (and Selected Foreign Nationals) (PMSEA) has been the gold standard of the actual POW count for the last 40-some years. Their original count was 660 military POWs returned to U.S. control. Two names inadvertently left off

the were later added making the total count of U.S. military POWs returned alive from the Vietnam War to be 662. Teams of DPMO professional analysts meticulously examined military unit records including the military units' After Action Reports, Morning Muster Reports, POW debriefings, Service Records, and Medical records to determine that a man was a POW. From this authentication, the POW Medal was authorized to be issued to and worn by former POWs (FPOWs).

The Department of Defense PMSEA list remains rock solid in accuracy to today. DPMO/DPAA has published this list online in their website, www.dpaa.mil. 662 military POWs returned alive from the Vietnam Conflict. (Actually, 30 had escaped, 632 were repatriated). No "new" POWs have been found since Army Captain Babcock was added to the list. Other categories such as MIAs and Escapees are also available to the public.

American Ex-Prisoners of War was established April 1942 by the families of POWS - military and civilian - captured on Bataan, and then Corregidor and the Pacific. In 1949, membership was expanded to include all returned prisoners of war and their families. It is currently a 501c3 organization for all former U.S. Prisoners of War, families and descendants. The Washington, DC office was established in 1981 under the command of Chuck Williams. AXPOW worked closely with VA over the years in efforts to improve treatment and benefits to all former POWs. Both organizations worked tirelessly to help pass laws and establish "presumptives" which would greatly enhance the establishment of service-

connected injuries and disabilities for POWs. The AXPOW database of Vietnam POWs matches DPAA's PMSEA list.

Somewhere along the line, VA began publishing their POW statistics in a grid which later became known as a "Pocket Card." The format has changed periodically, but the content is generally the same. The conflicts go from WWI to Iraq. The cards are dated from 2006 to the latest Pocket Card, 2023. The cards are published approximately every 2-3 years despite their mandate to publish the statistics quarterly. The Cards are published by the VA National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics. This office comes falls under the VA Office of the Assistant Secretary for Enterprise Integration. The latest card published in August 2023 states the VA's position on how many POWs remain alive, "Living POW Counts (2023)."

The Pocket Cards provide the only clues as to what is really going on within VHA, VBA and NCA. Looking back, the VA 2006 Pocket Card is the last year the VA was dealing with reality.

The 2006 VA Pocket Card was provided to American Ex-POWs with the following summary relevant to this discussion. The 2006 card shows POWs "Returned to Military Control" for the following conflicts: Vietnam 660, Desert Storm 21, and Iraq 8. These are correct numbers. They match statistics for DPMO/DPAA, American Ex-POWs and NAM-POWs, Inc., the 501C19 fraternal organization for the Returned Vietnam POWs. These are authentic RPOWs, by name.

Somewhere after 2006 the VA's diversion from the true figures began. Due to limited space, this

Too many, cont'd...

paper will only examine a couple of the Pocket Cards, 2018 and 2023. When the VA states there are 1,838 "Living POWs as of 2023," we rightly, or wrongly, must assume that the VA has 1,838 registered POWs who are receiving "benefits."

How else would they be able to count the "living POWs?" The VA stated in its 2018 Card that there were 1,085 Vietnam POWs alive despite factual evidence that only 444 of the original 662 were still alive at the end of calendar year 2018. Where did those additional 641 POWs come from?

The VA stated that there were 182 Desert Storm POWs alive as of 2018 despite factual evidence that only the 21 original POWs were still alive. Where did an additional 164 FPOWs come from?

Now let's continue to 2023. The VA stated that there were 799 Vietnam POWs alive despite factual evidence that only 365 of the original 662 were alive as of August 2023. Most of the 365 were alive and in contact with each other through NAM-POWs, Inc. Where in the world did an additional 434 FPOWs come from?

It gets worse for Desert Storm. The 2023 VA card states that there are 245 Desert Storm POWs alive despite only 18 of the 21 original Desert Storm POWs alive as of August 2023. How can this be? Desert Storm was over some 32 years ago. Magically, 227 additional FPOWs came forward to claim that they were captured during that

conflict? Something is rotten in Denmark!

The VA added a new category in their 2023 Pocket Card: "Post 9/11 Living POW Count." It is assumed that they mean the living POWs from Somalia (1), Kosovo (3) and Iraq (8). That's a total of 12 former POWs thought to be alive, post 9/11. The 2023 Pocket Card has 165 living POWs in their "Post 9/11" category. This is a crazy exaggeration. To top off the 2023 Card, the VA added yet another new category called "Unknown." The "Unknown" category has 259 living POWs noted on the 2023 Pocket Card. How can the VA give benefits to an "unknown" POW?

Now comes the heart of the discussion. Is the VA really signing up new POWs for benefits? Or are statisticians in the VA Office of Enterprise and Integration (OEI) just making up nonsensical numbers. Let's hope the latter answer is correct. If the former answer is correct, then the VA is complicit in perpetuating a massive fraud. If so, sooner or later it will be exposed.

The most logical answer as to how the number of POWs keep increasing comes from a few VA employees who are brave enough to explain the problem as they observe it. Some employees have explained that the VA now has an unstated policy that "the VA assumes that any applicant for POW status is being truthful, and his claim must be accepted on face value." Further, "the VA would rather error on the side of the applicant than to error against the applicant by denying him benefits to which he might be entitled." That's a mouthful, but

I personally heard it from the lips of a VA administrator.

I also heard from two VA psychologists that they had no choice but to enter "POW" in a man's medical record if he claims to being a former POW.

This opens the discussion to both real fraud and possible fraud. Real fraud is provable through the records of Departments of Motor Vehicles (DMVs) throughout the US. When a FPOW registrant applies for POW license plates, most DMVs require a letter from the VA stating that a registrant for POW license plates "is a POW." Usually, an applicant for state issued POW and DV license plates asks the VA to send a verification letter. After receiving the VA letter stating that he is a POW, the applicant submits his application to the state DMV. State DMVs accept VA letters as proof of a POW claim. POW license plates are then sent to the POW applicant.

Phony POW applicants who are issued POW license plates are entitled to whatever state benefits are offered. In most cases, car registration fees are forgiven. Some states forgive property taxes. In Texas, not only are property taxes forgiven, but POWs are also entitled to park at all state-sponsored parking lots. Just ask the former POWs who live in Texas. They park in the covered spaces at Dallas-Fort Worth Airport (DFW) for as many days as they want...all for free. They love this privilege, and they use it. States could be defrauded of funds. This could be provable fraud committed by a false POW applicant who used a VA letter verifying his status as a POW.

Too many, cont'd...

When an official VA letter or communication verifies that a man is a FPOW, when in fact he is not a FPOW, that VA letter then provides a direct link to commit fraudulent activity. Here is one example of a VA communication verifying that Mr. Ashley was a POW: Otis Bane Ashley, VA File no. 23-818-638/00, in VA letter. dated December 27, 1983.

Most fraudulent POWs seek only minor accolades and privileges like a free lunch at a service organization (Lions, Rotary, etc.) or as a parade marshal during a 4th of July event. Some flash their VA identity cards as proof that they were POWs. They seem to bask in the glory of having been a POW. Some like to brag to co-workers and friends. Some even use the ploy to make hits on unsuspecting women in bars. Some engage in fraudulent activities like a false "Go Fund Me." Now comes a discussion on how serious this could be for the VA. The VA Office of Inspector General (VA OIG) has provided a few examples of fraud committed by false POW claimants. There are more examples of false POWs exposed, too many to discuss here. The VA OIG is responsible for investigating and preventing fraud, waste, and abuse within the VA. Two actual examples should be enough to demonstrate the seriousness of the situation:

(1) Edward Lee Daily collected more than \$412,000 in disability and medical benefits over 15 years before being exposed as a fraudulent POW. He pleaded guilty in 2002 and was sentenced to 21 months in prison and ordered to pay restitution. The Social Security

Administration was able to recoup \$7,000.

(2) John Karl Lee, was ordered to pay nearly \$230,000 in restitution and fines. His VA ID card stating that he was a POW was taken away.

If a fraudulent POW claim were to be accepted by the VA, a series of events would occur. A verbal claim, or a written claim on paper is just a lie. It might not even be a crime at that point. But, after registering with the VHA as a POW, he then would be entitled to a medical exam by the benefits side of the VA, the VBA. If he had memorized the proper answers for establishing PTSD (e.g., "I still have nightmares"), VA psychologists would likely determine that he has a PTSD service-connected disability. If the man has high blood pressure, or any other ailment on the lengthy list of "presumptives," this too would be added to his record. In the end, the man might be classified as 100% service-connected disabled. Such a rating would ensure even more benefits. Perhaps a "disabled parking pass" would be issued by his DMV. He could then park in disabled parking. This is where the fraud (receiving money) would begin. He might apply for and receive Social Security benefits. This paper will not even begin to go into that discussion. On the VBA side, he might receive thousands of dollars monthly for the rest of his life. Tax free, of course. It can go even deeper into areas that few outsiders would even consider. What about his wife, assuming he is married? Once it is determined that he "is a POW," his wife might be eligible for VA Survivor and Dependent Compensation (DIC). If the husband, the fraudulent FPOW, pre-deceases her, she

would receive \$1,562.74 monthly ...for the rest of her life. The fraud would continue even after the fraudulent POW's death.

Past Secretaries of the VA have been personally briefed on this situation by members of the Advisory Committee on Former Prisoner of War (FPOW). It is not known whether any VA Secretary has taken any action. Some Congressmen are aware of this situation and have sought answers from the VA Secretaries with a Congressional inquiry which must be answered within a short time, something like 24-hours. The VA Secretaries have answered with their short form letters basically stating that the VA records on POWs have been carefully verified and are correct.

The VA probably will not respond or comment on the situation explained in this article. Any inquiry by any interested party would probably be met with silence. The VA employs the Privacy Act to its benefit by saying nothing.

The Privacy Act of 1974 (Pub. L. 93-579, 88 Stat. 1896, enacted December 31, 1974, 5 U.S.C. § 552a), a United States federal law, establishes a Code of Fair Information Practice that governs the collection, maintenance, use, and dissemination of personally identifiable information about individuals that is maintained in systems of records by federal agencies. [Wikipedia](#)

□ The Privacy Act of 1974, as amended to present, including Statutory Notes (5 U.S.C. 552a), Protects records about individuals retrieved by personal identifiers such as a name, social security number, or other identifying number or symbol

Too many, cont'd...

What is the solution? The solution is for the VA OIG to do its job. The VA Inspector General's office is the designated entity to investigate and correct fraud, waste, and abuse. The VA OIG has been briefed on the possibility of fraud, waste and abuse many times over the years yet they appear to have done nothing. The working method for a solution would be simple. Compare the lists of known living POWs against the POW lists held by the VA. This could be done in less than an hour. The VA OIG might find hundreds of cases to investigate, solve and prosecute.

The Office of VA Director, Analytics Service stated in its NCVAS Updates for the 2023 Pocket Card that "NCVAS POW Data Research confirmed DoD does not have POW data." This statement appears to be an error. Department of Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) names all 662 Vietnam era FPOWs at the following official DoD website: www.dpaa.mil All other FPOWs from other conflicts are a matter of public record.

All POWs on the PMSEA list have been designated as "Secretarial Designees" by their respective services. As such, they have been authorized to have government orders issued (with funding) to attend an annual POW physical exam at Naval Aerospace Medical Institute (NAMI), NAS Pensacola, Florida. Most POWs have used this service for the last 50 years following their repatriation during Operation Homecoming, 1973. As well, the 21 Desert Storm POWs have attended NAMI for their annual exams.

Conclusion: This article does not accuse anyone in the VA of any wrongdoing. The VA is staffed with many wonderful men and women of integrity. It is my sincere hope that this issue is the fault of poorly trained data technicians who took over the statistics for the last 15 or so years. If this is the case, they certainly messed things up between 2006 and 2023. The issues could easily be investigated and resolved. This whole mess could be easily accomplished by simply comparing the DPAA lists of actual POWs against the lengthy lists of the VA which undoubtedly contain names of men who were not POWs. Those names should be investigated and the designation "POW" should be removed from all their records. If non-POWs have fraudulently received funds, those funds should be recouped by the VA.

News

VA released a [PACT Act Year-In-Review Dashboard](#) showcasing the care and benefits that VA has delivered to Veterans and their survivors since President Biden signed the PACT Act into law on Aug. 10, 2022. Partly due to this historic law, VA is delivering more care and more benefits to more Veterans than ever before. Key results to date include:

Delivering benefits to Veterans and their survivors: VA has delivered more than \$1.85 billion in earned PACT Act benefits to Veterans and their survivors. VA is delivering these benefits to Veterans at the fastest rate in our nation's history, processing 1.65 million total Veteran claims thus far in this fiscal year.

Increasing Veteran access to health care: Since August 10, 332,252 Veterans have enrolled in VA health care — which is nearly 50,000 more enrollees than during the previous year.

Screening Veterans for toxic exposures: More than 4.1 million Veterans have received free, 10-minute screenings for toxic exposures from VA under the PACT Act — a critical step to catching and treating potentially life-threatening health conditions as early as possible.

Spreading the word to Veterans and their survivors: Thanks to the largest outreach campaign in VA history, Veterans and survivors are applying for their earned benefits at record rates. In this fiscal year, Veterans and survivors have submitted 1.95 million total claims (including 843,448 PACT Act-specific claims) — 37% more than last year and on pace to break an all-time record. Veterans have also submitted 1.65 million "intents to file" during this fiscal year — 44% more than last year.



AMERICAN BATTLEFIELD TRUST ★ ★ ★

PRESERVE. EDUCATE. INSPIRE.

AMERICAN BATTLEFIELD TRUST LAUNCHES ANIMATED MAP COVERING AMERICA'S WARS FROM 1754 TO 1945

Dramatic multimedia production from Wide Awake Films offers compelling storytelling and dynamic view of America's expansive military history

(Washington, D.C.) — The American Battlefield Trust has launched its most ambitious animated battle map to date: *America's Wars 1754-1945*. Produced by the award-winning Wide Awake Films, the stunning visuals and compelling storytelling bring to life the events and military engagements that shaped America over the course of two centuries, from the beginning of the French and Indian War in 1754 to the end of World War II in 1945.

"America's narrative is about more than statesmen and founding documents; our story was written by millions of citizen soldiers on nearly 250 years' worth of battlefields," said Trust president David Duncan. "We are proud to present this comprehensive overview in a compelling and accessible format so that this and future generations can find inspiration from these hallowed grounds around the globe."

The nearly hour-long production is the culmination of long planning and collaboration. It uses a combination of dramatic narration, historic and modern images, motion graphics, reenactment footage, and music to share the mesmerizing stories of more than a dozen individual conflicts, including the Revolutionary War, Indian Wars, Mexican-American War, Civil War, Spanish-American War, World War I and World War II.

The Trust premiered the documentary LIVE on YouTube September 4, with viewers lauding the innovative approach and comprehensive coverage of America's history with war.

"Fantastic video. I will have my kids watch this to get a basic understanding of the history of this great nation, and the sacrifices made by all those brave soldiers, and their families," one viewer exclaimed.

"I'll be watching it again," said another, in real time during the mass-watch debut.

The *America's Wars 1754-1945 Animated Map* joins the Trust's broader series of about two dozen more focused animated map videos, which have collectively been viewed more than 20 million times. The [Animated Maps collection](#), brings alive individual battles or campaigns from the American Civil War, Revolutionary War and War of 1812 to life, complete with troop movement animations, narratives, video, and more.

“The *America’s Wars 1754-1945 Animated Map* is by far our most ambitious installment of the series,” said the Trust’s Chief Historian Garry Adelman. “In moving outside our usual period of coverage, we wanted to provide a learning opportunity to explore the earliest conflicts of America’s citizen soldier and what they did after. By taking a more wholistic view of American military history, we’re able to place the 105-plus battlefields where the Trust has saved land into greater context.”



The longtime collaboration between the Trust and Wide Awake Films, of Kansas City, Mo., has yielded a host of exceptional projects together, including the Animated Maps collection and Step Into History videos that superimpose historic photos into their exact location on the modern landscape. No stranger to the massive effort involved with recreating battle scenes and compiling and editing down hundreds of hours of footage, the company worked tirelessly, paying meticulous attention to detail to compose this production.

“We’ve done a number of shorter form historical documentary pieces with the Trust, but it was a real honor for us to meet the challenge of this one, covering the conflicts that helped define America over several centuries,” said Shane Seley, Founder and Director at Wide Awake Films. “The most rewarding part of the experience is always knowing that we help the Trust raise awareness about these wars as well as money to save the land where this history occurred.”

Like all of the Trust’s award-winning educational content, the *America’s Wars 1754-1945 Animated Map* is available free of charge for anyone to watch, including the thousands of schools that already use Trust animated maps and other short videos in their classrooms. The full production is organized into chapters for individual conflicts to assist those who many prefer to utilize selected segments

About the American Battlefield Trust

The American Battlefield Trust is dedicated to preserving America’s hallowed battlegrounds and educating the public about what happened there and why it matters today. The nonprofit, nonpartisan organization has protected more than 57,000 acres associated with the Revolutionary War, War of 1812 and Civil War. Learn more at www.battlefields.org.

About Wide Awake Films

Wide Awake Films is a creative media group focused on innovative, efficient execution of historical, commercial and corporate video and film production. The production company excels in producing compelling and powerful corporate messages, as well as Emmy award-winning historical content for museums, documentaries and television programming.

Wreath Sponsorship

American Ex-Prisoners of War (AEPW) |165786|



REMEMBER the Fallen. . . HONOR those who Serve. . . TEACH our children the value of Freedom.

On December 16, 2023, as we do each year, American Ex-Prisoners of War will be helping Andersonville National Cemetery to Remember and Honor our veterans by laying Remembrance wreaths on the graves of our country's fallen heroes.

Feel free to share this American Ex-Prisoners of War sponsorship page with friends and family. Simply cut and paste the URL below and it will bring you to our site, with sponsorship for Andersonville National Historic Site:

www.wreathsacrossamerica.org/AEPW

All sponsorships are welcome!

Please help us honor and remember as many fallen heroes as possible by sponsoring remembrance wreaths, volunteering on Wreaths Day, or inviting your family and friends to attend with you.

Thank you so much for supporting the American Ex-Prisoners of War and Wreaths Across America!

History of Veterans Day



World War I – known at the time as “The Great War” - officially ended when the Treaty of Versailles was signed on June 28, 1919, in the Palace of Versailles outside the town of Versailles, France. However, fighting ceased seven months earlier when an armistice, or temporary cessation of hostilities, between the Allied nations and Germany went into effect on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month. For that reason, November 11, 1918, is generally regarded as the end of “the war to end all wars.”

In November 1919, President Wilson proclaimed November 11 as the first commemoration of Armistice Day with the following words: “To us in America, the reflections of Armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country’s service and with gratitude for the victory, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and because of the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of the nations...”

The original concept for the celebration was for a day observed with parades and public meetings and a brief suspension

of business beginning at 11:00 a.m.

The United States Congress officially recognized the end of World War I when it passed a concurrent resolution on June 4, 1926.

An Act (52 Stat. 351; 5 U. S. Code, Sec. 87a) approved May 13, 1938, made the 11th of November in each year a legal holiday—a day to be dedicated to the cause of world peace and to be thereafter celebrated and known as “Armistice Day.” Armistice Day was primarily a day set aside to honor veterans of World War I, but in 1954, after World War II had required the greatest mobilization of soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen in the Nation’s history; after American forces had fought aggression in Korea, the 83rd Congress, at the urging of the veterans service organizations, amended the Act of 1938 by striking out the word “Armistice” and inserting in its place the word “Veterans.” With the approval of this legislation (Public Law 380) on June 1, 1954, November 11th became a day to honor American veterans of all wars.

Later that same year, on October 8th, President Dwight D. Eisenhower issued the first “Veterans Day Proclamation”. On that same day, President Eisenhower sent a letter to the Honorable Harvey V. Higley, Administrator of Veterans’ Affairs (VA), designating him as Chairman of the Veterans Day National Committee.

In 1958, the White House advised VA’s General Counsel that the 1954 designation of the VA Administrator as Chairman of the Veterans Day National Committee applied to all subsequent VA Administrators. Since March 1989 when VA was elevated to a cabinet level department, the Secretary

of Veterans Affairs has served as the committee’s chairman.

The Uniform Holiday Bill (Public Law 90-363 (82 Stat. 250)) was signed on June 28, 1968, and was intended to ensure three-day weekends for Federal employees by celebrating four national holidays on Mondays: Washington’s Birthday, Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and Columbus Day. It was thought that these extended weekends would encourage travel, recreational and cultural activities and stimulate greater industrial and commercial production. Many states did not agree with this decision and continued to celebrate the holidays on their original dates.

The first Veterans Day under the new law was observed with much confusion on October 25, 1971. It was quite apparent that the commemoration of this day was a matter of historic and patriotic significance to a great number of our citizens, and so on September 20th, 1975, President Gerald R. Ford signed Public Law 94-97 (89 Stat. 479), which returned the annual observance of Veterans Day to its original date of November 11, beginning in 1978. This action supported the desires of the overwhelming majority of state legislatures, all major veterans service organizations and the American people.

Veterans Day continues to be observed on November 11, regardless of what day of the week on which it falls. The restoration of the observance of Veterans Day to November 11 not only preserves the historical significance of the date, but helps focus attention on the important purpose of Veterans Day: A celebration to honor America’s veterans for their patriotism, love of country, and willingness to serve and sacrifice for the common good.

Bombing Hitler's Gas Station, 1943

By John Skelly

Milton, FL

www.websitesammy.com

jj5kels@hotmail.com

Before Rockefeller discovered Pennsylvania, before Texas and Oklahoma, before Aramco, before the North Sea or Prudhoe Bay, before the Bakken Formation, there was Ploiești.

Romania, at the beginning of the 20th century, was one of the largest oil producers in the world. While its fields have now mostly matured, Romania drilled its first commercial oil well in 1857 and was the only country in the world that year to report significant crude oil production. The United States itself would not report any significant crude oil production until 1860.

" They were flying so low — sometimes just 50 feet off the ground — that gunners on the bombers had to aim up at anti-aircraft guns positioned on the roofs of surrounding buildings."



Three B-24 Liberator bombers, assigned to the 98th Bomb Group, fly a low-level bombing mission over the oil refineries around Ploiești, Romania, Aug. 1, 1943. (U.S. Air Force, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons)

The refineries near Ploiești, an industrial center in eastern Romania near Bucharest and the Black Sea, provided one-third of the oil supply of the Axis forces in World War II. Which made it an obvious target for aerial attack.

One such attack, *Operation Tidal Wave*, launched on Sunday, August 1, 1943, was perhaps the most spectacular American bombing mission of World War II or at least in its European theatre. It was a bold, low-level assault involving 178 B-24 Liberator heavy bombers.

Five heavy bombardment groups took part in Operation Tidal Wave: two from Benghazi, North Africa (the 98th and 376th), and three sent from England to Libya (the 44th, 93rd and 389th). Combined these were all the B-24 groups then available in the European and Middle East theatre of operation.

The Consolidated B-24D Liberator was the only American long-range heavy bomber that could reach Ploiești from the nearest Allied air bases in North Africa. A crew of up to 10 operated a B-24, which was over 66 feet long with a 110-foot wingspan. It had a top speed of just over 300 mph and a cruising speed of 200 mph. It could carry up to 8,000 pounds of bombs, and it was equipped with nine or more 50 caliber machine guns for self-defense. With a 5,000-lb bomb load the aircraft could range up to 2,850 miles. It weighed up to 56,000-lbs when loaded.

For the Ploiești mission, about 2,100 miles from North Africa to the target and back, the B-24s were given increased fuel loads with fuel tanks placed inside their forward bomb bays, leaving the aft bomb bay to carry the bombs, either six 500 lb bombs or four 1,000-pounders, plus some incendiary clusters to drop.

Some B-24s in the lead waves were given a pair of fixed 50 caliber machine guns fitted in the lower nose and fired by the pilot to help suppress enemy ground-based defenses. A few aircraft even carried twin 50 caliber waist guns.



B-24 over Ploiesti, Operation Tidal Wave (Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons)

Hitler's gas station, cont'd...

Very early that Sunday morning, crews began taking off from Libya, flying in formation. Waves of B-24s followed each other, keeping radio silence and flying low to evade German radar. The planes were to fly across the Mediterranean and the Adriatic Sea, pass near the island of Corfu, cross over the Pindus Mountains in Albania, cross southern Yugoslavia, enter southwestern Romania, and turn east toward Ploiești where they were to locate pre-determined checkpoints, approach their targets from the north and strike all targets simultaneously.

The attack was painstakingly designed and practiced repeatedly, but little went as planned. At the very start of the 1,000-mile run from Libya one aircraft crashed on take-off. Over the Mediterranean another began flying erratically and plunged into the sea for reasons still unknown.

A plane descended from the formation to look for survivors, narrowly missing another aircraft in the process and then due to its additional fuel weight was unable to regain altitude to resume course to Ploiești. Ten other aircrews also proved unable to regain formation cohesion after the incident, hampered in their efforts by orders to maintain radio silence, and had to return to friendly air fields.

The remaining aircraft next faced a steep ascent over the Pindus mountains, shrouded this day in a stormy cloud cover. The clouds broke the formation into two groups. Although all five groups made the 11,000 ft climb, the first

two groups (the 376th and 93d), flying higher and using higher engine power settings, pulled ahead of the trailing formations (the 98th, 44th and 389th), creating speed and time variations that would disrupt the synchronization of the group attacks. After the mountains, the gap had grown to 20 minutes. Precise timing and distance were critical for the bombers to all reach their targets at the right time and in the correct intervals.



Public domain, USAF Museum via Wikimedia Commons

Then navigation issues led entire squadrons off course. A disastrous premature right turn just short of the final initial checkpoint set the two leading bomber groups on a course to Bucharest instead of Ploiești. The correction, when they finally made it, forced the bombers to approach their targets from the south, where the Nazis had concentrated their anti-aircraft batteries, rather than from the north as planned. Arriving over a heavily-defended target area, disorganized and without the planned element of surprise, The Allied airmen encountered heavy resistance. The Germans knew more about the raid and were far better prepared for it than the Allies anticipated.

The ensuing attack proved dramatic, chaotic and costly. Disguised defenses, such as anti-aircraft guns hidden among train tracks, oil tanks, and surrounding fields, greeted the bombers as they approached their targets. Billowing clouds of black smoke limited visibility and interfered with navigation as the B-24s descended to drop their bombs. They were flying so low — sometimes just 50 feet off the ground — that gunners on the bombers had to aim up at anti-aircraft guns positioned on the roofs of surrounding buildings.

Hitler's gas station, cont'd...

Explosions from the ordinance dropped by the first groups of bombers made visibility even more difficult for the later groups, which were essentially following, or even flying into, their predecessors' paths. Compounding the confusion, some of those planes had abandoned their original assignments in favor of bombing more accessible "targets of opportunity." The three trailing groups, discovering assigned original targets had already been hit, also had to pick targets out by sight and try to bomb whatever refineries they could see.

Facing a fiery landscape black with thick smoke, withering ground fire coming at them from both above and below, and 60-foot flames shooting up higher than their aircraft were flying, some bombardiers jettisoned their payload before even finding a target. Pilots began looking for someplace to set down their bullet-riddled planes before being shot down or set ablaze by the inferno raging below them. One of the downed planes crashed into a female prison in Ploiești, killing a reported 100 civilians and injuring 200 others.

88 B-24s returned to Libya; 55 had battle damage. German air defenses accounted for 44 of the losses. Additional B-24s ditched in the Mediterranean on the return trip or were interned after landing in neutral Turkey. One B-24 with 365 bullet holes landed in Libya 14 hours after departing. A total of 23 others landed at Allied bases in Cyprus, Malta and Sicily.

The Americans sustained 310 air crewmen killed or missing, 108 captured by the Axis, 78 interned in Turkey, and four taken in by Tito's partisans in Yugoslavia. Of 178 bombers and 1,726 men on the mission, 54 aircraft and nearly 500 men failed to return.

Although the raid significantly damaged Ploiesti's oil facilities, the enemy quickly restored production. Tidal Wave succeeded in destroying two of nine refineries and damaging three others. Despite the extreme heroism of the airmen (five Medals of Honor awarded the most for any single air action in history—three posthumously) and their determination to press the mission home, the results of Operation Tidal Wave were less than expected. The targeted refineries produced some 8,595,000 tons of oil annually. The attack temporarily eliminated about 3,925,000 tons. Three refineries lost 100 percent of production but the Germans restored production surprisingly quickly. The largest and most important refinery target, Astro Romana, was back to full production within a few months; Concordia Vega was operating at 100 percent by mid-September.

Even so, notwithstanding its high cost in materiel and human lives, Tidal Wave strategically proved in some respects a moderate success. Falling far short of the original goals, it did cut Germany's oil distillation capacity at a time when her war machine needed it most to confront the Red Army's drive toward the Fatherland. The Reich ran painfully short of fuel for combat, transportation and training.

Ploiești was not attacked again until April 1944. Nearly a year after Tidal Wave, heavy bombers again appeared in the skies over the oil refineries. This time they flew at over 28,000 feet. (The U.S. Army Air Forces never again attempted a low-level mission against German air defenses.) They again took heavy losses but dropped sufficient ordinance on their targets that, while Ploiești never stopped producing fuel, the the German army found itself living off rapidly diminishing stockpiles as it used up gasoline and aviation fuel to fend off the advancing Allied armies.

As World War II began, Romania had been a neutral country Amidst rising Fascist political sentiment, a coup in September 1940 deposed the country's king and turned the government into a dictatorship under Marshal Ion Antonescu, a far-right leaning, and highly anti-Semitic, career military officer in Romania's army. The new regime officially joined the Axis powers in November 1940 and brought with it what was the third-largest Axis army in Europe.

But as the war wore on, besieged by relentless Allied aerial attacks and heavy troop losses on the Eastern Front, the nation's popular support for the war faltered. In a late summer offensive in 1944 the

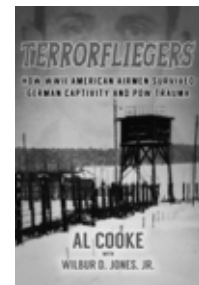
Soviet Red Army overtook the Ploiești oilfields— days before King Michael, son of the previously deposed King Carol II, led a coup d'état that toppled the Antonescu regime and put Romania on the side of the Allies for the remainder of the war.



National Museum of the Oil Industry, Ploiești Romania

Romania today ranks 44th globally in proven oil reserves. Ploiești, with its refineries, storage tanks, oil-field equipment works and distillery, remains the country's primary petroleum center. The Encyclopedia Britannica notes it is also a cultural center, with six museums (including the *National Oil Museum*, which traces the development of the Romanian petroleum industry).

Terrorfliegers: How WWII American Airmen Survived German Captivity and POW Trauma



This is an exceptionally intimate story of Albert Roland "Roland" Cooke, an airman who was shot down over enemy territory while serving his country during WWII. The author found box loads of information about his father's journey and those of his friends and felt compelled to share it with the world. Tech Sergeant Albert Roland Cooke was in the U.S. Army 8th Air Force, 377th Bomb Squadron, 392nd Bomb Group. You will learn what it was like to be shot down over a flaming enemy city and jump terrified into the air with a parachute for the first time, landing to be captured and hauled off to the first of four abominable POW camps or *stalags* and remain incarcerated for 15 months. You will follow Roland and his buddies as they are moved from one heinous *stalag* to another. Find out how Roland battled and defeated his extreme postwar POW trauma. The book also explores the author's impoverished family on the rural North Carolina home front.

WWII has produced hundreds/thousands of stories of survivors. This one will open your eyes to how a typical young man from a poor area survived German Captivity and how he ultimately overcame his POW trauma. Bundle up as the story takes place in freezing temperatures and the POWs are starving, sick, and malnourished.

<https://www.amazon.com/Terrorfliegers>; \$19.99 PAPERBACK; \$9.99 KINDLE



**new
members**

Welcome Home!

Jerome D Heeren
Lawrenceville GA
NAM 335 RFS 4 TFS USAF
Hoa Lo, "Hanoi Hilton", Zoo 9/11/72
to 3/29/73

Request for membership application

American Ex-Prisoners of War

Name:

Address:

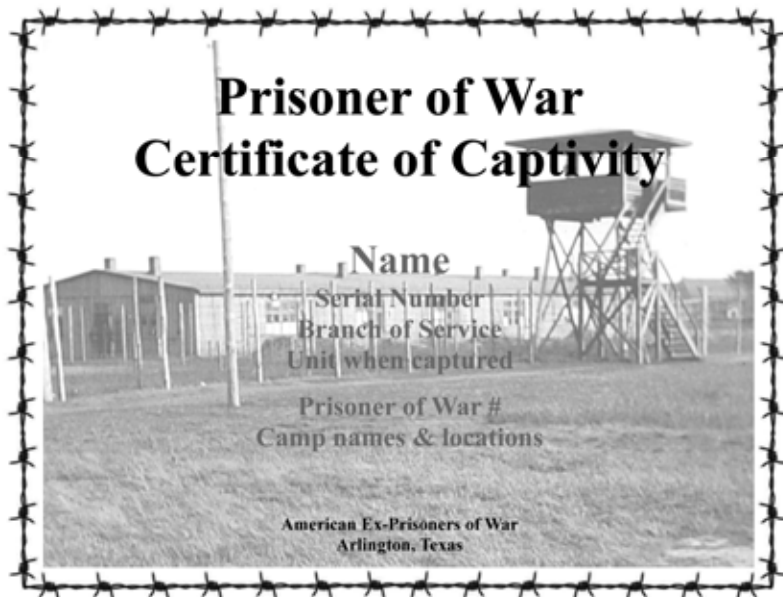
City:

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, or CEO Cheryl Cerbone at 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.

GENERAL FUND

Mary Louise Vaught, Hixson TN

In memory of Henry Raemer, by Kathy Wagner

In memory of James M Gilligan, by son James J Gilligan

In memory of JoAnn Fox, by Barbara Morris

In memory of JoAnn Fox, by Anna Beanblossom

Maryjane & Stephen Laznibat, Fairfield CA

VOLUNTARY FUNDING

Randy Gordon, Byron GA

Robert R Smith, Tomahawk WI

In memory of John Henry Schicht (Schick), by Mary Schick



taps



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

BREESE, Jeanne A., 94 passed away June 3, 2023. Jeanne was a resident of Sun City West, AZ and a very active member of the Agua Fria Chapter of American Ex-Prisoners of War. She was the widow of EX-POW Herbert B Breese, Jr (deceased 2005) and is survived by one brother, two daughters, five grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

FALL, James, age 100, of Marion, IN did June 10, 2023. He was proud veteran of the AAC, serving as a fighter pilot. He was shot down over Normandy, captured and held as a POW. James is survived by his wife of almost 78 years, Ethel Mae, 3 children, 3 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren. He will be missed by family and friends.

LEDKINS, Lonzo Barton, of Evansville, Arkansas, passed away May 30, 2023 at the age of 92. He was captured during the Korean War and held for 32 months until liberation. Survivors include his wife of 46 years, Aida, 1 son, 1 daughter, 1 stepson,

5 grandchildren, 9 great-grandchildren, numerous nieces and nephews.

STUTZ, Leroy W. of Oklahoma City, OK passed away on July 9th, 2023. He was 83. After school and joining the National Guard, he received an appointment to the Air Force Academy, graduating in 1964 as a 2nd Lt. Two weeks later he and Karen Keirns (his high school sweetheart) were married. On the 64th combat mission over North Vietnam Leroy was shot down and captured 2 December 1966. He was listed as MIA for the next three years. His status was changed to POW at the time. On 3 March 1973 after the Paris Peace Agreements were signed Leroy was released to return to the United States and his family. Leroy always talked about how much Karen had done for him. She had waited four years to marry as he couldn't be married as a cadet. Then later she waited almost seven years for him to return from SEA. She was his everything. He is survived by his wife, Karen, 1 son, 3 grandchildren, 1 grand-

daughter in law, 1 great-grandchild.

THOMASIAN, Karnig Arsen died on July 5, 2023 in Pompton Plains, NJ. He became a flight engineer on the state-of-the-art B-29. Stationed in Karachi, India his third mission on December 14, 1944, took his crew to Rangoon, Burma where his plane exploded. He was quickly captured and taken to a Japanese prison camp where he remained until his liberation on May 2, 1945. His first wife, Diana, predeceased him. He leaves his 2nd wife, Inga, 2 daughters, 1 granddaughter, nephews and their families.

YOUNG, Damon F. passed away May 16, 2023. He was 99. He was captured while serving with the Army in the Battle of the Bulge and liberated in May 1945. He also served in Korea and Vietnam. Damon is survived by 2 nieces, 4 nephews, and a host of many great nieces, great-nephews, family, and friends who loved him very much.

In loving memory...Your presence we miss...
Your memory we treasure...Loving you always...
Forgetting you never



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

  <p>The National 4th (IVY) Division Association</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Membership in the Association is open to all former Veterans and currently serving Soldiers of the 4th ID and attached units.</p> <p>Check our website at www.4thinfantry.org for membership and reunion information.</p> <p>"Steadfast and Loyal"</p>	 <p>The 106th Infantry Division Association</p> <p>Organized at Camp Lucky Strike 1945 active since 1946</p> <p>If you are a former 106th Infantry Division vet, were attached to the 106th, a relative of a 106th veteran, you are eligible for membership in the Association.</p> <p>The CUB Magazine is published three times per year. Published since 1946.</p> <p>Annual Reunions held yearly since 1947.</p> <p>Jacquelyn Martin, Membership Chairman 121 McGregor Ave. Mount Arlington, N.J. 07856 973-663-2410 E-mail: jsc164@aol.com</p>
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

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

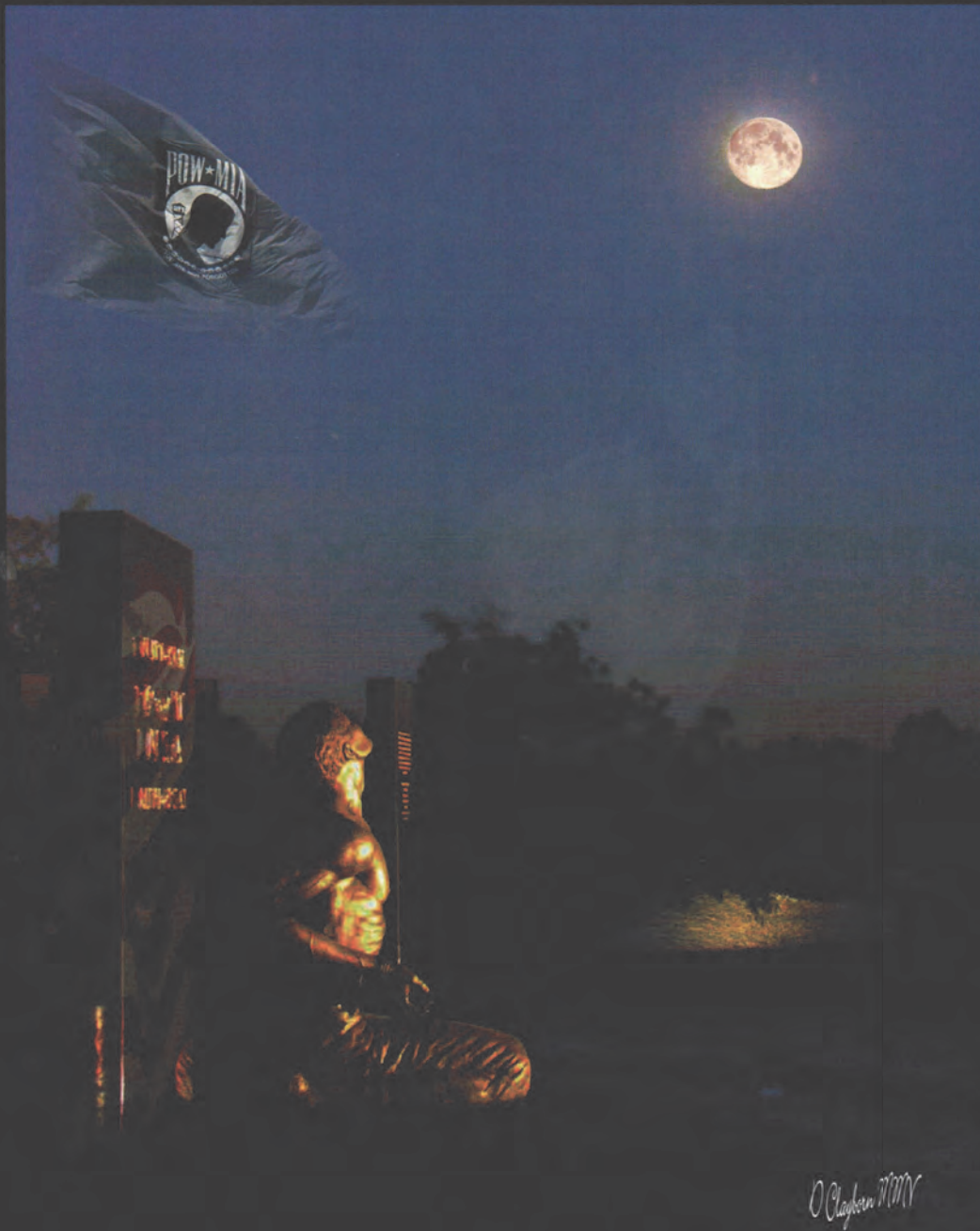


JEFFERSON BARRACKS POW-MIA MUSEUM
JEFFERSON BARRACKS POW-MIA MUSEUM

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; 314-609-9037.

The National POW/MIA Memorial at Riverside National Cemetery



Inscription on the National POW/MIA Memorial:

We honor here the sacrifice of hundreds of thousands of Americans held Prisoner of War and those still listed as Missing in Action since the time of the American Revolution. "Some died from disease and starvation, some perished in death marches, some were tortured, and some were lost...gone forever from their families ...all were deprived of their liberties so that you may enjoy yours."



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

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