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OUR MISSION STATEMENT

"Identify & Unite the Allred Family Through Gathering, Storing and Sharing Information"

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GARLAND HOWARD ALLRED - WWII HERO!

(Solomon, Phineas, Robert, George Washington, Charles Milton, William Fletcher, Garland Howard)
submitted by: Linda Allred Cooper

(Excerpts taken from a Greensboro News and Record article written by Denise Becker, published November 11, 1999.)

Flying and Spying -
World War II Veteran Remembers Unlucky Mission

Garland Howard Allred almost didn't make it back from The Good Fight. A cocky 22 year old in early 1945, Allred was flying reconnaissance missions in northern Italy and had convinced himself that he was too good to be shot down. "All pilots are egoists," he notes.

But, on January 20, the Germans called his bluff. While flying over Bologna, Allred's double-engine P-38 Lightning airplane was hit by an anti-aircraft shell. Shrapnel tore through the left engine and severed the coolant lines. Allred was forced to shut the engine down as it began to overheat. "That left me sitting 20,000 feet above German territory with one engine," Allred said. He limped back to his base in Florence on that one engine. Landing the plane, however, was another challenge.

"Spy pilots went out early in the morning," Allred explains. "Florence is in a valley. So when I got back to the base, it was covered in fog."

Unable to see the runway, Allred was forced to rely on his roommate, Lt. King, to talk him down. "One thing to remember, is that when I say runway, what I'm really talking about is metal mats laid out in a field." Allred slowed the plane and began extending his landing gear and lowering the wing flaps. Suddenly King screamed. "For God's Sake, don't land! You've missed the runway!"

Instead of a clear pathway, Allred was about to make a disastrous landing.

"I looked out and saw that dozens of planes were just beneath my laboring ship," Allred states. "I was scared to death." With the gear already down and the flaps nearly extended, there was no way the P-38 could continue to fly. As he struggled with the aircraft, another incident flashed through Allred's mind. Two days before, another pilot landing with one engine also missed the runway. He chose to gun the engine, causing the plane to flip and roll, scattering the plane and pilot over a quarter-mile area.

So, instead of slamming forward the throttle, Allred eased up and said a quick prayer. He narrowly missed the bell tower of a rural church and managed to glide the plane to a bare patch of sod where it finally touched earth. "A few scratches were the only personal injuries I received," Allred says.

Allred received the Distinguished Flying Cross - one of the highest medals of valor awarded to pilots - for his actions that day. He still has the original photograph of Brig. Gen. Charles T. Myers pinning the cross, which resembles airplane propellers, onto the chest of the dapper young flyer from Greensboro.

The 77 year old Allred, now sporting a silver mane and a few more wrinkles around his twinkling eyes, received another slice of metal Wednesday for his actions over the Italian skies. Governor Jim Hunt presented Allred and five other North Carolina men new license plates that tell the world of their bravery. Allred's car will sport the number 0001, with the letters FC and a picture of the Flying Cross medal. The legislature authorized the special license plates in 1998 for those people who had received medals for valor in combat, including the Silver Star, the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Bronze Star. The state already issued commemorative plates for Vietnam veterans and Prisoners of War. It took the state Veterans Administration nearly a year to approve the designs.

"My father commented that if the wheels of government did not move quicker, they would have to place the license plate on his tombstone," says Don Allred, president of the Asheboro/Randolph Chamber of Commerce. "It's just a little ego boost," Howard Allred laughingly notes about putting the plate on his car. But, make no mistake, Allred is clearly proud of his countrymen's actions during the last great war. "I think it's important to remember World War II because if Hitler had won, the world as we know it would not have happened," Allred comments. "Germany was deep into Russia and had conquered most of Europe. The world we know is a direct result of World War II." He pauses. "Of course, you have to understand that this is a World War II veteran talking. Others may disagree with me."

Allred, who grew up in Greensboro, enlisted in the Army Air Corps on October 30, 1942. "I wanted to fly from day one," he said. "There was no Air Force during World War II." He completed nearly 14 months of training before being sent overseas. These were the days of open cockpit planes - jets were still several years away - with primitive radar, limited navigation gear and propeller-powered engines. Flying by the seat of your pants was more than a cliche then. "Thank God there were no missiles in those days," Allred says.

On the wall of his home office is a framed photograph of a fresh-faced officer in full pilot regalia, leather bomber jacket and helmet, silk scarf, goggles and a devil-may-care smile. "Oh, I wanted to be a fighter pilot,"

Allred states emphatically. "They got all of the attention. But you were assigned according to need, and what they needed right then was spy pilots."

Using cameras in place of guns, spy pilots crisscrossed over strategic targets gathering vital information for the

WWII HERO Continued:
bombers who would be arriving later that day. Of particular interest were railroad tracks, troop movements and ammunition depots. Spy pilots flew alone and were flyer, navigator and photographer. "Our motto was alone, unarmed and unafraid,"

Allred said. "But don't believe that last one. We were scared to death. War has a way of eating up pilots." This fear, however, was counter-balanced by an unrealistic expectation held by most pilots that they would emerge unscathed, he adds. Even after he was show down, Allred continue flying reconnaissance - he flew 53 missions in all. "It was a lucky shot," he says about the shell that blew up his engine.

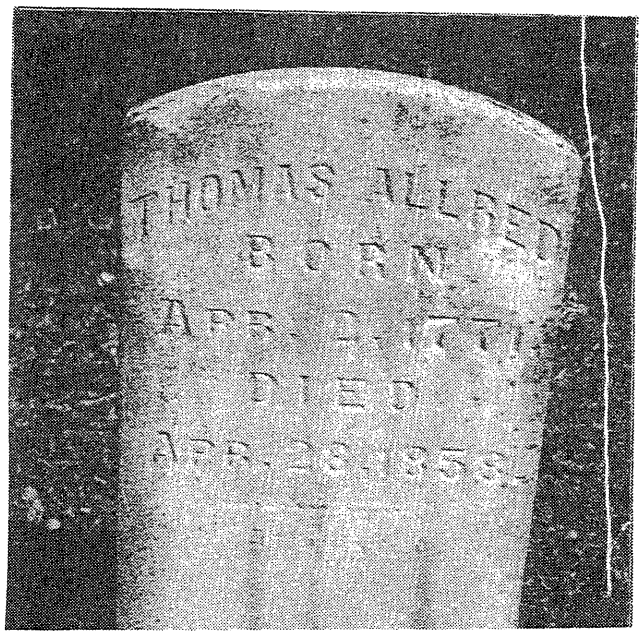
"We were 22 year old kids flying the fastest airplanes in the arsenal at that time," Allred says. "It was crazy." Allred initially was assigned to a squadron of long-range bombers in southern Italy. But when his first, and then his second roommate never returned from their first mission, Allred asked for a transfer. Spy pilots, he explains, had a choice: They could fly 50 short-range missions, usually lasting three to four hours, or 25 long-range missions before being discharged. Allred opted for the shorter flights. "There's so many more things that can go wrong in eight hours," he says. "So many more guns that are shooting at you."

After the war, Allred had planned to open a Western Auto Store franchise. But in 1947, he decided to dedicate his life to the Methodist Church. "I came home and told my wife that I wanted to be a Methodist minister," he recalls. "It surprised her. We had a home, a mortgage and a baby, and we had no money." He did, however, have the G.I. Bill. The young family sold their house and Allred began studying for the seminary. He graduated from Guilford College and earned a Masters Degree in Divinity from Duke University.

During his 43 years in the Western North Carolina Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, Allred served in churches all around central North Carolina. He also served as district superintendent for the western conference for six years. "There's special memories for me at every one of those churches," Allred says.

Allred, who retired in 1991 to care for his ill wife, is still a Pastor Emeritus in Asheboro and is a popular guest speaker in area churches. He still has his pilot's license, although he is now unable to pass the physical examination required to enter the cockpit. He still has fond memories, though, of his years in the sky. And these memories are not his along. "He would take me up in small planes and I was amazed by his abilities," says his son, Don. "He would do twirls and try his best to make me sick. It was like a roller coaster. But boy, he could grease a landing. He was very, very good. "I am very proud that Dad was a pilot!"

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Rev. Garland C. Allred

FRANKLINVILLE — The Rev. Garland Clyde Allred, 76, of 1909 Whites Memorial Road, died Sunday, March 5, 2000, at his home.


Allred

Funeral service will be 2 p.m. Wednesday at Whites Memorial Baptist Church, with the Rev. Jack Kivett officiating. Burial will be in the church cemetery.

He was a native of Randolph County, owner and operator o Allred's Plant Farm for 45 years a Baptist minister for 25 years and was the minister of Strait Way Baptist Church, where he was a member.

Surviving are wife, Maleta Staley Allred of the home; daughter, Donna Sue Allred of the home; sisters, Crayteen Brown and Betty Harris, both of Franklinville.

The family will be at Loflin Funeral Home, Ramseur, 7-9 p.m. Tuesday, other times at the home.

Memorials may be made to Hospice of Randolph, P.O. Box 9, Asheboro, N.C. 27204-0009.