

Just a POW (By Lt. Mick O'Brien)

A though to those who reap the spoils  
from those who die and sweat and toil  
above the clouds and in the blue  
who do the jobs set down by you.

Some fly still and yield to none  
others never, but us, we're done  
because we're here and here we'll be  
until the end and peace we see.

Some are gone expendable true  
but liked by me and loved by you  
"they have had it" as we say  
and a prayer is in order, if you may.

And here we are, we once flew  
forgotten now and known by few  
but live we must, the Lord hath said  
that's why we're here, among not the dead.

All have tales, both wild and weird  
of how it happened and the worst they feared  
some woke falling to give the yank  
others didn't and in the snow they sank.

Alive we are and live we must  
to make a better world we trust  
'tis hard to do, prison bound  
but there ways if only found.

The days are long and all the same  
with time to curse and time to blame  
but life is what you make it here  
good, bad or existence mere.

So to our selves we often say  
"stick it out" 'twill come the day  
when homeward bound we too shall be  
to live and live both new and free.

December 25, 1944

Good meal. X-Mas parcels.

\*\*[By mid December American forces and their allies had carefully and at great costs moved closer to Germany. The end seemed near and the German high command, namely Adolf Hitler, was panic-stricken. Now Hitler put back in command a General he had previously removed, Field Marshall Gerd von Rundstedt, a Prussian trained soldier with great ability.

Using two armored divisions General von Rundstedt attacked the Americans all along the Ardennes forest line. The great force of the German assault caused an American retreat which von Rundstedt then turned into a rout. With the Americans rushing rear-ward along a twenty mile salient, the Germans kept pushing the attack. Now the German advance came upon a small town called Bastogne, defended by a tiny American force under Brigadier General Tony McAuliffe, from Harrisburg, Pa.. General von Rundstedt, under a flag of truce, sent McAuliffe a request for the immediate surrender of his garrison, General McAuliffe who was Fighting Irish to the core, replied simply, "Nuts". There followed some of the toughest fighting of the war, the Americans who took to calling themselves "The Battered Bastards of Bastogne" were somehow holding but time was running out.

There was probably only one man who could, in the time remaining, save the Bastogne garrison and hurl back the Germans but he was under strict orders to stay put or at least that's what the American high command thought. Some sixty miles to the south of Bastogne the American Third Army was encamped under an eccentric southern born West Pointer, who among many other oddities believed in his own reincarnation, General George S. Patton.

Known as Crazy George or Old Crazy George, Patton's previous actions, which were actually insignificant compared to what was coming, had him in constant trouble with the Allied high command and he was continually berated by American politicians and the press, but his men very nearly worshiped him. Now the combat helmeted, pistol-packing commander wired Allied headquarters for permission to move to Bastogne. When an immediate reply did not arrive, Patton reasoned, in a manner as only Crazy George could reason, that it meant it was alright to advance.

On a remarkable sixty mile march in just under thirty hours, in a blinding snow storm during which Old Crazy George informed one of his soldiers, "With your help son, we're going to Berlin and I'am personally going to shoot that paper hanging son of a bitch", the American Third army relieved Bastogne. But Patton wasn't finished, after a short rest he put his troops into line east of Bastogne, gave the order, and now the American counterattack came on.

This time it was the Germans turn to retreat and be routed. Later that night a red faced General Omar Bradley informed an unknowing Allies Supreme Commander General Eisenhower, "Ike, that crazy bastard is counterattacking all up and down the German lines". Crazy or not, and there has been much discussion on

that point, Patton had the Germans on the run and he wouldn't let up.])\*\*

January 1, 1945

Home in 45.

\*\*[Now that Old Crazy George had unloosed himself and was on the move, disregarding orders using every excuse possible and some that weren't, there was no doubt that Lt. O'Brien and his fellow prisoners would be home in 45. In less than one month, in American public opinion Patton had gone from certified Nut to genuine Hero and there was no stopping him now.])\*\*

January 20, 1945

Full parcels. Also English X-mas parcels (good). Sweating out moving. Russians are seventy miles away (good). Everything in air but kitchen sink. Guess it wouldn't rev up.

\*\*[Now before the on rushing American Third army, the Germans tried to destroy roads, railroads and bridges to hold up the on coming Americans. At the Rhine river it appeared the Germans were successful, but Old Crazy George's advanced guard found just one bridge intact, at a place called Remagen and the Americans were on German soil quickly. The Allied Supreme Command now had no choice but to back up Old Crazy George's advance and as Lt. O'Brien observed indeed "everything was in the air"].]\*\*

January 27, 1944

At 9:00 P.M. we were given one hour to be ready to leave camp on foot. We went out the gate at 12:45 A.M. we walked 102 km in all. We walked until noon. Then rested five hours. In afternoon weather turned very cold and bitter. No shelter.

Started at 5:00 P.M. to Moscau and reached there at 7:30 A.M..  
It was cold and about one fourth of the men didn't make it.

In town men were falling from exhaustion and freezing combined. Were put up in paper mill and were unable to move for 48 hours. There the water was bad and myself plus a few hundred others had loose bowels and vomiting. Left there to go to Spermburg. Stopped short one nite and put up in barn. No facilities. Got to Spermburg, stayed overnite, got on "40-8" cars for Nuremburg. Fifty three men in our car, about average. At Nuremburg we got in a concentration camp XIII. No facilities. very bad conditions, we are hoping for the best.

We got here last nite. Today is Monday Feb 5. P.S. On the trip before we hit Moscau we had to hit the ditch. For some reason some shooting started. About five hundred rounds were shot and bullets were mighty close. Luckily only a few were hit.

February 19, 1945

Very little food. Lice and fleas bad. Delousing schedule set up. We are due in forty days. Few men from the block got showers. I didn't cut a high card.

\*\*[Now with the Russians advancing from the east and Old Crazy George storming in from the west, the Germans panicked, marching their prisoners in one direction and then the other. Food was running out, disease increased and living conditions deteriorated. But somehow those kids were holding on.]\*\*

February 20, 1945

8th hit town. R.A.F. has been here a few nites. Saw chutes.

\*\*[By the 8th Lt. O'Brien means the American eight air corps. R.A.F is the British Royal Air Force. The chutes referred to were not paratroopers but where supplies for the advanced elements of Patton's Third army which at times were moving so fast that their supply trucks could not keep up and they had to be resupplied from the air.]\*\*

February 21, 1945

8th hit town. Some hit too close. Windows blown open.

\*\*[Two more prisoners join the group.]\*\*

Lt. M.S. Pittman  
Marcanne  
Stateboro, Ga.

Owen D. Walton  
RFD 3  
Fort Dodge, Iowa

A Plan

Slim, Chip, Jack and myself plan to go camping and each one of us will cook for the rest. The other three days of the week we will eat the best dishes of the first four, plus whatever else we want. We intend to get a camp near home with good facilities.

I think this will be my menu.

Breakfast 8:00 A.M.

Fruit juice - Oatmeal with stewed raisins - Scrambled eggs - Canadian bacon - Four qts. milk - French toast with maple syrup - Hot toast - Coffee and coco - Jam - Peanut butter.

Dinner 1:00 P.M.

Mashed spuds - Buttered carrots - Baked ham with natural gravy  
- Biscuits - Bread - jam - Peanut butter - Butter - Maple syrup  
- Mustard - Rice and raisin pudding - Milk.

Supper 7:00 P.M.

Fruit cocktail - Tomato and cucumber salad - Baked spuds -  
Broiled steak with tomato gravy - Creamed peas - Asparagus tips  
- Hot roles - Bread - Jam - Butter - Peanut butter - Warm apple  
pie - Ice cream - Maple sauce - Milk - Coffee - Chocolate.

Snack 11:00 P.M.

Kreigie chocolate pie ( 2 in. thick) ("d" bar k2 crk) - Whip  
- Jam - Coffee - Milk.

Also in evening a glass of beer and crackers if desired.

\*\*[Tired, hungry and in want for most everything the boys made  
up menus and wish lists of food. Tomato gravy is tomato soup  
in a pan with meat and meat juices cooked in, Lt. O'Brien like  
it and his mother made it often.]\*\*

\*\*[Another prisoner.]\*\*

J.A. Boywe

Parklane Apts #201

110 St. Clair Ave. W.

Toronto, Owt. Canada

February 20, 1945 to March 14, 1945

Very rough. No food. Men passing out and too weak to walk  
normally. Everyone look and act very aged. Have had part R.C.  
food. On March 14th G.I. trucks came in with parcels, service  
expected to be continued.

\*\*[When and where possible the Red Cross tried to supply the prisoners with basics.]\*\*

March 15, 1945 to March 19, 1945

R.A.F. hit every nite, saturation raid 16th, really sweat, hit trenches.

#### Tent Assignments

##### Tent 5

Bond - 10D	Rollerer - 9 1/2D
Jennings - 8D	Kamenitsky - 7D
Robinett - 7E	Pasnell - 7 1/2B
Gavitt - 10 1/2C	Patrick - 10C
Couch - 9 1/2E	Fousts - 7D
Clark - 10 1/2B	Bridges - 10 1/2C
Hollmann - 8 1/2D	Keigbien - 7 1/2D
Wisner - 9 1/2E	

#### Food Wish List

Peas	Cornbeef
Macaroni & Cheese	Carrots
Raisins	Scalloped corn
Brussel sprouts	Steak
Potatoes	String beans
Sausage (stuffed)	Corn chowder
Tomatoes	Rice (Spanish)
Clam chowder	Beets
Beef stew	Dumplings
Cabbage	Boiled dinner
Turnips	Sweet potatoes
Corn	Hash
Onions	French toast

Squash  
Spinach  
Lima beans  
Asparagus  
Lettuce  
Macaroni (on toast)  
Rice  
Greens  
Creamed potatoes  
Fritters & corn  
Roast beef  
Roast pork  
Roast veal  
Roast lamb  
Baked ham  
Candied spam  
Hamburg & Tomato gravy  
Peaches & Lettuce  
Hot dogs  
Pork chops  
Fried ham  
Chicken  
Veal cutlets  
Sausage  
Canadian bacon  
Bacon/liver  
Cold cuts  
Tomato juice  
Fish  
scallops  
Halibut  
Tuna  
Fried oysters  
Salmon

Milk  
Pancakes  
Welch rarebit  
Chopped suey  
Georgia hash  
Spaghetti & meat balls  
Chili  
Omlet  
Tomato bisque  
Rice & beef  
Salad  
Shrimp  
Fruit  
Tomato cucumber  
Lettuce (1,000 island dressing)  
Carrots & apples  
  
Grapefruit & oranges  
Banana (with peanut butter)  
milk  
Coffee  
Hot chocolate  
Chocolate milk  
Ice coffee  
Beer  
Orange juice  
Grapefruit juice  
Pig in the blankets  
Pineapple juice  
Apple juice  
Tea  
Ovaltine  
Postum  
Malted milk

Mackerel	White bread
Raisin bread	Whole wheat bread
Cracked wheat bread	Hot rolls
Biscuits	Corn bread
Brown bread	English muffins
Muffins	Ginger bread
Nut bread	Peanut butter
Butter	Apple butter
Apple jelly	Jam
Maple syrup	Chocolate syrup
Cheese spreads	Maple cream
Honey butter	Lemon butter

Pies, cakes cookies and pudding

Mince	Cherry
Peach	Banana
Lemon	Custard
Butterscotch	Raisin
Prune	Chocolate
Pineapple	Blueberry
Raspberry	Blackberry
Pumpkin	Pecan
Apricot	Coconut cream
Boston cream	Rice pudding
Bread pudding	Chocolate pudding
Caramel pudding	Butterscotch pudding
Custard pudding	Plum pudding
Fig pudding	
Cookies	Brownies
Toll house	Ice box
Peanut butter	

Chocolate cake	Spice cake
Sponge cake	Angel cake
Marble cake	Devil's food cake
Pineapple up side down cake	
Apple up side down cake	
Fruit cake	Ice cream cake
Jello cake	Congeaed fruit cake
Cherry cobbler cake	Ginger bread cake
Doughnuts	Cupcakes
Strawberry short cake	

March 28, 1945

Alerted to march, A.M., never expected this here. Men had good and big and rich meals three or four days anticipating this. Are fairly strong now as have been on parcels for two weeks. But much worse shape than Jan 28th. If we move many will never make it.

\*\*[The German army put up what fight it could against Patton's advancing force using in some cases old men and young boys. But all that they could manage to do was back up losing men, supplies and arms that they couldn't replace]\*\*

April 4, 1945

Moving out today. Have to walk 147 K.

\*\*[Lt. O'Brien's record of mail received while held by the Germans]\*\*

NO.	Date sent	From	Date Rec'd
1	9/4	Mother	10/4
2	8/14	Mother	10/14
3	8/20	Mother	10/14

4	8/24	Mary Lou	10/14
5	8/29	Twins	10/14
6	8/29	Colleen	10/14
7	9/3	Jean	10/14
8	9/9	Mother	10/14
9	9/11	Jean	10/14
10	8/28	Mother	10/26
11	8/24	Jean	10/26
12	9/20	Jean	10/27
13	9/15	Mother	10/31
14	9/16	Ray	10/31
15	9/20	B&K	10/31
16	9/20	Elmerline	10/31
17	9/21	Mother	10/31
18	9/29	Mother	11/10
19	9/23	Jean	11/11
20	9/25	Jean	11/11
21	9/28	Jean	11/30
22	10/01	Gladys	11/30
23	10/03	Chub	11/30
24	9/27	Mother	12/11
25	10/25	Mother	12/11
26	10/09	Gladys	12/11
27	9/25	Gladys	12/22
28	10/16	Mother	12/24
29	11/01	Elmerline	12/24
30		(3 cartons-cigarettes)	
31	11/11	Jean	1/23
32		(3 cartons-cigarettes)	
33	10/31	Jean	1/27
34	11/14	Mother	1/27
35	11/14	Jean	1/27
36	11/23	Jean	1/27
37	11/25	Mother	1/27

38	11/26	Jean	1/27
39	12/05	Jean	1/27
40	11/17	Gladys	3/03
41		Jean	3/03

\*\*[A record of letters and postcards sent by Lt. O'Brien, during the same period]\*\*

Mail sent

Month	Letters	Cards
June	Mother-2	Mother-2
	Jean-1	Mother-2
		Chub-1
		Ray-1
		B&K-1
July	Mother-2	Ray-1
	Chub-1	Jean-1
		Mother-2
August	Mother-2	Elmerline-1
	Jean-1	Mother-1
		Ray-1
		B&K-1
September	Mother-2	Audry-1
	Chub-1	Jean-1
		Mother-1
		Ray-1

October	Jean-1 Mother-1 Chub-1	Audry-1 Colleen-1 Ray-1 Catspillars-1
November	Mother-2 Chub-1	Elmerline-1 B&K-1 Ray-1 Audry-1
December	Gladys-1 Mother-1 Chub-1	Ray-1 A. Clare-1 Elmerline-1 Pat-1
January	Mother-1 Chub-1 Elmerline	Ray-1 B&K-1 H. Marshall-1 Dad-1
February	Mother-1	Pat-1 Ray-1
March	Dad-1 Mother-1	Chub-1 Ray-1 Audry-1 B&K-1

\*\*[Mother was by then Mrs. Vivian Lovering of Canaan, Vermont. The twins were Lt. O'Brien's half sisters Ellen and Eileen. B&K, Bridget and Kate were housekeepers who worked for Mrs. Lovering. Colleen, Gladys, Audry, Ray, and Chub were high school friends. H. Marshall was Harry Marshall a customs agent in Vermont. A. Clare was Lt. O'Brien's aunt. Elmerline had been

a previous girlfriend and at the time Lt. O'Brien was engaged to Jean. No one knows who or what Catspillars was.]\*\*

April 13, 1945

Arrive Mooseburg. Every one that didn't take off made it. We traded cigarettes and soap for potatoes, bread, eggs and everything imaginable. Ate best since in Germany. R.C. trucks met us on the road. This march was a pleasure. Lots of parcels at Mooseburg. Rumored we will leave here soon.

\*\*[As Old Crazy George was advancing closer and closer the Red Cross relief effort improved, but now another obstacle was being thrown in the path of the prisoners liberation. American political feeling now held that the Russians were gobbling up too much of Germany and that American forces should set aside the planned liberation of the prison and the concentration camps and plunge as deep into Germany as possible. General Ike Eisenhower knowing full well that ordering Old Crazy George would do no good, merely suggested the action to Patton. For once Old Crazy George wasted no time in replying and it was not what Ike necessarily wanted to hear, "What the hells the matter with you guys back there, those are American boys being held and we've got a pretty good idea whats happening to those folks in the concentration camps. No by God. I'am gone to get those kids and people out, then if you guys want I'll deal personally with those God Damn Roosins". Before headquarters had time to reply Crazy George was again on the move]\*\*

April 25, 1945

Given forty eight hours alert to move A.M..Close again. Hope to stay as moving only delays liberation.

April 26, 1945

Not moving.

\*\*Now under even more pressure from Crazy George and his troops the German army simply fell apart, with hundreds becoming absent without leave every hour. The once great German army had been reduced to stragglers and small groups claiming to have been civilians through out entire war.]\*\*

April 28, 1945  
Artillery close.

April 29, 1945  
10:45 A.M. Tank moving. Bullets too close.  
12:45 P.M. U.S. flag put up. Goons surrendered. We are free.

\*\*[True to his word Old Crazy George had arrived and the boys were free, but for the rest of their lives they would never forget the pistol-packing, outspoken, crazy old man, who had come to their rescue.]\*\*

Frank F. Rahme  
3669 W. 60th St.  
Mt. Irion, Minn.

Scott Limbach  
Peacemill Rd.  
Wexford, Pa.

Douglas G. Conner  
13 Dorest Ave.  
Colonel light Gardens  
South Australia

John Dixon  
% Mrs. C. Goodworth  
P.O. Bathurst  
New South Wales, Aus.

Dave A. Gibbs  
109 Eastgate Pickering  
Yorkshire, England

A. Jack Dailey  
% Mrs. Corford  
12 Percy St.  
North Fitzroy  
Melbourne, Aus.

\*\*[Names of others rescued along with Lt. O'Brien.]\*\*

April 30, 1945  
Told we would move soon to fly out.

May 2, 1945  
First white bread in a year. G.I. grub in small amounts. Darn good. Won card cut. First to leave.

May 3, 1945  
From Mooseburg to Landshut by G.I. truck. From Landshut to Paris in C-47, refuel and Le Harvere then to Camp Lucky Strike.

## The P.O.W. Dairy of Lt. O'Brien

There follows a record of letters, newspaper articles and drawings.

The first letter was written to Lt. O'Brien's mother from then Vermont Governor William Wills.

Next is an article in the Island Pond newspaper concerning Lt. O'Brien missing in action over Germany.

A letter from Lt. O'Brien to his mother and all written from the German prison camp on October 15, 1944.

A letter from the Dean of Engineering at Tufts College to Mrs. Lovering, where Lt. O'Brien took primary training.

An October 25, 1944 letter from Lt. O'Brien to his mother in which he tells her that he has decided not to marry Jean when he returns. \*\*[Again The "Barbed wire complex".]\*\*

Two letters from Lt. O'Brien to his Mother's friends and helpers Bridget and Kate.

An except from the newspaper called "With the Boys in Service" which is a letter from Lt. O'Brien to his mother, and another such article about him being shot down over Germany.

Finally after forty three years from the date he was freed Lt. O'Brien received the Prisoner of War Medal.

Following are drawings Lt. O'Brien did while in confinement. First is a duck representing a German guard who could not get his wings. Then there are wings from various air corps that Lt. O'Brien came to know while being held: New Zealand, Canada, England, Holland, France, Poland, Germany and America.

WILLIAM H. WILLS  
GOVERNOR

FLETCHER PLUMLEY  
SECRETARY OF CIVIL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS



STATE OF VERMONT  
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT  
MONTPELIER

June 23, 1944.

Mrs. Lewis Lovering  
Canaan, Vermont

Dear Mrs. Lovering:

I have just seen the news report concerning your son, Mahlon.

I know your anxiety for his safety is great and in this you have my heartfelt sympathy.

Let us hope and pray that soon he may be reported safe and sound.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "W. H. Wills".

Governor.

WHW:ed

# Island Herald

1944

ISLAND POND, VT.

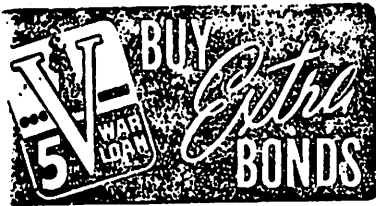
SINGLE COPY FIVE CENTS

## JT. MAHLON F. O'BRIEN

### MISSING IN ACTION

#### OVER GERMANY

A telegram from the War Department has been received by Mrs. Lovering of Canaan, that her Lieut. Mahlon F. O'Brien, 21, has been missing in action in a mission over Germany, since May 31. Lieut. O'Brien was born at Island Pond. He is a graduate of Canaan High School, and Burdette Business College, Boston, Mass. He enlisted in the Air Corps and received his basic training at Tufts College, Medford, Mass., and at Athol, Mass. His officers training was at the Field, Mills, Cal. He graduated and received his commission October 2, 1943. He was stationed at Carsburg, Tenn., until shortly before he went overseas. The cablegram was received of his arrival Overseas July 6th.



## BRIGHTON BASEBALL

### SEASON 1944

Coach: Alec King.  
 Games won. \*Games at home.  
 Brighton 7 North Troy 2  
 \*\*Brighton 14 North Troy 6  
 Brighton 3 No. Stratford 13  
 Brighton 1 Orleans 17  
 \*\*Brighton 14 Newport 9  
 Brighton 10 Derby 3  
 Brighton 4 Orleans 12  
 \*\*Brighton 16 No. Stratford 7  
 Brighton 18 Newport 20

## RIBBONS FOR CIVILIAN

### DEFENSE VOLUNTEERS

I have received advice that service ribbons will be sent upon certification by the Local Civilian Defense Director, certifying that certain of their volunteers are eligible to receive these ribbon bars.

Volunteers to be eligible, must have served 500 hours or more in Civilian Defense organization without pay in one or several of the services herewith listed: Members of Defense Council or a Control Center Staff, Air Raid Wardens, Auxiliary Police, Auxiliary Firemen, Emergency Personnel, Salvage Dept., Rationing Dept. Recreation, Volunteers, etc.

Hours of service may be counted in one or many activities, for example: You may have served 300 hours in one particular branch, 100 hours in another and an additional 100 hours in still another. This would make you eligible. Count only those hours actually on duty or engaged in Civilian Defense work. All time given in training, attending meetings, you may count as actual hours of service. If you have no actual records, you may estimate to the best of your knowledge.

Do not count hours of plane spotting for air craft warning as this service is under supervision of military authorities and recognition for hours served in the Air Warning Service is given by the Army.

Would those who consider they have 500 hours of service or more, please advise the undersigned at your earliest convenience.

Charles F. Maw, Local Civilian Defense Director.

## PROMOTIONS IN VERMONT

### STATE GUARD

Pvt. Ozanan Morin to Corporal; Pfc. Eddie Quinn to Sergeant; Pfc. Joe Basil to Corporal Corp. Theodore Lefebvre to Mess Sergeant; Sgt. William Gee to 2nd Lieutenant.

Lieut. Gee hopes to have all members of the State Guard attend meetings regularly so they can make Island Pond platoon a well organized unit.

## MOTOR-VEHICLE TAX STAMP.

Motor-vehicle tax stamps are now on sale at the post office. These stamps are \$5.00 and will be on sale until the close of business on July 31. After that date future monthly stamps will not be carried but may be purchased at any First or Second Class office or at an office located at a county seat.

The tax is collectible on all motor-vehicles, including passenger cars, trucks and motor cycles that are in use on the highways.

## Marshall Islands

The Marshall Islands are largely made up of two chains of atolls, extending northwestward from the Gilbert group in more or less parallel lines. Mili and its neighboring islet, Narik, form the southern extremity of the eastern, or Radak, chain. The name Radak means "sunrise." Given because of its geographic position, the word is also symbolic of the indicated promise of American action in this part of the world.

One of the 32 Marshall atolls, Mili comprises a roughly oblong-shaped cluster of islets and reefs surrounding a large lagoon. The lagoon is about 23 miles long and nearly 12 miles wide at its widest point. Navigable entrances into it are practically all from the north. The best channel, on the northwest, is about

KEEP ON SAVING YOUR WASTE PAPER

DEAR MOTHER AND ALL

OCT. 15 1944

TODAY WAS REALLY A GOOD ONE FOR ME. I GOT YOUR LETTER OF SEPT 4. IT IS THE FIRST I HAVE HEARD FROM ANYONE SINCE ARRIVING HERE. I DONT SEE WHY I CAN HEARD FROM ME BEFORE YOU DID, AS I WROTE TO YOU MUCH SOONER. I HOPE BY NOW YOU HAVE RECEIVED A LETTER FROM ME. TELL FAT TO TAKE IT EASY AND 7 SUBJECTS SEEM TO BE QUITE A FEW. BY ALL MEANS TAKE 4 YEARS TO GO THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL. I CANT IMAGINE BILL HAVING. HE MUST BE QUITE A BOY BY NOW. AM SWEATING OUT THE PARCEL NOW. IT DONT MAKE MUCH DIFFERENCE WHAT IS IN IT, AS ANYTHING IS APPRECIATED. AS I SAID BEFORE, CONCENTRATED FOOD, CANDY, AND SPICES. BAKING POWDER. A FEW SMALL ITEMS OF CLOTHING. THANK ALL THE FORKS WHO HELPED YOU GET IT OFF.

WROTE TO AUDRY LAST NITE. DONT FORGET CIGARETTE PARCELS. WE ALSO CAN USE THEM. NOW THE ICE IS BROKEN AND I HAVE GOT 1 LETTER, I WILL LOOK FOR THEM. REMEMBER ME TO EVERY ONE, AND I FOR ONE WILL BE GLAD WHEN THE WAR IS OVER AND WE GET BACK HOME. WILL SIGN OFF NOW, AND WILL WRITE LATER- LOVE, MICKEY

8054

Absender:

Vor- und Zuname: DR. LT. MAHLON F. O'BRIEN

Gefangenenummer: 5734

Lager-Bezeichnung:

Deutschland (Allemagne)

Gebührenfrei

Landesteil (Provinz usw.)

Land: U.S. of AMERICA

Kreis: VERMONT

Strasse: CANAAN

Empfangsort: Box 36

12262  
U.S. CENSOR

An MRS. LEWIS COVERING



Kriegsgefangenenpost

MIT BEST POST MACH NACH NEU-AMERIKA PARAVION VIA AIRMAIL

TUFTS COLLEGE  
ENGINEERING SCHOOL

OFFICE OF THE DEAN

MEDFORD 55, MASSACHUSETTS

October 9, 1944

Mrs. Vivian Lovering  
Canaan  
Vermont

Dear Mrs. Lovering:

Thank you for your letter of October 5th. We were glad to know that your son is safe, and very interested in learning that he is a prisoner of war.

We received, also on October 5th, a letter from Mrs. William Medill telling us that her husband, Staff Sergeant William Medill, collided in the air with another plane during a raid, and, that after parachuting to safety, he was taken as a prisoner of war. She gave us his address as Stalag Luft 4, Germany. Sergeant Medill took his primary course here at Tufts at the same time your son did and it occurred to us that he might be interested. Perhaps it would be possible for them to communicate.

We shall be happy to send you a copy of our next summary as soon as we have a sufficient number of replies to compile one.

Very truly yours,



H. P. Burden  
Dean of Engineering

DEAR FATHER & ALL, OCT 25 1944

AGAIN I'LL SAY THAT IT SUPE SIGNED GOOD TO  
HEAR FROM YOU. GLED TO FIND OUT THE KIDS  
ARE ALL OK, AND THAT TST DECIDED TO TAKE  
HIS FULL TIME IN SCHOOL. WAS SORRY TO  
HEAR ABOUT THE BRIGHT BOY. HE WAS FEEL  
YOUNG TO HAVE A SICKNESS LIKE THAT. AS  
YET HAVE NOT GOT YOUR PARCEL. WELL HERE  
GOES. IN THE NEXT FEW LINES YOU WILL PROBABLY  
FIND REASON TO GIVE ME A GOOD PIECE OF YOUR  
MIND AND END IT UP WITH I TOLD YOU SO.  
THE TRUTH IS THAT I HAVE DECIDED I DONT WANT  
TO GET MARRIED WHEN I GET BACK. IF I'VE  
HAD NOTHING ELSE TO DO, SINCE I'VE BEEN  
HERE I'VE HAD LOTS OF THINKING TIME AND  
THAT IS WHATS COME OUT OF IT. JEAN'S  
A SWEET GIRL AND ALL THAT, BUT I JUST

---

DONT WANT TO MARRY ANYBODY FOR AWHILE.  
MAYBE IT'S PARTLY DO TO THE SO CALLED BARRER  
WIRE COMPLEX" ONE KNOWS LIT OR WYDOWNS LIT  
PICKS UP HERE AFTER AWHILE, BUT THATS THE  
WAY I FEEL. HOPE YOU WONT BE TOO DIS-  
GUSTED WITH MY THINKING. HOPE TO SEE  
YOU ALL PRETTY SOON. LOVE ILL ALL NICK.

MIT LUFT POST NACH NORD AMERIKA PAR AVION  
Kriegsgefangenenpost. VIA AIR MAIL

Kriegsgefangenenpost.

54



12262  
U.S. CENSOR

An MRS LEWIS LOUERING

Empfangsort: Box 36

Straße: CANAAN

Kreis: VERMONT

Land: U.S. of AMERICA

Landesteil (Provinz usw.)

Gebührenfrei

Deutschland (Allemagne)

Lager-Bereichung:

Gefangenennummer: 5734

Vor- und Zuname: MR. T. MARSH F. O'BRIEN

Absender:

Kriegsgefangenenlager

Datum: NOV 29 1944

DEAR BRIDGET + KATE — GOT YOUR LETTER, AND  
WAS GLAD TO HEAR FROM YOU. BY THE TIME  
YOU GET THIS, WINTER WILL HAVE SET  
IN GOOD AT HOME. PROBABLY IT WILL AT  
HERE TOO. SURE HOPE TO GET HOME  
BEFORE LONG. HAVE HAD ABOUT ENOUGH  
OF THIS. WELL, HAVE TO CLOSE NOW. MICKY

Kriegsgefangenenlager

Datum: AUG 19 1944

DEAR BRIDGET + KATE — HOW ARE YOU. WE  
ARE ALL OK. THE WEATHER HAS BEEN FINE.  
WE HAVE ALL GOT GOOD SUNTANS. THE DAYS  
GO BY PRETTY FAST, AND WE PLAY A LOT  
OF SOFT BALL AND VOLLEY BALL. HAVE  
HAD A PLAY AND A MOVIE, AND HAVE  
SOME MORE PLANNED. WILL SEE YOU. MICKY

MIT LUFT POST NACH NORD AMERIKA PAR AVION VIA AIR MAIL

Kriegsgefangenenpost

ERKROFT

Mit Postkarte  
Par Avion  
An



MISSES BRIDGET + KATE FLAHERTY

Gebührenfrei  
Absender: RM. 4/21

Empfangsort: ISLAND POND

Vor- und Zuname:  
2ND LT. MAHLON F. O'BRIEN

Straße: VERMONT

Gefangenennummer: 5734

Land: U.S. of AMERICA  
Landesteil (Provinz usw.)

Lager-Bezeichnung:  
Kriegsgefangenenlager der Luftwaffe Nr. 3

Deutschland (Allemagne)

U.S. CENSOR  
10822

MIT LUFT POST NACH NORD AMERIKA PAR AVION VIA AIR MAIL

Kriegsgefangenenpost

Mit Luftpost  
Postkarte ERKROFT

34



An

MISSES BRIDGET + KATE FLAHERTY

Gebührenfrei

Absender:

Empfangsort: ISLAND POND

Vor- und Zuname:  
LT. M. F. O'BRIEN

Straße: VERMONT

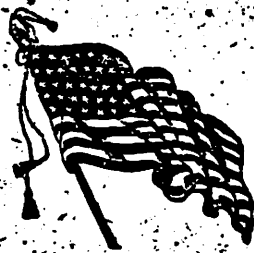
Gefangenennummer: 5734

Land: U.S. OF AMERICA  
Landesteil (Provinz usw.)

Lager-Bezeichnung:  
M.-Stammlager Luft 3

11423  
U.S. CENSOR  
Deutschland (Germany)

## With the Boys In Service



The following is copy of a letter received on Friday by Mrs. Lewis Lovering of Canaan from her son, Lieut. Mahlon F. O'Brien, a prisoner of war in Germany.

Stalag Luft 3, Germany  
June 22, 1944

Dear Mother and all:

As you probably have realized by how I got shot down. As I said before, I am not injured, and am going O. K. We live 12 in a room, and do our own cooking. We get German rations and also 1 Red Cross box per week per man. The Red Cross is doing a wonderful job. No one here will ever forget it. Remember me to the folks back home. We cannot write too often so won't write to everyone we used to. Hope you did not worry too much before you found out I was a POW, but imagine you did. How's Pat doing with the car? He ought to be getting pretty good with it by now. The weather is pretty good, not too hot, not too cold. By the way you can send us some stuff if you will. We want some chocolate bars (Hershey's) and concentrated food (dried fruits etc). You can find out from the Red Cross the size and weight allowed. Also some cartons of cigarettes. The stuff takes quite a while to get here so hope I am not here to get it.  
Mickey

Robert Basil was at Newport Saturday to take U.S. Civil Service Examinations for the Military Academy at West Point. He was appointed by U.S. Senator W R Austin of Vermont.

## With the Boys In Service



Atlantic City, N.J. "When you return to base, the targets aren't so rough," says 2nd Lt. Mahlon F. O'Brien, son of Mr and Mrs Lewis R. Lovering Box 36 Canaan, Vermont. It's when you don't come back that the targets are rough." Lt. O'Brien met his rough target in May of 1944 while flying as a navigator on a B-17 over Germany.

"We had just dropped our bombs on the target when things began to happen", continued Lt. O'Brien who is being processed here at the AAF Redistribution Station No.1. The flak was thick as usual. First, No. 4 engine was hit. Then numbers 1 and 2 went out. Those big iron birds don't fly so well on one engine, so I hit the silk at 5,000 feet about 60 miles from the target."

After eluding capture for seven hours, he was picked up by members of the Germany Army. Lt. O'Brien spent time in several prison camps before being liberated on April 29th of this year.

Lt. O'Brien entered the Army at Boston, Mass. on Sept. 19th, 1943. He went to England in April of 1944. He wears one battle star on his European Theater ribbon.

## Belated Medal For Colonel O'Brien

Forty-three years after he was freed from a Nazi prisoner of war camp, Lieutenant Colonel (ret.) Mahlon F. O'Brien received a Prisoner of War medal.

"I'm sorry it's so late, but better late than never," said U.S. Representative Joseph D. Early, D-Worcester, as he presented the medal to Colonel O'Brien on Sunday, October 30, at the close of Belmont Home's Annual Road Race and Healthwalk.

The Prisoner of War medal, recognizing the special services POWs gave to their country and the anguish and suffering they endured while incarcerated was only recently authorized by Congress.

Colonel O'Brien, a graduate of Canaan Memorial High School and Burdett Business College, entered the Air Force in 1942. He was captured by the Germans on May 31, 1944, one week before the Normandy invasion, after his B-17 crashed behind enemy lines. American forces freed him from the prison camp in April, 1945. Colonel O'Brien, a navigator, retired in 1965 after serving twenty-three years in the military. At the time of his retirement, he was supervisory accountant and finance officer for the Strategic Air Command in the northeast area, stationed at 8th Air Force Headquarters at Westover Air Force Base, Chicopee, Massachusetts.

Colonel O'Brien had been living at the Lovering home in Beecher Falls until his recent illness. He is presently a resident at the Belmont Home, 255 Belmont St., Worcester, Ma. 01605.

His son, Michael O'Brien of Waterbury, Connecticut and his sister, Mary Lou Lovering of Worcester, were present for the award ceremony.



Lt. Mahlon F O'Brien, son of Mrs Lewis R Lovering of Canaan, formerly of this town, is now overseas and has participated in a course designed to bridge the gap between training in the states and soldering in an active theatre of war. His next station will be one from which America's fighting planes take off to smash the Nazi war machine.

15, 1944

LIEUT. MAHLON F. O'BRIEN

MISSING IN ACTION

OVER GERMANY

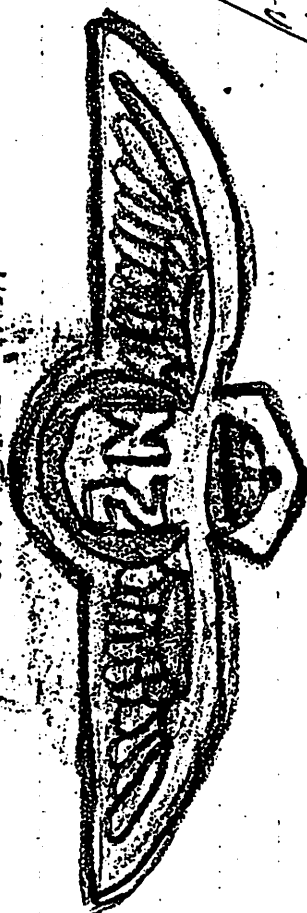
A telegram from the War Department has been received by Mrs. Louis Lovering of Canaan, that her son, Lieut. Mahlon F. O'Brien, 21, has been missing in action in a mission over Germany, since May 31.

Lieut. O'Brien was born at Island Pond. He is a graduate of Canaan High School, and Burdette Business College, Boston, Mass.

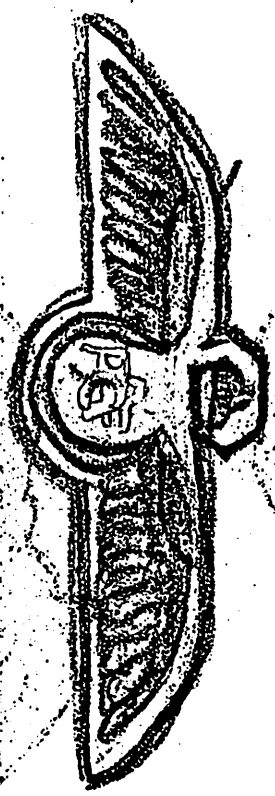
He enlisted in the Air Corps and received his basic training at Tufts College, Medford, Mass., and at Athol, Mass. His officers training was at Mather Field, Mills, Cal. He graduated and received his commission October 2, 1943. He was stationed at Dyersburg, Tenn., until shortly before he went overseas. The cablegram was received of his arrival Overseas May 6th.

Hand

2



NEW ZEALAND



CANADA

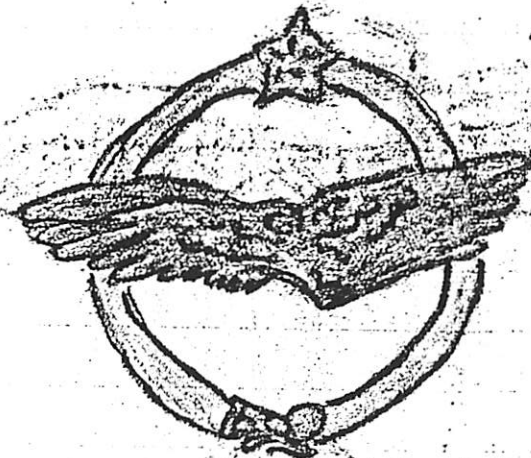


ENGLAND

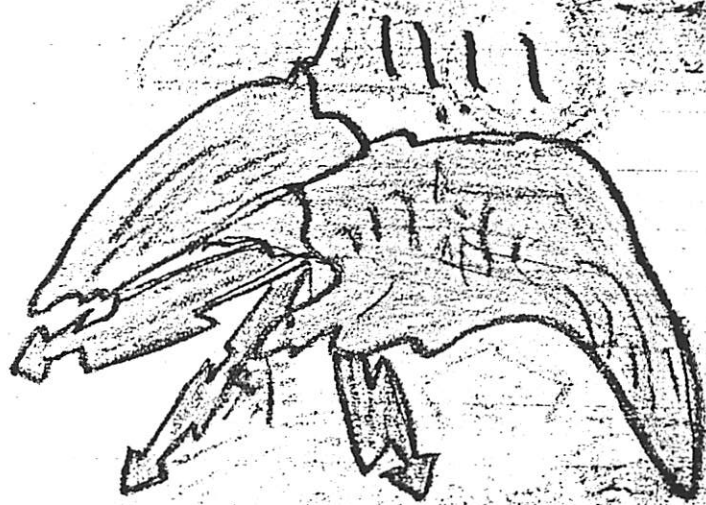


18

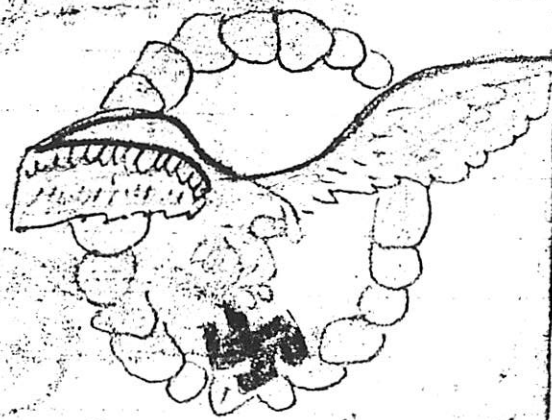




FRANCE

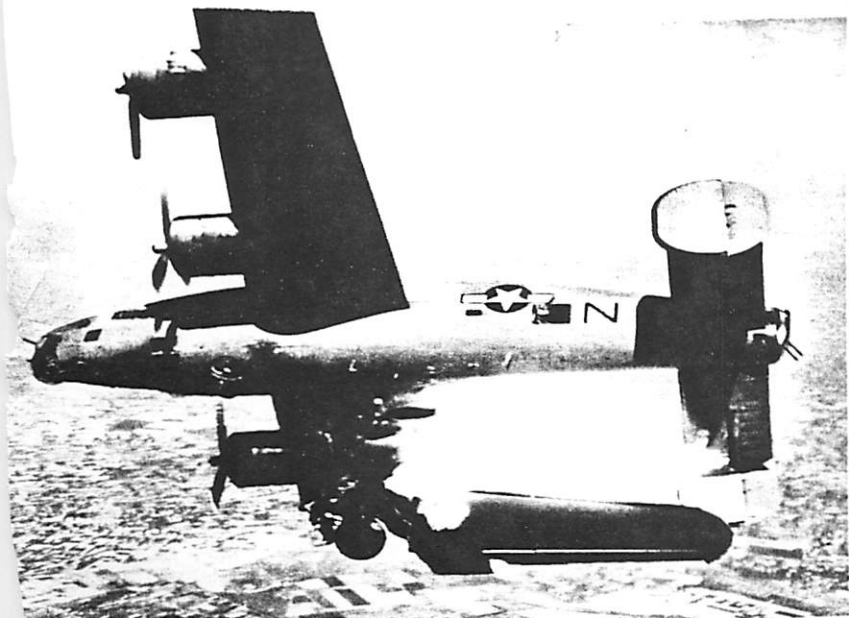


POLAND



## SHOT DOWN

Flying a B-17 or B-24 was hard work for all aboard, and there was always the fear that many would not be coming back. During 1943 and 1944, losses were often appalling, 53 out of 178 planes at Ploesti, 60 of 376 in double attacks on Schweinfurt and Regensburg, 65 of 291 in a single raid on Schweinfurt and one lost out of every ten planes was common place. The chances of the crew of a bomber hit hard five miles up were very thin. Bombers died in many ways, sometimes in an second as their bomb loads were hit, sometimes in flames, sometimes spiraling down with a wing or tail blown off. German fighters moved in to cut to bits and crippled bomber that fall out of formation. Many planes returned to base damaged, some so badly that it was a miracle they remained in the sky and there were always dead and wounded for the waiting ambulances. Not until the big decoy raids in late May, 1944, when the Nazi fighters were battered into impotence did the Americans and their allies own the sky.





\*\*\*\*\*  
\* General Dwight David (Ike) Eisenhower \*  
\* \*  
\* \*  
\* Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces \*  
\*\*\*\*\*



\*\*\*\*\*  
\* General George S. Patton \*  
\* \*  
\* Crazy George savior of Bastogne/liberator of prison camps\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

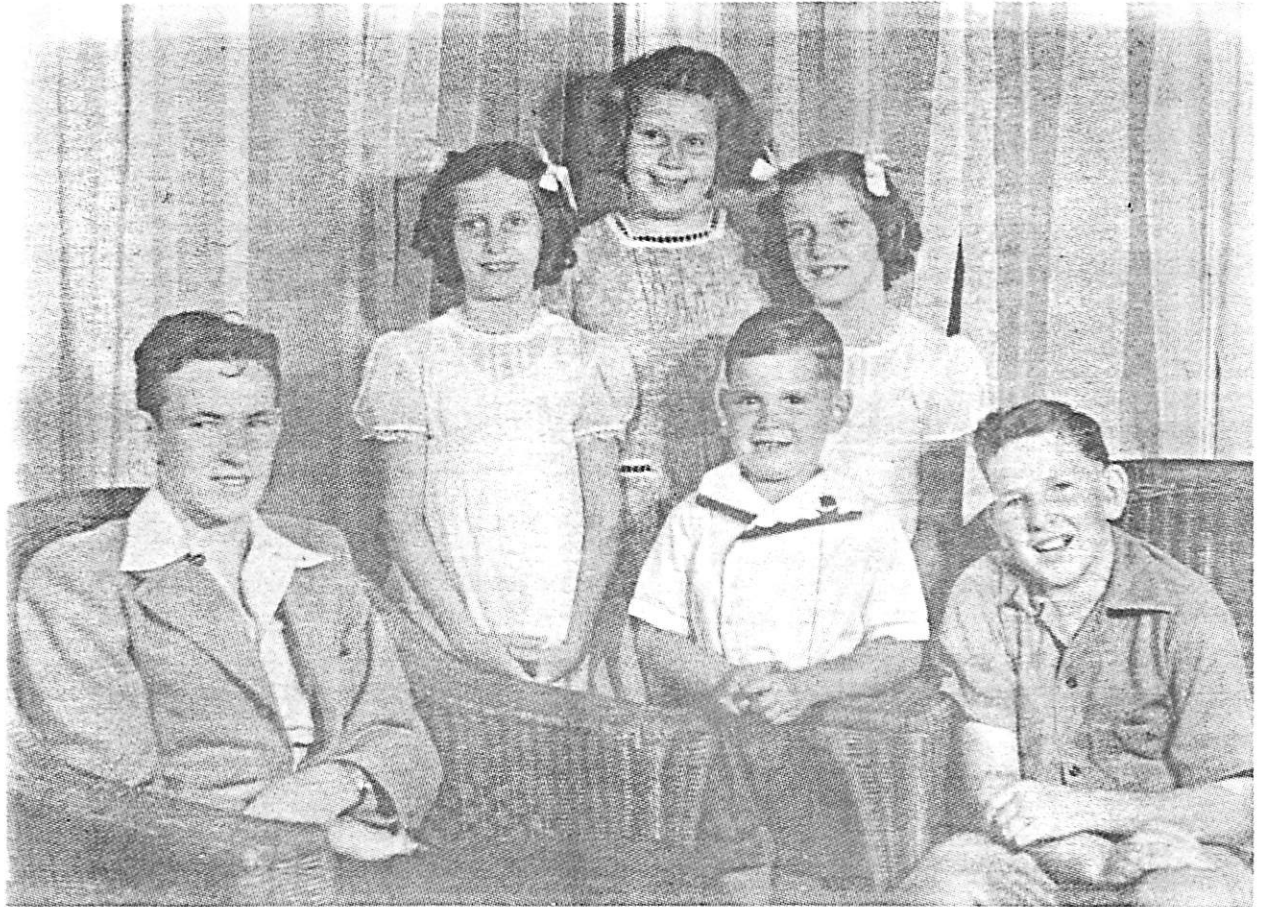


\*\*\*\*\*  
\* Mrs. Vivian Lovering, in the center, \*  
\* with Kate and Bridget Flaherty at the \*  
\* farm in Island Pond, Vermont. \*  
\* August 27, 1947 \*  
\*\*\*\*\*



*Rowland &  
Houston*

\*\*\*\*\*  
\* After the War, Lt. O'Brien \*  
\* married the former Miss Chris\*  
\* Carlson of Houston, Texas. \*  
\*\*\*\*\*



A 1942 picture shows Mick O'Brien, seated left, with left to right his sisters Eileen, Mary Lou and Ellen Lovering, standing is brother Bill Lovering and seated right is brother Pat O'Brien.

The P.O.W. Diary of Lt. O'Brien

Unsung Hero (By Lt. Mick O'Brien)

Fighter pilot  
small renown  
got twenty five  
the day he went down.

\*\*[On May 7, 1945 the Germans surrendered. Three months later after America had introduced the Atomic Age, half a world away, the Japanese also surrendered. At last, for the most part, the world was at peace.

Rather than risk surrender German leader Adolf Hitler committed suicide and his remains were burned, but never positively identified.

The country of Germany was divided between America, her Allies and the Russians, so that she could never again bring war to the world.

Old Crazy George, General George S. Patton was never reprimanded for taking orders in the manner just as he had wanted, instead he became an American legend. He died in an accident while on duty in occupied Germany.

General Dwight David (Ike) Eisenhower left the service and came home, where he ran Columbia University and later served two full terms as President of the United States.

The American survivors came home and got back to the business of living. With the help of Veterans benefits they furthered their education, bought homes, married and raised families in

new communities called sub-divisions. Throughout America new buildings arose from the ground called Veterans Hospitals to care for the wounded and disabled. In the 1947 the American government's budget for veterans and their care was larger than the entire military budget for the whole decade of the 1930s. So much had changed in America from the start to the finish of the war, that one returning soldier was heard to say, "I do not believe I have returned to the same country from which I left".

Lt. Mahlon Francis O'Brien stayed in what would become the United States Air Force, he rose to rank of Lt. Colonel. For his service during the war, he won the Prisoner of War Medal, but he had to wait forty three years to get it.

The great war was over and yet it was not over. The slaughter of the war had in some way touched every American and most of the citizens of the world and thoughts were of those who were not home and never would be: the husband, the wife, the father, the mother, the brother, the sister, the sweetheart and the dear friend. These were people who should have been alive, but they were not.

Shortly before the start of the war a young American, whose father was at the time the country's ambassador to the Court of St. James, authored a book entitled "Why England Slept". In young John F. Kennedy's mind if England was sleeping, he should have realized that America must have been in a coma. During the early years of the 1990s with the fall of Communism throughout the world, as a comatose America looked on again, the two Germanys reunited themselves. The Germans won that war of attrition.

Even during the time of the preparation of their Constitution, Americans were a people divided along class and racial lines, in the mid 19th century these struggles would tear the country apart. And as Americans muddled their way through the 20th century these problems would remain, but we can look back on time in 1940s when American boys and men put aside these differences, became united in a common cause for the nations very survival. They would mold, weld and forge themselves into a fighting machine of unparalleled strength and ability, no matter where or how they served in the war, there simply had been nothing like them since the days of Julius Caesar.

## About the Author

Although he now makes his home in Virginia, Gilbert Dively comes from a long line of Pennsylvanians. He was born in Altoona, Pennsylvania and attended school in a small town near there. After graduation he entered the United States Navy and served two years on active duty. After further schooling he became an accountant and business manager. Being a student of history especially military history he has consulted on historical facts concerning the Civil War and the Second World war, among others. He has just finished a book "Midway and the Pacific War". He lives with his wife Susan, (formerly Susan O'Brien, Lt. O'Brien's daughter) in the historic town of Winchester, Virginia.