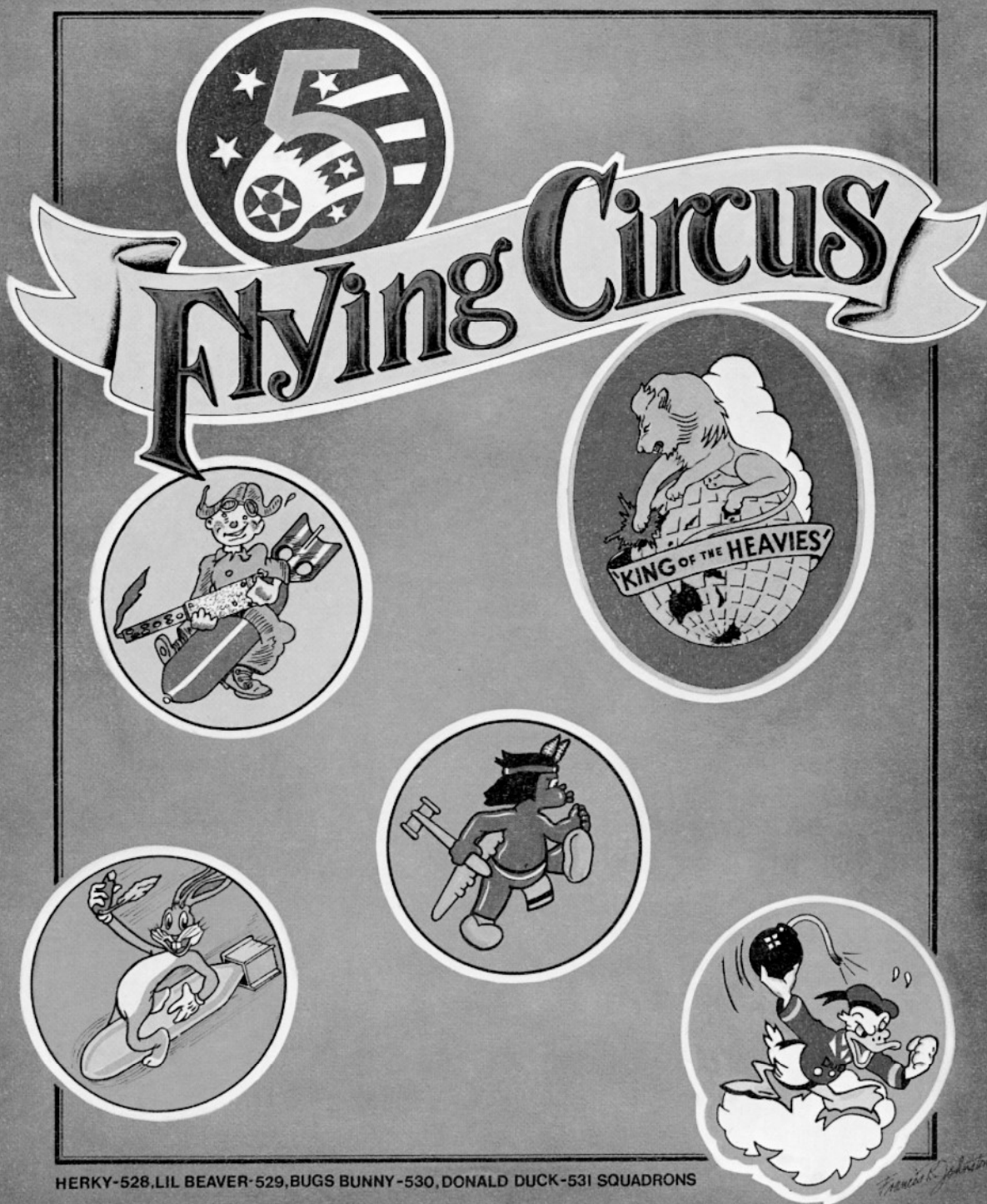


380TH BOMB GROUP



HERKY-528, LIL BEAVER-529, BUGS BUNNY-530, DONALD DUCK-531 SQUADRONS



The 380th Bomb Group Association

5th AF -- RAAF

Affectionately Known As

The Flying Circus

NEWSLETTER #79

NOVEMBER 2023

What's New: What Your Donations Support; 380th Webpage with Video Interviews/Stories; New Printing/Mailing Service

380th Centenarians: Cecil & Barbara Parsons (531st/RAAF)

380th Centenarian: Frank J. Chulay (528th)

What Are the Odds of Living to 100?

James Vogel Crew (529th)

Carl Ortman Crew (528th)

War Memories - "God Provides"

Frank Oncay (529th)

The Navigator

Navigational Tools of the US Army Air Force in WWII

Dead Reckoning

\$1 American Innovation Coin - Louisiana - Higgins Boat

Higgins Boat (LCVP)

Collings Foundation B-24

Membership Registration Form

Military Records Lost in the 1973 Fire?

Tips for Learning More About Your WWII Veterans

Depot Repair Squadrons

TAPS

Notices

There are two feature stories this issue! The first is related to flight navigation in WWII and was inspired by a drawing Glenn Oncay sent from his father's collection (Frank Oncay, navigator on the Vogel Crew) and the second is on the Higgins Boat. The Higgins Boat, with its innovative design and versatility, played an important role in the success of numerous amphibious assaults during WWII.

HISTORIANS

Bob Alford

Glenn R. Horton Jr.

Bob Livingstone

William Shek Jr.

Robert Withorn

HISTORY PROJECT

NEWSLETTERS

REUNION COORDINATOR

WEBPAGES – FINANCIAL

Barbara J. Gotham

LINKS

Membership form:

<http://380th.org/2023Member-form.pdf>

Gear order form:

<http://380th.org/Gear2022-January.pdf>

Comments/TAPS notification:

<http://380th.org/form.html>

FACEBOOK

Search for the group *380th Bombardment Group (WWII Veterans Group)* or go to <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2302731583244398>

TAPS/Memorial page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/421843586784696>

380th Bomb Group Association

130 Colony Road

West Lafayette, IN 47906-1209 USA

<http://380th.org/>

Email: 380th.ww2@gmail.com

Phone: 765-463-5390; Cell (texting preferred): 765-412-5370 (Eastern time zone). Please leave voicemail or text if no answer.

WHAT'S NEW

WHAT YOUR DONATIONS SUPPORT:

Not really new, but we can only continue to send you a print copy of the newsletter if you continue to support the newsletter with your donations. Thanks to all those who have and continue to contribute to the continuation of our efforts to bring you interesting and relevant stories about our group, WWII, and so much more! Your donations not only support printing and mailing, but also the fees associated with maintaining the website. A membership registration form can be found in this issue and online at: <http://380th.org/2023Member-form.pdf>

NEW WEBPAGE - VIDEO INTERVIEWS/STORIES:

A new webpage has been added to the 380th website: <http://380th.org/VIDEOS/Videos.html>

In August 2023 George Poy sent the link to a video interview done with Al Jansen (531st) to Barb Gotham. It was subsequently agreed with the approval of Al and his family that the interview could be placed on the 380th's website. This led to an internet YouTube search for other interviews by 380th personnel and related stories about our B-24s, crash sites, etc. If you have a video or audio interview that you or your veteran have done that is currently streaming on the internet or elsewhere, and you'd like it included on this webpage, please send the link to Barb Gotham (Email: 380th.ww2@gmail.com).

The listings on the new website are:

380TH PERSONNEL INTERVIEWS/STORIES

Goecke, Gordon P. / 530 / O-834790 / Pilot, Lutsey's Crew (87)

Gordon Paul Goecke's interview for the Veterans History Project at Atlanta History Center --
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VIZfy5SY68M>

Jansen, Albert (NMI) / 531 / 19148783 / Gunner, Benson's Crew (116)

WWII Interview with Al Jansen B-24 Crew-member: GOD BLESS THE WWII HEROES --
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dvWtZjNPZ9Q>

Mackie, William B. / 530 / 263946 (RAAF) / Navigator, Cupper's Crew (70A)

Mackie, William -- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jja8OM_ihFg

Overheu, Richard F. / 529 (RAAF) / Acft Cmdr, Overheu's Crew (42)

The War for Australia: Flying for the RAAF in WWII -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4QD32aP9UmM>

Pooyouma, Rex (NMI) / GP / 38072901 / Ground Staff, Hopi Code Talker

Hopi Festival 2018: 4 Hopi Code Talkers -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-djDXQCf-aU>
(Note that Rex was honored at the 2019 Hopi Code Talkers Day Event) - Read more on our website at
<http://380th.org/HOPI/380thHopiCodeTalker.htm>
Heroes Of The American Legion WW2 - The Hopi Code Talkers --
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7A-3GpgYepk>

Taylor, Charles B. / 530 / 15322758 / Asst Flt Eng, Gunner; Flt Eng, Huet's Crew, Cruze's Crew (51)

Veterans History Project -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9nnY6jXUIM>

RELATED VIDEOS (See the new website for the links to these videos)

- B 24J 15 CO Liberator Milady in Bush near Mandora NT Australia
- Shady Lady's Crew Rescued After Record Mission
- B-24 Liberators of the RAAF
- Yesterday's Air Force: WWII Heavy Bombardment
- Why did America Come to Australia's Aid?
- Day Trip: Darwin to Cox Peninsula | Part 5 - Visiting the "Milady" Wreck Site
- Beautiful Betsy Crash Site - Kroombit Tops National Park
- B-24 Diamond Lil - YouTube
- 380th Bomb Group Fenton - Facebook: Mile Pegs NT - WW2 in the Northern Territory, Australia



NEW PRINTING/MAILING SERVICE:

As of October 18, 2023, we have a new printing and mailing service for our print subscribers. Our previous provider, Purdue Xerox, closed up shop at the end of October 2023. Our new service is The National Group in Lafayette, Indiana. Hopefully everything will be seamless and you, the reader, shouldn't notice any changes. If you believe you are missing an issue, please contact Barb Gotham at 380th.ww2@gmail.com or at the address listed on the previous page.

380TH CENTENARIANS: CECIL & BARBARA PARSONS

Dear Barbara

I thought you might like to know that Cecil ("Boz") Parsons, my father-in-law and an RAAF member of 531 Squadron, celebrated his 105th birthday today, Sept 12, 2023.

He had two celebrations, first lunch at his home where he still lives with his wife Barbara (also ex-RAAF) who is 102. Also there were his three children and their spouses. Later he celebrated with a group of friends who gathered for the occasion.



Boz has strong and happy memories of his time flying Liberators with the 531st as he does of his time in Bomber Command from 1941 - 1943, where he with the RAF's 58 and 59 Squadrons over Europe.

I have included a couple of photographs: one taken on ANZAC Day (Australia's version of Memorial Day) circa 2001 when he led the Squadron at Melbourne march, as well as one of his crew [crew names are given in Newsletter #70] and his logbook.

He sends his warm regards to all the surviving members and family of your association.

Regards

Michael O'Donnell (Australia)

Parsons, Cecil E.R., RAAF-531st Squadron, Aircraft Commander, Parsons' Crew (82)

A previous article about and photos of Mr. Parsons and his crew can be found in Newsletter #70 (August 2020): <http://380th.org/NEWS/NEWS70.pdf>



Photo of Barbara Parsons (with Boz) in March 2022. She was receiving a centenarian's award being given to ex-service personnel who were born in the year that the RAAF was formed (1921); due to COVID restrictions, the ceremony was postponed until 2022. In the photo with Barb and Boz is the then-Chief of the Air Force, Air Marshall Mel Hupfeld and his wife, Louise.



Parsons' log book with his first flights in the Pacific Theatre. In November 1943 he had left the UK for New York and then by train to San Francisco before sailing to Brisbane, Australia. He was first assigned to the 531st Squadron and then the RAAF's 24th Squadron.

YEAR	Month	Date	AIRCRAFT	Type	No.	Pilot, or 1st Pilot	2nd Pilot, Pilot or Passenger	Days (Including Hosts and Remarks)
Feb	21		DC3 - C47			H.T.C.	Attached to 5th	Torres Strait (Tasmania) to Hobart (Maine) via Long's Replacement
Feb	22		B 24 J	LIBERATOR	-185	Flt Lt Napier	Self	Local
	22		B 24 J		-185	Capt. Williams	Self	Antarctic Island
	23		B 24 J		-127	Capt. Williams	Self	Antarctic Island
	23		B 24 J		-165	Flt Lt Napier	Self	Local
	24		B 24 J		-165	Flt Lt Napier	Self	Local

380TH CENTENARIAN: FRANK J. CHULAY

Dear Barbara

Frank J Chulay, B-24 Aircraft Commander of the 380th Bomb Group-528th Bomber Squadron, celebrated his 102nd birthday Sept 13, 2023. An article on him with crew picture was in your 62nd newsletter issue (December 2016: <http://380th.org/NEWS/News62-web.pdf>).

Attached is a photo of him taken about August 19, 2023.

Dennis Dolgin (Frank's son-in-law)

**Chulay, Frank J., 528th Squadron,
Acft Cmdr, Chulay's Crew**

A letter received 14 August 2023 from Jeffrey Chulay (Frank's son) says Frank now lives in a retirement community in Illinois and enjoys receiving the periodic newsletter.

Another article with Frank's logbook and a list of his crew members can be found in Newsletter #72 (June 2021).

<http://380th.org/NEWS/NEWS72.pdf>



WHAT ARE THE ODDS OF LIVING TO 100?

By DiscoverTheOdds.com

Updated August 22, 2023

Relative to the course of human history, and even in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, life expectancy is up. Thanks to a number of factors, including advances in our understanding of health, wellness, and longevity, people are living longer than ever. Nonetheless, living to the age of 100 remains a remarkable and somewhat rare feat. But, just how rare?

The short answer: Less than 1%. People living to the age of 100 or older, referred to as centenarians, make up less than one percent of the U.S. population.

Research increasingly reveals that a number of variables impact the odds of living to 100 such as mindset, daily activity, diet, and genetics.

- The odds of living to 100 vary by geography, with differences in longevity seen across states within the United States and also globally, from country to country.
- The odds of living to 100 are higher for women in comparison to men.
- The odds have changed over time and across generational cohort.

According to the U.S. Census Special Report on Centenarians, in 2010, there were 53,364 centenarians in the United States or 1.73 per 10,000 people in the total population.

Source: <https://discovertheodds.com/what-are-the-odds-of-living-to-100/>

JAMES VOGEL CREW - 529th SQUADRON

Jul 11, 2023

My father was Frank Oncay, Jr., who was the navigator in Vogel's crew of the 529th. My brother found this picture of Dad with Vogel's crew and thought you might like to add it to the history of the group.



I'm sorry that I don't have all the names of those in the picture. Dad didn't list the whole crew, just the names of the ones standing next to him. He is the one standing under the propeller.

Thanks for doing all this research and history of the squadron and group.

Janis Oncay McLeod

*Top row:
Jensen (Bombardier)
Vogel (Pilot)
Thomas (Co-Pilot)
Oncay (Navigator)*

Acft Cmdr: Vogel, James E., O-2066906 | 25 Jul 45, 2/Lt | RHEW, RU, 2/Lt |

Pilot: Thomas, Philip G., O-838195 | 25 Jul 45, 2/Lt | RHEW, RU, 2/Lt |

Navigator: Oncay, Frank (NMI), Jr., O-2078651 | 25 Jul 45, 2/Lt | To Group HQ, 25 Sep 45, 2/Lt |

Bombardier: Jensen, John L., O-2077118 | 25 Jul 45, 2/Lt | RHEW, RU, 2/Lt |

Flt Eng: Roth, Leon J., 42014147 | 25 Jul 45, Sgt | To 375 TC Gp, 18 Sep 45, Sgt |

Radio Opr: Passapetti, Joseph S., 31420429 | 25 Jul 45, Sgt | To 375 TC Gp, 18 Sep 45, Sgt |

Gunner: Leach, James E., 35612099 | 25 Jul 45, Cpl | RHEW, RU, Cpl |

Gunner: Owen, Kenneth H., 38345085 | 25 Jul 45, Cpl | RHEW, RU, Cpl |

Gunner: Pippi, Alfred A., 33203147 | 25 Jul 45, Cpl | RHEW, RU, Cpl |

Gunner: Reynolds, Thomas A., 36228492 | 25 Jul 45, Sgt | RHEW, RU, Sgt |

RHEW, RU = Returned Home After End of War, Records Unavailable; all archived records available ceased as of 1 October 1945

Source: <http://380th.org/HISTORY/529/529-crews.html#Vogel>

CARL ORTMAN CREW - 528TH SQUADRON

Wed, Sep 13, 2023



Hello Barbara,

Greetings from Annapolis, Maryland. Several years ago I started the *Legacy of Honor Project* to honor, research, and tell the stories of the men who died in WWI and WWII from my hometown and county.

One of the men is 2nd Lt Carl Edward Ortman, Jr. - he was a pilot of 42-73116 - went missing South China Sea 14 March 1944.

I have been trying to find a crew photo or a photo of Lt. Ortman to place on a Missing Man Table at our 15 September 2023 memorial event.

Denise Robinson

The photo to the right was provided to Ms. Robinson in time for her September 2023 event. It is from BEST IN THE SOUTHWEST, by Glenn R. Horton, Jr., Mosie Publications, Savage, MN, 1995, page 320. This photo was also used in Newsletter #24, September 2005: <http://380th.org/NEWS/News24/HagenStory.html>



CARL ORTMAN'S 528th CREW

Standing, L to R: LeGrand Brown-WG, Norm Brunette-BOMB, Ortman-P, Harry Hagen-NAV, Stan Massoll-CP. Kneeling: Bill Boos-R/O, Ron St. Martin-NOSE, Gene Chiarella-TAIL, John Mead-ENG/TOP, Bob Berry-WG
Harry Hagen Collection

ORTMAN'S CREW (24)

Acft Cmdr: Ortman, Carl E., Jr., O-833200, KFA, 14 Mar 45

Pilot: Massoll, Stanley R., O-928893, RHEW (Returned Home at End of War)

Navigator: Hagen, Harry P., O-2070020, RHEW

Bombardier: Brunette, Norman D., O-785651, KFA, 14 Mar 45

Flt Eng: Mead, John S., 35223329, RHEW

Radio Opr: Boos, William C., 37528223, RHEW

Radio Opr: Groce, Gard D., Jr., 39127978, KFA, 14 Mar 45

Gunner: Berry, Robert N., 38279885, RHEW

Gunner: Brown, Peter (NMI), 13156000, KFA, 14 Mar 45

Gunner: Chiarella, Eugene J., 42072191, Air Crew Fly Home, Oct 45

Gunner: Clifton, Carl M., 35639348, RHEW

Gunner: St Martin, Ronald A., 11107179, KFA, 14 Mar 45

Photographer: Shannon, Charles A., 34350243, KFA (with Ortman), 14 Mar 45 (he flew with various crews)

On 14 March 1945, B-24J-15-CO, #42-73116, *Heavenly Body*, was lost on a weather recce to Formosa. Engine trouble and supercharger fires forced the crew to abandon the airplane somewhere south of the Pescadores. All 12 men got out, but only 6 were picked up alive by various Air-Sea Rescue units the next day. Five were never found, and Shannon had been killed by a shark. Except for Gard Groce, from Bill Vance's crew, the crew was flying their first mission. Source: BEST IN THE SOUTHWEST, page 432.



Heavenly Body, <http://380th.org/HISTORY/PARTV/HeavenlyBody.htm>

RHEW = Returned Home After End of War; KFA = Killed in Flying Accident

WAR MEMORIES - "GOD PROVIDES"

Below is a rerun of the article from FLYING CIRCUS Newsletter #24, September 2005, sent in by Bill Bever, as told to him by Harry Hagen, Ortman's Navigator.

A former navigator, Lt. Harry Hagen, who was assigned to the 5th AAF, 380th Bomb Group, 528th Squadron in the Southwest Pacific during W.W.II related to me in a letter that his squadron at times had to fly with the Jolly Rogers 90th Bomb Group as they had so few operational B-24 aircraft. The politicians back in Washington sent everything to Europe.

In one instance the navigator said Mae West flotation vests were in short supply. He gave his vest to his young tail gunner and flew two weeks without a vest until he located a crate stored on a beach with two dozen Mae Wests inside. When he opened the crate to remove one vest, he heard a rifle being loaded behind him. He turned around to see a corporal with his rifle pointed right at him. Harry challenged the corporal and requested the corporal's officer on duty, but to no regard was the trooper going to release the vests. Harry went back to his squadron, contacted the CO to go with him to confiscate the vests. Upon arriving at the beach, they were both challenged by the same corporal so the CO said they were taking the vests and that he would accept full responsibility at that point. No shots were fired!

Another essential item in short supply was toilet paper. Harry said, "Finding toilet paper was like finding a treasure." They would promise rides in their B-24 for several rolls. One day the navigator and his friend traveled several miles to eat at an Officer's Mess. When they left the mess hall, their chests bloomed out to size 52 busts, each having two rolls of toilet paper stuffed inside their shirts they had liberated from the head!

The navigator never felt any remorse about liberating certain essential items when he found out their Chaplain got cans of turkey and beef. When he asked the Chaplain where he got the canned meat, the Chaplain told Harry, "God Provides."

FRANK ONCAY - 529th SQUADRON

Jul 25, 2023

On a portrait of my father when he retired there was a quote: "Old Navigators never die, they just D.R. away." D.R. means Dead Reckoning; this is when a Navigator used a star to navigate the flight path without instruments.

Glenn Oncay

Oncay, Frank (NMI), Jr.,
529th, Navigator, Vogel's
Crew



Editor's Note: See the articles to follow on the Navigator, Navigational Tools Used in WWII, and Dead Reckoning.

PORTRAIT OF AN AIR COMMANDO

OVER 10,000 FLYING HOURS!
B-17, B-24, B-25, B-26
C-46, C-47, C-54
C-121, C-123, C-124

**W.W. II
KOREA
VIET NAM**

**MAJOR FRANK ONCAY, JR.
"SUPER NAV"**

**REDISCOVERED LOCATION
OF "FLETCHER'S ICE ISLAND"
(WEATHER STATION)
AT NORTH POLE DURING
CELESTIAL TWILIGHT, 1957**

**HAND-CARVED ORIGINAL
SAF "Hooden Nickel"**

- Squadron Officers School
- Air Command & Staff College
- Air War College
- Air TAC School
- Combat Operations School
- Counterinsurgency School

**Navigated Over —
NORTH POLE
SOUTH POLE**

**INSTRUMENTAL IN ESTABLISHING
OBSTACLE COURSE • LANGUAGE SCHOOL
"SWAMP RAT"**

**"OLD NAVIGATORS NEVER DIE --
THEY JUST D.R. AWAY...."**

THE NAVIGATOR

Introduction

A navigator is the person on board an aircraft responsible for its navigation. The navigator's primary responsibility is to be aware of aircraft position at all times. Other responsibilities include planning the journey, advising the ship's aircraft commander of estimated timing to destinations while en route, and ensuring hazards are avoided.

The navigator is in charge of maintaining the aircraft nautical charts, nautical publications and navigational equipment, and generally had responsibility for meteorological equipment and communications. With the advent of satellite navigation, the effort required to accurately determine one's position has decreased by orders of magnitude, so the entire field has experienced a revolutionary transition since the 1990s with traditional navigation tasks, like performing celestial navigation, being used less frequently. Using multiple independent position fix methods without solely relying on electronic systems subject to failure helps the navigator detect errors. A professional navigator should still be proficient in traditional piloting and celestial navigation.

Training (WWII)

In World War II, the U.S. Army Air Forces trained tens of thousands of inexperienced young men to do what only a handful of skilled air navigators a decade earlier could do. During the war, air navigators served in all the military services and in all theaters of operation. This was a new concept for the military. The Army Air Corps had only adopted the idea of the air navigator as a specialized crew member in 1939. Suddenly, tens of thousands were needed. Most navigators in the Army Air Forces started as pilot cadets who "washed out" of pilot training, often in PT-17s. Good math skills were considered essential for those who made the transition to navigator.

Navigation cadets were sent to flying school following preflight where they spent from 15 to

The navigator's table and swivel seat are located immediately behind the bombardier in the nose of the B-24. The navigator sits facing backwards at his table, with his flux gate compass indicators and other navigational instruments on the bulkhead in front of him.

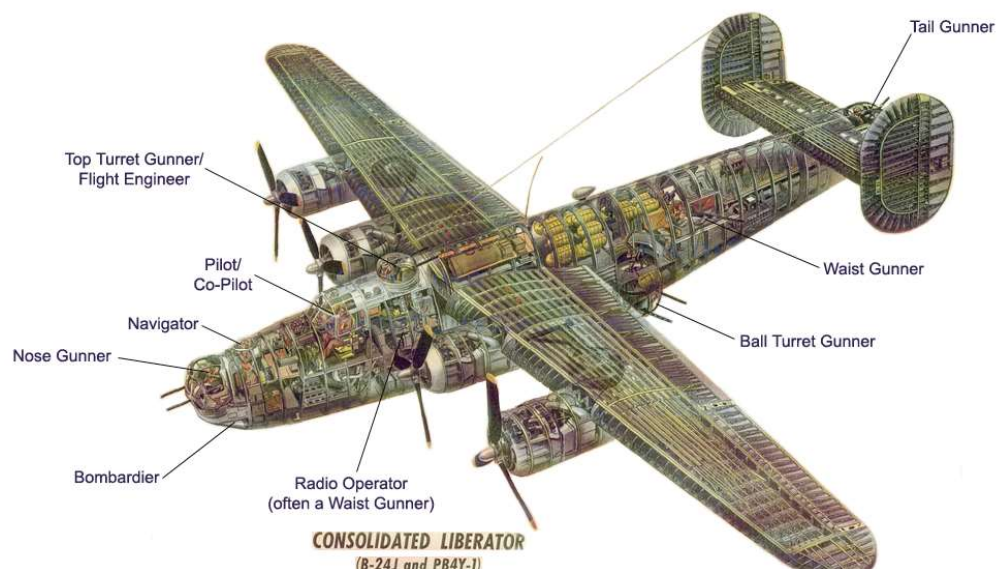
20 weeks in training. Emphasis was placed on precision dead-reckoning navigation with basic proficiency in pilotage, radio, and celestial navigation. A navigation cadet logged approximately 100 hours in the air but for every hour of flight, he spent five hours in the classroom. At the end of their coursework, they needed to be able to plot a route with a course error no greater than 11 degrees, being no more than one minute off per hour of flight time. They also had to get within fifteen miles of an objective during a night flight.

The demand for navigators required a constant expansion of the training program through 1943, and by VJ-Day more than 50,000 had graduated. The elimination rate was approximately 20%. Upon completion of training, navigators usually were sent to operational training units to become part of a flying crew being readied for combat assignment.

The Role of the Flight Navigator on a B-24 Crew in WWII

The flight navigator was an essential member of the B-24's crew, responsible for ensuring the aircraft reached its target and returned safely. Their duties encompassed the following:

- 1. Navigation:** Navigators used a combination of instruments and celestial navigation to determine the aircraft's position. Celestial navigation involved using the positions of the sun, moon, stars, and planets to calculate the aircraft's latitude and longitude. It was an invaluable technique, especially during long-distance missions.
- 2. Flight Planning:** Before each mission, navigators were tasked with planning the flight route. This involved selecting waypoints, estimating fuel consumption, and



THE NAVIGATOR (continued)

calculating the most efficient course to reach the target and return to base.

3. In-flight Corrections: During the mission, navigators had to make real-time course corrections based on wind, weather conditions, and enemy threats. They used tools like dead reckoning computers to maintain a constant estimate of the aircraft's position.

4. Radio Navigation: Navigators often used radio navigation aids, such as the Automatic Direction Finder (ADF) and the Radio Range Beacon, to supplement their celestial and dead reckoning navigation. These aids provided additional reference points for course corrections.

Challenges Faced by Flight Navigators in WWII

1. Enemy Threats: B-24s were frequently subjected to enemy fire, and navigators had to stay vigilant to avoid anti-aircraft fire and enemy fighter aircraft. Accurate navigation was critical to avoiding enemy-controlled airspace.

2. Weather Conditions: Navigators had to contend with unpredictable weather conditions, including fog, clouds, and turbulence, which could make celestial navigation challenging. Poor visibility could also make it difficult to identify landmarks.

3. Long-Distance Missions: Many B-24 missions involved flying over vast stretches of ocean or remote regions. Navigators needed to maintain accurate navigation without the benefit of visual landmarks.

4. Fatigue: Long-duration missions could be mentally and physically exhausting, and navigators had to remain alert and precise throughout the flight.

Contributions to the War Effort

The role of the flight navigator was pivotal in the success of B-24 missions. Their accurate navigation ensured that the aircraft reached its targets, dropped its payload on enemy positions, and returned safely to base. Inaccurate navigation could result in missed targets, civilian casualties, or aircraft losses.

The skills and expertise of flight navigators were integral to the overall mission success and the strategic objectives of the Allied forces. Their contributions were a testament to their dedication and bravery, as they guided their crews through some of the most challenging and perilous conditions in the history of aviation.

Conclusion

Playing a crucial role in the Allied victory, the flight navigators' ability to navigate accurately, adapt to changing conditions, and make critical decisions during missions ensured that these heavy bombers reached their targets and contributed significantly to the overall war effort and they are an enduring legacy in the annals of aviation history.

In Modern Aviation

In military aviation, navigators are still actively trained and licensed in some present day air forces, as electronic navigation aids cannot be assumed to be operational during wartime. In the world's air forces, modern navigators are frequently tasked with weapons and defensive systems operations, along with co-pilot duties such as flight planning and fuel management, depending on the type, model and series of aircraft. In the U.S. Air Force, the aeronautical rating of navigator has been augmented by addition of the combat systems officer, while in the U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps, those officers formerly called navigators, tactical systems officers, or naval aviation observers have been known as naval flight officers since the mid-1960s. USAF navigators/combat systems officers and USN/USMC naval flight officers must be basic mission qualified in their aircraft, or fly with an instructor navigator or instructor NFO to provide the necessary training for their duties.

The navigator is responsible for the maintenance of the ship's navigational equipment. U.S. Air Force navigators are responsible for troubleshooting problems of the navigation equipment while airborne, but the ground maintenance personnel are ultimately responsible for the repair and upkeep of that aircraft's navigation system.

Sources and to learn more:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Navigator>
<https://freepages.rootsweb.com/~webermd1/family/Liberator-Info.html>
<https://haynes.com/en-gb/tips-tutorials/anatomy-consolidated-b-24-liberator>
<https://www.wearethemighty.com/mighty-history/wwii-aerial-navigation/>
<https://timeandnavigation.si.edu/navigating-air/navigation-at-war/wartime-navigator>
<http://www.merkki.com/navigators%20of%20usaaf%20in%20world%20war%20II.htm>

NAVIGATIONAL TOOLS OF THE US ARMY AIR FORCE IN WWII

During World War II, navigators held a crucial position in ensuring the success of bombing missions, aerial reconnaissance, and troop transport. Navigating over vast and often unfamiliar territory was a challenging task, demanding the use of various tools and instruments. Navigational tools used by USAAF navigators during World War II included:

1. The Sextant

The sextant was a fundamental tool for celestial navigation. This instrument allowed navigators to determine the aircraft's position by measuring the angle between celestial bodies, such as the sun, moon, and stars, and the horizon. This information was vital for determining the aircraft's latitude and longitude. Sextants were robust and reliable, ensuring accurate navigation even in the most challenging conditions. Pictured is the compact A-10 sextant. Key features include a lighted bubble and a recording disk to determine averages.



2. Norden Bombsight

One of the most iconic pieces of equipment used by navigators and bombardiers in the USAAF was the Norden Bombsight. Developed by Carl Norden, this precision instrument allowed bombers to accurately target their payloads. The Norden Bombsight (pictured here to the right) was equipped with complex mechanical systems and relied on accurate inputs, including airspeed, altitude, drift, and target information. It played a critical role in the precision bombing campaigns over Europe and the Pacific.



3. Celestial Navigation

Navigators also relied on celestial navigation techniques, particularly during long-range missions. They used instruments like the sextant and octant to determine the position of celestial bodies, such as the sun, moon, stars, and planets. The resulting data was then used to calculate the aircraft's position and course. This method was crucial for maintaining course and pinpointing the aircraft's location when other navigational aids were unavailable.

4. Radio Navigation

In addition to celestial navigation, USAAF navigators relied on radio navigation aids like the Automatic Direction Finder (ADF) and the Radio Range Beacon. The ADF helped determine the aircraft's bearing to a ground station, while the Radio Range Beacon provided a series of radio signals that helped navigators track their position along predetermined airways. These instruments offered crucial support when flying under adverse weather conditions or over featureless



terrain. LORAN (Long-Range Aid to Navigation) and GEE (Gee-H) were two other radio navigation systems used extensively during World War II. LORAN used the time difference between radio signals from multiple stations to calculate the aircraft's position accurately. GEE was a hyperbolic navigation system that used the phase difference between signals from two ground stations to determine the aircraft's position. Pictured here is the Type 62A GEE Mark II Indicator Unit.

5. Dead Reckoning

Dead reckoning involved calculating the aircraft's position based on its previously known position, course, and speed. Navigators used drift meters and E6B flight computers (also known as the "whiz wheel") to perform dead reckoning calculations; they were a versatile slide rule used for various calculations related to flight planning and navigation. These tools allowed them to make educated estimates of their current position, even when other navigational aids were unavailable due to adverse weather or other factors. Pictured is the E-6B dead reckoning computer. See the next page for more on dead reckoning.



6. Radio Compass

Radio compasses, such as the ADF (Automatic Direction Finder) and the SCR-269, were used to determine the aircraft's bearing relative to ground-based radio beacons. By taking bearings from multiple stations, navigators could triangulate their position. These instruments were particularly useful in determining the aircraft's position when flying in or near hostile territory.

7. The Astrocompass

The astrocompass was another celestial navigation tool. It enabled navigators to measure the aircraft's true heading by observing the position of a celestial body. By comparing this observation with the aircraft's magnetic compass reading, navigators could calculate the aircraft's drift due to wind and make the necessary course corrections. The astrocompass was an essential instrument for long-distance flights, allowing for precise navigation over vast oceans and uncharted territories.

NAVIGATIONAL TOOLS (continued)

8. Maps and Charts

No navigator could function without a comprehensive collection of maps and charts. Navigators used aeronautical charts that included information about air routes, topography, and navigation aids. These charts were essential for plotting courses, identifying landmarks, and making real-time decisions during flight. Topographic maps and target maps provided crucial information about terrain, cities, and targets. They also featured grid systems and reference points to aid in navigation and target identification.

Conclusion

The tools used by USAAF navigators during World War II played an instrumental role in the success of aerial missions. These instruments, from the humble sextant to the versatile E6-B Flight Computer, allowed navigators to operate effectively in the challenging and dynamic environment of wartime aviation and helped ensure that aircraft reached their targets accurately and to return safely. Their skills and the technology they employed contributed significantly to the strategic success of the USAAF during the war, and these tools remain iconic symbols of an era when air navigation was a blend of science and art.

Sources and for more information:

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dead_reckoning

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DEAD RECKONING

In navigation, dead reckoning is the process of calculating the current position of a moving object by using a previously determined position, or fix, and incorporating estimates of speed, heading (or direction or course), and elapsed time.

Dead reckoning is subject to cumulative errors. While dead reckoning can give the best available information on the present position with little math or analysis, it is subject to significant errors of approximation. For precise positional information, both speed and direction must be accurately known at all times during travel. The accuracy of dead reckoning can be increased significantly by using other, more reliable methods to get a new fix part way through the journey. For example, if one was navigating on land in poor visibility, then dead reckoning could be used to get close enough to the known position of a landmark to be able to see it, before walking to the landmark itself - giving a precisely known starting point - and then setting off again.

Advances in navigational aids that give accurate information on position, in particular satellite navigation using the Global Positioning System, have made simple dead reckoning by humans obsolete for most purposes. However, inertial navigation systems, which provide very accurate directional information, use dead reckoning and are very widely applied.

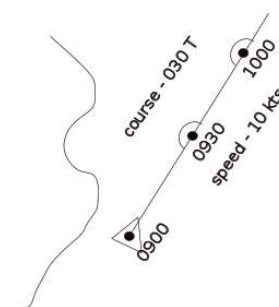
How It Works

The basic formula for DR is Distance = Speed x Time. An aircraft flying at 250 knots airspeed for 2 hours has flown 500 nautical miles through the air. The wind triangle is used to calculate the effects of wind on heading and airspeed to obtain a magnetic heading to steer and the speed over the ground (groundspeed). Printed tables, formulae, or an E6B flight computer are used to calculate the effects of air density on aircraft rate of climb, rate of fuel burn, and airspeed.

A course line is drawn on the aeronautical chart along with estimated positions at fixed intervals (say every half hour). Visual observations of ground features are used to obtain fixes. By comparing the fix and the estimated position corrections are made to the aircraft's heading and groundspeed.

Current Usage

Dead reckoning is on the curriculum for VFR (visual flight rules – or basic level) pilots worldwide. It is taught regardless of whether the aircraft has navigation aids such as GPS, ADF and



The navigator plots their 9 a.m. position, indicated by the triangle, and, using their course and speed, estimates their own position at 9:30 and 10 a.m.

VOR and is an ICAO Requirement. Many flying training schools will prevent a student from using electronic aids until they have mastered dead reckoning.

To learn more: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dead_reckoning

\$1 AMERICAN INNOVATION COIN - LOUISIANA - HIGGINS BOAT

Background

The American Innovation \$1 Coin representing Louisiana recognizes the invention of the Higgins Boat. The Landing Craft, Vehicle and Personnel (LCVP), or Higgins Boat, is credited with helping the Allies win World War II.

In 1938, the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps began testing a boat designed by Andrew Jackson Higgins of Higgins Industries in New Orleans, Louisiana. Higgins took inspiration from boats designed to navigate Louisiana marshes and swamps. The Higgins Boat was flat-bottomed with a ramp at the front. It was constructed partly of plywood to save money and steel. With the ability to maneuver in only 10 inches of water, the Higgins Boat allowed for military personnel, equipment, and small vehicles to easily unload onto an open beach through the landing ramp.

Higgins Industries made more than 23,000 LCVPs in New Orleans during World War II.

Characteristics of the Coin

The obverse (heads) design features a dramatic representation of the Statue of Liberty in profile. The obverse also includes a privy mark of a stylized gear, representing industry and innovation.

The reverse (tails) design depicts a Higgins Boat as it would have been deployed during World War II with its innovative landing ramp open against a beach.

Artist Information

Obverse -- Sculptor: Phebe Hemphill, Medallist Artist; Designer: Justin Kunz, Artistic Infusion Program
Reverse -- Sculptor: John P. McGraw, Medallist Artist; Designer: Dennis Friel, Artistic Infusion Program

Source: <https://www.usmint.gov/coins/coin-medal-programs/american-innovation-dollar-coins/louisiana-higgins-boat>



HIGGINS BOAT (LCVP)

In the late 1930s, the U.S. military began developing small boats that could carry troops from ships to open beaches. Andrew Jackson Higgins of New Orleans, who had been manufacturing shallow-water work boats to support oil and gas exploration in the Louisiana bayous, adapted his Eureka Boat to meet the military's specifications for a landing craft. Designated the Landing Craft Personnel (Large), or LCP(L), it was used extensively by the Allied forces in amphibious landings in World War II such as in the invasions of Guadalcanal and North Africa in 1942.

Initially, separate landing craft were used for troops and vehicles, the LCP(L)s and the LCVs (Landing Craft, Vehicle). The LCP(L) was designed without a ramp. Troops unloaded from the LCP(L) by jumping over the side, which proved unsatisfactory because climbing over the side exposed the men to hostile fire. Higgins solved this shortcoming by combining the LCP(L) and LCV's designs into the Landing Craft Vehicle and Personnel or LCVP. This craft, which is now the most famous of Higgins's designs and is often referred to

as the Higgins Boat, allowed infantry or small vehicles to exit through a front ramp.

Typically constructed from plywood, this shallow-draft, barge-like boat could ferry a roughly platoon-sized complement of 36 men to shore at 9 knots (17 km/h). The half-wood half-steel "smallboat" meant a lot to the War. These assault or LCVP boats would land troops and material on invasion beachheads. Their designer, Andrew



Higgins boat on display in The National WWII Museum in New Orleans

HIGGINS BOAT (continued)

Higgins, was originally building oil-prospecting wooden boats in Louisiana. Once the war broke out, he was positive there would be a need among the U.S. Navy for thousands of small boats—and was also sure that steel would be in short supply. In a moment of eccentricity, Higgins bought the entire 1939 crop of mahogany from the Philippines and stored it on his own.

The Japanese had been using ramp-bowed landing boats like Daihatsu-class landing craft in the Second Sino-Japanese War since the summer of 1937—boats that had come under intense scrutiny by Navy and Marine Corps observers at the Battle of Shanghai in particular, including from future general, Victor H. Krulak. When Krulak showed Higgins a picture and suggested that Higgins develop a version of the ramped craft for the Navy, Higgins, at his own expense, started his designers working on adapting the idea to the boat design. He then had three of the craft built, again at his own expense.

Higgins' expectations about small boats and the steel supply were right, and as the war progressed he applied for a position in Naval design. Insisting that the Navy "doesn't know one damn thing about small boats," Higgins struggled for years to convince them of the need for small wooden boats. Finally he signed the contract to develop his LCPV.

The United States Marine Corps was always interested in finding better ways to get men across a beach in an amphibious landing. They were frustrated that the Navy's Bureau of Construction and Repair could not meet its requirements and began to express interest in Higgins' boat. When tested in 1938 by the Navy and Marine Corps, Higgins' Eureka boat surpassed the performance of a Navy-designed boat and was tested by the services during fleet landing exercises in February 1939.

Satisfactory in most respects, the boat's major drawback appeared to be that equipment had to



Men disembarking from an LCPV



USS Darke (APA-159)'s LCPV 18, possibly with army troops as reinforcements at Okinawa, circa 9 to 14 April 1945.

be unloaded and men disembarked over the sides, thus exposing them to enemy fire in combat situations and making unloading time-consuming and complex. However, that was the best available boat design, and it was put into production and service as the landing craft, personnel (large), abbreviated as LCP(L). The LCP(L) had two machine gun positions at the bow.

The LCP(L), also commonly called the "Higgins" boat, was supplied to the British (from October 1940), to whom it was initially known as the "R-boat" and used for commando raids.

The success of these boats ensured that Higgins Industries would be a major employer during the War. A small workforce of only 75 workers in 1938 grew to over 20,000 by 1943. The Higgins workforce was the first in New Orleans to be racially integrated. His employees included undrafted white males, women, African Americans, the elderly and handicapped persons. All were paid equal wages according to their job rating. They responded by shattering production records. Along with the help of other American factories, Higgins produced more than 23,300 LCPVs during the War.

Design

At just over which were 36'3" in length and with a beam of 10'10", the LCPV was not a large craft. Their displacement when unloaded was 18,000 lbs., and they could maintain a speed of 9 knots (with a maximum speed of 12 knots or around 14 mph). Powered by a gasoline engine, they were defended by 2 0.30 caliber machine guns, and could carry either 36 combat-equipped infantrymen, or a jeep and a 12-man squad, or 8,000 pounds (3.6 tons) of cargo.

Its shallow draft (3 feet aft and 2 feet, 2 inches forward) enabled it to navigate shallow waters and could be run up onto the shoreline, and a semi-tunnel built into its hull protected the propeller from sand and other debris. The steel bow ramp at the front could be lowered quickly to

HIGGINS BOAT (continued)



Higgins Boat LCPV at Normandy

create a makeshift bridge directly onto the beach. It was possible for the Higgins boat to swiftly disembark men and supplies, reverse itself off the beach, and return to the supply ship for another load within three to four minutes.

The boat's thin armor left it vulnerable to heavier enemy fire, and it was found that extremely shallow water and hard obstructions such as reefs could stop the boat. Other vehicles such as the Landing Vehicle Tracked were later created to meet those drawbacks in amphibious operations.

Legacy

Higgins Boats changed the way that war was fought. Previously, navies would have to attack ports, which were usually heavily defended. By using Higgins Boats, armies could unload across an open beach and have more options in choosing their attack points. This also stretched the defending armies. Instead of concentrating on only a few entry points, defenders had to cover more shoreline. In both the Pacific and European Theaters of World War II, Higgins Boats allowed Allied armies to move ashore.

General Dwight D. Eisenhower declared the Higgins boat to have been crucial to the Allied victory on the European Western Front and the previous fighting in North Africa and Italy:

Andrew Higgins ... is the man who won the war for us. ... If Higgins had not designed and built those LCPVs, we never could have landed over an open beach. The whole strategy of the war would have been different.

Colonel Joseph H. Alexander, USMC (Ret) said, *"The Higgins boats broke the gridlock on the ship-to-shore movement. It is impossible to overstate the tactical advantages this craft gave U.S. amphibious commanders in World War II."*

It played a pivotal role in numerous major amphibious landings throughout the war, including:

- D-Day (Operation Overlord): On June 6, 1944, Allied forces stormed the beaches of Normandy in the largest amphibious assault in history. Thousands of LCPVs transported troops to the French coast, providing the essential mobility required for the success of the operation.
- Pacific Theater: In the Pacific, LCPVs were used extensively in island-hopping campaigns, such as the Battle of Guadalcanal and the Battle of Iwo Jima. These boats were instrumental in securing key islands and establishing footholds in the Pacific.

Surviving examples

Only a few Higgins boats have survived, often with substantial modifications for post-war use. A remarkably preserved Higgins boat, with the original Higgins motor, was discovered in a boat yard in Valdez, Alaska, and moved to the Museum of World War II just outside Boston in 2000. It had been used as a fishing boat in very shallow areas but, except for an easily removed addition to the cockpit, had not been altered; all of the armor plate was complete, as were gauges and equipment. The only restoration was a repainting to the original color.

An original Higgins boat discovered in Normandy has been professionally restored by the North Carolina Maritime Museum for the First Division Museum at Cantigny Park in Wheaton, Illinois. It was moved to Beaufort, North Carolina, for extensive restoration and then acquired by the Collings Foundation and is now on display at the American Heritage Museum in Stow, Massachusetts.

Other original LCPV/Higgins boats are on display or are planned for display:

- An original LCPV is on display at National Museum of the United States Army in Fort Belvoir, Virginia.
- An original LCPV is on display at the National Museum of the United States Navy in Washington, D.C.
- An original LCPV is under restoration at the Maisy battery in Grandcamp-Maisy, Normandy.
- An original LCPV is on display at The D-Day Story in Portsmouth, Hampshire.
- An original LCPV is seaworthy with Challenge LCPV in Rouen, Normandy; it was constructed

HIGGINS BOAT (continued)

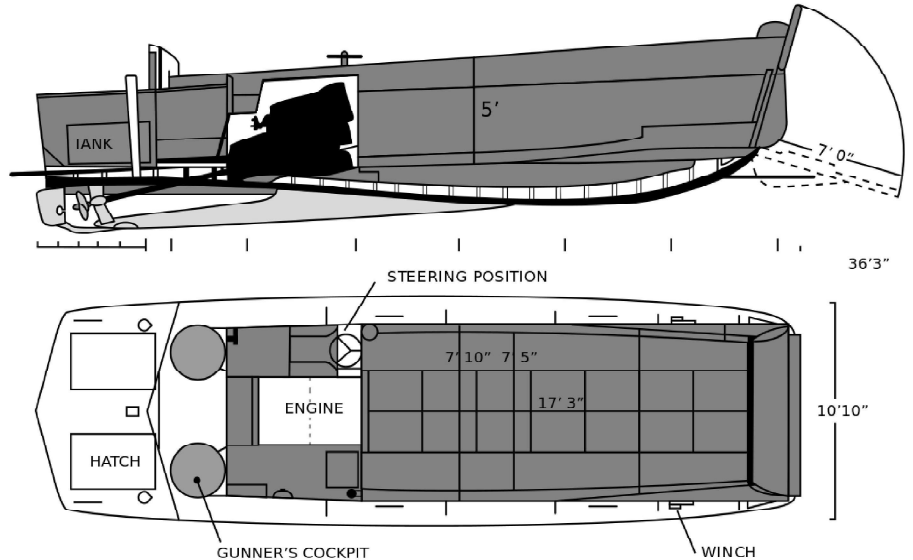
in 1942 and may have taken part in landings in North Africa and in Italy during World War II.

- An original LCVP is in storage with the WWII Veterans History Project in Clermont, Florida. It was acquired by the organization in April 2020 and is currently awaiting restoration.
- An original LCVP is undergoing restoration at the Indiana Military Museum in Vincennes, Indiana; the stern of the boat displays AG 39 and was presumably attached to the USS Menemsha (AG-39), a weather patrol ship in the North Atlantic, during WWII.
- An original LCVP is on display at the Motts Military Museum in Groveport, Ohio; it is from the USS Cambria (APA-36), which survived seven Pacific Theatre invasions.
- An original LCVP is on display at the Roberts Armory Museum in Rochelle, Illinois. One is undergoing restoration at the Louisiana Military Hall of Fame and Museum in Abbeville, Louisiana.

A replica Higgins boat, built in the 1990s using the original specifications from Higgins Industries, is on display in The National WWII Museum in New Orleans (photo at beginning of this article).

Conclusion

The Higgins Boat, with its innovative design and versatility, played an indispensable role in the success of numerous amphibious assaults during World War II. Andrew Higgins' dedication to creating a vessel perfectly suited for beach landings not only earned him the nickname "The Man Who Won the War," but it also saved countless lives and contributed significantly to the Allied victory. The LCVP remains a symbol of American ingenuity and determination, forever etched in the annals of military history as an essential tool in the liberation of Europe and the Pacific.



Drawing source:

<https://andrewjacksonhigginsmemorialfoundation.org/the-higgins-boat-lcvp/>

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To learn more, check out these websites:

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<https://cs.stanford.edu/people/eroberts/courses/ww2/projects/fighting-vehicles/higgins-boat.htm>

COLLINGS FOUNDATION B-24

Jun 25, 2023
Edward Painter

Saw this and thought of you. Interesting reading, as I had mentioned numbers fascinate me. Reading over 420,000 rivets were replaced I thought of the men and women turning these out multiple planes per day. Hope things are well.

<https://www.collingsfoundation.org/aircrafts/consolidated-b-24-liberator/>

The following text and photos are from the above website.

Its guns are long silent as the new mission it flies finds it over no enemy lands.

The world's only fully restored and flying consolidated B-24J Liberator is back in the skies after an absence of twenty years. The B-24 fought for our freedom in the skies of Europe and the Pacific through the use of strategic bombing during the Second World War. In order to help preserve this history and honor the veterans who participated in the war, B-24 serial number 44-44052 has been restored to mint condition under the auspices of the Collings Foundation of Stow, MA.

Over fifty years ago, in August 1944, the Collings Liberator was built at the Consolidated Aircraft Company's Fort Worth, Texas plant. Shortly afterward, the aircraft was delivered to the US Army Air Force and in October of 1944, it was transferred to the Royal Air Force. Under the British flag, the B-24 saw combat in the Pacific Theater in operations ranging from anti-shipping to bombing and re-supply of resistance force operations.

At war's end, the aircraft was abandoned by the RAF in a bomber graveyard in Khanpur, India; with the assumption that it would not fly again. However, in 1948, the Indian Air Force succeeded in restoring 36 B-24s, including 44-44052, to operational status. These aircraft were utilized until 1968.

For the next 13 years, the aircraft sat abandoned in India until British aircraft collector, Doug Arnold, obtained it in 1981. The aircraft was disassembled and transported back to England in a Heavy Lift cargo plane. Once in England, the aircraft was advertised for sale in "as is" condition and in 1984, Dr. Robert F. Collings purchased it. After a sea voyage of three weeks, the B-24 arrived in Boston and was brought to Stow, MA in four truckloads.

Collings said that the Foundation intended to restore the plane for static display only, but he was persuaded to restore it to flying status by local B-24 crewmen. "This made it about five times greater a project," Collings said. "We were convinced by the argument that only about three thousand people a year would see a static display,

but three million might see it on a nationwide tour.

Preliminary restoration work started in 1985, led by Massachusetts volunteers, most of whom were former crewmen, or sons of crewmen, on B-24s. When Collings decided to make the plane a flying restoration, he contacted Tom Reilly Vintage Aircraft in Kissimmee, FL to do the work on the airframe and powerplant. Volunteers restored the turrets, armament, radios, oxygen system, and cosmetic details. The original builders sponsored work on the Emerson Electric nose turret, PPG Industries of Pittsburgh supplied turret glass, and United Technologies of Hartford, CT donated a Norden bombsight. General Dynamics, a successor to Consolidated Aircraft, the original manufacturers of the B-24 in Fort Worth, TX, was a major sponsor of its restoration.

Collings said the restoration involved complete disassembly of the plane and work on about 80% of the B-24s 1.2 million parts. There was some corrosion and minor damage "plus the desire to make all the systems (engines, props, hydraulics, and electrical) one hundred percent right."

The entire hydraulic plant was replaced or overhauled, and every pulley was replaced. All cables and hardware, the bearings, an electronic strobe system, the batteries, and the radios were donated, along with installation advice and assistance.

The fuselage was in reasonably good shape, but twenty percent of its skin still had to be replaced. More than 420,000 rivets were replaced, as well as fuel cells, brake tubes, tires, and windows. Most of these parts were donated.

On September 10, 1989, after more than five years of hard work and 97,000+ hours of labor, the B-24 flew for the first time after restoration.



COLLINGS FOUNDATION B-24 (continued)

Starting a new life in 1989 flying as “All American,” a 15th Air Force aircraft, that flew in Italy with the 461st Bomb Group, the B-24, flew for many years with this scheme. In 1998, she was repainted to represent the “Dragon and His Tail” a 5th Air Force B-24 flying in the Pacific Theater with the 43rd Bomb Group. In 2005, she was repainted as “Witchcraft” in honor of the veterans of the 8th Air Force, who flew in the European Theater during WWII.

The history of “Witchcraft” is a story that legends are made from. The original “Witchcraft” was produced as a B-24H, built by Ford at the famous Willow Run, MI plant in 1944. It was delivered to the 467th in Wendover, Utah and initially assigned to Second Lieutenant George W. Reed and his crew who flew the aircraft to England. “Witchcraft” safely arrived with her crew at Station 145 in Rackheath, England on March 19th, 1944, after a 20-day flight over the Atlantic. The aircraft and crew began their combat service on April 10th, 1944, flying the first combat mission of the 467th Bomb Group. Over the next year “Witchcraft” flew an incredible 130 combat missions with various crews. “Witchcraft” was never once turned back while on a mission, and never had any crewmen injured or killed. Her last mission was flown on April 25th, 1945, which also was the last mission flown by the 467th Bomb Group. “...Witchcraft” was there at the beginning and at the end.” After the war, she was returned to the United States and like many other B-24s, was scrapped on October 3rd, 1945, at the surplus depot in Altus, Oklahoma.

The B-24 flies as part of the Wings of Freedom Tour, visiting over 120 cities nationwide annually with the B-17 Flying Fortress and B-25 Mitchell. To accomplish this, the Collings Foundation relies solely on contributions and donations to cover the operating cost of over four thousand dollars per flying hour. These contributions ensure the future of the aircraft and keep it flying as a symbol of American patriotism and as a learning tool for our future generations to learn more about World War II and aviation history.



Additional photos of WITCHCRAFT on tour during a visit to the Purdue University airport in August 2016 can be found at: <http://380th.org/NEWS/News62-web.pdf>

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An annual donation of \$25 (or whatever amount your budget allows) payable to **380th Bomb Group Association** will help defray costs of newsletters, mailings and the website throughout the year. (Cash or checks only, no credit cards.) Please mail your donation and registration form to:

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MILITARY RECORDS LOST IN THE 1973 FIRE?

Search Tips for Researching Military Records on Fold3®

July 18, 2023 by Jenny Ashcraft

Military records are a rich resource for genealogical and historical research. These records provide a treasure trove of information and shed light on the details of service personnel and their family members. Many US military records were lost in a 1973 fire, and Fold3® record collections can help recreate the military history of your ancestors. Following are some search tips to help you make the most of records on Fold3®.

Use Search Filters: Begin your search on Fold3® by using our search filters. As you enter a search term, a pop-up asks if this is a keyword, name, or place. Selecting a filter will dramatically reduce your results, making it easier to access your desired records. Additional filters like conflict/war, military service number, dates, etc., allow you to narrow your results further.

Military records differ from vital records, and the record you seek may not use a full legal name. Be sure to try name variations like first initial and last name, for example. Researchers can also toggle back and forth between searching collections and our patent-pending Browse experience.

The 1973 Fire at the NPRC: On July 12, 1973, a massive fire broke out at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, MO. It burned for 22 hours and destroyed 16-18 million military files. Records affected included 80% of Army files for Personnel discharged between November 1912 – January 1960; and 75% of Air Force files for Personnel discharged from September 1947 – January 1964. No duplicate copies of these records were ever maintained.

These lost records present a roadblock, but other available record sets can help you construct a military history.

For example, if you are searching for a WWII veteran, you might search for records like Unit Histories, Missing Air Crew Reports, Draft Registration Cards, WWII Diaries, or Air Force Photos. Remember that until 1947, the US Air Force was part of the US Army (United States Army Air Force – USAAF). Navy Muster Rolls recorded the movements of troops on transport ships even if they didn't serve in the Navy, and if your ancestor was sick or injured during their service, the military recorded hospital admissions (though many hospital admissions used only a military service number on the record instead of a name). If you know the infantry regiment or battalion your ancestor served in, that information can also open research avenues.

To read more: <https://blog.fold3.com/search-tips-for-researching-military-records-on-fold3/>

Related blogpost: ***Identifying Military Personnel: Decoding Serial Numbers***

<https://blog.fold3.com/identifying-military-personnel-decoding-serial-numbers/> - February 27, 2023 by Michael Strauss

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<https://blog.fold3.com/october-1-1942-the-uss-grouper-sinks-the-lisbon-maru/> - October 4, 2023 by Jenny Ashcraft

Hero From the Heartland: The Story of Bombardier David W. Fisher

<https://blog.fold3.com/hero-from-the-heartland-the-story-of-bombardier-david-w-fisher/> - September 25, 2023 by Jenny Ashcraft

The USS Benevolence Brings Home American POWs from Japan

<https://blog.fold3.com/the-uss-benevolence-brings-home-american-pows-from-japan/> - September 1, 2023 by Jenny Ashcraft

Julius Robert Oppenheimer

<https://blog.fold3.com/julius-robert-oppenheimer/> - July 10, 2023 by Jenny Ashcraft

TIPS FOR LEARNING MORE ABOUT YOUR WWII VETERANS

Discover Your WWII Veteran with Fold3® Military Records

November 1, 2023 by Jenny Ashcraft

Nationwide, descendants of America's Greatest Generation are clamoring to learn more about their ancestor's military service. Less than 1 percent of the 16.1 million Americans who served during WWII are still alive today. In honor of Veterans Day, we wanted to provide a few pointers for those who would like to learn more about your ancestor's WWII military experiences.

- 1. Gather any records you have at home.** Collect discharge records, military yearbooks, photographs, diaries, etc. Search these records for clues that may shed light on your ancestor's service (which military branch they served in, regiment details, military service number, newspaper clippings, etc.) A devastating fire at the National Personnel Records Center in 1973 destroyed 17 million personnel files. The loss of those files presents a challenge, but we have records to help bridge the gap. [See previous article.]
- 2. Find your ancestor's WWII Draft Registration Card.** We have nearly 36 million WWII Draft cards available to search¹. Among other details, these cards will tell you where the registrant lived and their birthplace.
- 3. US Army Enlistment Records.** If your ancestor served in the Army, you can cross-reference enlistment records with the draft card. Army Enlistment Records² include the enlisted's birth year and enlistment place. They also have another big clue – the Army Serial Number. This military service number can open new research possibilities.
- 4. Military Service Number.** Using Fold3® search filters, search your ancestor's military service number like this: Search – Filter – Military – Service Number. In some military records like WWII Hospital Admission Card Files³, military officials recorded a soldier's military service number but not a name (or they may have used initials) when generating a record. Thus, a name search may not return all available results. When conducting name searches on Fold3®, use all variations of the veteran's name. The military did not have a uniform system; one record may contain the full legal name, while another may use an initial and last name.
- 5. Search Unit Histories.** Each unit kept a regimental history. Some are very detailed with day-to-day movements, injuries, awards, and medals. Even if your ancestor is not mentioned by name, a unit history can help you track their service and experiences. Search our collection of Unit Histories⁴.
- 6. Marine Corps.** Explore our Marine Corps Muster Rolls⁵ collection if your ancestor served in the Marines. For those who died while serving, the Marine Corps Casualty Indexes⁶ can provide information about their military unit, cause of death, and military service number. The Marine Corps also recorded War Diaries⁷ for aviation units. These give detailed accounts of engagements.
- 7. US Army Air Forces.** If your ancestor served in the Army Air Forces (the US Air Force was created following WWII in 1947), we have several collections that might provide helpful information. The WWII US Air Force Photos⁸ collection has photos from all theaters of operation. You will find personnel photos, aircrew photos, photos of bombing operations, and more. If a plane went missing, authorities filed a Missing Air Crew Report⁹. These reports recorded who was on the aircraft and their military service number, witness statements, crash details, and more.
- 8. US Navy.** Even if your ancestor didn't serve in the Navy, you might find them listed on muster rolls because they boarded troop ships to travel to and from overseas postings. If they did serve in the Navy, explore our Navy Support Books¹⁰ collection, WWII Navy Muster Rolls¹¹ collection, Navy Cruise Books¹², and Submarine War Patrol Reports¹³ collection. Our WWII War Diaries¹⁴ collection includes daily operational reports and can provide detailed accounts of engagements.
- 9. Women in WWII.** Women served critical roles during WWII. Explore our Women's Army Corps¹⁵ (WAAC or WAC) unit history and a collection of WWII Cadet Nursing Corps Card Files¹⁶ to learn more about their valuable contributions.
- 10. Fold3® Memorials.** Millions of families have honored the military service of their loved ones by creating Memorials for the **Fold3® Honor Wall**¹⁷. These Memorials are a valuable collaboration tool and may include photographs, journal entries, and more. Your ancestor may not have recorded their personal experience, but maybe a soldier who fought alongside them did. If you want to create a Fold3® Memorial, go to <https://www.fold3.com/help/memorials/about> for simple instructions.

TIPS (continued)

These research tips are just the beginning. We have 160 WWII record collections from the United States to explore (and more from other countries). You can honor the military heroes in your family by learning more about their service on Fold3®.

Source: <https://blog.fold3.com/discover-your-wwii-veteran-with-fold3-military-records/>

Links:

- ¹ <https://www.fold3.com/publication/816/us-wwii-draft-registration-cards-1940>
- ² <https://www.fold3.com/publication/831/us-wwii-army-enlistment-records-1938-1946>
- ³ <https://www.fold3.com/publication/1088/us-wwii-hospital-admission-card-files-1942-1954>
- ⁴ <https://www.fold3.com/collection/unit-histories>
- ⁵ <https://www.fold3.com/publication/1414/us-marine-corps-muster-rolls-1798-1958>
- ⁶ <https://www.fold3.com/publication/977/us-marine-corps-casualty-indexes-1940-1958>
- ⁷ <https://www.fold3.com/publication/750/us-world-war-ii-war-diaries-1941-1945>
- ⁸ <https://www.fold3.com/publication/495/us-wwii-us-air-force-photos>
- ⁹ <https://www.fold3.com/publication/95/us-missing-air-crew-reports-macrs-wwii-1942-1947>
- ¹⁰ <https://www.fold3.com/publication/965/us-navy-support-books-1901-2010/browse>
- ¹¹ <https://www.fold3.com/publication/829/us-world-war-ii-navy-muster-rolls-1938-1949>
- ¹² <https://www.fold3.com/publication/825/us-navy-cruise-books-1918-2009>
- ¹³ <https://www.fold3.com/publication/494/us-submarine-war-patrol-reports-1941-1945>
- ¹⁴ <https://www.fold3.com/publication/750/us-world-war-ii-war-diaries-1941-1945>
- ¹⁵ <https://www.fold3.com/publication/1119/us-womens-army-corps-wac-1942-1978>
- ¹⁶ <https://www.fold3.com/publication/925/us-wwii-cadet-nursing-corps-card-files-1942-1948>
- ¹⁷ <https://www.fold3.com/wall>

DEPOT REPAIR SQUADRONS

26 October 2023

I've finished two new web pages.

DEPOT #4 DARWIN

aka 4TH AIR DEPOT DARWIN

IN AUSTRALIA DURING WWII

<https://www.ozatwar.com/usaaf/depotno4darwin.htm>

49TH DEPOT REPAIR SQUADRON

OF 49TH AIR DEPOT GROUP

IN AUSTRALIA DURING WWII

<https://www.ozatwar.com/usaaf/49depotrepairsqn.htm>

Regards, Peter Dunn OAM

ozatwar.com

MORE ON THIS TOPIC IN THE NEXT NEWSLETTER!!

TAPS

LEST WE FORGET



528th - Haves, Ethel, Widow of Hyman H. Haves, DOD May 22, 2009, Pacific Palisades, California, internet search

530th - Matusz, Barbara J., Widow of Arnold Matusz, DOD September 9, 2023, West Bloomfield, Michigan, internet search

531st - Burdi, Annette, Widow of Carlo J. Burdi, DOD 2019, Staten Island, New York, internet search

531st - Goodrich, Imogene, Widow of Warren W. Goodrich, DOD May 6, 2022, Royal Center, Indiana, internet search

NOTICES

If you have any inquiries, requests, or other information you would like to relay to other 380th Bomb Group Association members, please write to: Barbara Gotham (see contact info below in "How to Report Address Changes").

Also, if you have any information pertaining to any of the mail calls in any issue of THE FLYING CIRCUS, you can respond directly to the person inquiring (if contact info is provided) or to Barb Gotham to pass along to that person.

TO REDUCE PRINTING AND MAILING COSTS, READERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO RECEIVE A PDF COPY OF FUTURE NEWSLETTERS BY EMAIL (RATHER THAN RECEIVING THE HARD COPY IN THE MAIL).

If you are interested in this option, please send an email to: 380th.ww2@gmail.com

NOTE: IF YOU CHANGE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS, PLEASE BE SURE TO SEND NOTICE OF YOUR NEW EMAIL ADDRESS.

The membership/donation form is provided in this issue, but you can also use one from an earlier issue, or download a copy from the 380th website at:

<http://380th.org/2023Member-form.pdf>

PAST ISSUES OF THE NEWSLETTERS CAN BE FOUND on our website:

<http://380th.org/NEWS/News.html#Newsletters>

HOW TO REPORT TAPS

Please write to:

Barbara Gotham
380th Bomb Group Association
130 Colony Road
West Lafayette IN 47906-1209 USA

Or send email to: 380th.ww2@gmail.com

Or go to this web link and submit the form:
<http://380th.org/form.html>

Got an idea for a story? Send email to 380th.ww2@gmail.com or mail to Barb Gotham at the USPS address shown below.

Looking for a gift for that special someone? Please consider 380th gear! Check out the order form on our website at: <http://380th.org/Gear2022-January.pdf>

HOW TO REPORT ADDRESS CHANGES:

Please write to:

Barbara Gotham
380th Bomb Group Association
130 Colony Road
West Lafayette IN 47906-1209 USA

Or send email to: 380th.ww2@gmail.com

NEW FACEBOOK PAGES

Search for the group *380th Bombardment Group (WWII Veterans Group)* or go to
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2302731583244398>

TAPS/Memorial page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/421843586784696>



*This Newsletter is Dedicated to All the Men of the
380th Bombardment Group (H) in World War II*

with special thanks to

*Forrest E. (Tommy) Thompson, Lt. Col. USAF (Ret.) (DOD 6/15/91) and Helen H. Thompson
(DOD 6/22/08) who had the foresight, perseverance, and love of the 380th Bombardment Group (H)
and its history, traditions, and personnel to organize, succor, and guide the
380th Bombardment Group Association, Inc. (our predecessor organization, from 1982-1999)*

*and to Theodore (Ted) J. Williams (DOD 4/27/13) for his dedication to preserving the 380th's
history and for continuing the work of the
Thompsons in guiding our current organization from 1999-2006*

*and to Thomas (Tom) M. Hunt (DOD 11/11/08)
for his support, guidance and commitment to the 380th Bomb Group Association during his lifetime.*

Our everlasting thanks and love go out to them all.