

Franklin Historical Society

November 2022

On Thursday, November 3rd, the Society will hold its final presentation and business meeting for 2022. As November is the month in which we all recognize the service of those wearing the uniforms of the United States military, it seemed only fitting to have a **program honoring some of the “Greatest Generation” from Franklin who participated in WWII**. Delving into the Society’s archives, and adding some newly acquired material, the slideshow will tell a little of the story of Ted Lepianka, Bernice Sinclair, Neal Martin, and Neal’s older brother who did not return, Roger S. Martin. In the background will be playing songs from World War II, courtesy of a donation by Kathy Fuller. As the business meeting that will follow is the last of this year, all local members are encouraged to attend. Light refreshments will follow the presentation and precede the meeting, and both the slideshow and the business portion of the meeting are open to all.

As has been the case of recent months, October was no exception in reaping rewards from generous donations to the Society’s collections. Undying gratitude is expressed to the following: to **Donna Gilbreth** for a Mouli cheeses grater, Star-lite waffle iron (originally sent to Verna Schwartz, and after inspecting it, there is little wonder it was infrequently or ever used...), and fridge magnets from FSB and the Franklin Co-operative Bank, all found in the carriage house of the Gilbreth property at the corner of School and Prospect Streets; to **Kathy Fuller** for “Your Hit Parade” CD’s of 1942-49 and the aforementioned “Songs of WWII”; to **John Benham** for a framed photo of generations of “The Kearsage Mountain Boys” (please note: this will be on display so everyone can help to identify those pictured) with a folder of the organization’s records; to **Linda Pauwels** for her usual contributions of local obituaries and newspaper articles of interest; to **Rita Norander** for collectible newspapers from **Sue Winters** of Andover highlighting the Sesquicentennial and articles of historic interest in the Trumpeter; to **Elizabeth Jewell** for contributing a camo US Army uniform worn by her son; to **Myla Everett** for FHS Class of 1932 memorabilia (her mother’s class), miscellaneous newspapers, a souvenir booklet c. 1900 of Franklin photos, and Franklin business memorabilia; and **Lisa Martin** for so many items in creating the Martin Memorial display, with personal items from Roger Martin, a scrapbook compiled by her grandmother, and several things of her father Neal Martin (who also served in WWII in the European Theater, including the Battle of the Bulge) and her uncle Ray Martin, who served in the Air Force during the Korean Conflict. Visitors to the Society benefit in do many ways from gifts such as these, and lose so much when valuable artifacts and documents are discarded instead of donated. One of the most important functions of the Society is to save these treasures, so that those now, and later, can truly appreciate the sacrifices of those who came before.

Below is a scan of the 1943 newspaper article covering the dedication of the FHS football field in honor of Sgt. Roger S. Martin, one of the program designs commemorating the event, and a photo of Neal Martin, allowed leave to attend the special event, at the high school with his mother.

AIRCRAFT ACTION REPORT		REPORT No. VF-11 #24
<p>XII. TACTICAL AND OPERATIONAL DATA. (Narrative and comment. Describe action fully and comment freely, following applicable items in check list at left. Use additional sheets if necessary.)</p>		
<p>ENGAGEMENT WITH ENEMY</p> <p>OWN AIRCRAFT Disposition Altitudes Speeds Approach Tactics Use of Cover, Direction Angles of Attack and Their Effectiveness Distance of Opening Fire Defensive Tactics and Their Effectiveness</p> <p>ENEMY AIRCRAFT Method of Locating, Distance Disposition Altitudes Speeds Approach Tactics Use of Cover, Direction Angles of Attack Distance of Opening Fire Defensive Tactics</p> <p>COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS Own Weaknesses Enemy Weaknesses Defensive Tactics, Own Defensive Tactics, Enemy Flexible Gunners, Own Fighter Tactics Fighter Direction Use of Radar Night Fighting Recognition, Aircraft</p> <p>ATTACK</p> <p>OWN TACTICS Method of Locating Target Approach to Target Altitudes, Speeds Approach Dive Pull-Out Dive Angle Swerving Retirement Defensive Tactics Use of Jamming</p> <p>DEFENSE, ENEMY Enemy Tactics, Shot Concealment Searchlights Night Fighter Tactics Use of Jamming</p> <p>COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS Bombing Tactics Targeting Tactics Effectiveness of Bombs, Torpedoes Selection of Targets Fueling Swerving Tactics Defensive Tactics Use of Radar Recognition Photography Briefing</p> <p>OPERATIONAL Navigation Timing Rendezvous Recognition, Shot Communications Flight Operations Search and Tracking Base Operations Maintenance</p>	<p>While on regular CAP over our Task Group on the afternoon of October 14, a large boogey was picked up bearing 300 degrees about 50 miles from the force. CAP were vectored out. CAP patrol consisted of 8 planes. Lt. Dayhoff's division and Lt. Savage's division. CAP was on station at 20,000 feet and upon direction of HORNET fighter director set out on vector. Lt. Dayhoff's radio being out Lt. Stinson took the lead in that division as he was section leader when Lt. Savage's compass went out his division fell in behind. CAP received two small directional changes then were told the boogey was crossing from starboard to port. It was at this time that Lt. Savage tallyhoed them. Lieut. Stinson saw them and his estimate was that there were approximately 30, about 8 to 12 Judy dive bombers escorted by anywhere from 15-20 fighters. CAP at this point was about 17,000 feet slightly above the bombers by a few hundred feet and level with the first group of fighters. There were Zeke's above and Lt. Stinson called this fact over the radio before he went in to attack. He had also give the base a short report on number of boogey's before attacking.</p> <p>The officers who took part in this engagement were:</p> <p>Lt. N.W. Dayhoff (Deceased) Enn. J.A. Zink Lt. G.E. Stinson Enn. F.J.C. Blair (Deceased) Lt. J.E. Savage Lt. (jg) S.E. Goldberg (Deceased) Enn. T. Lepianka (Wounded)</p> <p>Lieut. G.R. Stinson's report follows:</p> <p>As my second section and Lt. Savage's division were below and to my left it gave them the better position to attack the bombers. I figured that if my section could engage and occupy the Zeros immediately above their chance to get the bombers would be improved. As it so happened this was the way it worked for they destroyed five to seven of the bombers on the first pass before the top cover hit them.</p> <p>The element of surprise was with us for they made no move to show they had seen us. I picked as my first target three Bamps flying in a tight V formation, just above the bombers. I closed fast from slightly below and as astern and held my fire until I was within bore-sight range. They all carried two large external gas tanks below their wings, and the attack was such a surprise that I flamed all three before they dropped any and made any attempt to break. In order not to over-run the third, after I had flamed the first, I had to cut my throttle completely and still had to pull up to miss him as he burst in flames. As I pulled up I saw a Zeke below me diving on my second division. I rolled over in a overhead and he exploded after a short burst. On my pull out there was a Zeke slightly above, but just as I pulled into firing range and opened up he split S'd out and I was unable to see if I damaged him. I didn't follow as I wanted to use my excess speed to regain my lost altitude. For a minute I feared I was alone as the overhead had carried me away from the fight, but as I looked back I saw my wingman Enn. Blair directly on my tail. I had seen him flame one Zero on our first pass and later in the fight saw him take two more off my tail.</p>	

A scan of a page from the sortie mission report during which Ens. Ted Lepianka was wounded (see center of the document). Later in the same report his group leader praised Ens. Lepianka for a precision "no wheels, no flaps" carrier landing of his damaged plane, recorded for posterity on film, and now a part of the USS Yorktown's permanent history.

As the only souvenir retained by the family of Lt. Col. Bernice Sinclair's wartime service, below is a scan of the photo of her framed with her rank insignia, nurses pin, 3rd Army patch, campaign ribbons, and the Legion of Merit award of which she was so worthy.



Please join the Society in honoring not just these particular veterans, but all those who have faithfully and dutifully served to keep our country safe, free, and a continuing source of inspiration to the world as a beacon of hope. They are heroes all. Together, no matter what the problem, Americans can find solutions to get past any and all dark times, and the turbulent times in which we live will prove to be no exception.