

EX-POW BULLETIN

the official voice of the
American Ex-Prisoners of War

501(c)3 Veterans Service Organization

Volume 79

www.axpow.org

Number 4/5/6

April~May~June 2022



We exist to help those who cannot help themselves



Memorial Day



Flags-in is a time-honored tradition that is reserved for Soldiers of the 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard). The Soldiers conduct this mission annually at Arlington National Cemetery prior to Memorial Day to honor our nation's fallen military heroes.

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Deadline for the July-Sept 2022
Bulletin is May 31, 2022
Please send all materials to the
editor at the above address.

April-June, 2022



April 9, 1942

In the Philippines... American General King surrendered 75,000 men (12,000 Americans) to the Japanese. A death march begins for the prisoners as they are taken to San Fernando, 100 miles away. **At home...** It was Mrs. Charles W. Bickford and Mrs. Fred E. Landon who, on April 10, 1942, persuaded other parents and relatives to hold a mass meeting. They formed an organization to get relief to the captured boys on Bataan. On April 14th, the *Bataan Relief Organization* began with Dr. V. H. Spensley, as Chairman. These are the roots of AXPOW. Our motto is: "Not by arms alone".

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.

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BEWARE OF SCAMS

In the last few months, a scam has been perpetrated using the names of members of the board of American Ex-POWs. We will NEVER ask you to make contributions to us personally, to "corroborate" your personal information, or to purchase anything from Amazon or any other vender. If you "right click" on the name you will discover that the address behind it is not our legitimate address. DELETE the phony email and empty your trash. You may also be able to copy the phony email address and block it from getting through again. Then send an email to AXPOW to alert us to the issue. Address: axpowceo@comcast.net.

All of us seniors and veterans should be aware of some of the more "phishing" scams out there. Financial scams targeting seniors are prevalent and costly. The FBI estimates that seniors lose more than \$3 billion each year to fraudsters. Scammers go after seniors because they believe older adults have a significant amount of money sitting in their accounts.

Here are some of the more prevalent scams:

1. Government impostors call unsuspecting victims and pretend to be from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Social Security Administration, or Medicare.
2. The grandparent scam is so simple and so devious because it uses one of older adults' most reliable assets, their hearts. Scammers will place a call to an older person and say something along the lines of: "Hi Grandma, do you know who this is?" When the unsuspecting grandparent guesses the name of the grandchild the scammer most sounds like, the fake grandchild will ask for money to solve some unexpected financial problem
3. Medicare/health insurance scams In these types of scams, perpetrators may pose as a Medicare representative to get older people to give them their personal information, or they will provide bogus services for elderly people at makeshift mobile clinics, bill Medicare and pocket the money.
4. Computer technical support scams prey on people's lack of knowledge about computers and cybersecurity. A pop-up message or blank screen usually appears on a computer or phone, telling you that your device is compromised and needs fixing. When you call

the support number for help, the scammer may either request remote access to your computer and/or that you pay a fee to have it repaired.

5. Sweepstakes & lottery scams is one that many are familiar with, and it capitalizes on the notion that "there's no such thing as a free lunch." Here, scammers inform their mark that they have won a lottery or sweepstakes of some kind and need to make some sort of payment to unlock the supposed prize.

6. Robocalls take advantage of sophisticated phone technology to dial large numbers of households from anywhere in the world. Robocallers use a variety of tactics to cheat their victims. Never speak, especially saying "yes" or any other affirmative response. Simply let unknown numbers go to voicemail or hang up immediately. If your phone service allows you to block numbers, do it.

If you suspect you've been the victim of a scam don't be afraid or embarrassed to talk about it with someone you trust. You are not alone, and there are people who can help. Doing nothing could only make it worse.

Keep handy the phone numbers and resources you can turn to, including the local police, your bank (if money has been taken from your accounts), and Adult Protective Services.

To obtain the contact information for Adult Protective Services in your area, call the Eldercare Locator, a government sponsored national resource line, at: 1-800-677-1116, or visit their website at: <https://eldercare.acl.gov>.



from the CEO

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Sitting at my computer on March 1st...

Does it feel like Déjà Vu...all over again?

Last week's power grab by Russian leader Putin was the latest in attempts to recreate the old USSR of Pre-and-Cold War days.

On August 8, 2008, Russian forces began the invasion of Georgia, marking the start of Europe's first twenty-first century war. The conflict itself was over within a matter of days, but the repercussions continue to reverberate.

In February and March 2014, Russia invaded and subsequently annexed the Crimean Peninsula from Ukraine. This event took place in the aftermath of the Revolution of Dignity and is part of the wider Russian-Ukrainian War.

But Ukraine is the jewel President Putin covets. Ukraine had long been second only to Russia in economic and political power.

In the independence referendum on December 1, 1991, the people of Ukraine expressed deep and widespread support for the Act of Declaration of Independence, with more than 90% voting in favor, and 82% of the electorate participating. The referendum took place on the same day as Ukraine's first direct presidential election; all six presidential candidates supported

independence and campaigned for a "yes" vote. The referendum's passage ended any realistic chance of the Soviet Union remaining together even on a limited scale;

As I am writing for this issue of the EX-POW Bulletin, I don't know the outcome the invasion. Will sanctions work in time to turn the Russian people against their leaders? Can our European allies work together for the common good and give military assistance? Does the Russian government care even a whit for what the rest of the world thinks of them? Do their people?

I think of my dad, fighting against a murderous, authoritarian regime; giving up his freedom in defense of his family and his country. I think of the millions of other Allies doing exactly the same.

And I also think of the mid 1950's when I was in grammar school...smack in the middle of the Cold War. "Put your head under your desk" for an atomic attack. "Go into the hall and press up against your locker" for a nuclear attack. My next door neighbor's underground bomb shelter. When in 1962, the Cuban Missile Crisis had my dad coming home in the middle of the day, packing a suitcase and living at DoD in Philadelphia while we came this close to the very possible end of the world.

Now, as then, I am afraid. I never thought that the actions of a far-away dictator could make me feel this way. I am 75 years old. And I don't like it one bit.

Please pray for Ukraine.
Hug your family.

Fondly
Cheryl

AXPOW BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
ANDERSONVILLE, GEORGIA
SEPTEMBER 18, 2022

The board will arrive on Wednesday, Sept. 17 and depart Saturday, Sept. 20.
We will be participating in POW/MIA Recognition Day ceremonies on Sept. 19 and meeting with the Friends of Andersonville as we continue our transition as voted on by our membership. If you have any ideas for the future of AXPOW, please send them to me at:
axpowceo@comcast.net. Cheryl

pow medsearch

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Promoting Health for Older Adults

CDC works to help older adults remain healthy, active, and independent as long as possible.



The increase in the number of older adults in the United States is unprecedented. In 2016, 49 million US adults were 65 or older, representing 15% of the population. That number is expected to reach 71 million by 2030 and 98 million by 2060—when older adults will make up nearly 25% of the population.

Age brings a higher risk of chronic diseases such as dementias, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, arthritis, and cancer. These are the nation's leading drivers of illness, disability, deaths, and health care costs. Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are most common in adults 60 and older, and the risk increases with age. In 2019, health care and long-term care costs associated with Alzheimer's and other dementias were \$290 billion, making them some of the costliest conditions to society.

CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion funds partners to improve the health of older adults by:

- Helping those with dementia remain active, independent, and involved in their

community as long as possible.

- Providing resources to help caregivers stay healthy and deliver quality care to their care recipients.
- Increasing early assessment and diagnosis, risk reduction, and prevention and management of chronic diseases for people with or at risk for Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.
- Increasing the use of other clinical preventive services like blood pressure checks, cancer screenings, and blood sugar testing.
- Increasing the number of people who speak to a health care provider about their worsening memory.
- Providing CDC-recognized lifestyle change programs to Medicare beneficiaries through the National Diabetes Prevention Program (National DPP) to reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes.
- Promoting physical activity programs to reduce the risk

of dementia, arthritis pain, and falls.

In the United States:

54 MILLION ADULTS are 65 or older.

6 MILLION ADULTS have Alzheimer's disease.

22 MILLION ADULTS aged 65 or older have arthritis.

Helping Older Adults With Dementia

Alzheimer's disease, the most common type of dementia, is an irreversible, progressive brain disease that affects nearly 6 million Americans. It is the fifth leading cause of death for those aged 65 or older. Alzheimer's disease and other dementias slowly destroy the brain, leading to cognitive declines (such as memory loss, language difficulty, or poor executive function) and functional declines (such as less ability to do activities of daily living and self-care). In some cases, dementias can lead to behavioral and personality changes (such as depression, paranoia, hallucinations, delusions, or agitation).

medsearch, cont'd...

People with cognitive impairment find it hard to maintain their health or manage other chronic conditions. Early detection of cognitive decline, including Alzheimer's and other dementias, provides an opportunity to manage other chronic health conditions and plan for the future.

Surveillance and Resources

CDC's Alzheimer's Disease and Healthy Aging Program works with partners and states to gather information on self-reported cognitive decline and caregiving among adults through the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). To encourage using these data for action, CDC developed an interactive data portal and a series of statistical briefs and infographics.

Healthy Brain Initiative and Public Health Road Maps.

The Healthy Brain Initiative improves understanding of brain health as a central part of public health practice by:

- Creating and supporting partnerships.

- Collecting and reporting data.

- Supporting populations with high rates of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

The initiative also promotes the use of *State and Local Public Health Partnerships to Address Dementia, The 2018–2023 Road Map*, and the *Healthy Brain Initiative Road Map for Indian Country*. The Road Maps list public health actions to promote cognitive health, address cognitive impairment, and respond to the needs of caregivers.

Building Our Largest Dementia Infrastructure (BOLD)

The BOLD Infrastructure for Alzheimer's Act was passed into law on December 31, 2018, Public Law 115-406. BOLD activities are designed to promote use of CDC's Healthy Brain Initiative Road Maps.

The BOLD Act:

- Establishes Alzheimer's and related dementias public health centers of excellence.

- Provides funds to support public health departments.

- Increases data analysis and timely reporting.

In 2020, CDC funded the first BOLD Public Health Centers of Excellence and BOLD public health programs to increase the dementia infrastructure across the United States.

Providing Resources to Help Caregivers

In the United States, people are living longer, and dementia and other disabling chronic conditions are becoming more common. The need for caregivers, both informal (family and friends) and formal (paid professionals), will likely increase significantly as the population ages. Although caregiving may be rewarding, caregivers are at risk of increased stress, depression, unhealthy behaviors, and poor attention to their own health. Caregivers of people with dementia are at even higher risk, and they may delay dealing with their own health needs.

Informal or unpaid caregivers provide most of the long-term care in people's homes. According to 2015–2018 BRFSS data, about 20% of US adults aged 18 or older reported providing care or assistance to a person with a long-term illness or disability in the past 30 days. Four in five of these caregivers manage household tasks, such as finances or cleaning, and more than half help with personal care, such as bathing. In 2019, the value of this unpaid caregiving was an estimated \$244 billion.

CDC worked with partners to develop an action guide for using REACH OUT, an evidence-based intervention designed to promote health and well-being among people who care for someone with Alzheimer's disease or dementia.

Increasing the Use of Clinical Preventive Services

Clinical preventive services can prevent disease or find disease early, when treatment is more effective. These services include screenings for chronic conditions such as cancer, high blood pressure, and type 2 diabetes; immunizations for diseases such as flu and pneumonia; and counseling about personal health behaviors.

medsearch, cont'd...

Increasing the use of preventive services by adults aged 50 or older is a key public health strategy, given the rapid aging of the US population. Unfortunately, only 25% of adults aged 50 to 64 and less than 50% of those 65 or older are up to date on these potentially life-saving services.

Promoting Programs to Reduce Arthritis Pain and Prevent Falls

In the United States, 23% of all adults, or more than 54 million people, have arthritis. It is a leading cause of work disability, with annual costs for medical care and lost earnings of \$303.5 billion. CDC recommends several proven ways to help people manage arthritis symptoms:

- Join a self-management education program that teaches the skills and confidence to live well with arthritis every day.
- Be active. Physical activity, such as walking, bicycling, and swimming, decreases arthritis pain and improves function, mood, and quality of life. Better physical function reduces the risk of falls and fall-related injuries and helps older adults stay independent. Adults with arthritis should move more and sit less throughout the day. Getting at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity each week is recommended. However, any physical activity is better than none. Physical activity programs can help improve the health of participants with arthritis.

- Maintain a healthy weight and protect your joints. People can reduce their risk of knee osteoarthritis by controlling their weight. They can help prevent osteoarthritis by avoiding activities that are more likely to cause joint injuries.
- Talk with a doctor. Recommendations from health care providers can motivate people to be physically active and join a self-management education program. People with inflammatory arthritis (like rheumatoid arthritis) have a better quality of life if they are diagnosed early, receive treatment, and learn how to manage their condition.

In the United States, people are living longer, and dementia and other disabling chronic conditions are becoming more common. The need for caregivers, both informal (family and friends) and formal (paid professionals), will likely increase significantly as the population ages. Although caregiving may be rewarding, caregivers are at risk of increased stress, depression, unhealthy behaviors, and poor attention to their own health. Caregivers of people with dementia are at even higher risk, and they may delay dealing with their own health needs.

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Looking for a buddy with whom you served in the military?

VA can forward a message from you to the Veteran if there is a current address on record.

VA |  U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Benefits Administration

Your message and the identifying information of the Veteran should be sent to your nearest VA Regional Office. If the Veterans is in VA records, your message will be sealed and sent to the address on file.

Find more information at:

<https://www.va.gov/womenvet/resources/faq-locating-veterans.asp#q001>

PRESUMPTIVE SERVICE CONNECTED DISABILITIES

Public Law 97-37

by William Paul Skelton, III, MD F.A.C.P.

All ex-POWs should keep these. Whenever you open your claim, take them with you and make sure the adjudication officer sees them and have him read them! Make sure he knows all about them. Tell him your own story as it relates to your problem.....

1. ARTHRITIS, TRAUMATIC
Also known as articular trauma.
2. AVITAMINOSIS
The total lack of vitamins in the diet.
3. BERIBERI
Caused by a severe lack of vitamin B1 (thiamine) in the diet.
4. DYSENTERY, CHRONIC
A disease characterized by frequent and watery stools, usually with blood and mucus, and accompanied by rectal and abdominal pain, fever, and dehydration.
5. FROSTBITE
The actual freezing of tissue.
6. HELMINTHIASIS
Infection with any type of worms that parasitize the human.
7. MALNUTRITION
Merely means bad nutrition.
8. PELLAGRA
It is caused by a virtual lack of vitamin B3 (niacin) in the diet.
9. ANY OTHER NUTRITIONAL DEFICIENCY
The lack of protein and calories in the diet generally produces no lasting side effects.

10. PSYCHOSIS
A generic term for any of the insanities.

11. PANIC DISORDER
Characterized by discrete periods of apprehension or fear.

12. GENERALIZED ANXIETY DISORDER

13. OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE DISORDER
This may be either obsessions or compulsions.

14. POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER
The re-experiencing of a trauma of a past recognized stress or that can produce symptoms of distress.

15. ATYPICAL ANXIETY DISORDER
This is a category that is used for diagnosis when the affected individual appears to have an anxiety disorder that does not meet the criteria for entry into any of the other known anxiety disorders.

16. DEPRESSIVE NEUROSIS /DYSTHYMIC DISORDER
Characterized by depressive periods in which the patient feels sad and/or down and has a loss of interest in the usual activities that cause pleasure or involvement in usual pastimes.

17. PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY
Literally Greek for the suffering of nerves outside of the brain and spinal cord.

18. IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME
Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a common disorder of the intestines that leads to crampy pain, gas, bloating, and changes in bowel habits.

19. PEPTIC ULCER DISEASE
A peptic ulcer is a sore or hole in the lining of the stomach or

duodenum (the first part of the small intestine).

20. CIRRHOSIS
Scar tissue replaces normal, healthy tissue, blocking the flow of blood through the organ and preventing it from working as it should.

21. STROKE & COMPLICATIONS
A stroke occurs when the blood supply to part of the brain is suddenly interrupted or when a blood vessel in the brain bursts, spilling blood into the spaces surrounding brain cells.

22. HEART & COMPLICATIONS
Heart disease includes atherosclerotic heart disease, and hypertensive vascular disease (including hypertensive heart disease, and hypertension).

23. OSTEOPOROSIS
Osteoporosis is a disease in which bones become fragile and more likely to break.

Disability compensation is a monetary benefit paid to Veterans who are determined by VA to be disabled by an injury or illness that was incurred or aggravated during active military service. These disabilities are considered to be service connected.

To be eligible for compensation, the Veteran must have been separated or discharged under conditions other than dishonorable.

Monthly disability compensation varies with the degree of disability and the number of eligible dependents. Veterans with certain severe disabilities may be eligible for additional special monthly compensation (SMC). Disability compensation benefits are not subject to federal or state income tax.

legislative



Legislative officer
Charles A Susino

Our legislative column provides our members with recent enacted and proposed Bills at the National level affecting veterans and their families. This report will do the same however will lead with a perspective regarding the current conflict in Ukraine.

Our current members have seen the true ugly side of war, meeting our enemy both in the battlefield and in their prisons during conflicts since WWII. Conflicts occur for many reasons and when the aggressor assesses the key leadership as weak, they view it as an opportunity to act. Sadly, Putin's assessment of the leaders was not wrong, acting sheepishly as his forces stood at the Ukrainian border. Now, their action is too little, way too late to avoid this senseless tragedy.

History has shown that it is impossible to predict with certainty the extent or outcome of these conflicts. What can be predicted is they create destruction of property, economic damage, human life and families at an unimaginable proportion. Our members, like so many veterans, have fought to defend our country and the freedom of others and find it so very painful to witness this senseless tragedy. Europe has not seen the likes of such unprovoked

aggression for 75+ years. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Ukrainian people and their extended families and friends there and abroad.

The Department of Veterans Affairs will propose adding certain rare respiratory cancers to the list of presumed service-connected disabilities in relation to military environmental exposure to particulate matter.

When the proposal becomes final, dependents, survivors, and Veterans who had claims previously denied for any of the below respiratory cancers would be encouraged to file a supplemental claim for benefits. They are:
Squamous cell carcinoma (SCC) of the larynx;
SCC of the trachea;
Adenocarcinoma of the trachea;
Salivary gland-type tumors of the trachea;
Adenosquamous carcinoma of the lung;
Large cell carcinoma of the lung;
Salivary gland-type tumors of the lung;
Sarcomatoid carcinoma of the lung and;
Typical and atypical carcinoid of the lung.

Any Veteran who had one of these cancers manifest to a degree of 0% or more at any time during or after separation would become eligible for service-connection.

If you are a Veteran who has been diagnosed with one of these conditions, but have not filed a claim, please notify VA of your intent to file a claim.

VA has also proposed changes to its Schedule for Rating Disabilities for auditory, respiratory, and mental health conditions. These changes would incorporate modern medical data and terminology, allowing veterans to receive

disability ratings based on the most current information. Ratings of veterans who currently receive VA disability compensation will not be impacted as a result of these changes. We encourage the VA to stay current with technology, types of disabilities, and above all veteran applications to minimize the waiting time for disability compensation.

The Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs has advanced a Bill for Post-9/11 Toxic-Exposure. The Committee unanimously passed the Health Care for Burn Pit Veterans Act, introduced by Chairman Jon Tester (D-Mont.) and Ranking Member Jerry Moran (R-Kan.). If passed it would extend health care eligibility for combat veterans from five to ten years after separation from the military. This is reasonable and needed considering many of the illnesses do not immediately surface after exposure.

Several pieces of Veterans legislation were signed into law by President Biden. The Hire Veteran Health Heroes Act of 2021 will create alternative pathways for veterans to attain gainful employment after leaving active duty. The Colonel John M. McHugh Tuition Fairness for Survivors Act of 2021 will finally close the loophole for survivors using their Chapter 35, Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA) tuition benefits and ensure institutions charge in-state tuition to these students. Veterans feel so strongly about the legacy and benefits left for their loved ones. Lastly, Protecting Moms Who Served Act of 2021 and S. 1031 will require a study on disparities associated with race and ethnicity with respect to certain benefits administered by VA

CAS

andersonville



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Greetings from Andersonville,

Wow, thanks to everyone at AXPOW for the tremendous support this year, especially with Wreaths Across America and meeting the goal of having a wreath for each headstone. It was beautiful to see, but the feeling of community, shared purpose, and gratitude for our veteran's was palpable in each of the roughly 1,000 attendees and that part does not show in pictures. It was a great day, and I will never forget how honored I felt to be here with our many partners and volunteers.

We have some staffing updates to share. Chief of Interpretation and Resource Management, Jody Mays, moved to a new position at Cumberland Gap National Historical in January 2021. While the park is working on filling this essential position, Andrew Miller from Vicksburg National Military Park is filling that role through June. Before Vicksburg, Andrew worked at Valley Forge National Historical Park, the Statue of Liberty National Monument, Fort Pulaski National Monument, Shiloh National Military Park, and five sites in New York City: Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace National Historic Site, Hamilton Grange National Memorial, Federal Hall National Memorial, Castle Clinton National Monument, and General

Grant National Memorial. We are very excited about his use of digital media and his ideas for getting the park message to a wider audience.



"I'm so excited to be selected for this developmental detail at such a significant place like Andersonville. Having several ancestors who were prisoners of war during

the Civil War including one laying in this park's national cemetery, it's just truly one of the greatest honors of my career and life to be here."

Another crucial position was filled last October when Caitlyn Edwards accepted the Lead Park Ranger position. Caitlyn has 7 years with the National Park Service and now manages the National Pow Museum operations. Caitlyn recently came from Fort Sumter and Fort Moultrie National Historical Park and has also worked at Sequoia National Park, Fort Frederica National Monument, Big Cypress National Preserve, and Great Smokey Mountains National Park.



"I have worked in Education and Interpretation Divisions and love being able to connect with visitors as well as getting them to connect with the parks. I like working at Andersonville NHS because I like learning about different aspects of the Civil War and being able to tell the stories of

different service men and women from the National Prisoner of War Museum.”

Caitlyn also serves as a Captain in the US Army Reserves.

Two other newer faces the past two years were brought on during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and round out the parks frontline staff.

Park Guide Davis Duffey is a graduate of Georgia Southwestern University and has a passion for Civil War military history and the prisoner of war stories. Davis has experience working with the National Park Service as an intern at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park and as a seasonal ranger as Boston Harbor Islands National and State Park.



“As a member of the park staff, I most enjoy teaching visitors of all ages about the prisoner experiences at Andersonville Prison, along with broader POW experiences as told through the museum. I also enjoy discussing the post-Civil War history of the site including the Woman’s Relief Corps.”

You will find Davis at the visitor desk of the National Prisoner of War Museum, conducting programming at the prison site, or roving the park making visitor contacts and building stronger connections to the park.

Park Guide Teri Surber also joined the Interpretive Division as a volunteer in May 2019 and hired as a ranger in June 2020. Teri also has made a significant impact to frontline operations and is striving to make broader connections to prisoner of war stories throughout every American conflict. Teri is delving into prisoners of war during the American Revolution and find outstanding new research to add to the park’s stories.

“Speaking to different visitors, whether a group of fourth-graders or a military alumni group, about American prisoners of war has been a wonderful experience. Many military veterans come to the park, and often they were either POWs themselves or know someone who was. When they share their stories, it is truly humbling.”



Teri Surber can also be found at the National Prisoner of War Museum engaging visitors with her eagerness to tell these important stories.

The entire staff has worked hard to stay safe and keep our visitors safe during the pandemic. We have a wonderful team here at Andersonville and it is such a pleasure to work with them, and all our partners at AXPOW and the Friends of Andersonville.

Upcoming Events at Andersonville National Historic Site:

April 1-14, 2022: Avenue of Flags

May 29-June 1: Memorial Day Observations

Please check the park’s website or social media platforms for updated information about these and future events. We are looking forward to hosting a re-enactment day and something special for POW/MIA Recognition Day, details to be announced soon.

Park Grounds

The park grounds are open daily from 8:00 am until 5:00 p.m., allowing access to the National Prisoner of War Museum, the historic prison site and the Andersonville National Cemetery. The park grounds including the National Prisoner of War Museum and the historic prison site are closed only three days per year: Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year’s Day.

The National Cemetery is open every day of the year from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.

namPOW news



*Richard A. Stratton
Atlantic Beach Florida*

I remembered enough Morse code to recognize that what I was hearing was not Morse code; but it sure wasn't the ghosts of French Foreign Legionnaires having a happy hour. This isolation wing of the prison had a limited number of cells. Once a day you would put your honey bucket out and your morning soup bowl. One of the cells would open up and those prisoners would gather up the gear and proceed to a cell at the end of the passageway that had some running water piped into it. These guys would do the dishes, buckets and their armpits taking their sweet old time, making a hell of a racket and yacking away at each other to beat the band. But wait a minute, they were not talking to each other, they were talking to the rest of us as if they were talking to each other.



TALES OF SOUTHEAST ASIA

It was a new ball game sitting in solitary confinement in a Hoa Lo ("Hanoi Hilton") isolation cell. It was far different than a week previous on the USS Ticonderoga (CVA-14) goofing off in the Ready Room as a newly assigned Lieutenant Commander maintenance officer of the World Famous Golden Dragons (CAW-19, VA-192). No more A4Es, no more flight schedules, no more LSO debriefs, no more mission planning, no more manning of the spare or the ready tanker, no more mail call. It all came to an abrupt halt on January 5, 1967, when I ate my own 2.75 FFARs (Folding Fin Aircraft Rockets) on a weather reconnaissance hop.



I was now a tortured, beaten, starving hulk designated as the "Blackest of Criminals" in the DRV (Democratic Republic of Vietnam) and an official "Yankee Air Pirate" (eligible to be hung from the yardarm, having been caught in the act of piracy). I was alone; separated from all my

shipmates. I did not know whom to trust, what the rules of my new mess happened to be, or what was expected of me in this new and strange form of warfare I was about to embark upon. The walls had more banging and knocking than the whole hull of the venerable 27C that had been my previous home. There was a rhythm and a pattern to the noise that had all the class of a wall full of woodpeckers.

Each cell had a high barred window open to the air. If you stood on your cement slab pad you could pick up what they were saying. "If you read me, cough once for yes; twice for no." Cough. "Are you Air Force?" Cough. Cough. "Are you Navy?" Cough. "Are you an O-5?" Cough. Cough. "Are you an O-4?" Cough. "Oh sh__, another Lieutenant Commander!" "Do you know who won the Army-Navy game?" Cough. Cough. "Oh hell, a dumb Lieutenant Commander at that!" "Jim Stockdale and Robbie Risner are the SROs (Senior Ranking Officers).

Their rules are: communicate at all costs; when they get around to torturing you, hold out as long as you can, bounce back and make them do it all over again; don't despair when they break you, they have broken all of us; pray." Cough. "Two Thais are next to you and have been trying to communicate with you. They are using the tap code; it is a box; the first letters are: American Football League Quits Victorious. Communicate. My name is Galanti — Paul Galanti." BANG. The universal danger signal, as I found out later.



They were hauled out of the cell block, tortured and I did not see Paul for three years.

The rules of the new ball game were quite simple. To lead was to be tortured. To communicate with a fellow prisoner was a de facto sign of leadership resulting in torture. To fail to bow was to be beaten and tortured. To fail to do exactly what you were told and when you were told was to be tortured. Medical attention was reserved to those who might have some propaganda value and then only in respect to the parts of you that showed. Food and water were rationed out only to the extent to keep you alive but in a weakened condition. Lenient and humane treatment were defined as permitting you to live. You were being held as a hostage and as a propaganda tool; otherwise you had no value. You were a slave to communist ideology.

Their rank questions made sense — find the SRO (Senior Ranking Officer). But after all — the Army-Navy game! Doesn't that beat all! The pampered nephews of Uncle Sam!! The Boat School Boys1 are forever with me! I really don't know if that is a curse or a blessing. Although I must admit that it took a set of

cajones (balls) for Paul to get the rules of the road and the tap code to me. I had met Stockdale at Stanford University where I was his numerical relief in the International Relations Program. He was a Boat School Boy, but I must admit, having already been tortured, that his rules of the road were a Godsend to my resistance posture.

You see, I started out in this man's Navy as a Naval Aviation Cadet having been first a Private in the Massachusetts National Guard. I knew what it was to be an enlisted man as my father and brother had been before me. I did not take it to be a sign of second class status — it was just different. I was a NavCad for the purpose of being a naval aviator, not of being an officer; if you had to be an officer to fly from carriers then so be it, no big deal. But these officers were something else! Here's how the myth built up in my mind. Recognize, that as far as I was concerned initially, all officers were Boat School Boys. NavCads ran out to the obstacle course; officers rode out and back in a Cattle Car. NavCads formed up for church call on Sunday while the officers drove by, shooting us the Hawaiian Peace Sign, to pick off all the best looking girls at Pensacola Beach.



*NavCad Class 19-55 Indoc Batt
4th Batt Class 36-55 [I was a klutz.]*

The officers got to go to the O'Club and watch pretty girls at the pool and drink Bloody Marys; the NavCads got to go across the street to the ACRA (Aviation Cadet Recreation and Athletic Club) — a primitive but welcome beer hall. NavCads got to wash

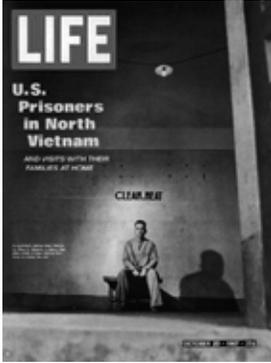
SNJs (aircraft) while the Officers lounged around. NavCads got to man fire bottles while the Officers started their engines. NavCads took the leftovers while the officers got the prime flight times and first shots at available aircraft. Not complaining mind you; just a fact of life registering more because they were no better or no worse an aviator than you were.



As a plow-back instructor in advanced training, I started to sort out the Boat School Boys. They hung in there together. They were adventuresome but over-confident. But they were as a rule unprepared for hops, careless about academics, and cavalier about performing for grades. As a plank owner in a new fleet attack squadron forming up, it became obvious to me that the leadership put the Boat School Boys in desirable positions of trust. In the wardroom their napkin numbers kept them together at the formal sittings. They tended to pull liberty together. They had contacts ashore and afloat that enabled them to get things done and take care of their troops in a manner I could only aspire to. They got the recommendations to Test Pilot School and nifty post graduate programs.

Sound green eyed with envy? Jealous? Left out? Angry? It may sound like it, but it is not so. They were different and I was different. Someday they would be in command and in the Flag Mess. If the Navy kept faith with me I'd fly my butt off and aspire to have a shot at Commander and maybe even get my own squadron. We

bsb, cont'd...



Paul Galanti-middle fingers airbrushed out of Life cover

were different. And how different the Boat School Boys were! During the six years I spent in prison I had the good fortune to be in a position to be in the middle of the internal prisoner communication nets that the VC (Viet Cong — Vietnamese Communists) never could eliminate. I watched good SROs stand up and be counted, only to be cut down like firewood. I saw their replacements come and go. I assisted in building up new communication nets when old ones were compromised. I got a good feel for those of my shipmates — the vast majority of who were sterling, outstanding warriors — who had that something extra to rally the troops, restore faith, charge the hill one more time, and be there when you needed them. What we as survivors all had in common was neighborhood, church, school, friends, and family that made us the people we are today. Our education and training only built upon, refined, and honed what already was there.

However, it did not take me long in Hanoi to discover that the BSB (Boat School Boys) were in a class all by themselves. Indeed my first life saving contact was with Paul Galanti, BSB extraordinaire. At great risk to life and limb, you would try to communicate. The purposes of communication were to formulate resistance plans, escape plans, resistance to enemy propaganda ploys, names of downed and imprisoned Americans

and their allies, set up the chain of command, establish our rules of the road, build morale, and basically to screw the VC in any way that we could think of. We had our own war to fight and could not do it without communication.

The last thing you needed when you started to set up a communication net or pass the word was to have some overly educated jackass try to debate with you the theology and philosophy of what you were trying to do, especially when you were tapping. Some guys wanted convincing, others wanted it to be fair, still others thought it was too something (dangerous, frivolous, demeaning, childish, hard, soft, etc., etc.). You don't know what a thrill it was to find that on the other side of the wall you had a BSB. He would get it right the first time around. You would get no guff. "Roger WILCO Out." Later on he might come back and ask you if you or the SRO knew what you were doing, or suggest a better way, or tell you frankly that he thought it was useless. But he never passed that down the line.

Jerry Denton - during a filmed propaganda session-blinked out "torture" in Morse code.



One of our acting SROs (a BSB) took it into his head that the POWs would all go on a fast to show the VC that we would not tolerate the torture and beating of prisoners. We would fast until the VC granted us the rights of POWs under the Geneva Conventions. He passed the word down the line to his emaciated, already starving, sickly troopers via a net made up mostly of BSBs. We went on the fast much

to the amazement of the VC who were only too glad to eat the rations themselves (since we actually were winning the war about the time LBJ knocked off the bombing). Meanwhile, the BSBs went back up the net to convince our stalwart but misguided leader, that the fast was counterproductive and got the order rescinded. Obey — an easy word — but with critical implications for survival. Innovation — not always productive, like a fast for the starving; but better than sitting on your duff.



John McCain-seriously injured and on a stretcher refused the offer of an early release at a time when our own internal policy for release would have let him go with honor.

All of the lessons that Mother Bancroft² taught her sons, many of which did not have the approval of the Academic Committee, were played out on the VC. A BSB during a filmed propaganda session blinked out "torture" in Morse Code. A BSB is on the cover of Life magazine showing an inverted Hawaiian Peace Sign (Life airbrushed the fingers out lest their customers be scandalized). A BSB, seriously injured and on a stretcher refused the offer of an early release at a time when our own internal policy for release would have let him go with honor.

The stories of the sons of Mother Bancroft go on and on. But BSBs were lifesavers through unflinching

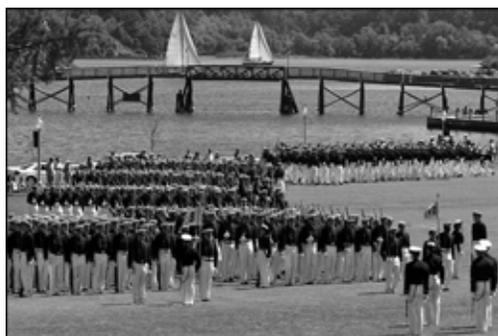


*Stratton inspecting the
USNA Marine detachment
1986*

leadership and inspiration through example to me. I came out of the prison experience vowing to become a part of the BSB system, which was certainly a change from all of my earlier NavCad and JO carping. And indeed, my Navy twilight tour was within the USNA system. The United States Naval Academy performs a unique service for the country that other institutions, like my Georgetown and Stanford, never could or should perform.

The USNA is in the business of forming from the raw material of society a group of leaders of men and women, a class of warriors, a cadre of men and women who are willing to sacrifice their treasure, their bodies, and their very lives for the Constitution, and for the citizens of the United States of America. The USNA recreates the dedication of the signers of the Declaration of Independence who gave their all for their beliefs. The USNA is in the business of developing integrity, honesty, courage, and stamina through rigorous physical and intellectual conditioning.

The product of the USNA is not an engineer, a political scientist, a chemist, or a physicist. The product is a citizen, a person formed in an heroic mold, whom we hope will never have to be a hero, but who we are confident has the fortitude to go in harm's way to protect the Republic. The product is a person who will do the right thing for no other reason than it is the right thing to do. The product is a person who recognizes excellence and is willing to strive for it. The product is a person dedicated to caring for the enlisted men and women of the U.S. Navy, those people who do most of the work and most of the dying in our Navy. The product is a person who well represents the nation no matter what port he enters or sea he sails upon.



*Midshipmen on "P"rade
Warden Field USNA*

No other institution does this. The greatest accolade given the USNA in the Vietnamese Communist prison was the statement the Camp

Commander, Major Bui, made to John Sidney McCain III, BSB, when John, son of the Commander in Chief Pacific, refused an early propaganda release: "They have taught you too well, McCain! They have taught you too well." May we always continue to teach Midshipmen "too well."

Richard A. Stratton spent six years in seminaries studying for the Catholic priesthood. He transferred to Georgetown University and obtained a degree in History. He entered navy pilot training, discovered he liked it, and decided to make the Navy his career. Stratton was shot down over North Vietnam in January 1967. In March of '67, he was forced to attend a press briefing in Hanoi. He pulled his 'Manchurian Candidate' antics when he appeared drugged and robot-like and with unfocused eyes made exaggerated bows to the four corners of the room.

This conference focused world attention on the treatment of POWs in Vietnam and the mind-altering acts imposed on the POWs to secure their compliance. He retired from the Navy with the rank of Captain. Douglas Hegdahl, the Navy enlisted man who fell overboard off a combat ship in the Gulf of Tonkin, ended up as Stratton's roommate. Most POWs memorized names, shoot-down dates, etc. of other POWs. Hegdahl, blessed with a vast memory, retained over 300 names. Even though contrary to 'official' policy on early release (we all go home together), Stratton told Hegdahl to go home if offered the opportunity, and if it did not exact too great a personal price. Hegdahl accepted an early release and took home over 300 names of POWs & #151 to the eternal gratitude of the named POWs and their families.

1. 'Boat School Boys' refers to graduates of the United States Naval Academy.

2. Bancroft Hall is the living quarters for Midshipmen at the U.S. Naval Academy

"Tap Code" credit: Mike McGrath

pow/mia

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



New Year, but little changes

On January 29th, 2022 news was announced that 100 year old Special Forces legend, Major General John "Jack" Singlaub passed peacefully in his sleep.

Singlaub joined the Army during WWII, and was working with Special Operations, being dropped behind enemy lines numerous times to aid evacuations of Prisoners of War, as well as to demand better treatment of those held POW.

He was involved in very early planning of the Son Tay raid, but it would be a few years before there was any execution of the plan, under other commanding officers.

At the age of 50, and as a BG, he attended flight school due to the huge increase in use of helicopters in Special Forces operations.

It is said that Singlaub was involved in every controversial military action since WWII. He was active in overt and covert military ops for 40 years. General Westmoreland once described him as a "true military professional" and "a man of honest, patriotic conviction and courage."

Also at the end of January, President Biden renewed the call for US Navy veteran and contractor from Lombard, Illinois to be released from

custody overseas. Mark Frerichs was kidnapped two years ago in Afghanistan, and is believed held by the Taliban linked Haqqani's. He is now 59 years old.

On the 27th of January, headlines had yet another American in the news. Last summer, Marc Fogel, an American teacher in Moscow, was detained at the airport amid claims he was smuggling marijuana into Russia. The detention came just a few months after Fogel lost diplomatic status working at the U.S. Embassy.

He faces 20 years in prison if found guilty of smuggling narcotics "on a large scale" for distribution and sale to students he taught.

Fogel is reported to have a medical prescription for marijuana after spinal surgery and brought 17 grams (less than an ounce) with him. Russian law define "large amount" as 100 grams or more.

On the Anniversary of Pearl Harbor in December, DPAA announced the end of the search for identifying those lost on the USS Oklahoma. Just under 400 remains were identified over the last 6 years. Any remains that could not be identified, will be reburied in the Punchbowl, with no active work expected on those in the future.

Other news from DPAA was pretty much a rerun with repeat announcements of previous press releases.

Shipfitter 1st Class Charles Perdue was accounted for in October 2020, "but we only recently received notification that his family had their full briefing on his identification." {WWII}

Cmdr. Paul Charvet was accounted for last March, "but we were only recently notified of his family

receiving their full briefing on his identification." {Vietnam}

Seaman Biacio Casola was accounted for last July, "but we only recently received notification of his family receiving their full briefing on his identification." {WWII}

Cpl. R.B. Cherry was accounted for last May, "but his family only recently received their full briefing on his identification." {Korea}

U.S. Army Pvt. Andrew J. Ladner, 30, of Harrison City, Mississippi, killed during World War II, was accounted for July 9, 2021 (announced 02/03/2022.)

Press reports from Pennsylvania had news of a WWI Doughboy MIA case. James I.uber has been missing since October 8, 1918 in France. His dog tag is now in the PA National Guard Museum, and volunteers hope they know where he is buried.

They believe the dog tag and his remains were separated decades ago when he was buried by Americans after being felled by a machine gun bullet.

Because of the fire at the National Personnel Records Center, and lack of detail as to the exact burial site, recovery of his remains has been a very long mission.

On the last trip to France, volunteers had news.

The Orlean Times Herald reported: "Now we had even more of a starting point to look at," Laplander said. Using information from files of other men who died in the vicinity, he was able to narrow the list down to four possible names for three sets of unknown remains that were found there.

Uber may have been one of them.

We believe that Jim was picked up as an unknown and that his tag was not with his body," Laplander said. "We're about 75-percent sure that he's buried as an unknown in the Meuse-Argonne Cemetery."

The search continues.

On February 1, we received news that former TWA flight 847 hostage, William Darras had passed away. Held with the 39 others in June 1985, hijackers with Shiite Hezbollah killed one Navy diver, and threatened another hostage with "15 minutes to live." They were held 17 days, and one hijacker was arrested two years later in Germany, carrying explosives. He was sentenced to life in prison, and released on parole after serving 19 yrs. He remains on the U.S. FBI's Most Wanted Terrorists list.

As of March 3, 2022, the number of Americans Missing and Unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War remains at 1,584.

There are 81,614 still unaccounted for US Military personnel since 1941.

RETURN TO VICTORY

MacArthur's Epic Liberation of the Philippines
James P. Duffy, Hachette Books

Reviewed by Angus Lorenzen

Those of us who were in the internment camps in Manila cannot forget that coded message that came over the loudspeakers at Santo Tomas, "Better Leyte than never". That was in October of 1944 and was an affirmation that the U.S. Navy's air raids on Manila starting September 21 were just the start of the action by the American Army and Navy that would eventually get us out of this hell hole. But we could never imagine the ferocity of battle that was in store for the American forces before they could finally liberate us, nor the murderous fury of the Japanese that followed as they destroyed Manila and murdered untold thousands of civilians

James Duffy now fills in the gap in our knowledge as he tells the story of MacArthur's return to the Philippines and the tussle he had with the Joint Chiefs of Staff to convince them that the Philippines, not Formosa, was the most appropriate jumping off location for the invasion of Japan that would have to be accomplished before peace could finally prevail. The Philippine Islands sat squarely in the shipping path of the oil, rubber, and other commodities that Japan had to ship from the Dutch East Indies to the home islands. Occupation by Allied forces would provide the ability to unmercifully harry the ships carrying these war supplies to a Japan that vitally needed them to carry on the war.

The original plan was to land on Mindanao where the Army Air Corps could support the troops from New Guinea, but it was changed to the more central location of Leyte when Navy pilots reported minimal enemy activity there. One thing that was clear was that air power was to be the deciding factor for American forces and the strategic location of airfields was paramount. Japan's strategy since the start of the war was to have a concentration of capital ships that could destroy an enemy fleet. But aircraft carriers changed the way that navies fought, and the U.S. had the technology and resources to build far more aircraft carriers than the Japanese did, which doomed Japan's plan for a decisive naval victory which would cause the U.S. to sue for peace. They made one final attempt at a decisive sea victory during the American invasion of the Philippines, but the result was almost complete destruction of the Imperial Navy. It was then that they turned to suicide missions.

When General Wainwright ordered all armed forces under his command to surrender to the Japanese after the fall of Corregidor, many small units broke away and formed guerilla units. MacArthur ordered the leaders to avoid confrontation with the Japanese and to develop intelligence information that would be valuable when he returned. Without question, the guerilla movement in the Philippines was huge and when the American forces returned, they provided information needed by the Landing forces and joined the troops in combat. The battle for the Philippines was characterized by two indomitable forces. On the one side was General MacArthur who was determined to keep his promise to return and mustered all of the forces he could

civilian, cont'd...

to make it happen. On the other side was the Japanese Imperial Army that believed that a major defeat of the Americans on the battlefield would cause them to negotiate for peace. The Philippines was where that major battle would take place and to make it happen the Japanese brought General Yamashita, "The Tiger of Malaya", from Manchuria to command their forces in the Philippines. Yamashita assembled a force of 260,000 men on Luzon to prepare for the major battle. The Japanese navy also assembled fleets to deter the American forces and as the battle became imminent there were four Japanese fleets facing four American fleets.

The American landings on Leyte commenced on October 20, 1944, over a long stretch of the east coast of Leyte. We don't realize what a major landing it was, but for comparison, more troops were landed on Leyte than were landed in Normandy on D-day. One of the early objectives was Tacloban, and the 1st Cavalry raced from their landing beach to occupy the lightly held city. Shortly afterwards, MacArthur arrived and announced that he had returned as promised and Tacloban became the provisional capital of the Philippine Islands.

General Yamachita had been placed in command of the defense of all of the Philippine Islands. He was preparing for the big battle to be on Luzon, but the Imperial Army in Tokyo wanted it to be on Leyte and commanded Yamachita to send troops to Leyte to engage the American forces. Reluctantly, he did so but most of the troopships were sunk because of the superior American air power. Still the fighting was intense, especially in the northwest of the island. General MacArthur announced the

end of organized resistance on Leyte on December 25, 1944, but resistance continued until March 1945.

The next large island invaded was Mindoro on December 15, 1944, only a short distance from Manila, and use of its airfields allowed Army Air Corps coverage over Manila and the Lingayen landing beaches that were used a short time later. The landing was made at Lingayen shortly afterward on January 9, 1945. The 6th Army started moving cautiously down the central valley of Luzon. MacArthur was anxious to reach Manila and ordered a more aggressive advance, resulting in the 1st Cavalry reaching the capital city on February 3 and the 37th Infantry arriving a day later. And thus began the infamous Battle of Manila, the most intense urban battle fought by the U.S. during WWII.

The things that I considered the most important takeaways from this book were as follows.

The land battles in the Philippines were not trivial. Huge numbers of troops on both sides battled for supremacy, and the Japanese hoped for a victory that would force the Americans to sue for peace.

Air power over the battlefield was essential and American forces moved quickly to build or renovate airfields in the territory they captured. In fact, access to locations for airfields was paramount in deciding where to land.

Naval power on both sides was deployed in some of the major naval battles of the war. Each side had four fleets that engaged the enemy in different parts of the archipelago. Naval losses for the Japanese were devastating, including the loss of their two battleships that were the largest in the World.

Japanese aircraft carriers were unable to match the number of carriers fielded by the Americans, which caused them a huge disadvantage in the naval battles. Having lost so many experienced naval combat pilots, the Japanese turned to using inexperienced pilots in the infamous suicide attacks by kamikazes.

The American forces were aided by guerilla units to a much greater extent than indicated by many other authors. Guerillas held large sections of some islands, withholding them from use by the Japanese forces.

The author does a good job of describing the action throughout the Philippines and includes a number of maps and photos. He concentrates on strategy of the commanders on both sides. It is difficult to follow the naval battles which are so important to the outcome, and I would recommend having a fairly large size map of the Philippine Islands to trace the sea battles. This book fills in a lot of gaps in our knowledge about what was happening around us as we awaited deliverance from the Japanese oppression.

Reprinted from the January edition of Beyond the Wire
CPOW - Civilian Ex-Prisoners of War
www.cpow.org

Veterans Legacy Memorial Keeps Veteran Stories Alive

by James LaPaglia

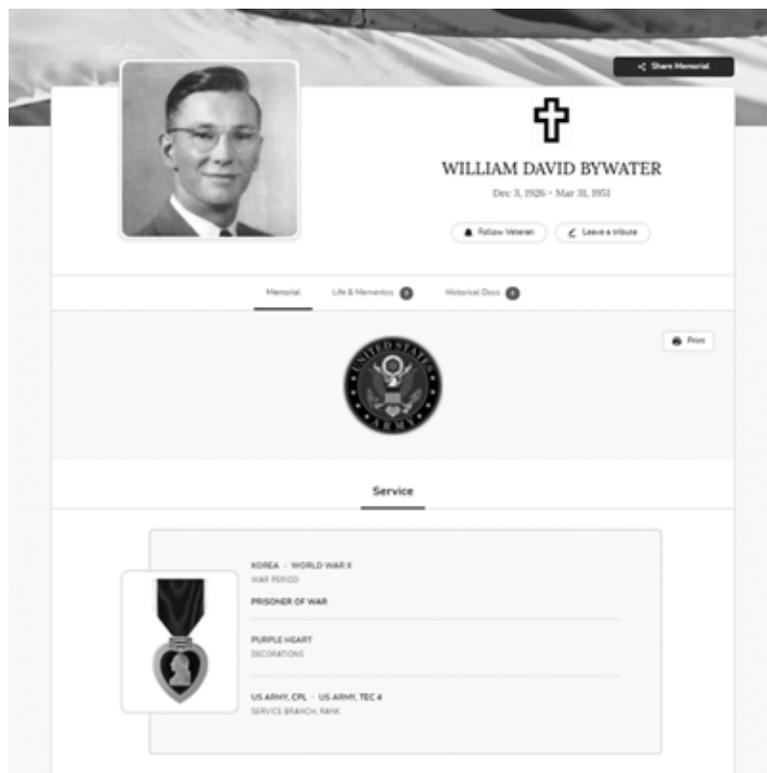
National Cemetery Administration

William Bywater of Lemmon, SD answered his country's call and enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1944, the same year he graduated from Lemmon High School. He served honorably in Okinawa and returned to South Dakota to continue his education and plan for his future. He was called up again when the Korean War broke out in 1950. He was wounded and captured by the Chinese Communist forces and ultimately killed in 1951. When his body was returned home, he was laid to rest at Black Hills National Cemetery in Sturgis, SD.

So that his prisoner of war story and other Veteran stories will continue to be told and seen by others, the National Cemetery Administration provides the Veterans Legacy Memorial website, the nation's first digital platform dedicated entirely to the memory of more than 4.3 million Veterans interred in VA's national cemeteries and in VA grant-funded cemeteries.

Launched in 2019, individual Veteran profile pages are populated with military service and cemetery information. This publicly available information is gathered from VA records and includes service branch with logo, dates of birth and death, rank, war period, decorations, emblem of belief, and cemetery information.

Interactive features added to the site in 2020 and 2021 allow family, friends, and others to post Tributes (comments), upload images, share their Veteran's military service timeline and achievements, biographical information, historical documents and more. The site also allows visitors to share Veteran profile pages by email and post them to Facebook and Twitter.



Content is submitted using various text fields, drop-down choices, and drop & drag options. All content is reviewed by VLM Moderators before being posted to Veteran pages to ensure it conforms to the VLM User Policy and appropriately honors Veterans. Currently more than 30,000 items have been posted to Veteran pages.

To see and contribute to William Bywater's VLM page go to <https://www.vlm.cem.va.gov/WILLIAMDAVIDBYWATER/3649A5B>

To find other Veteran VLM pages, go to www.va.gov/remember.



This is No Shit

Reprinted with permission from River Rats MIG SWEEP Winter 2022

A Special Connection Between Brothers

Craig "Pontiff" Pope

I wanted everyone to know about a special story that the Billy Sparks Kentuckiana Pack has known about for years but has recently been updated. The following story is edited from an article that was in the F-100 Super Sabre Society's magazine, The Intake, from this past summer. Thanks to one of their editors, Robert Gatewood, for letting us use part of the story in telling this special connection between two brothers. A little background, The Intake magazine likes to publish photos of the guys back in the day when they were flying the F-100. So here is most of that article with Keith's submission and Robert's thoughtful comments. -Pontiff

--- I got a very interesting email from our Photo Editor. More appropriately, an email from one of our other members - Keith Balcom - that was forwarded to me with his comments about the original email. "Hi Medley: I have not run into this type of the request before. It is well above my pay grade, so let me know how you want to handle it. A separate story, maybe?" That piqued my interest. So, I started to read the original email. Subject: "The way we were" photo. "This should be double interesting," I thought as I waded into the text of Keith Balcom's email: "I submit my photo for the 'The Way We Were' section. It



Ralph Balcom-left



Keith Balcom-right

was taken in 1966 when I was a Lt. at Lakenheath, having just won the 48th TFW bombing competition. I'd also like to tell you about my brother, Col. Ralph Balcom. Here is his picture with the Hun. He flew over my high school in Seattle, WA, in 1958, and I knew from that moment I wanted to fly the F-100 ... got lucky, and I did ... from 1964-1968." 'Lucky is right,' I smiled, as I saw a "two for one" condition developing with the two brothers destined for the TWWWW Dept side by side!

Then came an unexpected jolt as I read on for some really bad news.

"Ralph went on to fly the F-105 but was shot down on his 96th mission and is still listed as MIA. I wear his POW-MIA bracelet to this day. I even have it tattooed on my arm! If you are looking for more photos for the TWWWW section, it would be an honor to have his picture alongside mine." 'You betcha, little brother,' as I admired the permanent artwork on his right arm. Then, my gaze turned to a well-done and decorated "Man Cave," particularly in the area of his military career, which spanned from AFROTC in 1962 to 1968, after a shortened tour flying Huns

out of Phu Cat, Vietnam. Keith's challenge coin tells two tales.



Just thought you might like to see the challenge coin I made to honor my brother and to tell a little bit about my time flying the fabulous Super Sabre. One side is remembering Ralph, and the back has a little bit on my F-100 involvement out of Lakenheath (64-67) and Phu Cat (68)."



"Ralph went on to fly the F-105 but was shot down on his 96th mission and is still listed as MIA. I wear his POW-MIA bracelet to this day. I even have it tattooed on my arm!



is truly a miracle and is a tangible piece of him that we get to keep forever. Our mother, Marian, was sad when she first learned of the dog tag, but now that she has it and can hold it, she is full of joy. Her grandchildren are excited for us as well. We have sent pictures of the dog tag to our uncle, Keith Balcom, who is also very happy and grateful for its return. We wish he lived closer to see it and feel it personally. After all these years, our family feels blessed to receive this miraculous gift”.

So, yes, both Keith and his brother’s pictures were side by side in the “The Way We Were” section of The Intake, in addition to the article. But the story then takes on even more meaning as two weeks after this article came out last summer, the Balcom family got some information on Ralph. Let me start with some background on Ralph’s status, then follow up with the exciting news. While Ralph’s crash site has been known for some time, and a couple of visits have been made to it, nothing definitive has come of it...until now. I think it might be best to have Ralph’s son, Chris, tell the story. I have asked him to write it up for this part of the update:

While there will never be a complete closure for them regarding the missing of Ralph, this may be the closest thing they will receive, and it is something that they can hold in our hands that is a direct link to him. After all these years, it is powerful to see the family all “together” again with their hands giving love and support to Ralph after all these years. He is in good hands. Keith hopes to someday join with them in holding hands once again with his brother.



Chris Balcom and his sister, Tracy, receive his father’s dogtags

“On February 20, 2021, our family learned that in 2019 my father’s dog tag was given to DPAA (the defense agency accounting for MIA’s in Vietnam and elsewhere) by a villager who found it while scavenging for metal at an aircraft crash site. The villager found it in 2007 and kept it all these years. When we learned of its existence, we asked if we could have it and how could we get it? We were told, yes, we could have it and were given the option of having it FedEx’d to us or delivered personally. We chose personal delivery. On March 23, 2021, a representative from Mortuary Affairs at Dover AFB DE came to California to give it to us. It was a wonderful experience that my sister Tracy and I will remember always. The representative is a veteran herself, was very professional, and could empathize with our situation. To have our father’s dog tag returned to us



Excerpt from

The Spirit to Soar:

*Inspiring Life Lessons and Values
for a Victorious Life*

Chapter 1

Face Your Fears to Build Courage

Lt. Colonel Barry Bridger



On January 23, 1967, my copilot, Dave Grey, and I launched a mission in our Phantom F-4 fighter jet in treacherous weather. It was my seventy-fifth mission and the only daytime mission I ever attempted.

Every 2,000 feet, we hit a deck of clouds. We were flying in the clear 4,000 feet above the last deck of clouds. That's the last place you want to be because when a missile comes out of the clouds, as fast as those SA-2 missiles were able to fly, you have only seconds to dodge or detect the missile. At least I knew to look left 10 o'clock and left 8 o'clock for possible surface-to-air (SAM) missile activity. Suddenly I saw a glow coming up through the clouds at left 10 o'clock. I hit my mic button and said, "Bobcat flight break left, SAM 10 o'clock low."

We had been briefed to not take evasive action but trust the pod. After I called the missile out to the rest of the flight, we started a gentle turn, maintaining "pod formation." I did not see the second missile coming from left

8 o'clock. I became quite anxious. A gentle turn didn't make sense, and my aircraft had no pod. So I flipped upside down and pulled straight down toward the Earth.

Then I heard an explosion.

Due to the impact of the missile and the aircraft coming apart, all the warning lights in the cockpit lit up. There are a lot of caution lights in a fighter aircraft. I was somewhat mesmerized by all the lights clicking on at once. I don't think I'd ever seen them. I looked at my dash panel, and all those lights lit up. It said, "You need to service your hydraulic reservoir. Your oil pressure's low on the right engine. Your left engine is overheating. Your right engine is on fire." Then one light that I had never seen came on that said, "You're in deep kimchi."

Then the stick went limp, and fire was everywhere. Captain Dave Grey, my copilot, figured I was dead, so he ejected. I didn't even know he left the aircraft. I never heard him go. Meanwhile, I was sitting there looking at all those lights, still going about 600 miles an hour, true air speed. With the wings and tail gone, the aircraft was spinning uncontrollably through the air. I reached for the ejection handle unsuccessfully due to the torque created by my rapidly spinning aircraft. Then my adrenaline kicked in, and my second effort was successful. I said to myself, "It is going to be very breezy."

I shut my eyes, pulled the handle, and ejected from the aircraft. It was breezy as hell, and when I opened my eyes, I was blind. I said, "Oh, great. Now I can't see." I grabbed at my face and discovered, to my great joy,



that my helmet had spun around on my head, and I was looking into the back of the helmet. I turned it around and said, "Yes! I can see!" Shrapnel had hit my helmet and loosened it enough to spin it around on my head. The shrapnel had also left a deep cut in the top of my skull, which was bleeding profusely.

I left the aircraft sitting in the ejection seat. Upon ejection, a chute attached to the seat is deployed to stabilize it and allows it to descend at a controlled rate of speed of about 80 miles per hour. A pressure sensor on the seat detects when you hit 10,000 feet pressure altitude, automatically kicks you out of the seat, and deploys your main parachute so you can safely descend to the Earth.

The clouds that day were layered about every 2,000 feet, and each layer was about 500 feet thick. I couldn't see the ground. I was just falling through decks of clouds—*thump, thump, thump*. I was also looking up at the altitude sensor on the side of the seat, saying to myself, "That sucker had better work because, eventually, there's going to be

spirit, cont'd...

dirt in one of these decks of clouds.”

After a while, my mathematical mind cranked up and I thought, “Well, let me calculate how far I’ve fallen. I’m falling at about 125 feet per second and I guess I have been falling for about 80 seconds, which means I have fallen about 10,000 feet. I ejected at 20,000 feet. So why hasn’t my main chute deployed?”

At that moment, I lost all confidence in the pressure sensor. I decided to manually separate from the ejection seat and deploy my main chute myself. I reached down and pulled a handle that would release me and my main parachute from the ejection seat. Now it was up to me to pull my parachute handle, my ripcord to inflate my parachute, and safely descend to the Earth. In other words, I no longer had an automatic system to deploy my main parachute.

The instant I pulled that handle and the seat sped away from me, I saw a strap fly up over my head. Instinctively, I reached up and grabbed it. Now I was free falling at about 125 miles an hour, looking at that strap that was hooked to a bag about 9 feet over my head. It dawned on me that the bag had to be my chute, but I couldn’t figure out why it was nine feet over my head.

So I pulled the bag down to my hands. But initially, I still could not find a handle to deploy my chute. Within moments, I did find the handle attached to my right shoulder harness, where it belonged. So I pulled it. Of course, the chute opened right there in front of my eyes and snapped



me—damn near broke my back. I learned later you don’t want to deploy the chute close to your body because when it inflates, it can break your back as it snaps open with the air. You really want it up above you, completely extended, to avoid injury.

I did it the wrong way. I deployed my own chute manually, after I had ejected from the aircraft. That’s probably one of the reasons my back has been injured ever since. But we never practiced ejecting from aircraft. I did what came naturally to me in the moment.

I don’t know if anyone else has ever done what I did. Most people rely on automatic deployment when they eject. Of course, most people fly in a non-weather environment. Mine was a very severe-weather environment, and that complicated the whole process. It would have been much easier if I had been able to see the ground. But 2,000 feet below me was another deck of clouds. Who knows what it was hiding? I didn’t know.

During that incredible event, I was busy trying to figure out how to do things. It never crossed my mind that anything was going to happen other than the fact that I needed to pay attention to what I was going to do next. I was completely engaged in my attempts to monitor my descent and survive my parachute opening.

I had no idea of the hell that was waiting on me. What happened next was a defining moment that completely altered the trajectory of my life.

Jim Peterson, Author

The first lesson Barry taught me early on was that facing fear head-on breeds courage. There is no other way to live a strong life. To develop the kind of courage that is prevalent in our heroes and that we have revered through history, we must be placed in fearful situations in which the outcome is uncertain. As you read Barry Bridger’s tale about a harrowing and life-changing event, think about how you would react in a similar situation.

https://www.amazon.com/Spirit-Soar-PhD-Jim-Petersen/dp/1631956515/ref=sr_1_1?cri d=38L5F4ZK74N8V&keywords=The+Spirit+to+Soar&qid=1642537211&s=books&sprefix=the+spirit+to+soar%2Cstrip books%2C82&sr=1-1



Welcome Home!

HANDWRITTEN MEMOIRS OF ORVILLE J. JACKSON



I entered the active service on 12 December 1942 and received an honorable discharge 5 October 1945 at the Army & Navy General Hospital, Hot Springs National Park, Arkansas.

During this time I was in Co. "B" 409th Infantry Regiment, 103rd Cactus Division and we trained in Camp Clairborne, Louisiana and Camp Howze, Texas. I had special training in maintenance of small arms and was Co. "B" armorer artificer. I was promoted to technician 5th grade (small arms, see qualification record), later promoted to Sergeant.

In October 1944, the 103rd Division sailed to Europe on the Monticello and landed at Marseilles, France on 20 October 1944. From here on, you don't see any lights on, unless dim. After leaving the Monticello, we walked for an hour or more to where we slept on the ground all night. The cooks fed us breakfast in the kitchen truck, then we boarded a convoy of trucks and headed toward the front lines. Co. "B" was the one to mark the route out to our destination. One person would be let off at each intersection to direct the division convoy through and the last truck would pick us up. (It certainly was

a different feeling to be thousands of miles from home, than 35 miles from home, before being in service.) The convoy had traveled more than 100 miles to let us off, to be fed and get organized with enough ammo and start walking. Some time it would be easy walking with no enemy in sight or sound till now, way ahead some shots and we hit the ground. When it was again quiet and we advanced, there were German bodies laying in the timber.

Later – on this foggy wet day, we were scattered out standing near the only street passing this small town, on the side. We were waiting quietly until ordered to advance, when suddenly there were mortar shots up ahead. One of our company got hit with shrapnel and the medics picked him up with the stretcher when firing ceased. My buddy survived. When the explosions were getting closer, towards me, I quick laid down in a trench which the barn yard drained in on one side and at that time, wishing it to be deeper for my safety. After the excitement, we jumped across a small creek and went up into a timber to stay for the night. No one talked above a whisper. I had my raincoat on, so I sat by a brush pile and slept. Before daybreak it was still foggy and we went on the move again. We knew Germans were not far away. We walked across the Vosges mountains of France, with very little contact with Germans. They had trees cut down, so they were across the narrow road, across or through the area. They had to be cleared so the kitchen truck and jeeps could follow us. After getting through the mountains, the truck arrived with our Thanksgiving turkey dinner, but it was spoiled. It took us four days walking across the mountain. We got k-rations and our four-day

supply. We opened them just to get the best part out and piled the rest upon one pile. At this area we cleaned our weapons and started walking again, advancing without casualties. It was our plan to pull a surprise attack on this town and take hundreds of Germans prisoner that would be withdrawing from American troops pushing them back. So Co. "B" and other companies opened fire all at once from the top of this hill at the edge of town. While we were firing at the town, our men were advancing into town under our fire. Now they are firing so the (we) rest can enter town from the hill. Our Captain had said, the weather is getting colder, so if we take a town, it means we can stay inside that night. Another Co. "B" man and I stayed in a house while other ones scattered out at other places. We needed some sleep, so would take turns on guard. The next day there were hundreds of German prisoners marched down past town with many guards. It was a night to be alert cause there was action quite often. Later, soon after a little town was bombed, we went through it checking it out and saw a woman's head lying in the street.

Another night we walked across fields, not far from a highway, very little traffic, only two cars and without headlights on. Orders were not to fire at any, cause it gives out position away, but one guy shot at one car and it rolled off the road. Not any of us firing, but some artillery whipping overhead. We got up to a small river. I walked across the bridge into Selestat. Some went across through water and lost their bazookas. We had advanced too far, was only supposed to go to the river, but assured headquarters, we could hold our position (on Dec. 1, 1944). As usual we all scattered out in

jackson, cont'd...

different houses for the night. About 3 A.M. one guy says, "I hear tanks coming." Another says, "I wonder if they are Germans, or ours." Another spoke up and says, "I don't know, but we'll soon find out." Then boom, boom, boom, from three tanks. One of my buddies says, "Oh, Jack, I guess I'm done," as he fell (in the dark) across my legs. I had been crouched down on my hands and knees. There was a large hole in the side of the house and through a partition upon the second floor where we all were. Had about 30 German prisoners on the ground-level floor and they all shouted aloud. The Germans outside were calling for us to come out. One of my buddies says, "Are we going to walk out?" and another replied, "I guess we only have two choices, either walk out or be killed, so I'm walking out." A small fire started in the room, but soon put out. Plaster dust filled the room. I then left my M-1 rifle and 64 rounds of ammo with my bandoliers and was able to walk out after being hit in seven places with shrapnel from the tank 88. There were guys there from other companies as well.

The Germans had us all lined up and counted, then marched about a block or more. Finally told the wounded to sit down on the side of the dirt bank. I, along with a couple others, were put in a house beside us till daybreak, when we were loaded in a station wagon that had board benches on each side. We were taken to a large bus, but had only room for two. Somehow a French man was

ahead of me getting on the bus and they only let me on, so now, I'm not with anyone who can talk American. After riding a while in the dark, we were put down below ground level, in a long hallway with dim bulbs overhead and wooden benches on each side, where we sat and slept, not knowing what time of the day or night it was. From this place, I was taken and put in a caboose on a very short train. Later, I asked the guard where the restroom was. I walked bent over and very sore and I looked in the mirror to see just where I had got hit with shrapnel. The shoulder strap on my coat was nearly cut into and a piece of shrapnel was stuck there. I showed the shrapnel to my guard and he asked where did I get that and I was very surprised that he could talk English very good. Not long after the train stopped and the guard got off and ran around beside the train to the front and brought a couple medical officers in by me. They said in a half hour or so I'd be at another place to get help or they would take care of me there. I told them to wait, I could stand it that long, but it was a few more hours before we got to Rottweil, Germany hospital. I got cleaned up there and the next morning the guard came early and motioned for me to put my shoes on. I thought perhaps I was going close by to get an x-ray, etc., so I only tucked my shoe laces in. Out in the hallway an orderly took my clothes out of a closet and threw them on the floor. The guard took the hanger from them and rolled them up for under my arm. I believe all the patients in this room were Polish and French. I was surprised the guard was taking a Frenchman along for the walk down to the train depot. Apparently the train

was gone, so back we went. It was raining and wet snow covered the ground. Women and other civilians carrying umbrellas were turning around to see me in only underwear and the guard poking me in the back to hurry. Back in the hospital, I was advised to be dressed early the next morning, a guard would be there to pick me up and take me to another hospital.

The next morning the guard picked us up again and walked to the train depot and rode to an officer to get interrogated, but since I could not understand German or speak it, we continued on to Ulm, Germany hospital. The guard told me Ulm was a large town and they expected it to be bombed. Upon arrival

at the Ulm hospital with a large fence around it, I was greeted by Americans who were prisoners. What a wonderful feeling to talk to someone after being a week without talking. Their questions were about war news and said I'd be treated good here. They get American Red Cross parcels; each one is divided between four guys and each guy gets five cigarettes a week. I replied, "You guys can have my cigarettes, cause I don't smoke." (Thanks to the Red Cross for helping keep us alive. We needed you.) The doctors who took care of me were P.O.W.s also. One English and one Sydney, Australian Capt. Kevin W. Priddis. They removed the shrapnel from my back. Different nights we lay in the dark hospital with the shades pulled and listened to the bombers flying over and could see flashes of light at the shades edge. After two months passed, I was discharged from the hospital to make room for new

jackson, cont'd...

patients arriving. Some beds were set up in the halls.

After leaving the hospital, I was moved three times. One time we were being moved in a closed box car. The only light inside was a 4 inch by 48-inch place over head high in the end of the car. It was so crowded that half of us would sleep lying the same way and when one wanted to turn, about 50 would turn. We were locked in for four days. Some had dysentery bad and the only place to go was against the sliding door and when the Germans came with an armful of bread to feed us, they would slide the door back and throw the bread in all at once. When there would be an air raid on, the engine would be taken alone to hide it and the box cars left out in the open.

Another time being moved in a passenger train (with civilians) parked a mile from town, this bright sunny day. The engine and cars were between two banks about as high as the train, when an American plane came in all of a sudden and strafed the engine with 50 calibers. We were in the car closest to the coal car. Some civilians laid down in the car and the rest of us scrambled to get out. Many people were ahead of me crossing the open pastures. The water poured from the engine through bullet holes. I could hardly get up the steep bank cause I was so weak and my knees would buckle backwards at times. People got back together and carried their luggage to town. The guard put the P.O.W.s in a lone train passenger car near the depot.

The engine had been moved ahead to be camouflaged, but another lone box car came coasting down a track beside us and derailed after it got by us in the car and many other people standing there. Later at the stalag some P.O.W.s had dysentery so bad, were too weak to get off their bunk and died. The toilet was a long dirt trench with a pole, the proper height to sit on. All of us had lice, no change of clothes anytime and no place to take a bath. Some had to go on work detail repairing railroads which had been bombed. The drinking water was shut off in the daytime. Some fellows were in need of a smoke so they would find some bark and shave it off and roll it up to smoke, others may have a butt from an American Red Cross parcel to smoke during the night, by their self, they hoped. Soon 5 or 6 would be waiting in line for a drag, or a puff, "how about butts, can I have what you're throwing away?" That was the usual sounds in dark hours of night. Our bedding was two very small blankets.

The last two weeks of April and the last of five months being a P.O.W. we were moved to a place under a large tent in the same area and we slept on gravel. We got rid of the lice, they either couldn't stand it in the cold, or us. We also lost our freedom, were scared, wondering at times if we would make it, we prayed and wondered how our family was at home since the last letter was in November 1944 and about starved to death.

The greatest day of my life was 29th April 1945 when the 14th

Armored Division drove tanks up to the Stalag fence and (our) American plane flew over, very low waving the white flag out his window. We didn't have to use the zig zag deep trench in our yard for safety. Sailed home on Sea Robin from Le Havre, France.

Orville J. Jackson was inducted into the US Army on Dec. 12, 1942 and received an honorable discharge on Oct. 5, 1945 with the rank of Sergeant. He served in Company B, 409th Infantry Regiment, 103rd Cactus Division in WWII and received the Purple Heart, POW medal, Bronze Star, two Battle Stars, French Legion of Honor medal and other service decorations. He was wounded in action and taken prisoner in Germany from 12/2/44 to 4/29/45. His war experiences are documented online in the Library of Congress Veterans History Project.

He was an active member of the NE Iowa Chapter, AXPOW. He also traveled to many of his Army reunions.



new members



National Headquarters
PO Box 3445
Arlington, TX 76007-3445
(817)-649-2979
axpow76010@yahoo.com

Welcome!

Nancy Dewicki Campbell
Farmington Hills MI
Daughter of Zdzislaw "Jerry"
Dewicki, ETO

Request for membership application American Ex-Prisoners of War

Name:
Address:
City:
State/Zip:

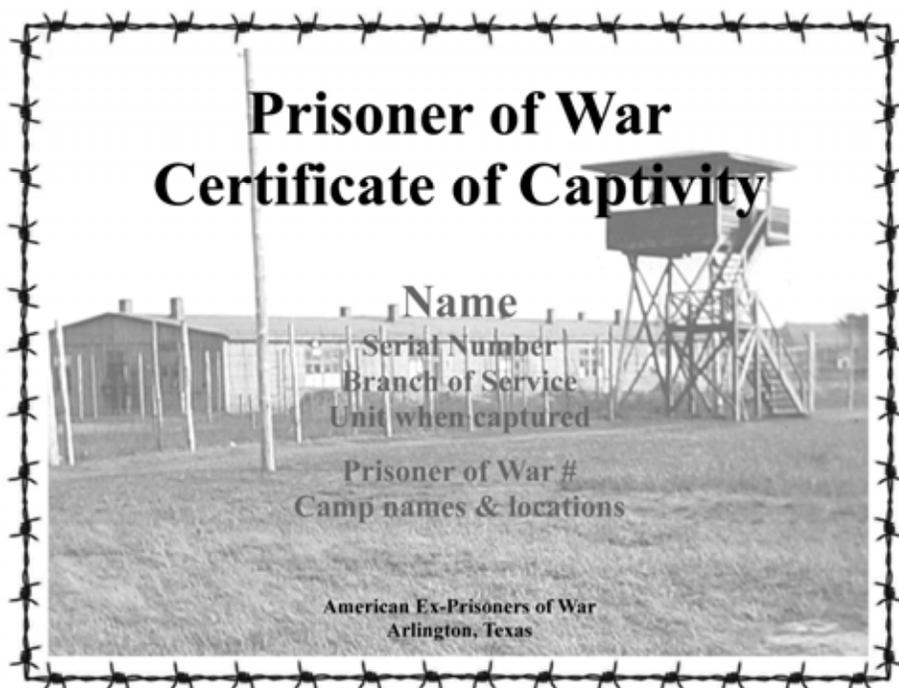
Membership is open to US Military and Civilians captured because of their US citizenship and their families/descendents.

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



Prisoner of War Certificate of Captivity



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.

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.

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.

GENERAL FUND

Jon F Olsen, Columbus OH

Keith Lewis, Jasper AL

In memory of Clarence Loop, by Nadine Vernon

In memory of Frank George, by Bob Moyer and Carole Curtis

In memory of Frank George, by Robert Vieyra

In memory of Frank George, by Tom, Cindi & Steve Yarrington

In memory of Frank George, by Andy, Mary Ellen Chervak

In memory of Frank George, by Adele Dray

In memory of Frank George, by Michael & Linda Kenien

In memory of Frank George, by James D Myers

In memory of Frank George, by Jerome Henehan Jr

In memory of Frank George, by Cindy Solomita

In memory of Frank George, by Jeanne & Gary Guidici

In memory of Frank George, by Lynn Schild

In memory of Frank George, by Barbara Olevano

In memory of Frank George, by M/M Fran Fetsko

In memory of Frank George, by Marge Fetsko

In memory of Frank George, by Kris & Pete Olevano

In memory of Frank George, by Jerome & Theresa Shara

In memory of Fred Jossi, by Milwaukie American Legion Post
180

In memory of Jay D Trimmer, by his estate

In memory of PNC Zack Roberts, by Kim Roberts

In memory of Polly Hemphill, by Phyllis Hutchins

In memory of Richard Jeffries, by Douglas Hardiman

In memory of Thomas Francis Walker, by Sandra Cipolla

In memory of Zdzislaw Dewicki, by Diane Maurer

In memory of Zdzislaw Dewicki, by Family and Friends

VOLUNTARY FUNDING

Irving Lautman, Norristown PA

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Robert Smith, Tomahawk WI

ESTATES

Estate of Jay D Trimmer

Estate of Janeane Nuccio, widow of Samuel

Thank You!



taps



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

BAIN, PAUL E. of Jupiter, FL passed away Oct. 7, 2021. During WWII, he was captured in the Battle of the Bulge while serving with the 106th Inf. Div. Survivors include his wife Martha.

BENSON, WILLIAM LYLE OF Iowa City, IA died May 19, 2021. He was 93. Bill served as a Navy communications officer before enlisting in the Army for the Korean War. He served with the 1st Cav, 1st Bn, 8th Reg., B Co, 3rd Platoon. He was captured by the Yalu River and marched from camp to camp. On one of the marches, he escaped. His wife, Lois, predeceased him; survivors include 3 sons, 3 daughters, 5 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren.

CORTEZ, RICARDO L, 92, of Copperas Cove, TX passed away Nov. 25, 2021. He served with the 19th Reg., 34th Inf. Div. during the Korean War, captured August 1950 and held until July 1953. Ricardo was a member of the famed Tiger Survivors. His wife, Argelia "Helen, passed away in 2014. He leaves 3 daughters, 1 son, 6 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren.

DEWICKI, IRENE, 95, of Dearborn Hts, MI died Aug 5, 2021. Beloved wife of Zdzislaw Dewicki for 71 years. One of

the original 'Rosie the Riveters', she worked at Willow Run Assembly Plant making airplane propeller shafts during WWII.

DEWICKI, ZDZISLAW, "Jerry", 99, of Dearborn Heights, MI, passed away on Dec. 16, 2021. Jerry was a bombardier in the 15AF, 464 BG, 779 BS. On Aug 25, 1944, after a bombing mission on Prostějov, Czech., his plane ran out of gas and went down over Predlitz, Austria. He and the crew were captured and held prisoner at Stalag Luft 1 in Barth, Germany for 10 months until the Russian Army liberated the camp on May 1, 1945. He was a life member of AXPOW and the Wolverine Chapter- serving as its commander in 1994-95, and attending many national conventions. He loved participating in Memorial Day and 4th of July parades driving his replica 1932 Ford Roadster, often with one of his grandchildren beside him. He is survived by his 7 children, 25 grandchildren, and 18 great grandchildren.

GEORGE, FRANK "Pip", of Endicott, NY died Jan 14, 2022 at the age of 102. His wife, Vicki, passed away in 2007. During WWII, Frank served with the 82nd Airborne Div. He was captured during the invasion of Sicily, escaped, was

recaptured and escaped again. Frank was past NY State Commander, and active in AXPOW on the National level. Survivors include 2 sons, 1 daughter, 10 grandchildren, 8 great-grandchildren, numerous nieces, nephews and their families.

JOHNSTON, ROBERT A., 97, Sun City West, AZ passed away on December 31, 2021. Bob was an active member of the Agua Fria Chapter of American Ex-Prisoners of War serving the Chapter as the last commander from 2012 through 2014. He was in the European Theater Operations with the U.S. Army 70th Infantry 275th Regiment and was held prisoner of war in Stalag Luft 4B. Bob is survived by two daughters, three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

LANGE, DEAN E., of Mesa, Arizona passed away January 14, 2022. He was 98. He flew combat missions in a P-51 Mustang in WWII and was shot down over France, spending the remainder of the war in a German Prisoner of War Camp at Stalag Luft I. He carried shrapnel in his left arm the remainder of his life. He is survived by his wife of 48 years, Lois Chestine, 1 son, 1 daughter, 1 stepson, 4 grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

taps, cont'd...

MUNTZ, ALFRED KEITH, of Greenfield, IL died Feb. 8, 2022. He was 100. Al was captured while serving with the US Army during WWII, Co. F, 377th Reg., 95th Inf. Div. (The Iron Men of Metz). He was captured in Metz and held in Stalag III-B until liberation. Preceded in death by his wife, Junita, he leaves 1 daughter, 1 son, 4 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

WEATHERMAN, CARL, of North Augusta, SC, passed away Sept. 6, 2021. He was 89. During his service in the United States Army he served in the Korean War where he was held as a POW for 33 months. He then served in the Vietnam War. Along his Army career, he maintained his dedication to veteran affairs by being a devout member of AXPOW. Carl is predeceased by his wife, Betty June; he is survived by 3 sons, Dennis 2 daughters, 1 sister, 9 grandchildren, six great-grandchildren and their families.

WOODCOCK, THEODORA (Teedie) COWIE, age 97, of Medford, OR died Dec.1, 2021. At the start of World War II, Mrs. Woodcock, then age 17, and her mother, were interned at Santo Tomas University in the Philippine Islands. Her father was killed in an early Japanese bombing raid on Manila, and Teedie and her mother spent the next three years as guests of the Japanese army, awaiting the fulfillment of Gen. McArthur's promise, "I shall return." Teedie was a life member of AXPOW. She enjoyed hiking, golf, bridge, reading, and travel. Survivors include 2 sons, 2 daughters, 8 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren.

ZUCKERMAN, NORMAN, 95, of Barrington, IL, passed away Dec. 28, 2021. He was a longtime member and friend to the Fox River Valley Chapter, and Illinois State Commander, AXPOW. Norm was captured in the Battle of the Bulge and held in Bad Orb Prison Camp in Germany. Norm was a White Sox fan his whole life and enjoyed traveling to multiple ball fields with Marion who was a Cubs fan. He leaves his wife of 31 years, Marion, 3 sons, 6 stepchildren, 15 grandchildren, 16 great grandchildren and their families.

Chaplain



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I got this in an email several months ago. I think of it often. I think about the returnees from Viet Nam and their treatment!! I think

about the Korean War Veterans and their lack of respect, as if they were never there. I think about the WW II veterans and there rapidly diminishing numbers!!! All have given that blank check to our government and their lack of fulfilling their promises. But mostly, I think about our service to the greatest country in the world – it wouldn't have been the greatest without everyone serving. The following email shows me that there are still people who honor the sacrifices that we have made. It helps me to know that people DO CARE!!!

"This should be required reading in every school and college in our country. This Captain, an Army doctor, deserves a medal himself for putting this together.

"I am a doctor specializing in the Emergency Departments of the only two military Level One-Trauma Centers, both in San Antonio, TX.

We care for civilian emergencies as well as military personnel. San Antonio has the largest military retiree population in the world living here. As a military doctor, I work long hours and the pay is less than glamorous. One tends to become jaded by the long hours, lack of sleep, food, family contact and the endless parade of human suffering passing before you. The arrival of another ambulance does not mean more pay, only more work. Most often, it is a victim from a motor vehicle crash. Often it is a person of dubious character who has been shot or stabbed. With our large military retiree population, it is often a nursing home patient.

Even with my enlisted service and minimal combat experience in Panama, I have caught myself groaning when the ambulance brings in yet another sick, elderly person from one of the local retirement centers that cater to military retirees. I had not stopped

chaplain, cont'd...

to think of what the citizens of this age group represented. I saw 'Saving Private Ryan.' I was touched deeply. Not so much by the carnage, but by the sacrifices of so many. I was touched most by the scene of the elderly survivor at the graveside, asking his wife if he'd been a good man. I realized that I had seen these same men and women coming through my Emergency Dept. and had not realized what magnificent sacrifices they had made. The things they did for me and everyone else that has lived on this planet since the end of that conflict are priceless.

Situation permitting, I now try to ask my patients about their experiences. They would never bring up the subject without my inquiry. I have been privileged to hear an amazing array of experiences, recounted in the brief minutes allowed in an Emergency Dept. encounter. These experiences have revealed the incredible individuals I have had the honor of serving in a medical capacity, many on their last admission to the hospital.

There was a frail, elderly woman who reassured my young, enlisted medic, trying to start an IV line in her arm. She remained calm and poised, despite her illness and the multiple needle-sticks into her fragile veins. She was what we call a 'hard stick.' As the medic made another attempt, I noticed a number tattooed across her forearm. I touched it with one finger and looked into her eyes. She simply said, 'Auschwitz.' Many of later generations would have loudly and openly berated the young medic in his many attempts. How different was the response from this person who'd seen unspeakable suffering?

Also, there was this long-retired Colonel, who as a young officer had parachuted from his burning plane over a Pacific Island held by the Japanese. Now an octogenarian, he had a minor cut on his head from a fall at his home where he lived alone. His CT scan and suturing had been delayed until after midnight by the usual parade of high priority ambulance patients. Still spry for his age, he asked to use the phone to call a taxi, to take him home, then he realized his ambulance had brought him without his wallet. He asked if he could use the phone to make a long-distance call to his daughter who lived 7 miles away. With great pride we told him that he could not, as he'd done enough for his country and the least, we could do was get him a taxi home, even if we had to pay for it ourselves. My only regret was that my shift wouldn't end for several hours, and I couldn't drive him myself.

I was there the night M/Sgt. Roy Benavidez came through the Emergency Dept. for the last time. He was very sick. I was not the doctor taking care of him, but I walked to his bedside and took his hand. I said nothing. He was so sick; he didn't know I was there. I'd read his Congressional Medal of Honor citation and wanted to shake his hand. He died a few days later.

The gentle man who served with Merrill's Marauders, the survivor of the Bataan Death March, the survivor of Omaha Beach, the 101-year-old World War I veteran, the former POW held in frozen North Korea, the former Special Forces medic - now with non-operable liver cancer, the former Vietnam Corps Commander.

I may still groan when, yet another ambulance comes in, but now I am much more aware of what an honor it is to serve these particular men and women. I have seen a Congress who would turn their back on these individuals who've sacrificed so much to protect our liberty. I see later generations that seem to be totally engrossed in abusing these same liberties, won with such sacrifice.

It has become my personal endeavor to make the nurses and young enlisted medics aware of these amazing individuals when I encounter them in our Emergency Dept. Their response to these particular citizens has made me think that perhaps all is not lost in the next generation. My experiences have solidified my belief that we are losing an incredible generation, and this nation knows not what it is losing. Our uncaring government and ungrateful civilian populace should all take note. We should all remember that we must 'earn this.' If it weren't for the United States Military, there'd be NO United States of America!

And now as you have finished reading this, our Congress enjoys their free medical care, are in the process of charging these people for their medical care and at the same time possibly reducing their retirement pay. A typical political "Thank you" for their Service."

In God We Trust!



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

NORTH CAROLINA SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE:

Harold Davis is looking for descendants of NC former POWs. Although it is a nationwide program - his focus is NC.

Harold Davis, 517 Mohican Trail, Wilmington, NC 28409

hgdavis224@gmail.com

910-470-21333

40th Infantry Division, Korea 1952-'53; Retired Project Engineer Bell System

I belong to a relatively small Military Society. The 40 & 8 Society.

We have a program that offers scholarships to descendants of POW/MIA veterans.

I have attached an official description of the program.

For various reasons qualified applicants are very hard to locate. Nationally only 27 scholarships were granted last year. Only one of all submitted was refused. I am working in my home state, North Carolina.

If you are a resident from North Carolina please contact me I will help your descendants with the application.

I am a combat veteran from the Korean War. (gratefully 91 years old) My greatest fear was being captured. I have very strong feelings for all POWs. Thank you so much for your interest.

Thanks again

My regards,

-For God and Country

Harold G. Davis, Sr

"WHAT THE BOYS WANT TO KNOW"

Letter-Writing Guide

Reminders about the various thoughts you may wish to include in your letters, to avoid forgetting . . . all are cheerful thoughts to "keep 'em smilin'."



Ask About Them Tell you it like to see them in their uniforms. But all the girls admire them. Their kind of life most enjoy with them - probably made them let an airplane, and enough to talk. How is the food? What about entertainment? Talking to all the stores in camp and pointing the trees and when we leave? Wish you could see them!

The Family's News Everyone is in good health, and the old, familiar ailments are much improved.

Ask How You Are Tell them how each member of the family is working hard to help win the war quickly. Add stories of part in Civilian Defense and other warlike activities. Everyone's interested - as it worries, howling, and so, listening to the radio - is mighty interesting.



What About the Children? It's big news if baby is cutting its teeth or if Junior just had one. Anything the children say or do is

important. How 'bout what are they doing in school? Is little sister occupied with her study? Or some interest? Is brother and his the school team? Are they still having string bean and potatoes every day the way other?



A Word About Your City and Country

They're either good about or bad - or have been some changes. What kind of work are they doing? Have some of them joined the armed forces? Or served? Gettin' married? Stud better?

How About Your Reading Browse the day's scrapes, the new papers, the money's worth. They're all important.



What's Going to Happen? How business changes in the business district, rumors about the stock - all build an appropriate amount of news of the home town.

Personal Wishes We hope all the boys and girls have a good luck in the world!

"KEEP 'EM SMILIN'"

KEEP SMILIN'



"HE JUST LOVES DESSERT, CAPTAIN, BUT YOU SEE THAT HE EATS HIS VEGETABLES!"

I found this with my mother's things after she passed away~ Cheryl



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

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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.

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