



San Diego Chapter 1 Member Biography



San Diego Chapter American Ex-Prisoners of War

WWW.SDPOW.ORG

Member Biographies

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San Diego Chapter 1 Member Biography

Bob Barney

Bob Barney, a Missourian Enlisted in Army Air Corp In December, 1940.

Aerial gunner in O-47 aircraft in Hawaii at the time of the Japanese attack - December 7, 1941.

Later, became pilot and aircraft commander of B-17 flying Fortress. Assigned to the Eighth Air Force in England – 43 & 44.

Shot down of 18th bombing mission to Berlin, Germany. on April 29, 1944. during attack by over 200 German Fighters over Magdeberg. Issued "bailout" instructions from flaming aircraft. One of ten crewman killed in the air by enemy fire. Several crew members, including Barney himself, received injuries.

Prisoner of War in Stalag Luft III, home of The Great Escape.



Escaped twice from the enemy, both in early April 1944. Following second escape, Lived with German farmers until liberated by General Patton's Third Army. - April 29, 1945 - exactly one year from date of captivity.

Chased typhoons from Guam for two years in B-29 aircraft during in mid-fifties. Made 18 typhoon eye penetrations

Pilot and project commander for testing the Atomic Clock in late fifties. Flew four-engine KC-135 jet aircraft from Griffiss Air force Base, N.Y. to Sydney, Australia in 1960. Two German scientists

participated in the two-week project. (First jet aircraft ever to land in Australia.)

Served as Director of Flight Test in the Air Force Systems Command for six years prior to retirement.

Bob shared the details of his life in the book: ***Bulletproof*** which can be located on Amazon.com

Retired July, 1961 as a Lt. Col, USAF.



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Frank Burger

The two POWs from the San Diego Chapter that have been working wonders for their people for many years are Commander Frank Burger and Senior Vice Commander Fernando Tellez, MD.

Frank Burger was a “Flight Engineer” in B-24’s out of Italy during World War II. He had pilot training, gunnery school, some navigation and could handle just about anything in the plane. On one of his very early missions some of his crewmen was shot up pretty bad and Frank held one in his arms as he passed away.

On the mission he was shot down, he was nearly trapped in the Bombardiers compartment in the nose of the plane. The tail gunner was barely conscious and he threw him out the plane with instructions to hold on the ring; and he knew he would pull it when he was dropped.



When Frank hit the ground he was free for three days and was caught drinking water at a well. The Germans put him in jail; the jailor was a Hungarian and released him to the local Hungarian group. He was caught again when the hotel in Budapest was raided by the Germans. He was placed in Stalag Luft 4 but spent most of his time in Luft 1.

When liberated he was in very poor condition, he became almost blind from lack of decent food and spent 6 weeks in the hospital on the French coast to regain the sight and body weight.

He settled back home in Iowa doing Home Construction work. He got involved with veterans groups, moved to California in the early 50”s and met up with a San Diego POW who was the National Commander of the AMERICAN Ex-PRISONERS OF WAR, Charlie Miller.

Frank has an office in the VA Regional Office and meets the POWs every Thursday from Noon to 1:30 PM in ‘therapy’ sessions. The usual attendance is 40 to60 former POWs.

Together with Dr. Tellez, these two gentlemen have built a POW Chapter with over 250 names of men who at one time or another have been through the Veterans Affairs system for the Medical Care and Entitlements they deserve. Some of those benefits include License plates, and Life Time Passes.



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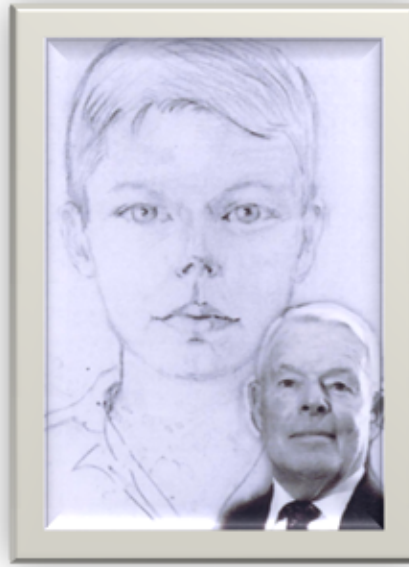
Tom Crosby

WWII Civilian
Prisoner of War
for 37
Unforgettable Months

Tom was born in the Philippines to American parents who were working in Manila before the war. On December 7th 1941 when Pearl Harbor was bombed, military installations in the Philippines were also attacked on the same day.

Shortly after the Japanese entered Manila, Tom, and his family of five were taken to the University of Santo Tomas, built in 1611 with no dormitory facilities. There, with 3700 allied nationalities, Tom would spend the next 37 months in captivity.

At the end of three very hungry years, on February 3rd 1945, General MacArthur's 1st Cavalry Division spearheaded "Flying Column" mechanized units through the Japanese



infantry lines to rescue the prison camp before the Japanese could carry out orders from Tokyo to eliminate all military and civilian prisoners.

Tom, now 11 years old, was among 220 prisoners held hostage by 65 Japanese for 36 tense hours until negotiations ended in exchanging the prisoners for the safe escort of the Japanese fully armed to the enemy's front lines a few blocks away and released. Two days later the Japanese found out about the rescue and began shelling the camp for four days resulting in many

casualties. Tom and his family survived this ordeal.

Tom regained his health and education, later joining the Navy during the Korean conflict, then worked in aerospace for 13 years and finally retired after 25 years with the City of Coronado in San Diego County.

Tom and his wife Nancy are proud active members of the San Diego Chapter-Ex-Prisoners of War, with 4 children, 9 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren.



San Diego Chapter 1 Member Biography

Ed Davidson

Born on July 31, 1923 at Bovina Center, located in the Catskill Region of New York State.

Spent the first four grades in school in one room, then moved to the other room for grades five through eight.

Immediately after graduating from high school at Delaware Academy, Delhi, NY in June 1941 I started Aviation Mechanic Ground School at Elmira, NY. Spent all my savings (\$75.00) on flying lessons there. By working at the airport on weekends I was able to log twenty hours of flight time before April 1942.

Enlisted April 4th, 1942 in New York City for the Aviation Cadet program. Preflight training at Maxwell Field, AL; Primary Flight Training at Decatur, AL (PT-17); Basic at Walnut Ridge, AR (BT-13); and twin engine Advanced at George Field, IL (AT-9) where I was commissioned May 28, 1943. B-17 training at Columbus, OH, Ephrata, WA and Spokane, WA

Crossed the Atlantic on the Queen Mary and arrived at the 96th Bomb Group near the end of November 1943. Shot down on Jan 5th, 1944 over Bordeaux, France on our seventh mission



and ditched the burning airplane in the Bay of Biscay. Lost half of my crew that day.

Spent January 1944 until May 13, 1945 at Stalag Luft 1. Returned to Allied Military Control through Camp Lucky Strike and back to USA on June 21, 1945. Processed at Atlantic City, NJ in August and separated from Active duty in January 1946 and started studying mechanical engineering at Cornell University while flying with Air Corps Reserve at Rome, NY. Transferred to Parks College in September 1948 and graduated March 1951 and recalled to active duty with my Air Force Reserve unit. Flew C-46 and C-119 aircraft in Korea until the armistice was signed in Oct 1953.

Hired by American Airlines in March 1955, based in New York.

In 1966 AAL obtained a Military contract for flying military supplies to Viet Nam.

I volunteered for the project and I flew into Danang, Cameron Bay and Saigon during late 1966 and early 1967. In May 1973 I moved to San Diego where I retired from line flying July 31, 1983.

Had the great good fortune to work as a consultant with American Airlines as a simulator instructor in Dallas/Ft Worth, TX working with the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve crews flying the KC-135E tanker aircraft from September 1983 until March 2003.

Since then I have been retired in San Diego with Maria, the mother of our three sons.



San Diego Chapter 1 Member Biography

Byron Disselhorst

When America entered WW II in Dec. 1941, Byron was a freshman at Oregon State University and he joined the Army Reserve sometime after that. He was able to finish his sophomore year in college, and then he was called up as were other students in his category.

He took basic training in Texas and then was put in the army specialized training program and sent to the University of Nebraska for six months before he was transferred to the 44th. Infantry Division in Kansas where he trained before going to Europe in Sept. 1944.

He went into combat in October assigned to the 7th Army. The weather was wet and cold, and by Nov. it was snowing. Around Thanksgiving time, his regiment was awarded a Presidential Unit Citation for repulsing the Germans in the Alsace-Lorraine region of France.

After the Battle of the Bulge, the Germans needed a diversion to relieve pressure on their divisions in the Ardennes where the first Army had regained the initiative. As a result, the Germans launched an attack on



the 7th. Army on New Years Day. Byron was still in the 7th. Army and the lines were spread thin.

On Jan. 6, 1945, his company launched a counter attack and without going in to all the details he was captured in the afternoon after fighting most of the day. After brief stops in two POW camps and three separate box car train trips, he ended up in his final camp, Stalag 4A, near Dresden, Germany, in Feb. 1945. The box car trips were tough. One could either stand or sit, but could not lie down. One trip lasted six days and he had one meal and a little water.

The camp he was in was a work camp for enlisted POWs. He did pick and shovel work and got one bowl of watered soup and one slice of bread per day. He weighed about 90 pounds at the

end of the war. He wore the clothes he was captured in until he was liberated. He had two showers during captivity and all in the camp had lice. At night he dreamed about food.

Byron knew the war was coming to an end by late April. About April 30 all left the camp and followed refugees trying to escape the Russians who were taking over. When the war ended in early May, he had reached Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia which was controlled by the Russians. He lived with a family for about two weeks before he finally was returned to American control and sent to France and home.

After discharge from the Army in Nov. 1945, Byron returned to Oregon State University and graduated with a BS degree in Chemical Engineering in June 1947. Most of his professional career was in the field of nuclear power research and development. Byron also served in the U.S. Air Force Reserve and received an honorable discharge with the rank of Captain.

He is now retired and involved in a variety of activities. His wife was a WW II Army Nurse and is also retired.



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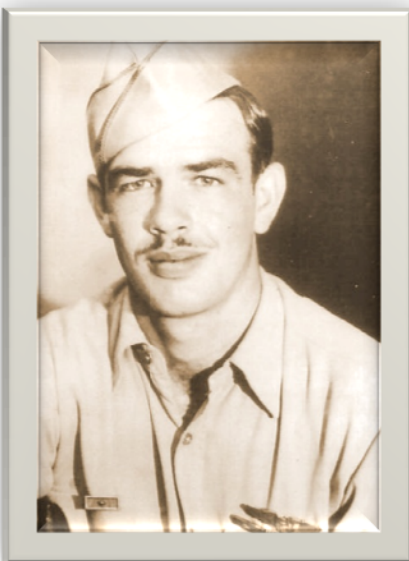
Carl Heimaster

**Crew 6, 724th Squadron,
451st Bm0b Group, 49th
Wing, 15th AF, USAAF**

At the Induction Center at St. Louis, the usual batteries of tests were given where I was found to be in excellent health, mentally strong, and as a hobby enjoyed hunting, the Army decided that the Air Force was the place for me.

Basic training at Miami Beach was very minimal, just the usual close order drill, cleaning a rifle that had no ammunition and had never been fired, but most of all how to obey orders! A decision was made by the Army that I was to enter a flying status, and they sent me to Denver Colo. to study armament i.e. bombs, how they worked, Fuses and how they were activated to detonate the bombs.

Passing this phase I was sent to Laredo Texas for Gunnery School. We were taught to shoot all types of hand-guns, rifles, machine guns at stationary and moving targets. This Missouri country boy had never flown in an airplane so when I was told that the next part of our training would be firing at a target being towed by another plane, I was petrified!! The plane was a single engine, two seater, I was fitted with a seat type



parachute with a safety strap through the harness, riding in the rear seat facing the rear with a machine gun which had stops to prevent me from shooting the tail off our plane!!! To compound my apprehension the gunner before had become air sick all over the rear seat, this didn't do a thing to settle my stomach!!

The Air Force was building the 15th Air Force to be stationed in Italy. Several Groups were in the process of being assembled in different areas of the United States. I was sent to Wendover Utah to be part of the 451st. Bomb Group of which there were 4 Squadrons of 10 planes with 4 officers and 6 enlisted men in each plane. My crew was formed and we were given a B-24 which we named the American Beauty....What a great crew!! The Pilot and I were the only members that were raised West of the

Mississippi, the others from NY, Penn., Ohio we bonded together like family.

The Corps of Engineers had preceded us to Italy and had built an air strip of steel matting, along with all the support building, ammo storage, and fuel depot to conduct our missions of destruction on the enemy. It didn't take long to get started. The middle of January 1944 saw us in the air doing what we had been trained to do. Help Destroy The Machine of War .

Our days became a blur, delivering our bombs for two days, resting one then repeat. Targets of rail- yards where box cars, oil cars, troop carriers all would fall victim to our bombs. Often our targets would be the oil rich fields of the Balkans- our greatest danger would come not in the form of fighter planes but the anti-aircraft fire called Flak .

The shells would burst all around us sending flying pieces of steel in every direction, sometimes direct hits on a plane, or maybe a small piece the size of a walnut tearing through the plane not caring whether it hit man or machine. Such was the case with our plane, American Beauty, on June 23 1944. A piece of shrapnel severed an oil line on the left side, number 1 engine, all oil was lost so it had to be shut down. This created an



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extra load for number 2 engine and after 20 minutes it also failed.

When your plane is losing altitude and you are unable to climb to clear a mountain range, we had no choice but to abandon our American Beauty to her fate in the side of a mountain, while we had no choice but to parachute to earth. THUS BEGINS ANOTHER SAGA!!!

Our pilot called on our intercom to bail out starting from the rear forward and being the tail-gunner I was the first one to hit the silk. My parachute caught in the top of some trees and I had to stand on tip-toe to reach the ground. I traveled down a dry creek bed, turned around a point and there stood a group of German soldiers!! I was a Prisoner of War...After 41 missions my fighting war was over, but now mental war would begin. That evening our entire crew was crowded into a root cellar where we discussed our injuries and wondered at our fate. Some time during the night our nose-gunner Joe Klubert either was taken or he left on his own but the next morning they, the Germans, told us that Joe was shot while trying to escape. We do know that he had an injured ankle but we never saw him again so we never knew his fate.

The next stop of our rail journey was Budapest, Hungary a gathering place for all captured air-men on

their way to a P.O.W. camp in northern Germany. We were placed in solitary confinement for a week, with greasy hot water for breakfast, a bowl of soup and a piece of bread for lunch, the dinner soup was a little thicker. Their reason for this confinement was to question us one at a time about a new night fighter that was appearing in the skies, which of course being on a bomber we knew absolutely nothing about. It was while I was in solitary that I realized that it was the 4th of July!! Happy birthday America!

Now our box-car was attached to several others and we were now a P.O.W. Troop Train. We moved rather swiftly North with out any other stops, potatoes, bread, and water was provided us while confined to our car. Personal hygiene were conducted through a partially opened door while on the move, exercise was allowed before the evening meal then back in the car to a bed of straw with 20 or 30 others, and we sped through the night. We arrived at our destination sometime in the latter days of July. We were met there with the usual escort but this time they had Canines, I mean big angry, snapping, snarling, biting dogs!! The guards would ease off their leashes enough for the dogs to bite the unfortunate ones in the buttocks, needless to say we were glad to get into the safety of our

barbed wire enclosure. The official name of our camp was Stalag(prison) Luft(air) 4. The camp was laid out in a square divided into quarters, in each quarter there were 13 barracks a cooking building (not to be confused with kitchen) where potatoes were cooked with some times meat of an unknown origin.

Time hung heavy on our hands but it also passes so quickly. Thanksgiving passed then Christmas arrived and with it we could hear heavy artillery to the East of us and knew that the Russians were pushing the Germans back. Tension mounted inside the camp as to our fate and our guards were nervous also as to their fate.

Those prisoners who had trouble walking from wounds suffered in battle were transported to another camp where medical attention was better. Each time a group left camp we wondered where they were going and what was to be their destination. Up until now we thought we were prisoners of war but now we could see that we were also Pawns of war. Starting the last week of January our camp started its evacuation, I left camp the 2nd of February, we each carried what we thought we could carry and or what we would need. Of course we were not told where we were going or how long the walk would be therefore almost



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every one discarded items that we thought we would need only to find the pace of the evacuation was so fast and we were so out of shape that after eight miles we were down to the bare essentials, Our blankets, and food nothing else.

On May the 1st we were told that soon we would be liberated of course this rumor was ignored but sure enough on May the 2nd at 9:30 AM a British Tank Corp came down the road!!!! After 333 days of incarceration, walking more than 600 miles in three months, we were free!!!

A near-by Army Post gave us a shower, a tooth brush, clean clothing, new shoes, good food, none of which we had had for the three months of walking and de-lousing what a relief to be rid of the lice!!! (Through the years I have never wasted food and am amazed at the food on the shelves of our super market, which so few people appreciate).

The rest of May is rather a blur as we were moved from one base to another, always moving westerly toward the debarkation point called " Camp Lucky Strike" along the west coast of France. Here our time was spent eating high protein foods, steaks, ice cream, candy, milk shakes and sleeping. The Army was trying to get some weight on our skinny bones. I

had lost 40 pounds, and, except for bleeding gums, was in pretty good shape physically. Mentally, I don't know to this day whether it has affected my life. I would like to think that it has not .

The latter part of May we were placed aboard a freighter that had been modified with hammocks and lots of food to return to America. Our previous crossing with our air plane took 10 hours, to again cross the Atlantic it took 14 days but we didn't care we were going HOME!!!!!!

The Army base at New Port News, Va. was overwhelmed with returning solders, to lighten the crunch we received a 90 day furlough and sent on our way. The trip home to the Ozarks was so calm, quiet, and peaceful without the worry or concern, where our next meal was coming from or when!! Upon arrival at Lebanon, Mo. I met my High School Math teacher. We had a joyous reunion right there in the Greyhound Bus station!! Because I did not know when I would be arriving home I was unable to notify my family and since we didn't have a telephone, I ask the ole math teacher, Mr. Peterson if he knew some one who could drive me the 11 miles home. No he said I'll do it myself so he called his substitute to fill in for him at the station and away we went!!

He started honking the horn some distance from the house and I think the folks guessed or knew what was happening because they were there in the yard when we drove up.

HOME SWEET HOME but the home-coming wasn't complete! My war time sweetheart, Mary, lived in Kansas City 200 miles away, arrangements had to be made through the Ration Board to get enough gas stamps to allow us to drive up to see her. We were still at war with Japan and the critical items were still being rationed (i.e. gas, tires, sugar, coffee, and other things) plus a 35 MPH speed limit!!! I called her when we were in town to let her know I was on my way, the phone lines were wet with tears of joy from both of us. The trip took one of the slowest 8 hours I ever spent but at last we were united; married July 9th 1945 and spent the next 50 years loving each other until she slipped away from me in 1995.

In June of 1999, after years of loneliness, I met my current Love, Patricia, who became my wife in 2003. We are having years of happiness together!



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Fred Kennie

8TH Air Force, 95th Bomb Group, 334th Squadron

Was a Co-Pilot, flying the B-17 Bombers in WW II. On his 7th mission his plane was shot down on a raid to Munster, Germany, October 10, 1943. Following bailout over Western Germany he hid out; walked by night and evaded into Holland.

When he could walk no more, due to frozen feet lack of water and food; he was discovered in a farmer's haystack. Circumstances were such that the "Dutch" Authorities were compelled to turn him over to the Germans, otherwise the Occupying Forces would kill 10 or more randomly selected citizens, as they had done just several weeks earlier, when another Allied flyer had escaped into the "Dutch Underground".

Fred spent the remainder of the War, 19 months, as the guest of the German Reich in a German Prisoner of War Camp known as Stalag Luft I. The camp was located in Northern Germany in the small town of Barth on the Baltic Coast. At the war's end in May 1945, the camp was liberated by the Russian Armed Forces.



After returning home to Pennsylvania, he attended Purdue University, in Indiana, graduating with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Airport Management. While in school, he continued flying in the Reserves as time permitted. He accepted a position in 1950 as Airport Manager of the Williamsport Municipal Airport in Pennsylvania.

Shortly after the death of his wife, he moved to California and settled in San Diego in early 1952. While visiting with Jim Bellingham, a Flight School and POW room-mate he accepted employment with Convair, as a Logistics and Contracts Administrator. He married in San Diego the following year, raised two children; and after 49 years of marriage, lost his wife, who had been ill for 24 years. He was

active in Boy Scouts, camping and hiking; which included two hikes of Mt. Whitney.

Fred & Jim soon after that found Edwin Davidson, whom they knew in Flight Training and POW Camps as he was transferred by American Airlines to the San Diego. The three of them enjoyed their get-to-gathers, and travels.

Fred says he was lucky; very lucky; to meet and marry Beulah in 2005. They keep busy with hobbies of model railroads, airplanes, photography, travel and grand children.



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Ralph Kling

Grew up on a small farm of cows and chickens in central California.

After high school graduation in 1942 he and his twin brother joined Army Air Corps. Ralph graduated as 2nd Lt Dec. 5th '43. RTU in P-47, went to England April 8; (his brother went to Italy).

He joined 388th Fighter Squadron May 1st, flew two missions before D Day and 66 after; had one Victory. Most missions were in support of General George S. Patton.

Ralph bailed out of his flaming P47 Thunderbolt on September 21, 1944 over Luxemburg.



He then spent 3 weeks in a German hospital for "displaced" people working in German war industry. Was then 3 months in Stalag Luft III (of Great Escape fame). The prisoners spent a week walking in snow and riding in box cars and starved nearly to death. Next, he was held in Mooseborg's Wehrmacht (Army) Camp for 2 1/2 months.

Ralph was Liberated April 29, 1945.

After the war, he went to San Jose State University, taught and coached high school for 15 years and was an administrator for 15 more (11 as Principal of a large high school).

After retirement he worked at HP for 7 years, National U for three and then built "Boulders" and has worked diligently with the POW Group.



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Carlos Montoya

Carlos is a former POW and survivor of the notorious Bataan Death March. Originally from Albuquerque NM, he was sent with the 200th Coast Artillery to the Philippines before WW11 and was at Camp Stotsenberg when it was attacked by the Japanese immediately after Pearl Harbor

After fighting down the peninsula for four months, the defenders of Bataan, U. S. Army and Philippine Army soldiers were commanded to surrender to the Japanese.

Completely out of food and ammo, they reluctantly followed orders and were captured. Near the town of Marivales at the tip of the peninsula, the Japanese sent Carlos along with thousands of others through searing tropical heat and humidity with no water and no food and the psychotic Japanese beating and bayoneting as many men as they wanted to.

After five days of torturous marching, Carlos and the others were packed like sardines into tiny rail cars for a 20 mile stretch of track between San Fernando and Capas. The cars were so packed with men that many died before they reached the station at Capas; where they were unloaded from the cars and



marched the last six miles to Camp O'Donnell.

There was almost no water for the prisoners, and during his time there, Carlos became ill with dysentery and was left for dead in a room at the camp infirmary called "zero ward". He summoned the strength to crawl back to his unit and with some help from a friend, he was able to heal himself enough to volunteer for a work party.

He wanted to get out of the camp that he felt was a death trap. He worked through the summer on a road through the jungle and after 3 months, out of 300 men on the detail, Carlos was one of 48 who survived. He went from there to Bilibid Prison and then to Camp Cabanatuan before he was shipped to Japan aboard a freighter like cattle. In Japan he

was transported to the northwestern coast where he worked like a pack mule loading coal in the town of Niigata.

He spent the rest of the war in Niigata Camp 5B and there was a guard at the coal yard that singled him out for special beatings and torture. Carlos grew to hate this guard and in 1972, long after he was liberated, he returned to Japan with a pistol intent on revenge.

His revenge was denied him, however, and he couldn't locate the guard. He was also there for the '72 Olympics, so the trip wasn't a total waste. He now lives in San Diego with his wife Betty, alive and still kicking at 93 years.



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Rip Reopelle

Rip was born and raised in Minneapolis. During the last year of high school he became interested in learning how to fly an airplane. After graduating in 1942, he joined the Army Air Corps Pilot Training Program and was sent to Jefferson Barracks, Missouri. The next 18 months he experienced excellent training at various Army Air Corps bases primarily in the southwestern part of the country until graduation in June 1944.

The rest of his training program was spent learning how to fly a B-17 at Yuma, Az. with another outstanding instructor. In the fall of 1944, his crew went to England on the Queen Elizabeth II to join the 8th Air Force 379th. Bomb Group in Kimbolton, England.

On his 11th. mission with another crew, his plane crashed on take off and he spent 2 weeks in the hospital and then returned to his regular crew. Only 4 survived that crash. On the 13th.



mission as co-pilot, his plane was shot down and he and his engineer were taken prisoners together and the others who survived were taken in other areas. Two of the crew were killed.

He was liberated on April 29, 1945 by Gen. George Patton at Moosburg, Germany, from Stalag VII-A. He returned by way of Camp Lucky Strike and then to New York Harbor on a former German ship.

After returning home, he and his wife decided he should take advantage of the GI Bill, so he went to the University of Minnesota for 2 years and transferred to Arizona State to complete his Bachelor's and Master's in Education. They

moved to National City in 1950 where he took a six grade teaching job. He later became principal, and then after receiving his PhD, became superintendent of the National School District.

After his retirement from the school district he was appointed as a Port Commissioner to the San Diego Port District for 8 years. During that time he and his wife traveled extensively until her death after 46 memorable years. Their 3 sons live in Southern California. He and his present wife have been married since 1999.

He retired from the Air Force Reserve with a rank as Major.

He feels he has had a very fortunate life, and thanks the man upstairs for taking such good care of him.



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Dr. Fernando Tellez

Fernando A. Tellez, M.D. as a 2nd Lt. graduated from B-17 pilot training at Hobbs, New Mexico. In March, 1944, he was deployed to Europe to the Eighth Air Force, 466 Bomb Group. On the day his aircraft was shot down over Denmark, as co-pilot he was being transitioned from B-17s to B-24's. As a result of the air attack over Denmark, by ME109's, his plane caught fire, the controls were destroyed and the crew was forced to bail out. Three crewmen perished as a result of this air battle.

At a site near the village of Rudby, where the plane crashed, the citizens in their gratitude, established a monument to the crew of the downed aircraft. Dr. Tellez visited the site some sixty-four years later.

In his post war years he returned to his educational goals and obtained his Doctor of Medicine Degree



from the University of California at Irvine. He spend most of his medical career as Chief Medical Consultant to the California Department of Rehabilitation. He has co-edited two college textbooks which are currently being used nationally.

Since his retirement Dr. Tellez has lent his active support to the American Ex-Prisoners of War in San Diego and Nationally. He is presently the Vice-Commander of the San Diego Chapter of the American Ex-POWs and has been appointed by the Secretary of Veteran's Affairs to the National

Advisory Committee on POWs.

There are three areas that Dr. Tellez feels most satisfaction and joy in having participated on behalf of the American Ex-Prisoners of War:

The establishment of arteriosclerotic heart disease and hypertension as a presumptive disorder. This has been most helpful in obtaining compensation for a great number of American Ex-Prisoners of War.

Dr. Tellez designed the California Ex-Prisoners of War license plate and was instrumental in the passage of Senate Bill No. 1462. This bill mandates a no fee registration and auto license plates to all American POWs in California.

The attainment of lifetime passes to the San Diego Padres baseball games for all San Diego Chapter members of the American Ex-Prisoners of War.



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Bob Vogler

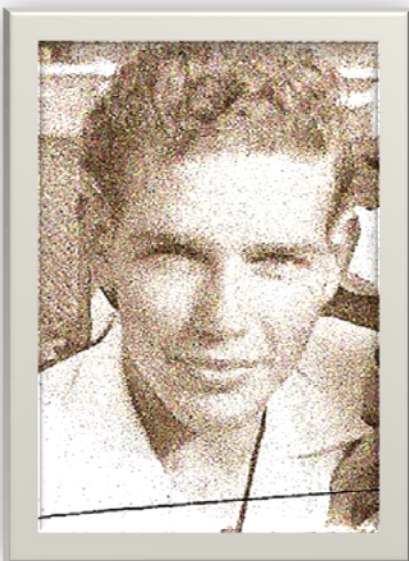
Bob was born in Seattle, WA, but grew up in Southern California. He enlisted in the military service in the Army Air Corps in January 1940, without any “Boot Camp” training.

He was almost immediately sent to the Philippines arriving there May 21, 1940. His military training there consisted of watching the sergeant show how to shoot the Springfield rifle and a machine gun, which he used on Bataan in combat.

Life in the Philippines at that time was some what relaxed. He was off duty each day by noon so he attended the Philippine University in the afternoons. His knowledge of aircraft instruments gave him a chance to work on airplanes of KLM, Philippine Airlines and any others who needed correction of their planes instruments.

On Dec. 7th he was assigned to the 17th Pursuit Squadron, commanded by the first Ace of WW II, “Buzz” Wagner. Later he met the crew of the B-17 piloted by Colon Kelly the Medal of Honor winner.

However things got bad when the Japanese Forces took over



the islands and Bob and 1,800 others went in the hold of a ship to Formosa, and then to Korea. This miserable trip in the hold of a Japanese freighter lasted 22 days. Where the body waste was hauled out in the same container in which the meager food was delivered.

They were sent to a Japanese industrial manufactory complex; called Mukden, Manchuria. Here they lived in sod covered barracks and walked five miles to work and back at night; where temperatures reached 45 below zero.

They were there to build locomotives for the Japanese war industries. These guys managed to learn how to do the work even though few had any machine work experience.

They also learned how to “pinch” oil lines to bearings; leave a hole in a gas tank, etc that caused great frustration with the Japanese in charge. Their reaction was to take 150 of the worst offenders, including Bob, back to Japan and the Lead Mines; where they each had a cart that they had to fill each day before they could leave; or they stayed another 8 hours.

At war’s end this big 6’ 3” guy came back to the states at 80 pounds; retired from the Air Force after 20 years as a Master Sergeant.

Bob was employed by General Dynamics, for 20 years as a Manufacturing Development Engineer, retired and still resides in San Diego.



San Diego Chapter 1 Member Biography

Chris Zazas

Born in Des Moines, Iowa and after graduation from high school the seniors got in a couple of 2 ½ ton trucks and drove over to Fort Dodge and Enlisted in the Army.

That whole group went to the 82nd Division in Mississippi, some on to the Aberdeen proving grounds; and some to South Carolina and the 4th Division 22nd Infantry. Chris went with the group that went to Europe (ETO) and ended up in Cardiff, Wales . They were there a month in training for the Invasion of France. There five different landings on Normandy; Utah and Omaha by Americans; Gold, Juno and Sword by the British.

Chris's group went to Omaha Beach on an LST; and the second he jumped off into the beach waves a German 88 shell hit the LST and blew it and those still in it apart. There were three GI's with Chris and even



loaded with guns and Bandoliers of ammunition they were able to reach the beach. When they did, they ran up into "hedge Rows"; and the War was on for those who got off the beaches.

Chris's group went on thorough St Lo where he had an injury that slowed him down some. Later going through Belgium he was the Driver of the Jeep for the Commanding Officer. Then to the Rhine River; they used small boats or rafts to cross the river but did not notice they were being watched by the Germans. They were all immediately captured; Chris

and four others were taken into the streets and the others were all shot.

The Germans used Chris and his "Buddies" to clean up the body parts of Germans killed earlier in the area. As the German group moved on and around the area of the Rhine River Chris and his "Buddies" were taken along to clean up the stench and mutilated bodies of Germans.

As so happened to other POWs; Chris was eventually Liberated by General Patton's Third Army. He came home through Camp Lucky Strike, to Iowa where he ran and owned jewelry stores.

He and Mary moved to California in 1964; retired a few years ago and now is very active in the Greek Society AHEPA; where Chris has held many leadership roles.