

MOHAWK

442nd Fighter Wing



Air Force turns 60



Secretary, chief reflect on 60th anniversary

By Secretary of the Air Force Michael Wynne and Chief of Staff Gen. T. Michael Moseley

SAN ANTONIO — The following is a message from Secretary of the Air Force Michael W. Wynne and Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. T. Michael Moseley on the Air Force's 60th birthday Sept. 18.

"Sixty years ago today, the Air Force became an independent service. Three days before becoming the first secretary of the Air Force, W. Stuart Symington noted in his address to the inaugural convention of the Air Force Association, 'No Air Force can be created by legislative action alone. All the National Security Act of 1947 has done is to give us the green light. It must be considered an opportunity and not an accomplishment.' Since that time, courageous Airmen have pushed the limits of imagination and technology to fight and win the nation's wars.

"This anniversary gives us an opportunity to reflect on where we have been in just over a century of powered flight and just over five decades of rocketry and access to space. Today we also honor the extraordinary achievements and gallant sacrifices America's Airmen have made in the defense of freedom. Born of the revolutionary ideas of military aviation and rocketry and forged in the fire of combat throughout the wars of the 20th century, a handful of visionary pioneers helped shape the most dominant Air Force the world has ever known.

"Today, our innovative, warfighting culture shines through as close to 700,000 Airmen — including our active duty, civilians, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve — con-

tinue to answer our nation's call. Of those Airmen, more than 235,000 are assigned to our global combatant commanders, defending this great nation through the operating domains of air, space and cyberspace. Over 35,000 Airmen are currently deployed to 120 locations around the world fighting the Global War on Terrorism.

"Yet, while we are fighting today's war we are also transforming our service to meet tomorrow's emerging threats. We are modernizing and recapitalizing our force. New aircraft, such as the F-22, F-35, new combat search and rescue

helicopter and replacement air refueling tanker will ensure our edge in the air domain. We are also helping to maintain our technological lead in space by replacing our strategic communication and early warning satellite systems. Likewise, we are aggressively pursuing options that will position us to dominate cyberspace. These vital efforts aim to give the joint warfighting team critical advantages in the air, space and cyberspace. They foster Air Force cross-domain dominance — the ability to project

power and create decisive and lethal effects through the air, space, cyberspace and against targets on the ground and at sea. They provide our nation with sovereign options.

"While the Air Force is a technically-oriented service, it is our Airmen who make our Air Force great. While we mark this milestone in Air Force history, we congratulate each of you. Total Force Airmen of the U.S. Air Force past, present and future can take pride in their roles in the Air Force's success. Your service, dedication and sacrifice guarantee our ability to fly, fight and win for America today and into the future. "



MOHAWK

442ND FIGHTER WING

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October 2007
 Charge-of-quarters



MASTER SGT. ROBERT SMITH
442ND SECURITY FORCES
SQUADRON SQUADRON

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COVER PHOTO: The U.S. Air Force celebrated its 60th anniversary Sept. 18. The history of the 442nd Fighter Wing itself goes back to 1943, when the 442nd Troop Carrier Group flew C-47s into combat in order to tow gliders and drop paratroopers over the battlefields of Europe. The wing switched to fighters in 1982 and today flies the A-10 Thunderbolt II in the Global War on Terrorism. (Photo Illustration by Maj. David Kurle)

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442nd Fighter Wing Tip of the Spear



SENIOR AIRMAN

CHARLOTTE "NICOLE" ALLEN

442ND LOGISTICS READINESS SQUADRON

Senior Airman Charlotte "Nicole" Allen is a fuels distribution refueling operator with the 442nd Logistics Readiness Squadron's Fuels Management Flight. She is currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in psychology at the University of Missouri with aspirations of becoming a practicing physical therapist. She was recognized as a top performer for outstanding achievement during the wing's recent unit compliance inspection for issuing 87,449 gallons of jet fuel to more than 100 base-assigned and transient aircraft with no fuel-related take off delays. This is 20,000 gallons higher than the nearest operator milestones.

She has performed without any safety incidents or spills in over 100 consecutive refueling operations. The Air Force Reserve inspector commented that this was a significant individual accomplishment.

Airman Allen was also credited and recognized as a member of the fuels checkpoint team for its outstanding performance during the UCI. A big part of this success is her initiative to volunteer for whatever the task may be with great attention to detail making her a great asset to the 442nd Fighter Wing fuels-management team.



Fate put Sergeants Matt and Linda Jobe into separate situations that tested their Air Force training.

PHOTO BY MAJ. DAVID KURLE

Family Matters

One couple, two emergencies, same response

By Tech. Sgt. Leo Brown

A husband and wife from the 442nd Maintenance Group proved they can step up in a crisis after separate, chance encounters that tested their mettle and required them to put their lifesaving skills to use – skills they learned partially from careers in the Air Force Reserve.

Matt and Linda Jobe, of Dunnegan, are pretty unassuming. Matt is an air reserve technician with the 442nd Fighter Wing, and Linda is a pre-school teacher and a traditional reservist. After they met in 2000, they married in 2003.

Over the last fourteen months, though, fate put them in situations where they literally stepped out from a crowd to help fellow human beings who were victims of car accidents.

The Jobes said they drew heavily on their military and civilian first-aid training to help the victims. They also said they were shocked that while many people stopped at each scene, few helped.

Linda, a master sergeant and the non-commissioned officer in charge of the 442nd Maintenance Group's orderly room, came across a wreck June 16 near Whiteman Air Force Base. The acci-

dent claimed the life of one person and seriously injured two others, one of whom Linda aided.

Jobe said she approached the stop sign at Highways D and 23 when she saw a red mini-van crash nose-first in a ditch. She pulled her car off the road, called 911 and then began aiding the front seat passenger, a woman whose right foot was nearly severed.

"You just do what you're able to do," Linda said. "Don't just stand there and watch. I just kind of kicked into what training I've had. I'm a pre-school teacher, so I take a lot of first-aid training and all I could think about was the different steps I needed to take – stop the bleeding, keep her from going into shock. Don't take your training lightly, because you never know when you're going to need it.

"The most disturbing thing was the conversation with her," she said. "I knew I needed to keep her talking. I was just trying to keep her mind off what had happened. She just kept saying, 'Where did the road go? Where did the road go?'"

The woman's husband had been driving and her sister was

See 'Lifesaving' next page...

MSG changes command

Col. J.D. Larson takes guidon Sept. 8

Left, Col. John D. Larson, the new commander of the 442nd Mission Support Group, addresses group members and guests at a change of command ceremony Sept. 8 at the Whiteman Air Force Base Mission's End Club. Right, Colonel Larson accepts the 442nd Mission Support Group guidon from Col. Steve Arthur, 442nd Fighter Wing commander. Colonel Larson joins the 442nd after a tenure as the deputy commander of the 934th Mission Support Group, part of the 934th Airlift Wing, at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport Air Reserve Station, Minn. (Photos by Maj. David Kurle)



Lifesaving efforts earn couple some recognition

Continued from page 4...

in the back of the van. A small dog was also in the back. They were on a leisurely drive, spending time together, as the husband would soon be starting treatment for cancer.

While emergency responders showed up, Linda continued to focus on the front-seat passenger.

"She was asking what happened to her dog, what happened to her sister," she said. "I heard a guy say 'We got nothing,' as he was working on her sister. So that conversation goes through my mind.

"I just wanted to make sure I didn't miss anything," she said. "First, she lost her dog. Then we told her her sister was dead. Her husband was in pretty bad shape. And her foot – the skin was the only thing holding it in place. It was bent out to the right. I just kept talking to her. I lost a lot of sleep going through those conversations."

On October 3, 2006, Matt and a friend, Eric Beeler of Humansville, came across a vehicle that was upside down in a creek near Slater on Highway 240.

"A lot of people had stopped, but no one was doing anything," said Matt, a staff sergeant and the 442nd Maintenance Operations Flight maintenance support liaison technician. "A lady told us (the driver of the upside down vehicle) was still in the car, so another guy and I swam out to the car – it was about 20 feet out and the water was about chest level.

"You could see the tires sticking out the water, and we reached in through all the windows but couldn't find her," he said. "We were trying to drag everything out of the car and then we got a hold of something that didn't move."

That "something" was the driver. She wasn't seat-belted in and they eventually pulled her from the car. Once ashore, the two men continued their life-saving efforts.

"She was full of water, so we were pushing on her belly and then we finally started CPR," said Matt, who also noted he has worked as an emergency medical technician.

"I don't understand why you wouldn't help," Matt

said. "If it was me, I'd want someone to help me and not just look. I just couldn't believe all the people standing there. One of my first thoughts was, 'How come all these people are standing around?'"

"That doesn't make sense to me," Linda said. "When I stopped, I dialed 911 as I was running across the road. I didn't really think about not doing something."

Since she was performing military duties at the time of the accident, Sergeant Linda Jobe was awarded the Air Force Commendation Medal for a courageous act Sept. 8 in front of the entire 442nd Fighter Wing during a wing commander's call.

"I had to do the Heimlich maneuver on my dad in a restaurant and it was the same thing – everybody just sat there and watched," she said. "You just kick in to what you've been trained to do. After hearing it so many times, things stick."

The Jobes have had limited contact with the wreck victims' families, but the people they helped have not been far from their minds.

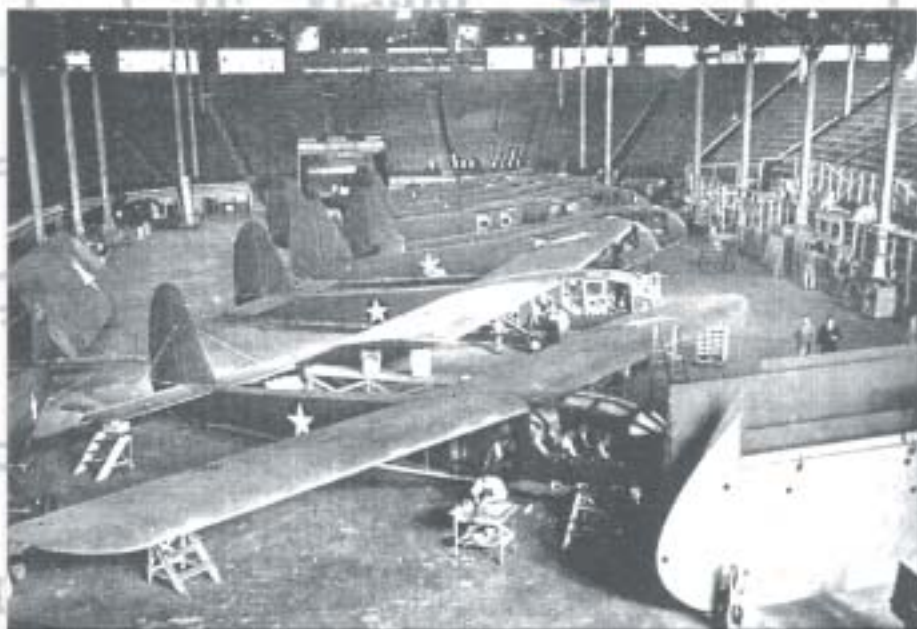
"I've thought about her," Linda said. "I just wonder how she's doing. I've talked to her other sister, who lives in Kansas, on the phone."

While the person Matt helped unfortunately passed away, he said his efforts brought her family peace of mind.

"Her mom thanked us," he said. "We called and checked on her daughter. Her brother was deployed to Iraq with the Army. They let him come home (after the accident). She lived to spend her last days with her family and they had some time to think about everything and say good-by to her.

"I never spoke to her brother, but I got a thank you card from him," he said. "He wrote about what a big deal people make about him being in the military and being a hero. He wrote a really nice note and said we were his heroes."

On a wing and a prayer



ARCHIVE PHOTO

Above: Kansas City's American Royal arena was one of several U.S. locations where the Waco CG-4A combat glider was built during World War II.

Below: Whiteman Heritage Foundation volunteers and Frank McKinley (far right), the project coordinator, work on a glider tail assembly as a part of the complete restoration work of a Waco CG-4A combat glider. The foundation is seeking volunteers to help with the work.

Whiteman group works to restore WW II glider

By Master Sgt. Bill Huntington

“I’ll tell you straight out: If you’ve got to go into combat, don’t go by glider. Walk, crawl, parachute, swim, float – anything. But don’t go by glider!”

This perspective comes from then-war correspondent, Walter Cronkite who, in the forward to John L. Lowden’s book “Silent Wings at War” added, “This comes from one who did it – once.”

More than a generation removed from the birth of aviation, in a time of multi-engine bombers and high-speed pursuit planes, men still flew into war in aircraft similar in many ways to those that first flew over Kitty Hawk.



US AIR FORCE PHOTO BY MASTER SGT. BILL HUNTINGTON

The iconic image of delivering airborne troops in World War II is the grim-faced paratrooper in the door of an aircraft, tensely poised for the green light that would signal him to jump into the battle below. Less familiar scenes of airborne assault are those who arrived in a Waco CG-4A combat glider made of welded steel tubing, plywood, canvas and Plexiglas. Rarer still is any depiction of the aviator who actually piloted them to war and did it again, and again, and again ... that is, if he survived.

It's likely that glider pilot was one of many who trained for his wartime missions over the farmlands of west-central Missouri while based at the then-Sedalia Army Air Field and it is entirely possible that the glider he flew was manufactured nearby in Kansas City.

The CG-4A was the most widely used U.S. troop and cargo glider of World War II. It was crewed by a pilot and copilot and it could carry 13 troops and their equipment or a jeep, a quarter-ton truck or a 75mm howitzer loaded through the hinged nose section. Usually, C-46s and C-47s were used as tow aircraft.

The CG-4A first went into operation in July 1943 during the Allied invasion of Sicily. It also participated in the D-Day assault on France on June 6, 1944, and in nine major airborne assaults in Europe and in the China-Burma-India Theater.

Rearwin Airplanes, Inc., established in 1928 by businessman Rae A. Rearwin in Salina, Kans., was contracted by the Waco Aircraft Company of Troy, Ohio, to build 1,500 CG-4A combat gliders for the war effort.

In 1943 Rearwin sold his interest in the company, which then became Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation. Commonwealth sought a Kansas City location to house the operation.

In an interview with Kansas City television station, KCPT, Jay Dillingham, a Kansas City Stockyards manager, told how he negotiated with Commonwealth for them to use the American Royal arena as a manufacturing plant. He also reflected on watching the aircraft take shape.

"It was amazing to see those gliders develop, and taken down the street here without their wings on them, over to Fairfax where they put the wings on them and then took them out of here," he said. "They served a purpose in the Army."

As Commonwealth completed its contract, and the war ended, glider construction activity died down and eventually ceased at the American Royal. Partially constructed gliders were stored nearby in vacant lots and eventually forgotten as

first weeds, then shrubs and trees grew up in and around them.

According to Frank McKinley, Whiteman Heritage Foundation member and glider restoration project manager, a man named Jim Jones eventually located the glider frames and, with the help of a Kansas City area college, began the work to restore a glider from the many parts.

"About eight years ago, Mr. Jones donated the glider and all of the materials to the Air Force," Mister McKinley said. "It was accepted by the Air Force Museum and stored here. It is Air Force property but we've just volunteered to do the work to restore it."

After being housed at different locations around the base – none very suitable for the restoration work – former Oscar One curator, Tech. Sgt. Phil Fleming, arranged with then-509th Bomb Wing commander Brig. Gen. Chris Miller to obtain a small warehouse building across the street from Outdoor Recreation.

Since then work has slowly progressed on the glider and the main fuselage, still without its fabric covering, has taken shape. Mr. McKinley and the other volunteers have been working on the glider's tail section.

"We've got eight or 10 people volunteering their time on different days of the week," he said. "Slowly but surely we're going to bring this thing around."

When the restoration work is complete, a building will be needed to house it to protect it from the elements. With that building, Mr. McKinley sees an opportunity to create a facility that would showcase Whiteman's past.

"Our ultimate goal is to have a heritage center (at Whiteman), which would cover not only the glider, but all of the base's history," Mr. McKinley said.

His vision for the center includes the base's missile era, its current B-2 mission and the missions of its tenant organizations, including the Air Force Reserve, the Missouri National Guard and the Naval Reserve.

He sees it coming to pass because of the individuals who have volunteered their time to make the restored glider a reality but he knows there is more to be done and more volunteers – to do everything from working on the glider proper to inventorying parts – are needed.

"We need people who have the attitude that 'I'm willing to try anything'," Mr. McKinley said.

People interested in volunteering to work on the project can reach Mr. McKinley at (660) 687-4421 or by email at Gerald.mckinley@whiteman.af.mil



THE GLIDER'S CONTRIBUTION

The success of the gliders in combat is not without controversy, or detractors, among military historians; however in most instances it did make a significant impact on the face of the battle.

A study written for the Historical Division, European Command, by a committee comprised of former German officers, saw that on D-day the presence of the gliders, and other airborne troops, meant the commitment of German reserve forces to counter them. As a result, these were forces the Germans could not employ to reinforce their Normandy re-doubts to repulse the allied invasion.

According to the report, "The significant fact is that the air landings made it possible to substantially increase the number of forces which had been brought to the mainland during the first phase, thus augmenting the purely numerical superiority of the attacker over the defender."

Whatever the case, these daringly built aircraft piloted by equally daring Airmen, made their contribution to the war and their legacy remains in the form of the freedoms realized in the lands they liberated. As the Airmen succumb to time, the Waco CG-4A combat assault glider remains as a memorial to that generation's resistance to totalitarianism.



PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. TOM TALBERT

Brig. Gen. Patrick Cord, 10th Air Force vice commander, speaks to members of the 442nd Fighter Wing Sept. 8.

By Maj. David Kurle

The two biggest priorities for 10th Air Force, the 442nd Fighter Wing's higher headquarters, are completing the Base Realignment and Closure process and meshing the numbered-Air Force's Reserve units with active-duty missions and units as part of the Air Force's Total Force Integration project, according to the 10th AF vice commander.

Brig. Gen. Patrick Cord visited Whiteman Air Force Base Sept. 4-9 to fly the 442nd FW's A-10 Thunderbolt IIs, an aircraft he has been flying for 27 years, and to present awards to wing members during the unit training assembly.

He has been at his position at Naval Air Station, Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth for more than a year now since giving up the reins of the 442nd Fighter Wing in July 2006.

General Cord assists in leading 10th Air Force during a time of transition for Air Force Reserve Command as it continues to transform from a strategic to an operational force in reserve.

The command is looking at standing up additional Air Combat Command-gained associate units where active-duty and Reserve Airmen will team up to share missions and aircraft – currently associate units flying fighter aircraft are based at Hill AFB, Utah, and Elmendorf AFB, Alaska.

Tenth Air Force is at the forefront of AFRC's efforts to expand its role into new mission-areas, such as space and cyberspace, and get its share of new aircraft, such as the F-22 Raptor.

General Cord granted an interview for the 442nd Fighter Wing's monthly magazine, *The Mohawk*, during his visit and shared some of his insights into the present and future states of 10th Air Force.

Mohawk: Sir, can you describe the two or three most significant issues facing 10th Air Force at this time?

General Cord: "I would say the two biggest things that we have going on in 10th AF that take the most time, effort, thought and planning are finishing the (Base Realignment and Closure process) BRAC and all of our Total Force Integration (TFI).

"I prepared a mission brief when I got down there last year, and as I prepared this mission brief I took a look at all of the units that we have within 10th. There is not a single unit within 10th that is not somehow affected by BRAC or TFI – not a single unit!

View From Above

Vice commander outlines 10th AF priorities, programs

Whether it was a plus up to 24 (PAA), like this wing; if it was a closure or a movement, like the 926th Fighter Wing or a new mission stand-up at Buckley, there wasn't a single unit that wasn't affected. We had a space group that's upgrading into a wing. We've got new missions at Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada. Those things take the most time.

"What I'm trying to get the 10th AF staff and the Air Force Reserve Command staff focused on is to think strategically about our TFI as we start new missions and stand up associate wings. For example, at Moody (AFB, Ga.), did we plan for enough bodies to go into Moody to begin with? Are we fulfilling what the active duty wants? Each associate unit is different. You can't say when you start a unit at Moody, it will be the same way you start a unit at Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz., nor will that be the same when we start the Global Hawk unit at Beale AFB, Calif.

"It requires a whole different mind-set from the headquarters' staffs. The entire staff needs to be thinking strategically and not to give an 'Oh, we've always done it this way,' answer. That is what takes the most amount of time for us right now, is starting the new missions. I want us to all think strategically and not wait for things to happen. In my opinion, sometimes in the old days the NAF (Numbered Air Force) just sat and waited for the phone to ring from the units saying 'hey, here's my problem.' We, as a headquarters, can't do that anymore."

Mohawk: With the stand-up of an associate unit at Elmendorf AFB and the conversion of the fighter wing at Hill AFB to an associate unit, not to mention the addition of an A-10 associate unit at Moody AFB, are we going to see Air-Combat-Command-gained units operate as associate units in the future?

General Cord: "Yes, from what I understand from the meetings I attend. The whole Air Force is drawing down because of Presidential Budget Directive-720 and General (T. Michael) Moseley's (Air Force chief of staff) decision to re-capitalize our equipment.

"We can not afford to fly aircraft that are becoming older than the people flying the airplanes. The average age of our tankers is now in the 40's. The Air Force has projected out that we may have people flying these same tankers that have yet to be born. We can't do that anymore so General Moseley had to come up with some money, so his way to do that was to streamline our processes and our people. By streamlining how we do

business and how many people we have on board the Air Force can channel the money saved to re-capitalize our aging aircraft fleet.

“But as he recapitalizes, the cost of recapitalization, especially on the fighter side, is expensive. You can’t trade one F-16 for one F-35. You have to trade three or four F-16s for one F-35, just like two or three F-15s for an F-22. So, the associate unit construct will allow us to maximize the use of our resources. Because it’s proven itself in the airlift world and it’s been very, very effective, we’re just going to do adopt the same approach on the fighter side. The future may see the associate unit as the norm not the exception.”

Mohawk: Has your perspective on how the Air Force Reserve operates changed since leaving a wing-level leadership position to take over the vice commander position at 10th Air Force?

General Cord: “Obviously, there’s a different allegiance. When I was here (at Whiteman AFB) I would fight for money for this unit. I was all about the 442nd. If I went to a food fight or a money fight, I didn’t care about other wings so much. If the 442nd needed it, we, obviously, were number one and needed all the money. So, that perspective has had to change. I’ve had to get a little more objective. When each of the wing commanders see me to fight for their units, I think, ‘I used to be you.’ So, that part’s changed.

“I have had the opportunity to be at a few more high-level meetings and listen to General Moseley, (Air Force) Secretary (Michael) Wynne and (ACC commander) General (Ronald) Keys and hear, not necessarily in a formal way, but in somewhat informal settings, from leadership about how they came to a decision on an issue. I listen to the background leading up to a decision and it really gives me a much better understanding and the ability to go out and say, ‘hey, these guys aren’t just winging it, they really thought through this.’

“So, it has been nice to have access because everybody asks you how senior leadership made certain decisions. I can sit down and say ‘well, here is the process we went through.’

I miss the people connection. You don’t get quite the same people interaction. Tenth Air Force vice commander is a good job and it’s a challenging job.”

Mohawk: What did you take away from your tenure as the 442nd Fighter Wing commander and how did you incorporate that into your leadership position at 10th Air Force?

General Cord: “I took the same philosophy I had here at Whiteman, and that was, in a nutshell, continuous improvement. When I was the wing commander, I tried to instill in people that the 442nd Fighter Wing is really good at what it does, but at times you can get stuck in a rut or think that because you’re the best you don’t have to continually improve what you are doing. I took that same philosophy to 10th Air Force because as a wing commander I felt there were times I didn’t get the support I thought I should have gotten from some of the directorates at 10th.

“I’m trying to emphasize strategic thinking. We cannot wait for the phone to ring, we need to be thinking for our units about TFI and other things. We need to be out front helping solve problems before the units see them, so the units don’t have to solve those problems, they can go about their business because we’re asking them to do a whole lot with limited resources.

“We need to be on our toes, that’s the one thing I’ve tried to do, and that’s been difficult, when you go to a numbered Air Force that hasn’t been tasked for many, many years of trying to get it re-energized.”

Mohawk: What did you learn from living and working in Missouri?

General Cord: “In general, Missouri is a wonderful place. In the two-and-a-half years Mary (Cord, the general’s wife,) and I were here, we formed some of the closest relationships we’ve ever formed, not only in the military, but in the public sector. That has to be a credit to the caliber of people in Missouri.

“As the vice commander for 10th Air Force, I don’t have to worry about the 442nd. When Col. Steve Arthur (442nd FW commander) calls me, I know he’s got an issue and it needs my attention – and he calls me very seldom. I know because of the wing’s culture – that mid-Missouri work-ethic – or that Midwest work ethic, that work ethic is going to permeate and keep the 442nd at such a high level of performance. They’re not going to tolerate anything less.”

Mohawk: Is the A-10 still a viable platform in the Global War on Terror? Is the airframe as relevant today as it was 20 years ago?

General Cord: “Absolutely. The A-10 is going to be a bridge aircraft for the combat air forces. The combatant commanders love it. In the battles we’re fighting right now, Lt. Gen. (Gary) North (Central Command Air Forces commander) would love to have the A-10’s 30-milimeter gun capability everywhere, because of its lethality, low amounts of collateral damage and its precision – it’s a good little weapon. The A-10 is very useful in the war on terror and it’s viable in other wars because of the precision-engagement modifications being made right now.”

Mohawk: So, when you say the A-10 is a bridge aircraft, you see it outlasting the F-16?

General Cord: “If you look at most of the charts, I think the F-16 retires earlier than the A-10 for a couple of reasons. The F-16 is wearing out quicker – it pulls more Gs and that stresses the metal. They’re having fatigue issues with the F-16, so it’s going to go away sooner, which makes sense because that’s the first airplane the F-35 replaces. But we can keep the A-10 on board because now it’s a precision engagement platform and we can use it in the combat theaters we’re operating in now.”

Mohawk: Do you see close air support as a viable mission 20 years from now, with the advent of unmanned-aerial-vehicles and other technological changes to the conduct of modern warfare?

General Cord: “Yes and no. If you talk to the special operations units, then the answer is ‘yes.’ Of course the special operations world would like own the A-10 and keep it inside their span of control.

“If you extrapolate from some of the theories out there about these little wars, like we have now in third-world countries, close air support is a vital capability. If you go to a big theater war, CAS would play a very small role.

“I think we are 10 or 20 years from having appropriate unmanned combat aerial vehicles the Army trusts well enough to use for close air support. For that reason, I think we’ll have some need for CAS until that happens.

“In the future we’re going to have a lot more unmanned aircraft and they are going to pick up a lot more of the missions. When you look at air interdiction, which is one of the missions that the A-10 does now, the Air Force may use these unmanned airplanes first for the air interdiction role, and then the A-10 be able to do some of the clean up actions. But, that’s one man’s opinion.”

Heritage to Horizons P.O.W. series - Part III

Internment: Life at Stalag Luft III and witness to the 'Great Escape'

By Tech. Sgt. Leo Brown

As the Allied air attacks on Adolf Hitler's "Fortress Europe" increased during World War II, so did the number of Airmen shot down and captured by the Germans. Fliers from the United States, Britain, Canada and other countries poured into Stalag Luft III and other *Luftwaffe*-run prison camps.

At one point, SL III's population peaked at roughly 10,000 "kriegies." Regardless of their home country, the Airmen found life as prisoners of war to be rife with hunger, health problems, uncertainty and boredom.

Retired Lt. Col. Fred Frey said he arrived at the camp in eastern Germany via train in late October or early November of 1943, but he wasn't alone.

"I had acquired crabs," he said. "They get under the first layer of skin and it itches like hell. The little buggers look like crabs. I was scratching myself like crazy in the cars. Maybe I got them from the straw crap that was in the (rail) cars.

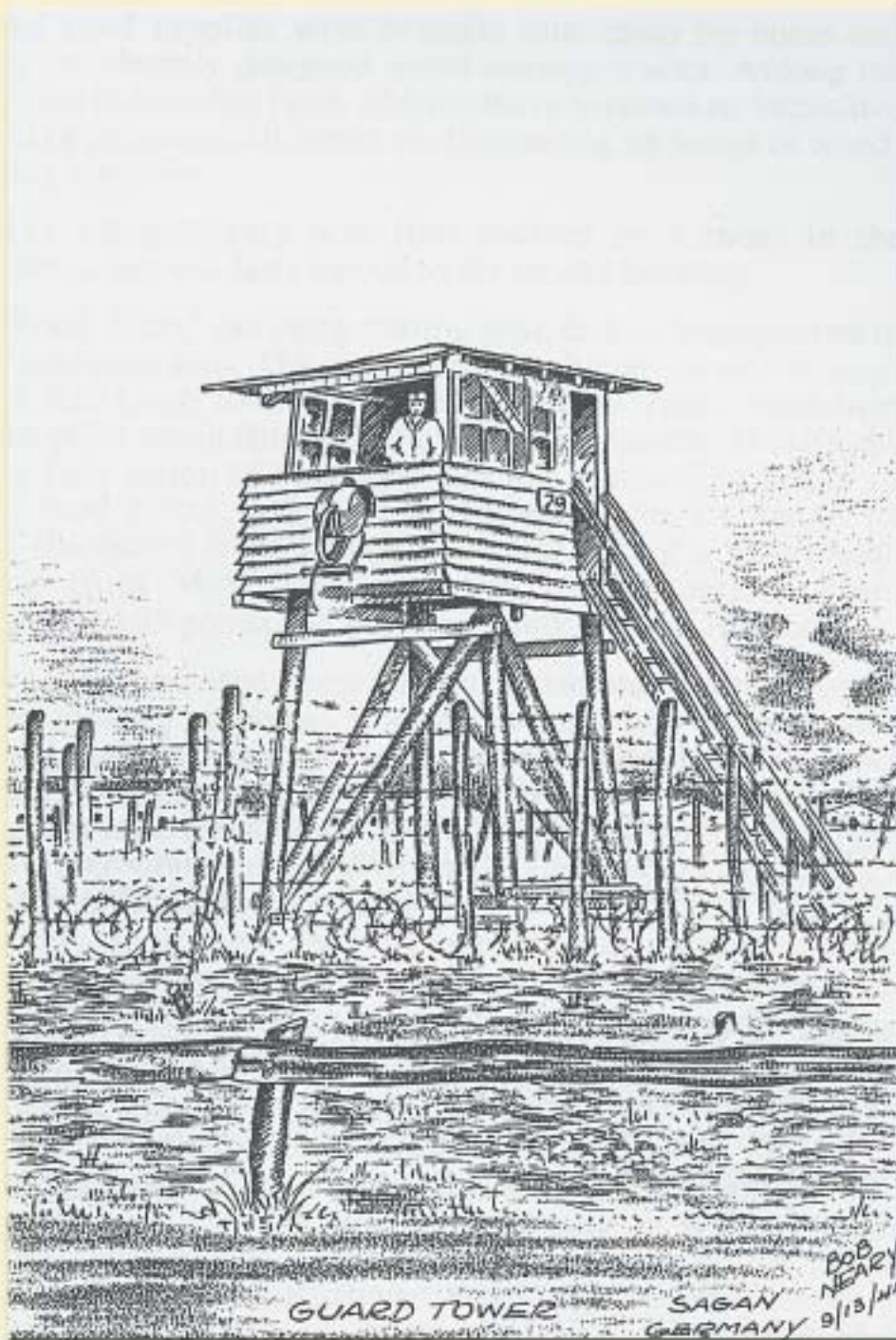
"We had to strip down when we got to Stalag Luft III," Colonel Frey said. "They didn't have any real ointment, so they put kerosene on the crabs. You know what kerosene is on raw skin? My Lord, I almost hit the ceiling. That hurt."

Trying to stay clean and healthy was not an easy chore. The men slept on mattresses filled with wood shavings and sawdust, and they said hunger was a faithful companion.

"We were constantly hungry, particularly after we got put on half parcels," said Hal Hallstead, who was a second lieutenant. "It was gnawing and very bad. I can't even describe it. I wouldn't wish it on anyone."

"What little food the Germans gave us and what we got from the Red Cross parcels we stretched out," said Halstead's fellow crew member Jim Gregory, also a second lieutenant.

"Every kriegie got the same amount of food, regardless of height or weight," Lieutenant Halstead said. "You could win one egg and I won it one time. You could have it all to yourself. I elected to have



One of the many guard towers of Stalag Luft III. Venturing beyond or even touching the rail in the foreground was punishable by death. The barracks in the distance are those of the north compound at Stalag Luft III. This compound was the scene of the escape of seventy-six men by tunnel on Mar. 24, 1944. Most of the men were recaptured and, under Adolph Hitler's orders, 50 were executed.

mine hard boiled and all my fellow kriegies would watch me eat it.”

“One of the tortures we’d impose on ourselves was we used to play a game, at least in our barracks, and we’d think up the names of all the candy bars,” Lieutenant Gregory said. “Of course, whoever got stuck had to do the dishes. We had Hershey, Baby Ruth. This was torture.”

“Many kriegies would make careful lists of recipes and they’d talk with other kriegies about them,” Lieutenant Halstead said. “That’s all they talked about.”

“Such as how to bake a roast,” Lieutenant Gregory added.

“It was torture,” Lieutenant Halstead said.

“As frightening as some of the experiences were, that feeling of hunger was predominant over fear,” Lieutenant Gregory said.

While the Airmen slowly but surely adjusted to life “behind the wire,” they were also starved for information about how the war was progressing. They said the German guards and German publications they were allowed showed that Germany was winning the war.

But Charles Woehlerle, a first lieutenant, said the prisoners’ spirits got a big boost one day when a new captive was spied wearing something unusual.

“One day, in walks a guy with a pair of coveralls we hadn’t seen before,” he said. “It was a heated (flight) suit. He had the wisdom of tearing off the connections at the ankles so the Germans didn’t see them. In there were beautiful copper wires.”

Before long, some Airmen came up with a recipe like none other, not for food, but for a radio. Starting with the basic ingredients of ingenuity, patience and determination, they mixed the copper wires with sulfur, silver linings from cigarette packs, resin from trees and other items, and before long, they had a homemade

radio, from which they could pick up the British Broadcasting Corporation.

“It was a very involved thing, but it worked and we got the BBC,” Lieutenant Woehlerle said. “We had to be careful. (The radio) was hidden in an accordion bellows and (the Germans) never found it. It was an odd-looking thing. What I got from the BBC was that we were winning the war.”

Although the captured Airmen were prisoners, their incarceration didn’t keep them from doing what they could to tie up German forces, which otherwise could have been employed on front lines.

Several escape attempts were made at SL III, sometimes in ones and twos, and sometimes in larger numbers. The most famous attempt, made on the night of March 24, 1944, became known as the “Great Escape” and it was hoped that 250 Airmen would make it through a tunnel that went 30 feet down, more than 330 feet out and 30 feet back up.

Seventy-six fliers made their way through the tunnel, code named “Harry.” Seventy-three, however, were recaptured, but three made it to freedom. Of the 73, Hitler ordered that 50 be executed and the others returned to SL III or other camps.

Lieutenant Woehlerle had the privilege of knowing some of the men involved with the “Great Escape.”

“(Flight Lieutenant) Henri Picard (of Belgium) was my roommate,” Lieutenant Woehlerle said. “He was a very fine man. He did a nice caricature of me, which I still have. He got killed. He was quiet. He was so brilliant and so talented. (Flight Lieutenant Arnold) Christensen (of New Zealand) was the other roommate I lost on the ‘Great Escape.’

“I knew (Royal Air Force Flight Lieutenant) Tim (Walenn) and I used to watch him work with his identification cards,” Lieutenant Woehlerle said. “He was absolutely brilliant. He was a mild fellow. He

loved birds and he could identify all the birds that came into the camp. In my log books, I have 11 names and addresses of those killed.”

Lieutenants Picard, Christensen and Walenn were among the 50 executed.

Colonel Frey said some of the men he knew in his part of the camp also tried escaping, but the German guards, called “ferrets” by the prisoners, sniffed it out.

“They discovered our tunnel,” said Lt. Col. (Ret.) Fred Frey. “We’d gone down about 20 feet and they took the ‘honey wagons’ (holding excrement), and dumped it in the tunnel. They covered it up with dirt and said, ‘You won’t use that again.’ The ferrets are running around all the time. If they see a pattern increasing, they know something’s going on.”

Despite failed escape attempts, a shortage of food and an uncertain future, the Airmen persisted. As the war continued, the German fronts crumbled and Lieutenant Woehlerle said one day in late January 1945 a strange sound was heard in the distance.

“We were hearing ‘boom booms’ and we knew the Russians were coming from the east. We were in our (camp) theater and the senior officer came in and said, ‘I just got word from the (German) *kommandant* that we’re to be out of here in one half of an hour. Go get your stuff!’”

Within a short time, thousands of prisoners and their guards were tramping west through the nighttime cold, the ground covered with snow and slush. They were “free” of SL III, but they were still prisoners and they weren’t sure where they were going or what the next day would bring.

The Airmen were marched and rode by train to Stalag VII-A in Moosberg, in southeast Germany. Their stories of their journey to SL VII-A and their liberation there in April of 1945 will be told in the next Mohawk.

A sketch of the west compound at Stalag Luft III, one of six compounds used to hold allied prisoners of war. More than 10,000 officer Airmen, including more than 6,800 American officers, were held at the camp until the Russian push into eastern Germany forced an evacuation of the prisoners by foot at midnight on Jan. 28, 1945 during a blizzard. The German Luftwaffe personnel running the camp were determined to prevent the liberation of the highly-trained Airmen by the rapidly advancing Russian Army and forced the prisoners to walk more than 62 miles in six days to other POW camps.

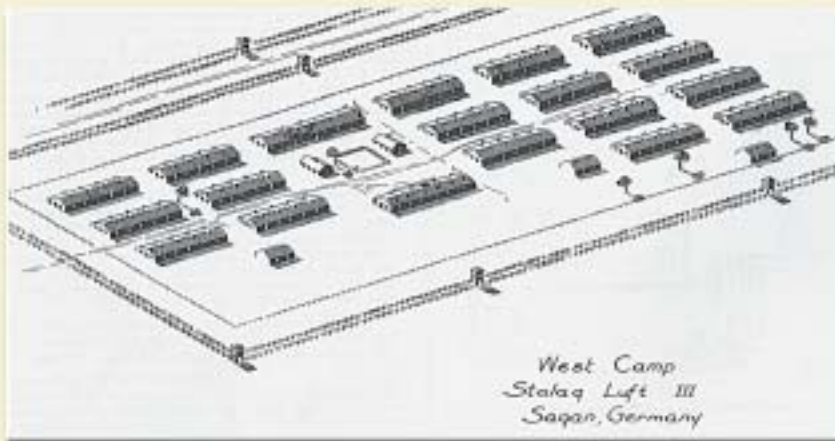


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Maj. Edward Ronnebaum, 710th Medical Squadron, holding a trophy at left, Master Sgt. Claudia Spooner, 442nd Mission Support Flight, holding a certificate, and Master Sgt. Anna Sewell, 710th Medical Squadron, holding a trophy at right, were among those recognized at the annual National Exercise Tiger Association awards banquet in Columbia, Mo., Sept. 21. Also in attendance were Col. Tony Johnson, 442nd vice wing commander and Master Sgt. Larry Washington, 442nd Mission Support Flight first sergeant.

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TO THE FAMILY OF:



**"Total Force Airmen of the U.S. Air Force past, present and future can take pride in their roles in the Air Force's success. Your service, dedication and sacrifice guarantee our ability to fly, fight and win for America today and into the future."
-- Air Force Secretary Michael W. Wynne and Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. T. Michael Moseley**