

SILENT WINGS MUSEUM: Newsletter



The Legacy of the World War II Glider Pilots

**Vol. 19 No. 2
Winter 2019**

GENERAL INFORMATION

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DIRECTIONS

DRIVING: NORTH LUBBOCK, I-27 AT EXIT 9. THE MUSEUM IS LOCATED IN THE HISTORIC OLD AIRPORT TERMINAL BUILDING JUST TWO BLOCKS EAST OF I-27. LOOK FOR THE SILVER "G" WINGS ON THE TOWER ABOVE THE ENTRANCE.

FLYING: THE MUSEUM IS ACCESSIBLE BY TAXI OR RENTAL CAR FROM THE AIRPORT TERMINAL. THE MUSEUM IS ADJACENT TO AND WITHIN EASY WALKING DISTANCE OF LUBBOCK AERO, FBO AT LUBBOCK PRESTON SMITH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT. GPS COORDINATES FOR THE MUSEUM ARE: N 33° 39.467' W 101° 49.911'

ADMISSION FEES

GENERAL ADMISSION	\$8.00
SENIOR CITIZENS (60+)	\$6.00
CHILDREN (AGES 7-17)	\$5.00
STUDENTS (W/ COLLEGE ID)	\$5.00
CHILDREN (6 & UNDER W/ FAMILY)	FREE
MUSEUM MEMBERS	FREE
ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY	FREE

MUSEUM HOURS

TUESDAY - SATURDAY	10 AM - 5 PM
SUNDAY	1 PM - 5 PM

CALL FOR HOLIDAY HOURS



2019 Veterans Day Celebration

IN THIS ISSUE

Around the Museum	2
2019 Veterans Day Celebration	3
SWM CG-4A Gets a Facelift	6
National WWII Glider Pilots Association	9
Research & News	
The Leon B. Spencer Research Team	16
A Glider Pilot's Christmas	17
In Memoriam	22
New Membership Program	23
Upcoming Changes	24

AROUND THE MUSEUM

Silent Wings Museum Staff

Director of the Municipal Museums
Jacqueline Bober

Assistant Municipal Museums Manager
Eddy Grigsby

Museum Curator
Sharon McCullar

Marketing and Special Events Coordinator
Jacqueline Marchildon

Museum Curator
Sebastian Forbush

Museums Store Manager
David Seitz



The Silent Wings Museum at Sunrise, Winter 2019

AROUND THE MUSEUM



On the very cold and windy Monday of November 11, 2019 the Silent Wings Museum hosted the annual Veteran's Day Celebration! The event featured Jack Woodville London, Director of Writing Education for the Military Writers Society of America (MWSA), and an award-winning author and military historian, as the guest speaker. With the help of the Helen Jones Foundation, this event was made possible. Thank you to everyone that was involved in making this event a success!



AROUND THE MUSEUM



Foxhole Christmas

The Silent Wings Museum hosted Foxhole Christmas on Saturday, December 14, 2019 and we had a great turnout. Guests learned how Christmas was celebrated in America during World War II! Participants had the opportunity to listen to music from the era, ate Christmas treats and decorated toy trucks that they got to take home. It was great fun for all ages and we are looking forward to next year.



Photos Taken By Sylvia Jennings

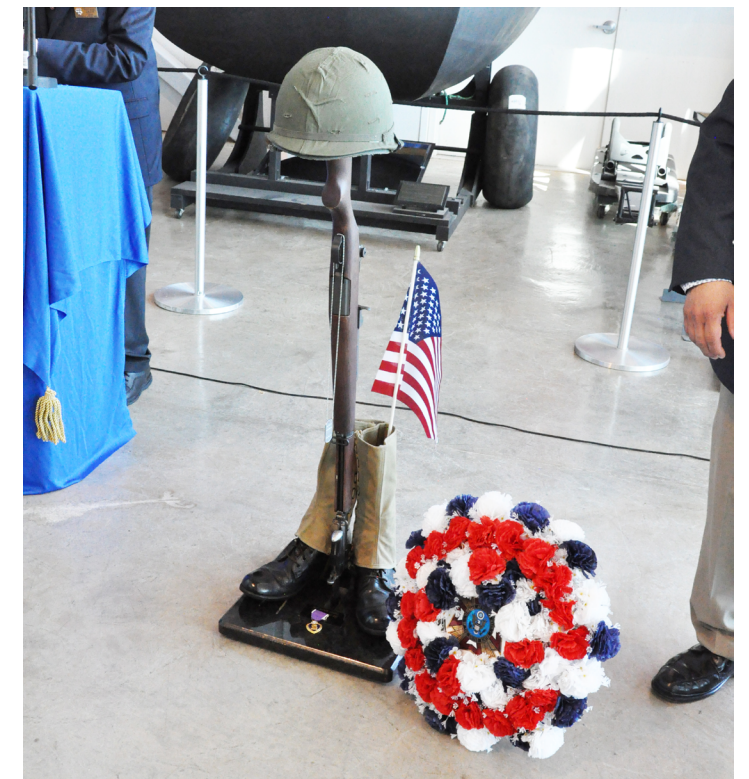
AROUND THE MUSEUM

Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

On December 7, 2019 the Lubbock Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Post 2466 honored the sacrifices made by our armed forces on December 7, 1941. The attack on Pearl Harbor has long been defined by heroism displayed by those survivors who rescued their fellow sailors from certain death.

The VFW in conjunction with the Military Order of the Purple Heart, Chapter 0900, hosted a Pearl Harbor remembrance ceremony at the Silent Wings Museum.

The ceremony included recognizing WWII veterans, introduction of Gold Star families, presentation of colors, wreath laying, playing of TAPS and folding the American flag.



Silent Wings Museum CG-4A Gets a Facelift

Sharon McCullar, Curator

Recently a treasure of the Silent Wings Museum had some work done, and the old girl is looking good!

She – aren't all beloved aircraft “she”? –has a complicated story. The fuselage and main wing sections were retrieved from atop a tire store in Fresno, California. Parts scrounged from across the country were used as is, refurbished, and in some cases served as examples for fabricating replicas.

This work began in earnest around 1974 and completed in 1979. Glider mechanics, glider pilots, and aircraft enthusiasts from across the United States and overseas contributed expertise, labor, and funds to see the restoration to completion. The results help tell the story of the WWII Glider Program every day at the Silent Wings Museum.

As this focal point of the Silent Wings Museum neared its 30th anniversary as an artifact, museum staff recommended that the cockpit be re-skinned due to condition issues. In the early 1980s the fuselage and tail sections were covered with modern materials, specifically Dacron polyester fabric and nitrate and butyrate dope formulations. “Dope” is a term for a chemical solution formulated for coating aircraft surfaces.

The cockpit is covered with cotton fabric. Synthetic fabric ages differently than organic fabric, notably experiencing less structural change in response to temperature and relative humidity fluctuations. The cotton fabric is also more susceptible to fiber breakdown as it ages.

The cockpit skin was showing signs of deterioration, tearing and splitting as the fabric contracted with age and response to environmental conditions. This

breakdown of materials then placed stress on the dope coating and wooden structural components. Replacement of these materials with synthetic fabric and modern dope formulas was recommended to stabilize the cockpit as a whole and bring all of the materials up to the same type.

In 2019, the Silent Wings Museum Foundation, Inc received a grant from the CH Foundation and work began. Silent Wings Museum engaged with Allison Aircraft, a contractor with extensive experience working with modern and vintage aircraft, to re-skin the cockpit. Aircraft mechanics from Lubbock Aero removed the cockpit, attached a temporary replacement, and re-installed the finished cockpit.

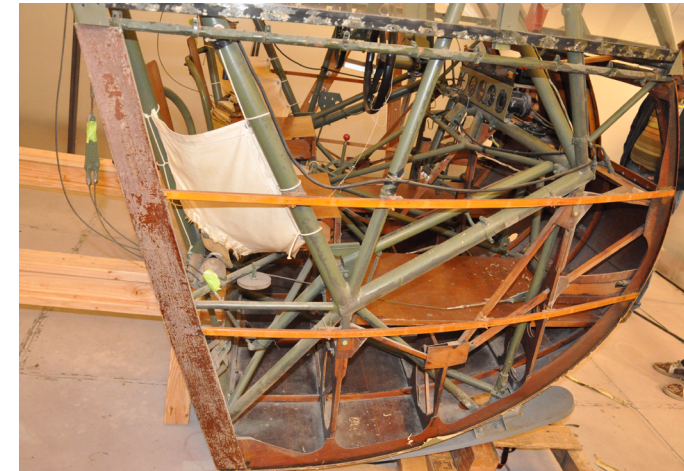


Under the watchful eye of the Glider Pilot in a nearby exhibit, Lubbock Aero mechanics remove cockpit for transport to work location.



Temporary cockpit applied during work. This cockpit made by a different manufacturer made fitting a delicate operation.

The major components of the re-skinning work were to: remove the old doped fabric, remove adhesive from the wooden and metal structural elements, perform minor repairs to the structural elements, and apply new aircraft fabric and dope coating. The removal of the old fabric without damaging the wooden structural elements was crucial and required a great deal of skill on the part of the contractors. Next, they used a solvent to remove adhesive residue. This prepared the surface to accept the new materials evenly.



Cockpit structure minus fabric.

Then the work of applying the polyester fabric began. Careful application is imperative, even in a non-flying museum artifact. The cotton fabric applied in the original manufacturing process was attached reasonably taut and then misted with water and dried to shrink the fabric tight.

Our re-skinning project used modern polyester fabric, which is heat-shrunk. A skilled hand is needed for this crucial step. Modern aircraft dope formulations do not continue to shrink and tighten the fabric as the nitrate dope did in the 1940s. Starting with an evenly taut polyester fabric surface is crucial to the final appearance. It will help our artifact CG-4A remain stable and avoid slippage of fabric on the structure.



Heat is carefully applied to shrink the polyester fabric taut to the cockpit structure.

After shrinking, the fabric was stitched to the cockpit structure to keep it from shifting, just as was done in World War II.

The dope used for this re-skinning project is of two different types and three different colors applied in thirteen layers. Each layer accomplishes a needed element for a stable final product.



Silver-impregnated dope over clear base layers protects the fabric from ultraviolet light.

AROUND THE MUSEUM



Final coat tinted green to match the rest of the CG-4A

Glider parts collected by the NWWIIGPA thirty years ago came in handy once more. These parts are separate from the museum artifact collection and were obtained specifically to facilitate museum glider restorations. Small screws used to hold the cockpit structure together were very difficult to remove and some broke off during the re-skinning process. Salvaged screws now hold the cockpit structure securely in place.



Re-skinned cockpit returns to its place on the CG-4A.

The color matches beautifully and the materials are expected to last for fifteen to twenty years, perhaps longer, under museum environment conditions. The project began in March and the re-skinned cockpit returned to the Silent Wings Museum on September 9, 2019.



Back home again.



NATIONAL WWII GLIDER PILOTS COMMITTEE NEWS, RESEARCH AND HISTORY

REUNION CHAIR
50TH ANNUAL REUNION
NATIONAL WWII GLIDER PILOT COMMITTEE
WILL BE HELD IN LUBBOCK, TX
Dates are October 8th, 9th, and 10th

- Mary Roemer,
National Reunion Chair
mailto: roemermary@gmail.com

NATIONAL CHAIRMAN

First of all, thank you to those in attendance for confirming me as your National Chair. I will do my utmost to live up to your confidence. I read a letter at the Saturday membership meeting from Charlie Day. Charlie announced that he is stepping down as National Secretary. We understand and accommodated that request. We did not, however, entertain the idea of his stepping down as Vice Chair of the Executive Council or from the Research Team. The Executive Council does a considerable amount of communication over email and Charlie is too valuable a resource to not keep him in that loop. The same goes for the Research Team. Charlie is a veritable encyclopedia when it comes to the CG4A glider and even though we will miss seeing him and Joyce at our reunions, his presence will still be felt in no small way. Claudia Coggin volunteered to fill the National Secretary seat and was confirmed by the membership. Thank you, Claudia.

Now, for the good part. What a great reunion! I know we say this year after year, but this one was a little different. First of all, it was the smallest reunion I have ever attended, but it lacked nothing in terms of the enthusiasm of those in attendance. The Thursday night presentations by the 94th Flying Training Squadron (FTS) cadets, Don Abbe, and Gary Stripling were an excellent set up for the events to follow and the presentations on Friday night by Alana Jolley,

Maj Ben Rushing, and Lt Col (ret) Mark Vlahos built on one another in a way I have never seen before.



94th Flying Training Squadron with Bill Cheolas. The Past, Present and Future Air Force Glider Pilots.

Several new members added a little different dynamic to the weekend. Two of those members were retired USAF officers, a trend I expect to see continue. And, as always, the contingent of staff and cadets from the 94th FTS were engaged, perhaps more than ever before, with the other members and especially with our venue hosts, the 82nd Airborne Division (Let's Go!). Speaking of the 82nd, they pulled out all the stops. We dined at Iron Mike on Fort Bragg Thursday and Friday nights. During the day on Friday, we had a great tour of Fort Bragg including the 82nd Airborne Museum. Then, believe it or not, we received a training session on their virtual ranges. Those that wanted fired the M4 rifle, several types of pistols and even a Squad Automatic Weapon (light machine gun). At the Saturday night banquet, Sharon McCullar, Curator Silent Wings Museum, and Barbara Woods, Project Manager for locating families of un-awarded Bronze Star Medals (BSM), made a special presentation of the BSM to Catherine Manning, the daughter of glider pilot John Manning.

Joan Abrahamson was the very deserving

NATIONAL WWII GLIDER PILOTS COMMITTEE NEWS, RESEARCH AND HISTORY

recipient of this year's WWII U.S. Glider Pilots Memorial Award (formerly the S. Tipton Randolph Award).

Our guest speaker was Lt. Colonel Stewart Lindsay, Commander of the 2nd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division. Col Lindsay gave an excellent overview of his unit's history, from its inception as an infantry regiment in WWI to becoming the 325th Glider Infantry Regiment in WWII to its present configuration as an Airborne unit. Col Lindsay knew his unit's history, knew its mission and knew first hand its capabilities. I, for one, was proud to just be in the same room with him.

I mentioned earlier that there was a special dynamic at this year's reunion. It was fascinating listening to the Air Force guys talking to the Army guys, the new members not being shy, even giving presentations, and the way the cadets seemed to be relaxed and comfortable interacting with everyone.

The unquestioned star of the show this year, however, was glider pilot Bill Cheolas. We didn't ask Bill to do any presentations this year, other than formally welcoming the 94th staff and cadets on Thursday night (which he handled like a pro). We didn't allow him to get tied up with outside interviews. We just let him relax and attend the reunion like everyone else. Well, almost everyone else. Every time I noticed him he had a crowd around him, was in high demand everywhere on Fort Bragg and was particularly engaged with the cadets. This is what we are all about.



Jonah Anestis, great grandson of Glider Pilot Van R Hatcher is talking with Power Glider Pilot Bill Cheolas.

Finally, a very special Thank You to Mary Roemer! She put all of this together and is already working on next year's reunion in Lubbock. Stay tuned!

P.S. I called Bill Cheolas on Veteran's Day. He is still pumped about the reunion in Fayetteville and is already planning his route to Lubbock. Look forward to seeing some more of our regulars next year.

P.P.S. Patricia Overman won the quilt at the raffle!

- R. Bruce Overman,
National Chairman

NATIONAL SECRETARY

Dues notices will be going out by email for those who we have email addresses for and those that we do not will be mailed. We now have an online membership payment system. You may update your dues for 2020 by visiting our website. <https://www.ww2gp.org/membership>

Do not miss out on:

- THE REUNION - Your reunion registration packets
- VISITING THE SWM - Free entrance to the Silent Wings Museum
- THE NEWSLETTER - comes quarterly, containing Silent Wings Museum events, the news of the Association and well researched Troop Carrier and Glider Pilot articles from our veterans and research team.
- GETTING RESEARCH HELP- Priority for research on WWII Troop Carrier veterans by our professional Team, the Leon B Spencer Research Team.
- GETTING INVOLVED WITH THE 94TH TRAINING SQUADRION - Being with an

NATIONAL WWII GLIDER PILOTS COMMITTEE NEWS, RESEARCH AND HISTORY

organization that has ties to the Air Force Academy's 94th Flying Training Squadron

- VOLUNTEERING TO PRESERVE TROOP CARRIER HISTORY.

- Claudia Coggin,
National Secretary

Veterans, you will be receiving Christmas cards again this year from Eileen Oswainy's project.

- Patricia Overman,
National Wing Commander

NATIONAL WING COMMANDER

I have not been very active in contacting veterans or in helping the research team this last quarter. Our website service provider updated the database server and many of the forms, and outputs to the website crashed. Some of it they fixed but much of the fix required rewriting a good amount of the database driven pages. Probably much of my coding was deprecated. Some of the rewrite was time sensitive due to our new online system. This type of work is usually done by a development team but I'm it until our Committee wins the lottery.

I talked to Frank Brandon and he believes he now knows where his glider went down. Hope we can help verify this information.

Also have talked to Bill Cheolas, Gerald Berry and Ray Hughes. Ray sent me a book that his sons put together from Rays memoirs. Ray was a Power Glider Pilots. Those were the men who had graduated from advance flight school and were pooled in the late summer and early fall of 1944, and were sent to advance glider training at either Lubbock or Laurinburg Maxton. They all attended technical training at Laurinburg Maxton. They were then sent to the ETO arriving after November 1st. Ray arrived in November and what is not mentioned in the book is that Ray flew his first combat mission as a C-47 copilot resupplying the 101st at Bastogne. He received his first Air Medal for Bastogne. He then went on to fly his glider combat mission, Rhine Crossing, and received a Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster for this aerial action.

INTERNATIONAL DIRECTOR

MARKET GARDEN +75 YEARS

Last September it was 75 years ago that Operation Market Garden was executed. There were many events throughout the week. Each day there were C-47 and/or C-130 flying around, to drop some paratroopers at a location. And two different columns of WW2 vehicles drove the Hell's Highway route from the Belgium-Dutch border to the Island, between Nijmegen and Arnhem. Besides that, there were numerous small columns driving through villages to commemorate the liberation of those.

My work schedule prevented to attend each event. So I started on September 8 to man an information stand at Jachtslot Mookerheide. That area had been used by the glider pilots who had flown in the 82nd Airborne Division as assembly area. German prisoners were guarded in the gardens of the hunting lodge by glider pilots. Pretty interesting. The building and grounds are now part of Natuurmonumenten, an organization preserving nature in Holland. The building needs to be renovated, a 5 million euro project. Apparently someone is working on a book about the history of the hunting lodge, and I offered help to them so they could tell as well about the Glider Pilot activities on the grounds. And, when time is there, I think I ask if a plaque can be installed to commemorate the glider pilot work in that area.

NATIONAL WWII GLIDER PILOTS COMMITTEE NEWS, RESEARCH AND HISTORY



Red and white roses at the Troop Carrier monument at Son. The monument commemorates the 434th 435th 436th 437th 438th and 442nd Troop Carrier Groups.

My next scheduled event was on September 16. A parachute drop near Son was the plan. As I was involved with Remember September 1944 Foundation to place the Troop Carrier monument there, I wanted to be at the drop. It turned out the drop was delayed, by 4 ½ hours. I never witnessed the drop. I did place flowers at the Troop Carrier monument and at two sites where a C-47 ad crashed.



Mr. Harry Hesketh, nephew of pilot Lt. John Hesketh, surrounded by present day members of the 435th and 76th at the newly inaugurated monument.

September 19 was another day I had planned. The son of glider pilot F/O James Ferrin was in Holland. His father was with 305th Troop Carrier Squadron and landed in Holland on September 19, 1944. After the war he wrote a book. That book, together with other information made it possible to find the field where he landed.

Our first stop was the Troop Carrier monument at Son, the intended landing zone for his father. From there we moved to the Wings of Liberation museum at Best. This to see a real glider frame, and a glider replica. The museum has fell victim of some cuts in exposition space...the owner uses some buildings for other purposes that might bring in more money Business is business.

Then we went to Schijndel, had lunch. A friend of mine had said he had a glider wheel that might be from F/O Ferrin's glider, or one of the other two gliders that had landed nearby. How close can one get to material used by a loved one in WW2?

Then we visited the St. Lidwina building. Used in 1944 as a hospital where at least three glider pilots of the 305th TCS had been hiding for the Germans. From here we drove to the field where his father landed 75 years earlier. We walked around the field and asked to owner if we could go into the field. We could and were right in the middle of the field. First material, not the spot where it happened...how close can one get to that?

From the field we drove to the Silent Wings monument at Den Dungen and from there to the Freeland museum at Gemonde. All places related to the 305th TCS mis-landings of 19 September 1944. We ended the day with a lovely dinner.

NATIONAL WWII GLIDER PILOTS COMMITTEE NEWS, RESEARCH AND HISTORY



Jim Ferrin and his wife Margo at the edge of the field where his father landed and became prisoner of war, exactly 75 years before this photo was taken. Another glider of the squadron landed in this field and one landed a few hundred meters to the west.

Two days later I moved to Kastelee, Belgium. There was the inauguration of a new monument. This was for a C-47 crew of the 76th Troop Carrier Squadron. Since 2013 I had been in touch with family of the pilot, and for this event they came over with 10 persons. All nephews and nieces. Besides that, there were representatives of the present day 435th Troop Carrier Group from Germany (2 persons) and from 76th Troop Carrier Squadron from the USA (10 persons). The ceremony was beautiful and I had a speech about the Market Garden history and what happened that day. And boy, the Belgians know how to end a ceremony, with the lovely Belgium beer.

It took some organization to get it all working, in preparation phase about when the event would be and on the day for transportation. But in the end, it all worked out fine.

A week later, on September 28, there was another inauguration of a monument. Actually two. That was at Gemonde. The first was for a C-47 crew that crashed there on September 23, 1944. Friends working on the site discovered the dog tag of one

of the two fatal casualties. That will be sent to the family in the USA. The ceremony there was nice. It was pretty windy. The design with the rivets is very nice.



Mr Cees de Laat. Mr. De Laat was recognized for his courage and defiance of the German soldiers in his area.

The second phase was at the resistance monument where a plaque was unveiled with the names of the Americans who received help from the local resistance. As International Director of the National WW2 Glider Pilot Association I was honored to recognize one of the first helpers of the men from F/O Swanson's glider. After 75 years, Mr. De Laat was recognized for his courage. That was a complete success with thanks of Bevrijding Gemonde and National WW2 Glider Pilot Association. After the ceremonies there was coffee and lunch. Well organized.

NATIONAL WWII GLIDER PILOTS COMMITTEE NEWS, RESEARCH AND HISTORY



Hans den Brok Representing National WW2 Glider Pilot Committee at Gemonde, and acknowledging the actions of Mr. De Laat which resulted in preventing F/O Swanson and his passengers becoming prisoner of war (or worse)

- Hans den Brok,
International Director

Glider #42-77277, a fine Ford built glider, in mission code named DOVE, Serial 22, Chalk number 21. Forty-seven CG-4A gliders were flown in Serial 22, leaving, Italy from Galera air field at 1545 (3:45PM), August 15, 1944.



Flight Officer Stevens took a few minutes after his landing to take a photo of his glider while waiting for evacuation to the first D day Field hospital in Le Mitan hamlett located in Mr Lavagne barn.

The formation flew up the coast of Italy, then over to the tip of Corsica and releasing at 1800 (6PM) in Southern France over landing zone (LZ) O, between the towns of La motte and a twelfth century village of Les Arcs. The glider pilots who landed in or around LZ O were evacuated to the town of Le Mitan.

JM had a lot of prep work to do before Hilde and Rod arrived, scheduled for 29 September 2019.

Also on the International Scene:

Our research team extends long and far. We have Hans den Brok and Christian Dijkhuizen in the Netherlands, Jeff McGovern at Ramstein Germany and Jean Michel (JM) Soldi in Southern France. All of these members frequently take time from their busy work schedule to meet with visiting veterans and their families to help with field study around there are: Landing Zones, Command Posts, Medical Aid Stations, POW cages etc.

On 29 September 2019, JM guided a tour of the Landing Zone near Le Motte for the daughter, Hilde, and son-in-law, Rod, of glider pilot Flight Officer Clarence Stevens, 1919-1999. FO Steven's Piloted

NATIONAL WWII GLIDER PILOTS COMMITTEE NEWS, RESEARCH AND HISTORY



Hilde and Rod. Daughter and son-in-law, Rod, of glider pilot Flight Officer Clarence Stevens. MJ tour, 29 September 2019

With his son Adrien, JM, was able to locate the exact field that FO Steven's had landed based on a photo sent to our research team earlier by Hilde. According to Hilde her father was injured in the glider landing. The glider hit the ground hard on landing and the jeep they were carrying broke loose from its mooring impacting with both Lt. Stevens' and his copilot's, Lt Andrew's back.

It seemed the injury did not detour Lt Stevens from using the small camera he had stowed away in his Musset bag to take a photo of his glider while awaiting medical evacuation. The injured were taken to the first D day field hospital in Le Mitan. The field hospital was established in Mr. Lavagne's barn, a local farmer. Lt Stevens would have been evacuated to this hospital and then onto the beach head, then to Italy, and eventually back to the U.S. There was a lot to show Hilde and Rob about there With a lot of emotion they visited le Mitan hamlett which was also the first airborne task force division H.Q. and had a tour of landing zone O. North of the village of La Motte where JM showed the glider a wing part still in the top of a tree since D day of the 15th of August 1944. Hilde and Rod spend few other day visiting the

Provence region before leaving for Germany for the end of the trip.



Hilde and Jean Michel Soldi in front of the landing zone that F/O Stevens came landed in 1944.



Hilde is visiting the Southern France Liberation Monument at La Motte and is photographing the The National World War II Glider Pilots Association of the U.S.A. memorial plaque which was dedicated on August 15, 2001.

Great job Jean Michel and Hans for it cannot be easy to schedule and work around these tours while working a full time job.

- Jean Michel Soldi
Patricia Overman

NATIONAL WWII GLIDER PILOTS COMMITTEE NEWS, RESEARCH AND HISTORY

LEON B SPENCER RESEARCH TEAM

Eight of our Seventeen Research Team members attended the 49th Reunion in Fayetteville. RT members attending included Don Abbe, Chuck Hobbs, Tom Martin, Bill Moline, Patricia Overman, Keith Thoms, Gary Stripling, and Mark Vlahos. The RT members present were kept very busy answering requests from members for information on their Glider Pilot or Troop Carrier Crew member relative. In addition, a number of members attending brought documents, photos, and many questions that RT members attempted to respond to.

On Thursday evening I presented the 2019 Annual Report of the Leon B Spencer Research Team. A few of the key points are summarized below:

WHO MAKES REQUEST TO THE RT?

- 32% Sons
- 26% Daughters
- 20% Grandchildren
- 01% Great Grandchildren
- 14% Other Family members
- 07% Non-Family

I explained the typical process that the RT members follow from receipt of a request to the update of the glider pilot's bio file in the database. It was pointed out that the database can only be updated using "Solid Documentation" and the types of documents were listed that were considered solid documentation. I then explained what was included in a typical glider pilot bio file and followed that with a summary of the growth of Family Requests and RT Responses over the past three years.

FAMILY REQUESTS / RT RESULTS

- 2017 - 54 Glider Pilots / 174 documents located
- 2018 - 62 Glider Pilots / 271 documents located
- 2019 - 147 Glider Pilots / 274 documents (thru mid-Sept)

I closed the presentation with the following
KEY TAKE AWAYS

- RESEARCH TEAM IS ALL VOLUNTEER,
- RT SEARCHES FOR RECORDS & UPDATE DB FOR EACH GP,
- RT MEMBERS SERVE AS HISTORIANS, GLIDER PROGRAM EXPERTS, LANDING SITE GUIDES AND HOSTS, MEMORIAL CHAMPIONS, AUTHORS OF BOOK AND ARTICLES,
- FAMILY REQUESTS ARE INCREASING, RESPONSE BACKLOG AND RESPONSE DELAY IS GROWING,
- NEED MORE RESEARCH AND DB ENTRY SUPPORT
- NEED SYSTEM TO TRACK REQUESTS & RESPONSES
- NEED FAMILY FEEDBACK LOOP

- Gary Stripling
Project Manager

Leon B Spencer Research Team



NATIONAL WWII GLIDER PILOTS COMMITTEE NEWS, RESEARCH AND HISTORY

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF BASTOGNE

A GLIDER PILOT'S CHRISTMAS Mel Brockman

Oh! Let us speak of Christmas
At Bastogne in '44,
When the Airborne saw Ole Santa come
In gliders by the score.

They'd asked him for their presents
Such as shells and gas for tanks.
They also hoped for aid supplies
For wounded in their ranks.

With Santa flying the tow-plane
And GPs at the glider controls,
The Germans were caught astounded
Below in the snow and cold.

'Twas o're forty years you'll remember,
And the Airborne was in a tight fix
So forgive them for not seeing gliders,
But a sled that belonged to St. Nick.

If you've gone along with this story,
Then we know that you truly believe
That there really is a Santa Claus
Bring love on this Christmas Eve.

* * *

As many of you know for Troop Carrier Command Bastogne was an emergency resupply to the 101st and Hogan's Task Force, 82nd Airborne in the areas of Bastogne and Macouray, Belgium, during the German counter offensive. The missions were weather dependent and did not cooperate with our AAF until "just in time".

Besides the many C-47 bundle drops, there were three glider missions all dedicated to resupplying the 101st Airborne Division. The first one was a single glider piloted by 2nd Lt Charlton W. Corwin, Jr and copilot F/O Benjamin F. Constantino, 96th TCS, 440th TCG.. According to 2nd Lt. Corwin's Interrogation report (the report given upon return to

base) they took off with Surgeons and other medical staff and supplies at 1440 hours (2:40 pm). McAuliffe had lost his medical hospital staff to the Germans shortly after his arrival in Bastogne around the 18th of December and was in desperate need of medical staff.

Lt Corwin's report:

Take off from A-82 at 1410. Met no enemy action of any kind during flight. Received green light to cut over field which I would say was 2 and ½ miles to 3 miles from the field which I was supposed to cut. We were briefed that our LZ would have a smudge pot signal with a great deal of smoke and a T panel and we had an air photo map of the area showing a pin point location of the field. Coming over this field I saw plenty of smoke. I thought that must be it but I believed that according to the map we weren't there. Bastogne was still off in the distance.

As we approached the smoke I took a good look and satisfied myself that it was not our signal and I was determined to hang on until the sip pulled me into what I thought was the correct target. My co-pilot noticed that I did not cut on green light, so he immediately yelled that I had the green light to cut and that we had passed over the field with smoke and panels in it. When I heard the word panel I accepted that the tow ship was right and cut. Had gone some distant past the field so had to make a 180 degree turn immediately upon releasing and glide back to area over which I received green light. Landing in field next to wood near B Company position on west perimeter of 101st Airborne Division, 1000 yards from enemy lines.

After landing we learned from infantry platoon leader that the field over which we received the signal to release was on panel identification system used to show our fighter-bombers the line of battle so that they would not bomb and strafe inside of that line and hit our own troops.

Helped unload glider and hid medical equipment in the woods. Three of the surgeons received immediate

NATIONAL WWII GLIDER PILOTS COMMITTEE NEWS, RESEARCH AND HISTORY

jeep transportation to the Division hospital. The rest of the surgeons had to wait about an hour before getting a truck, loading the equipment and arriving at Div. I arrived at Div around 1730-. Was evacuated from division at 1400 the next day. Took prisoners in trucks to 8 Corps Hq at Florenville. From there the next morning, 28 Dec 44 we were given rail transportation to Paris. Arrived at Orleans 2100 29 Dec 44 by train.



The next mission was a ten glider mission. On the 25th or December the 440th received orders regarding their cargo—3000 gallons of 80 octane gasoline. Each glider would carry 300 gallons of gasoline in five gallon jerry cans lashed together and secured to the floor behind the pilots!

I choose co-pilot Flight Officer George L Dekker's report for this article because it relates to the next mission which I thought was interesting.
F/O Dekker's Interrogation Report:

Take off time was 1515 hrs, over target at 17:30 hrs. Glider 42-74019, 96th Sqd, formation #5. Took off flew out to IP, nearing the IP [initial point] we saw our fighter escort take off and come to lead us in about five minutes out from the LZ. We got our first flak and small arms 20mm fire and the stuff got worse as we went into the LZ. Made the landing and took cover returning to the glider for my equipment, noticed it was full of holes and had lost two cans of the 60 cans of gas that we went in with [Note next, Charlie's article]. The 101st Airborne boys were glad

to see the suff too. That night we tried to rest under a duel of artillery. The next day we saw 37 more glider and their tow planes coming in on the same course we had taken the day before. They ran into the same concentration of flak and small arms fire. Saw planes shot down all around us. We were sent out of the newly opened road with 700 prisoners to a rail head and then to Paris after 28 hours on the train.

Mission number 1117, same mission F/O Dekker witnessed, was a 50 glider mission executed on the 27th of December. Their loads were gasoline, medical supplies and lots of ammunition. The 439th Troop Carrier Group was given this mission and were to fly with only one pilot in each glider.

2nd Lt. Mack Striplin's Interrogation report:

Take off time was 1038 hrs, over target at 1231 hrs. Glider 43-41075, 93rd Sqd, formation/chalk #29.

Take off and flight en route were good. Hit intensive flak about three minutes from LZ. Glider was struck in left wing by direct hit, and many holes were punched by flack fragment in fuselage and tail as well. Recognized LZ by smoke, cut properly and landed what looked to be good field from air. But when wheels had touched I saw a large ditch and fence ahead, which I negotiated without damage to myself or load. Ground was slippery, and I had to dig in a wing in order to stop. Artillery unit unloaded glider.

I went to Div CP, being the first GP to arrive, and gave information where to find the small box of priers for the 155 mm shells in each glider. I was asked by the commanding officer to accompany him and make sure all primers were removed from the gliders. Upon stating to return to Bastogne, we were delayed one and one half hours while the enemy were shelling abridge. When we returned, the other GPs had already been evacuated. I spent the night in Bastogne; it was heavily bombed and strafed by the Germans. I saw no AA defense other

NATIONAL WWII GLIDER PILOTS COMMITTEE: SILENT WINGS MUSEUM FOUNDATION

than.50 cal mg. During my stay in Bastogne I saw a P-47 strafe our own troops. I was evacuated at 1230 A, 28 Dec, together with PWs and American troops being relieved The trucks took us to Florenville where the VIII Corps Hq sent be by jeep to Luxembourg City. Arrived there about 1800, and had great trouble getting a place to eat and sleep. Left Luxembourg in a 94th TC Sq plane for Paris at 1445 A, 29 Dec, arriving at 1600. I noticed a 93 TC Sq plane on the field and went to it, but for one reason or another it was ordered not to take off. We spent two nights in Paris in poor quarters near the field. Returned to A-39 at 1100, 31 December.

Lt Col Barnes FA, at Bastogne said that as he saw us flying in he knew we would pass over intense flak, because he had known for some time that the Germans had flak positions on the course we flew.

Numerous people with whom I talked at Bastogne seemed to think that we should have known that the corridor had been opened by the 4th Armored Div.

At Luxembourg a Lt Col, AC, connected with G-2 said that he would like to know who passed out the information that flak was south of the RR, because the fact of the matter was exactly the reverse.

Flight Officer Narcise M Monje, 93rd TC Sq, in Formation/Chalk 34, also mentioned the corridor in which the 50 gliders followed:

Report by F/O Monje:

TO and flight enrout were good. Met accurate automatic weapons and small arms fire during last three minutes of run-in. Had no difficulty in landing. Load pick up by AB./ I proceeded to Div. CP. Was evacuated 1500 A to Florenville where I remained overnight. Thence by train to Paris arriving 1200 A 29 Dec 44. Thence by air to A-39. A Captain of the 4th Armored Div. (704 TD Bn?) said "We broke through to Bastogne at 2300 A 26 December 44 and we radioed this information immediately. We have been firing at a battery of

five 88's NQ of Bastogne and at three to five batteries of AA guns five miles SW of Bastogne by N of the RR track which were right on your course. I do not understand why you came in that way."



Some glider pilots just before take-off on Dec 27th. Each will fly by himself delivering much needed Ammunition, and medical supplies. The first glider pilot on the left is Claude "Chuck" Berry father of Beth Stripling.

All in all there are 56 reports from each of the glider pilots and copilots. 72 pilots flew. The missing reports are those pilots who became Prisoners of War because their tow plane was shot down, or their tow rope was severed by small arms fire or flak forcing them down in enemy territory. Missing also are the reports that would have been made by the four glider pilots who were killed in action, 2nd Lt Raymnd G SCHOTT, George S FREEMEN, Douglas C. BLOOMFIELD and GERALD D KNOTT. I hope to eventually get these reports available to members. There is a lot more information in these three page reports other than the summary which has been printed here.

If you would like to find out more about Bastogne Troop Carrier missions we have a detailed account on the Glider Pilot's website. This includes, the situation and how the offensive happened, all the Troop Carrier bundle drops schedules etc. This also includes the information that actually was given to Col. Charles Young about the route, corridor of flight for the 50 gliders

<https://www.ww2gp.org/ardennessituation.php>

- Patricia Overman

NATIONAL WWII GLIDER PILOTS COMMITTEE: SILENT WINGS MUSEUM FOUNDATION

GASOLINE AND 5 GALLON CANS, A PRIMER:



Gasoline jerry cans: SC 195413-A Gasoline supply dump in Belgium. Trucks are being loaded with fuel cans for trips to front lines. 10/22/44 [By counting the number in the first row and counting the rows, the 10 Bastogne gliders carrying 60 each gasoline cans into Bastogne on Dec 27, 1944, would be approximately 2/3 of the cans on the ground in this image.]

The design of the U.S. military steel jerry can was established during World War II and did not change until the introduction of the plastic 5 gallon jerry cans in the late 1980's. The dimensions and specifications:

- Length 13.75 in.
- Width 6.75 in.
- Height 18.75 in.
- Weight (empty) 10.5 lb.
- Liquid Capacity 5.05 gal. or 20 liters

(Ft Campbell historians calculated: 35.0 lb with gasoline). The Exception: 5 gallons of gasoline weighs 31.25 lb plus 10.5 lb can = 41.75 lb, not 35 lb as Ft Campbell stated. 5 gallon of water weighs 46.15 lb, plus 10.5 lb can = 56.65 lb.

Rex Shama in Pulse and Repulse on page 210 reports that 50th Wing Order #361 received in early hours of December 26, 1944 at 440 Troop Carrier Group at Orleans France was explicit that the load for the 10 glider resupply was to be gasoline. Each glider

was to carry 300 gallons of 80 octane gasoline in five gallon jerry cans. At the end of that same paragraph he quotes an unidentified glider pilot as saying, "We had gasoline lashed to our backs". That quote is followed by the statement that the typical load was fifty-nine or sixty jerry cans. This statement of a one can variation in number of cans is not attributed to a glider pilot specifically. It is only a statement. On page 226, Shama wrote that glider chalk #36 carried four surgeons and 155 mm howitzer shells. I see no mention of gasoline by Shama in the 50 glider serial on the 27th, nor mention of surgeons or medical supplies or ammunition in the ten glider serial.

Charles Young, page 342 Into the Valley states the ten glider mission on the 26th carried 2,975 gallons of 80 octane gasoline. This equates to 595 five gallon jerry cans of gasoline, or 59 1/2 five gallon jerry cans of gasoline per glider. Another distribution would be that nine gliders carried 60 cans and one glider carried 55 cans. Another variation would be that five gliders carried 60 cans and five gliders carried 59 cans. Was the supply depot short five jerry cans or were they short 25 gallons of gasoline?

Young on page 373 presents part of the Historical Summary of the Bastogne/Battle of the Bulge: There were two glider missions planned to Bastogne. The first one was split into two flights. The first flight was one glider carrying five surgeons, four medical technicians and medical supplies. The second flight was ten gliders carrying 2,975 gallons of 80 octane gasoline (note that this is 25 gallons or five cans short of the Wing order #361). The second mission was a 50 glider mission carrying heavy ammunition comprised mainly of 155 mm shells, plus the detonators, plus more (4) surgeons. The real need was for the larger 155 howitzer shells. Dick Fort in Young's book thinks he carried 105 mm shells. In Young's book I see no mention of surgeons or medical supplies or ammunition in the ten glider serial.

Gerard M. Devlin in Silent Wings on pages 292-293 and 295 states, pertaining to the ten glider serial to Bastogne on December 26, "... 10 more Wacos were

NATIONAL WWII GLIDER PILOTS COMMITTEE NEWS, RESEARCH AND HISTORY

loaded with additional medical personnel, gasoline and artillery shells ...". Page 293 states that both F/O Morgan and Lt Price carried only 50 cans of gasoline each. Page 295 states that the 50 glider serial was loaded with howitzer shells and gasoline.

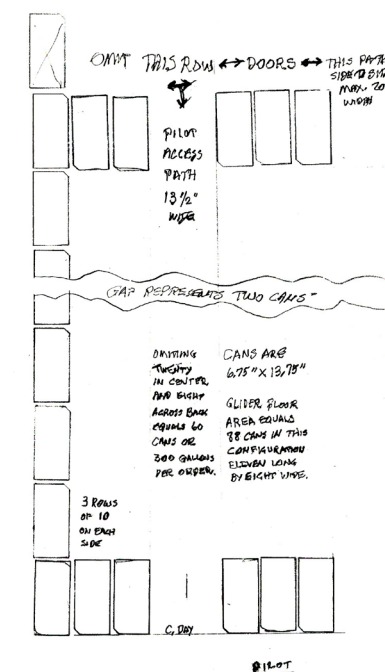
The 50th Wing Order #361 order called for 60 cans per each of the ten gliders. Young's figure was 595 cans of gasoline (2,975 gallons) or one can short for five gliders and 60 cans in the other five gliders. Devlin wrote there were two of the ten gliders carrying only 50 cans each which makes the total gasoline cans twenty cans short of the wing order and fifteen cans short of Young's total. Also, if as Devlin states, there were medical personnel and artillery shells in any of these ten gliders one bench for the personnel not including foot space would remove or displace another twelve cans per bench, lowering the total number of gasoline cans. Artillery shells were in individual tube like containers. Guessing at the length of these, it can be assumed a small pile of these shells would displace as many cans as would one bench.

The ten gliders of the second flight flew with pilot and copilot and could easily have carried 70 five gallon jerry cans of gasoline while remaining under the designed gross weight – still leaving a 7 inch wide path down the center for the pilots to take their places. Without regard for weight or a path for the pilots, the CG-4A floor could accommodate 88 jerry cans positioned in the configuration shown on the following diagram. The steel jerry can and five gallons of gasoline weighed 41.75 lb. The same can with water weighed 56.65 lb. It is possible that the person at Wing level who calculated the number of cans per glider for the mission used the water weight? Using the water weight the glider with 60 cans and two pilots would be under the design gross weight. Thus, using this incorrect weight pilots may have selected to remove several cans before the flight?

If it is true that less than 300 gallons was carried by a glider, would it be a direct violation of Wing orders to carry less than 60 cans? Partially filled cans with

only 3 or 4 gallons could have allowed the gasoline to "slosh" in the can and several "sloshing" cans could have affected the flight of the glider. My belief is the ten glider serial carried only gasoline and the 50 glider serial on December 27 carried a few more (4) medical personnel and artillery shells. Most writers do not mention gasoline in the 50 glider serial.

The below drawing shows a probable layout of 60 cans in a CG-4A. There would be three rows of ten cans on each side. This leaves 13" down the center and across the rear open to create a path for the pilots to enter the loaded glider. If the cans were arranged in the opposite direction with the 13.75" length of the can across the width of the floor only four cans would fit across the width. With the 6.75" width of the can running front to back, this arrangement of 60 cans would make four rows of 15 cans, front to back. This would leave an open area almost 57" by the width of the glider floor (58") in the rear. For balance the cans would have to be loaded closer to the front but with the 57" X 58" area to the rear the glider may have been nose heavy. This arrangement would leave plenty of entry space for the pilots in the rear but would not allow a path to the controls other than crawling on the gas cans. How many cans and gallons of gasoline were carried in which gliders in which flight?



Possible position of 60 five gallon cans of gasoline in CG-4A glider allowing a 13 inch wide path for pilot entry down the center from the rear entry doors

- Charles Day

IN MEMORIAM

George F. Wasson 1919 - 7/14/2019
Bethel Park, Pennsylvania
440 TCG, 95 TCS

Carroll A. Ray 5/26/1922 - 5/05/2019
Huron, South Dakota
439 TCG, 91 TCS

Carl G. Belville 5/31/1918 - 11/15/2019
Cartersville, Georgia
441 TCG, 302 TCS

Gertrude K. Finklestein 2/17/1916 - 10/24/2019
Gotha, Florida
Wife of Glider Pilot Wilton J. Finklestein

Jerome H. Miller 8/21/1921 - 1/21/2019
New York, New York
62 TCG, 7 TCS

John Donnelly Hardie 3/2/1922 - 8/5/2019
Fort Myers, Florida
3AC TCG, 318 TCS

James L. Kuhns 6/20/1920 - 6/17/2019
Hamburg, Iowa
441 TCG, 100 TCS



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Did your glider pilot write anything down about his experience? Share that memory for his biographical file at the Silent Wings Museum by emailing it to SMcCullar@mail.ci.lubbock.tx.us

We look forward to hearing from you!

Flight Officer George L. Carver painted this squadron emblem on a scrap of glider fabric in early 1945.

Netherlands East Indies (New Guinea)

UPCOMING CHANGES:
Moving Digital
Silent Wings Museum Newsletter is Going Digital!

<p>SILENT WINGS MUSEUM: Newsletter</p> <p>The Legacy of the World War II Glider Pilots</p>		 <p>Vol. 18 No. 4 Summer 2019</p>																							
<p>GENERAL INFORMATION</p> <p>6202 N. I-27 LUBBOCK, TEXAS 79403 - 9710</p> <p>DIRECT LINE 806.775.3049 INFORMATION 806.775.3796 FAX 806.775.3337 WEB WWW.SILENTWINGSMUSEUM.COM</p> <p>DIRECTIONS DRIVING: NORTH LUBBOCK, I-27 AT EXIT 9. THE MUSEUM IS LOCATED IN THE HISTORIC OLD AIRPORT TERMINAL BUILDING JUST TWO BLOCKS EAST OF I-27. LOOK FOR THE SILVER "G" WINGS ON THE TOWER ABOVE THE ENTRANCE.</p> <p>FLYING: THE MUSEUM IS ACCESSIBLE BY TAXI OR RENTAL CAR FROM THE AIRPORT TERMINAL. THE MUSEUM IS ADJACENT TO AND WITHIN EASY WALKING DISTANCE OF LUBBOCK AERO, FBO AT LUBBOCK PRESTON SMITH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT. GPS COORDINATES FOR THE MUSEUM ARE: N 33° 39.467' W 101° 49.911'</p> <p>ADMISSION FEES</p> <table border="0"> <tr><td>GENERAL ADMISSION</td><td>\$8.00</td></tr> <tr><td>SENIOR CITIZENS (60+)</td><td>\$6.00</td></tr> <tr><td>CHILDREN (AGES 7-17)</td><td>\$5.00</td></tr> <tr><td>STUDENTS (w/ COLLEGE ID)</td><td>\$5.00</td></tr> <tr><td>CHILDREN (6 & UNDER w/ FAMILY)</td><td>FREE</td></tr> <tr><td>MUSEUM MEMBERS</td><td>FREE</td></tr> <tr><td>ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY</td><td>FREE</td></tr> </table> <p>MUSEUM HOURS</p> <table border="0"> <tr><td>TUESDAY - SATURDAY</td><td>10 AM - 5 PM</td></tr> <tr><td>SUNDAY</td><td>1 PM - 5 PM</td></tr> </table> <p>CALL FOR HOLIDAY HOURS</p>				GENERAL ADMISSION	\$8.00	SENIOR CITIZENS (60+)	\$6.00	CHILDREN (AGES 7-17)	\$5.00	STUDENTS (w/ COLLEGE ID)	\$5.00	CHILDREN (6 & UNDER w/ FAMILY)	FREE	MUSEUM MEMBERS	FREE	ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY	FREE	TUESDAY - SATURDAY	10 AM - 5 PM	SUNDAY	1 PM - 5 PM				
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Help bring the Silent Wings Museum newsletter into the digital age! We are preparing to transition to a digital newsletter by the Fall 2020 issue, continuing to bring you the latest information about the activities of the Silent Wings Museum and the National World War II Glider Pilots Committee. A test digital document will go out on February 28, 2020 to the emails we have on file. If you do not receive a welcome email from us at that time, we would very much appreciate a quick email to our Marketing and Special Events coordinator Jacqueline Marchildon so we can add you to the list.

The next two issues (Spring 2020 and Summer 2020) will be paper issues as we work to compile a complete list of emails.

Thank you for your support! Your membership is greatly appreciated and is vital to the ongoing work of preserving the legacy of the World War II Glider Program and telling its story to future generations.

Jacqueline's email is Jmarchildon@mylubbock.us