



Newsletter Issue 10, January 2011

Captain Peal's Heroism

Captain Charles M. Peal, pilot in the 78th Fighter Group, took off in the early hours of August 14th from Duxford in the UK in a P-47, bound on a patrol mission over the French town of Noyon. He used up most of his weaponry accomplishing his mission. Starting the long flight back to England, the only offensive power left to him rested in his machine gun. It was then, while passing over the RR tracks of Crouy, 3 kms NE of Soissons, that he saw a German munitions train pulling into the railroad station.



Without hesitation, he dove upon it, opening fire in the face of the German flak barrage. His bullets struck home, blowing the train to pieces. However, the ensuing explosion took out his plane as well. He crashed in the town at 0650 that Monday morning, his plane smoldering near the RR tracks, on what is now the Rue du Capitaine Peal. The people of the town hurried to collect his remains from the wreckage. The following morning they held a quiet ceremony for him, at great risk to themselves, in the church cemetery. There were so many flowers on his gravesite that it was completely covered. Today Capt Peal is remembered by a memorial just to the side of the RR tracks where he heroically lost his life. He is buried in Nashville, Tennessee. —*Christopher Herrly*

Our 1000th American War Story

The American War Memorials Overseas database now contains over 1000 people. We reached this significant milestone this month with the addition of Lawrence Scanlan of Cedarhurst, Long Island, who abandoned his engineering studies to enlist in the French Foreign Legion. He was severely wounded in the leg on 16 June 1915 and lay on the battlefield for 56 hours before being rescued by a stretcher bearer. Today he is honored on the American volunteers monument in Paris.

Pistol Donation Facilitated

COL (US Army, retired) John Davis, a long time resident of France and WWII veteran, recently donated an important artifact to the Judge Advocate General museum in Charlottesville, Virginia: the pistol used by PVT Tommie Davison to commit the capital crime for which he was court martialed and executed during the war. American War Memorials Overseas worked with COL Davis, the JAG museum, and the US Embassy in Paris to facilitate the donation.



Indianhead Renovations

Many thanks to the 2nd Division Association who has started a project to renovate the 23 markers that delineate the division's limits of advance in WWI in France. Here are some dramatic before (top) and after (bottom) pictures.



Photo credit to Ray Shearer, who is also the driving energy behind the project.

Please consider a donation to help us continue our important work