



Flightline



Newsletter of the 780th Bombardment Squadron of WWII

November 2017

Brother of squadron spouse

Korean War MIA identified

Some members of the 780th Bombardment Squadron have personal connections to wars in addition to World War II. Eleanor Ball, widow of 780th crew chief Jack Ball, had an older half-brother who served in the Korean War. Army Cpl. Donald "Donnie" Baer was missing in action for 67 years until this past August, when his remains were positively identified. Cpl. Baer will be buried in the family plot in Racine, Wisconsin, with full military honors, on Veterans Day.

In July 1950, Baer was a member of Co. K, 3rd Batt., 34th Inf. Regt, 24th Inf. Div., engaged in combat operations against North Korean Army forces in and around the city of Taejon (now Daejeon), South Korea. On July 19, the North Koreans initiated a large-scale attack on the city in an attempt to destroy U.S. forces. Following the battle, Baer could not be accounted for and was declared missing in action.

This is all Eleanor and the rest of the Baer family knew until 2001 when several family members submitted DNA samples to the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency in the hopes that his remains would be recovered and identified some day. Then, the family learned from Baer's service files that five sets of remains were recovered in the Taejon area in Febru-

ary 22, 1951 - some seven months after the battle. One set of remains was identified and

the other four were buried in Tanggok, South Korea, as Unknowns. In 1954, the four were disinterred and sent to the U.S. Army Central Identification Unit in Kokura, Japan. Still not able to be identified, in 1956 the four remains were sent to the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Hawaii or "Punchbowl" for permanent interment as Unknowns, or X-files.

In 2010, X-files at Punchbowl were declassified, and a private researcher started making connections between MIAs and artifacts that were connected to the X-files. In 2015, the researcher made the Baer family aware of the 24th Division helmet inscribed with Baer's name

found in the Taejon area where the four unidentified remains were recovered.

The Baer family requested disinterment of X-file 450 in 2015, and again in 2016, and received notification that X-file 453 - one of the four remains recovered in 1951 - was disinterred on August 14, 2017 and positively identified as Baer on August 24, 2017. DPAA positively identified Baer's remains through a chest radiograph comparison of Baer's TB chest X-



Cpl. Donald L. Baer

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Your News & Letters

Dear Kathy,

Sending you a little money to keep the Flightline coming.

There is one thing I'd like to see. A picture of your family, especially the girls, in the Flightline. For years they were with us.

Take care,

Alice Lindeman

P.S. Sure miss my love, Louis.

Editor's note: It's wonderful to get a letter from you, Alice, and I, too, miss Louis/"Dyke." And thank you for your contribution to the newsletter. Can you believe what the girls look like now?! (see page 5)



Kathy,

I truly enjoyed your recent Flightline. Doing OK here except I am now using a cane due to my balance.

Hope all is well with you and yours. Having tough time without Aileen, she died one day before our 66th anniversary. This was 2014.

Attached is a bit of help to keep Flightline coming. You do a great job with it.

Since I passed 90 I write like a doctor (MD).

My best to you,

Jim Long

Editor's note: You and I both write like doctors, Jim, but you have a better excuse! Thank you for once again supporting Flightline. It is my pleasure to create each issue, and I am so glad you and the rest of the squadron value it. I will keep it going as long as possible.



Dear Kathy,

I was surprised and happy to see Frank's picture on the front page of Flightline (June 2017). It was a sad - sweet moment. We were married 58 years. He passed on January 18, 2017 due to congenital heart failure and complications from old age. Our son, Bob, and I continue to live in The Woodlands, Texas, near Houston. He had two WWII sons: Bruce died from cancer a year before

Frank did. He was 72. Frank Jr. still lives in Dallas with his family. We chose not to write an obituary as almost all of Frank's relatives and friends have already passed. I'm sorry I didn't write to you sooner. At some point in the near future we plan to take Frank's ashes to Dallas where his parents are buried.

Frank was loved and respected by all his friends and neighbors here in The Woodlands. We miss him so much.

Love,

Patsy and Bob Teagarden

P.S. Frank always remembered his World War II days, his great crew and good friends!

Editor's note: Thank you for the follow-up letter, Patsy. I'm glad you liked seeing the 2010 article. In addition to the end of Nazi tyranny, the other great result of the war is the friendships that were established.

Thank You

**Alice Lindeman
and
Jim Long**

**for your donations
to the Flightline**

Can you answer grandson's questions?

Joshua Hummel, grandson of 780th veteran Robert F. Davenport, has a few questions that he hopes our members might be able to answer:

"Attached are some photos my family and I have found. My Grandfather was a part of four boys that all joined up when they were of or close to age during World War II (one Navy, one AAF, and two Army). I have learned that the oldest brother died during training with his co-pilot. They were in a Corsair off of the coast of Virginia.

"My grandfather, nose gunner in Tenant's crew, was on B-17's before B-24's. I don't really have any records of it but I was told at one point he was in the 331st Heavy Bombardment Wing. Upon research it seems unlikely pre-WWII he would have been in that outfit. After WWII he continued on to S.A.C. in Korea and then worked in nuclear arms in North Dakota and retired as a Master Sergeant. He married and raised three great children, and always had a great sense of humor/prankster."

Here are Joshua's questions. If you can help, email him at summersun83@gmail.com:

1. Did anyone else transfer from a different outfits or fly in 17's then 24's?
2. Did anyone stay in the service after and continue on to Korea or further?
3. Was the .38 Special we found common amongst "Bomber Boys?"
4. Is there a detailed list or organization/government that I can find out exactly what he was involved in now or my grandmother can? At one point there was a records office, but I heard they had a fire or flood so all was lost. Is that true?
5. I know the name was popular, did anyone know or fly on *Blunderbuss*? Was it in the 780th?
6. Does anyone have any more plane/*Flightline*/base/training photos in their archives? It would be a treat to see such rare documents.



Photos of Robert F. Davenport in Joshua Hummel's family collection.



If anyone has any other photos or information to share I'm still saving/scanning the photos documents member and their families have been sending me. Thank you very much and my best to you all!

... from front page

ray taken in 1948 and the clavicle bones of his skeletal remains, as well as dental, anthropological and circumstantial evidence.

Baer's remains will be flown from Honolulu, Hawaii to Milwaukee, Wisconsin on November 9, escorted by Baer's great-nephew, T/Sgt. Daniel D. Knautz of the U.S. Air Force, stationed at Minot AFB, North Dakota. After 67 years, he will be laid to rest in Racine between his father and older brother, George.

Cpl. Baer was awarded the Purple Heart, the Combat Infantryman's Badge, the Prisoner of War Medal (he was originally reported as a prisoner), the Korean Service Medal, the United Nations Service Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, Presidential Unit Citation Ribbon and the National Defense Service Medal. The Republic of Korea also has awarded their Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation, and in 2015, while sisters Joan Knautz and Janet Baril were in South Korea, Cpl. Baer was awarded the Ambassador for Peace Medal.

Baer is survived by sisters Eleanor Ball, Joan Knautz, Janet Baril and Carol Preston. Deceased family members are his parents, Elizabeth and Vernon Baer; and eight siblings: George Baer, Florence Fleischhacker, Rosemary Halbur, Raymond Baer, Clarence Baer, Dorothy Gay, Barbara Baer and Frank Baer.

Baer's name is recorded on the Walls of the Missing at Punchbowl along with the others who are missing from the Korean War. A rosette will be placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for.

To date there are more than 7,700 servicemen still unaccounted for from the Korean War, and 73,000 servicemen unaccounted for from World War II. For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for Americans who went missing while serving our country, visit the DPAA website at www.dpaa.mil, social media at www.facebook.com/dod-paa, or call (703) 699-1420.

Ten from 780th Squadron still missing from WWII

According to the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), approximately 20,000 Army Air Corps/Air Force servicemen are still unaccounted for from World War II. Below are the names of ten 780th squadron men who are listed among the missing on the DPAA website. They are listed by name, rank, serial number, date of loss, state of enlistment and location of loss:

BAKES, RUSSELL V	SGT 39917606
8/24/1944 UT	ADRIATIC SEA
BUCK, LEROY O	2LT O-1683592
8/24/1944 PA	ADRIATIC SEA
CARLEN, ROBERT C	2LT O-717974
8/24/1944 NY	ADRIATIC SEA
EMERY, LESTER E	2LT O-1047959
8/24/1944 KS	ADRIATIC SEA
GUTE, IRWIN R	SGT 37667758
8/24/1944 IA	ADRIATIC SEA
HILGER, JAMES W	2LT O-2060988
12/2/1944 CA	POLAND
KLINE, CURTIS L	PFC 34810995
6/3/1945 AL	DAKAR
LEE, RICHARD F	SGT 11112316
8/24/1944 CT	ADRIATIC SEA
MCPARLAND, JAMES P	SGT 20221507
8/24/1944 NJ	ADRIATIC SEA
SHANLEY, WALTER E	SGT 32651452
8/24/1944 NY	ADRIATIC SEA



The Luptons: then and now

Alice Lindeman was so sweet to ask for a current picture of my family. I'm happy to oblige.

The photo of the five of us, right, was taken on the beach at the beachhouse of 780th Squadron members Bart and Helen Branch when they hosted the 2006 squadron reunion in New Hampshire. Bart passed away this year. His obituary will appear in the December issue of the *Flightline*. I am holding Claudia, age 3. John is holding Lydia, age 3, and Audrey, 18 months.

The other two photos were taken this August. Bottom left, Claudia and Lydia, age 14, and Audrey, age 12, are heading off to their first day of school. Claudia and Lydia are freshmen and Audrey is a seventh grader. I know, I can't believe it either!

Bottom right, of course, is me and John. I know, I can't believe this one either - but not for the same reasons!

I started attending squadron reunions in 1998 with the Dayton reunion. I looked forward to them every year. You all are my family - even those of you I haven't had the pleasure to meet in person. I'm so happy you got the chance to meet me "pre-kids" and that you have welcomed me and my family into your squadron family, as well as your personal families. I love you all!



Kathy Le Comte
Editor, *Flightline*
1004 Williams Blvd.
Springfield, IL 62704-2832

Flightline

Apologies for the lateness of this *Flightline*, but the delay offered an opportunity that I normally don't get to honor Veterans Day. *Peanuts* creator Charles Schulz often saluted *Willie and Joe* creator Bill Mauldin on Veterans Day. Here's a sampling. The December issue is coming soon!

