

A message from our president Francis X Gosselin



To all the members:

The New Year 2013 has begun. Already, the year is beginning to show that it will be another dynamic year in the economy, world, and local affairs. It will also brings us new ideas and new members to continue moving our association forward.

As you know, I have been your president for almost six years, and it is time to step aside and allow others to continue developing the association to fulfill its main goal – support of those who served the 601st and 615th ACW Squadrons in a fraternal way.

Therefore, is with deep regret that I will now step down and allow time for the membership to identify and elect those who will continue our work to continue our legacy. It has been an enjoyable six years. I have been fortunate to become associated in all areas of management and goodwill with those engaged in our planning and implementation of our annual reunions.

I wish to thank all of you for your help these past years. It has been quite an experience working with Fay and the board. I thank you all, but it is now time for me to depart and become just another member of the association.

I thank you all and GOD BLESS YOU ALL!

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Van T. Bartoot died at the age of 92

Remember the guy who wouldn't take the flag down?

You might remember a news story several months ago about a crotchety old man who defied his homeowners association and refused to take down the flagpole on his property and the large flag that flew on it.

Now you can find out who, exactly, that old man was. On June 15, 1919, Van T. Barfoot was born in Edinburg probably didn't make much news back then.



Seems the rules said a flag could be flown on a house-mounted bracket, but, for decorum,

items such as Barfoot's 21-foot flagpole were unsuitable.

He had been denied a permit for the pole, erected it anyway and was facing court if he didn't take it down.

Since the story made national TV, the neighborhood association has rethought its position and agreed to indulge this old hero who dwells among them.

In the time I have left I plan to continue to fly the American flag without interference," **Barfoot told The Associated Press.**

Twenty-five years later, on May 23, 1944, near Carano, Italy, Van T. Barfoot, who had enlisted in the US Army in 1940, set out to flank German machine gun positions from which fire was coming down on his fellow

soldiers.



He advanced through a minefield, took out three enemy machine gun positions and returned with 17

If that wasn't enough for a

day's work, he later took on and destroyed three German tanks sent to retake the machine gun positions.

That probably didn't make much news either, given the scope of the war,

but it did earn Van T. Barfoot, who retired as a Colonel after also serving in Korea and Vietnam, a Congressional Medal of Honor.

What did make news...

was a neighborhood association's quibble with how the 90-year-old veteran chose to fly the American flag outside his suburban Virginia home. As well he should.

And if any of his neighbors still takes a notion to contest him, they might want to read his Medal of Honor citation. It indicates he's not real good at backing down.

Van T. Barfoot's Medal of Honor citation:

This 1944 Medal of Honor citation, listed with the **National Medal of** Honor Society, is for Second prisoners of war. Lieutenant Van T. Barfoot, 157th Infantry, 45th Infantry:

> WE ONLY LIVE IN THE LAND OF THE FREE...

BECAUSE OF THE BRAVE! AND, BECAUSE OF OLD MEN LIKE VAN BARFOOT!

Obviously he is not related to anybody in congress!

As suggested by an email from Carl Kitchens

Strange World War II Facts

You might enjoy this from Col D. G. Swinford, USMC, Ret., and history buff. You would really have to dig deep to get this kind of ringside seat to history:

- 1. The first German serviceman killed in WW II was killed by the Japanese (China, 1937). The first American serviceman killed was killed by the Russians (Finland 1940); highest ranking American killed was Lt. Gen Lesley McNair, killed by the US Army Air Corps. So much for allies.
- 2. The youngest US serviceman was 12 year old: Calvin Graham, USN. He was wounded and given a Dishonorable Discharge for lying about his age. His benefits were later restored by act of Congress.
- 3. At the time of Pearl Harbor, the top US Navy command was called CINCUS (pronounced 'sink us'); the shoulder patch of the US Army's 45th Infantry division was the Swastika, and Hitler's private train was named 'Amerika.' All three were soon changed for PR purposes.
- 4. More US servicemen died in the Air Corps than the Marine Corps. [Actually the 8th Air Force alone suffered about 5,000 more KIA than the entire Marine Corps in WW2.] While completing the required 30 missions, an airman's chance of being killed was 71%.
- 5. Generally speaking, there was no such thing as an average fighter pilot. You were either an ace or a target. For instance, Japanese Ace Hiroyoshi Nishizawa shot down over 80 planes. He died while a passenger on a cargo plane.
- 6. It was a common practice on fighter planes to load every 5th round with a tracer round to aid in aiming. This was a mistake. Tracers had different ballistics, so (at long range) if your tracers were hitting the target, 80% of your rounds were missing. Worse yet tracers, instantly told your enemy he was under fire and from which direction. Worst of all was the practice of loading a string of tracers at the end of the belt to tell you that you were out of ammo. This was

definitely not something you wanted to tell the enemy. Units that stopped using tracers saw their success rate nearly double and their loss rate go down.

Here's something related from 5th SF, Detachment B-52's Tips of the Trade item #32; "Tracers work both ways".

- 7. When allied armies reached the Rhine, the first thing men did was pee in it. This was pretty universal from the lowest private to Winston Churchill (who made a big show of it) and Gen. Patton (who had himself photographed in the act).
- 8. German Me-264 bombers were capable of bombing New York City, but they decided it wasn't worth the effort.
- 9. German submarine U-1206 was sunk by a malfunctioning toilet.
- 10. Among the first 'Germans' captured at Normandy were several Koreans. They had been forced to fight for the Japanese Army until they were captured by the Russians and forced to fight for the Russian Army until they were captured by the Germans and forced to fight for the German Army until they were captured by the US Army.
- 11. Following a massive naval bombardment, 35,000 United States and Canadian troops stormed ashore at Kiska, in the Aleutian Islands. 21 troops were killed in the assault on the island. It could have been worse if there had been any Japanese on the island.
- 12. The last marine killed in WW2 was killed by a can of spam. He was on the ground as a POW in Japan when rescue flights dropping food and supplies came over, the package came apart in the air and a stray can of spam hit him and killed him.

Suggestred from an email by

Carl Kitchens

First Known Airplane Flight Manual



By Dick Peiffer

very airplane comes with an Airplane Flight
Manual also called a Pilot's Operating Handbook.
They are required and approved by the Federal
Aviation Administration, and are an official
document as a part of the airplane. The modern documents
contain; Checklists, Operating Limitations, Performance
Charts, Weight and Balance,

Emergency Procedures, to name a few. The manual or essential information must be carried in the airplane at all times and be within easy reach of the pilot(s).

The history of the airplane flight manual dates back to the first flight manual issued by the Glenn Curtiss Aeroplane and Motor Company for the 1911 Glenn Curtiss Model D "Pusher" and is quoted below.

control pole gently towards his (the aeronaut's) middle anatomy.

4. When sufficient speed has been attained, the device will leave the ground and assume the position of aeronautical ascent.



5. Should the aeronaut decide to return to terra firma, he should close the control valve of the motor. This will cause the apparatus to assume what is known as the "gliding position", except in the case of those flying machines that are inherently unstable. These latter will assume the position known as

"involuntary spin" and will return to earth without further action on the part of the aeronaut.

6. On approaching closely to the chosen field on terrain, the aeronaut should move the control pole gently toward himself, thus causing the mechanism to alight more or less gently on terra firma.

The next time you board an airline; remember it was once called an aeronautical apparatus.

Thanks to the FAA Academy, Engineering and Manufacturing Branch Oklahoma City, Oklahoma



Rules Governing the Use of Aeronautical Apparatus

- 1. The aeronaut should set himself in the apparatus, and secure himself firmly to the chair by means of the strap provided. On the attendant crying "Contact", the aeronaut should close the switch that supplies electrical current to the motor, thus enabling the attendant to set the same in motion.
- 2. Opening the control valve of the motor, the aeronaut should at the same time firmly grasp the vertical stick of control pole, which is to be found directly before the chair. The power from the motor will cause the devise to roll gently forward and the aeronaut should govern its direction of motion by the use of the rudder bars.
- 3. When the mechanism is facing into the wind, the aeronaut should open the control valve of the motor to its fullest extent at the same time pulling the

R. J. "Dick" Peiffer was in the 601st in Ops on Alpha Crew, from May 1954 to May 1957. Entered on duty with the FAA in 1958 in ATC and retired 1990. Then until 2003, he was a corporate pilot flying for a half dozen companies in a variety of business aircraft. Still an active pilot he gives required pilot flight reviews, instrument competency checks and conducts aviation safety seminars.

New co-pays for TRICARE pharmacy customers

Release No. 01-04-13 - Jan. 24, 2013

ALLS CHURCH, Va. (AFRNS) – New co-payments for prescription drugs covered by TRICARE will go into effect soon. The Fiscal Year 2013 National Defense Authorization Act requires TRICARE to increase co-pays on brand name and non-formulary medications that are not filled at military clinics or hospitals. There is no increase to co-pays for generic medications. Increases will be effective sometime in February, depending on when system changes can be made, and the publication of a required Federal Notice. TRICARE Pharmacy co-pays vary based on the class of drug and where beneficiaries choose to fill their prescriptions. The co-pay for generic medications stays at \$5 when a prescription is filled at a network pharmacy. clinics will continue to provide medications There is no co-pay when generic prescriptions are filled through TRICARE Home Delivery. The new co-pay for a 30day supply of a brand name medication purchased at a retail network pharmacy will be \$17, up from the current \$12.

Beneficiaries using TRICARE Home Delivery will pay \$13 for brand name drugs, up from \$9; however, the Home Delivery price is for a 90-day supply.

The greatest change in co-pays applies to non-formulary medications. The \$25 copay for these drugs increases to \$44 at retail pharmacies and \$43 through Home Delivery. The TRICARE Uniform Formulary is a list of all the medications TRICARE covers.

For fiscal 2014 and beyond, the new law directs that co-pays increase annually by the same percentage as retiree cost-ofliving adjustments. In years when a COLA increase would total less than a dollar, it will be delayed a year and combined with the next adjustment so increases will always be \$1 or more.

Pharmacies at military hospitals and with no co-pays. Visit

http://www.tricare.mil/Costs/PrescriptionCo sts.aspx for more details. (Courtesy of TRICARE Communications) For more retiree news and information,

please visit www.retirees.af.mil.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Your membership dues are still \$20.00. Please renew your membership as soon as possible and/or before **January 31**st of each year. Make your check payable to Howard Dickey, 27382 450th St., Leonard, MN 56652. Howard is the Association Treasurer. **Do not make** your check payable to the 601st-615th ACW Association. Thanks.

Romy Griffitts' War Stories

omy Koch was born in Kassel, Germany in 1939, the year Hitler's forces invaded Poland. She has terrifying memories of her early childhood. Seventy years later she still finds them very painful to tell. Her father and uncles were conscripted into the Luftwaffe. Many family members, some military and others civilian, did not survive the war. Her hometown was laid waste by floods and bombs from the R.A.F and 8th U.S. Air Force. I will endeavor to tell her story as she told me. There were a number of reasons the Allies attempted to reduce Kassel to rubble. There was the Henschel Foundry

Messerschmidt-109 fighters were

panzers near the city center.

producing locomotive engines and

assembled in Kassel as well. And there were other industries producing essential products for the Nazi war effort. The Hauptbahnhof served as a vital transportation hub.

There were also 200,000 innocent civilians living in Kassel. Romy was one of them.

Romy remembers as a small child who helped the family by running family errands to the bakery, and other neighborhood shops. She was constantly reminded to raise her right arm in salute and greet the shopkeepers with a clear and loud. "Heil Hitler!" Failure to do so might bring suspicion upon the family and perhaps a visit by the Gestapo.

The RAF occasional bombing began in 1941 and increased in numbers and ferocity soon after. Often Kassel was a secondary target, depending on weather conditions. Soon the RAF carpet-bombed the city by night and the USAF bombed by day. Responding to the air raid warning sirens, Romy, her mother and sister took shelter in bomb bunkers. It was a terrifying experience for everyone, but more so for the innocent children. Sleeping was impossible in the crowded and dimly lit bunker. The bomb blasts could be heard and felt well below ground level.

Then in May of 1943, The R.A.F. "Dam Busters" successfully breached the Eder Dam sending a cascading wall of water down stream. The Fulda River flooded low-lying areas of Kassel and Hann. Munden but had virtually no effect on the war effort. The worst of it came on the night of Oct. 23, 1943. Romy's mother was weary of shelters and told the children they would sleep in their own beds that night. Romy's older sister begged their mother to take them to the shelter. So she relented and they walked to the shelter as the sirens wailed. Bombs fell as never before. Incendiary bombs caused firestorms and still the bombs continued to rain all over Kassel.

After the all-clear signal sounded, citizens found a horrific scene. Burning mounds of rubble was everywhere. Romy's home had been destroyed. Her uncle and two aunts were missing. It was reported 10,000 civilians were dead and casualties numbered over 30,000. Romy's mother walked to Koenig Platz where hundreds of charred and mutilated corpses



were displayed for identification. Among them where the remains of Romy's family members. They were identified only by the jewelry they wore. It has been said that 90% of the city was destroyed that night. But bombers returned nearly every day.

The family gathered what they could find from the ruins of their home and began walking south, away from the city. Romy, age 4, her sister, age 7 and their mother walked with a few clothes and bits of bread as their only possessions. Her father was in the Luftwaffe somewhere, but they had lost contact with him.

After walking nearly 30 KM they reached the village of Herzerode where a farm family offered them shelter and a little food. Romy remembers that she was always hungry.

Sometimes they ate a potato and if lucky they had an egg

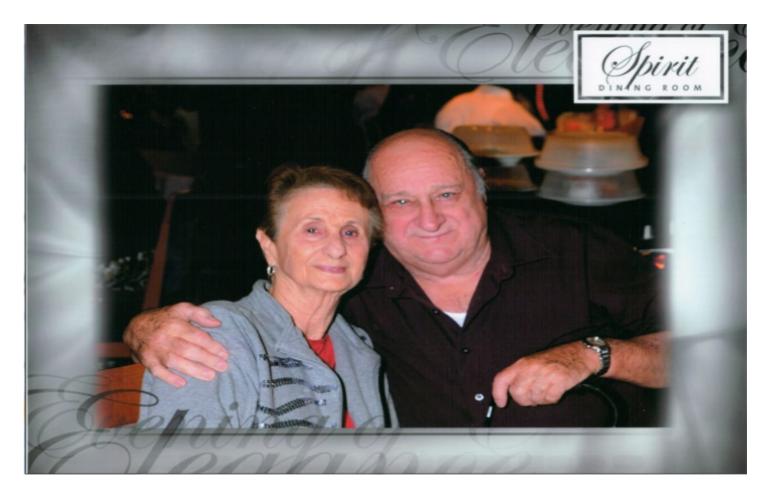
during the day. Nothing more. She remembers they had taken shelter in a tiny hut and struggled to keep warm. American Army troops arrived in 1945. The family was too hungry and tired to be afraid. A young army officer evicted them so he could sleep in a bed for the night. Another soldier found three eggs and playfully juggled them for his amusement. Through sign language, Romy's mother told the soldier that was all the children had to eat. The soldier smiled, cracked the eggs and mixed them with sugar on a table rendering them useless. After these troops marched on towards Kassel, other U.S. Soldiers arrived. They were much kinder and offered food. The girls had their first taste of chocolate – a Hershey bar, and some chewing gum. Romy doesn't remember how it happened, but one day their father walked into the village and reunited with the family. The war was over. He burned his uniform and was never taken prisoner. Someone in the village told the soldiers that her dad was a former SS officer. At gunpoint, he was forced to strip naked, but later released when no identifying tattoo was found.

The family made their way back to Kassel and the reconstruction of a beautiful city began. Both parents worked at two jobs as they helped build an apartment building on Eisenschmiede Strasse. The family always shared food with others even if it meant they ate less. After all the hardships suffered before, during and after the war,

American GIs were considered friends. When Romy and I were dating, my friends were always welcome in their home to drink a "bier" and a share a meal.

We were married and returned to the States in 1960. We have visited Kassel, Germany numerous times over years and consider it our second hometown.

~ Glen Griffitts, 601st AC&W Sqdn., 1957-1960



Margie's 76th Birthday Gift!

On Friday, the 14th my wife Marjorie reached her 76th. At this time in our crazy life, I felt she needed and deserved something special. I decided to take her on a three-day cruise to Nassau.

The 1st day out of port, I felt she needed to relax and took her to the Spa. Then I surprised her with a 75-minute "head to toe massage" with a Facial. This was her time enjoy and relax!

These were three days to relax and enjoy great food and great shows. On Friday the 14th during dinner, the dining room crew surprised her with a cake with one candle for her birthday. All the people in the dining room sang her "Happy Birthday". That just made her day!

If you have never been on a cruise, you need to go once in your life. You will truly feel you have been blessed!

You will be surprised with the joy of meeting wonderful new people from all over the world. Thus making your time a very special one!

If you have a special period of time need celebrating, a cruise is a great way to spend it.

Margie & Frannie Gosselin

...more computer stuff!

By Bill Hanson

few days ago I got an email from Facebook telling me that someone in Romania had logged into my account and that my account was suspended. At first I took this as the usual phishing trick to try to get me to reveal my password. Then I tried to log into the account (making sure not from any link provided in the email) and found that it was not available. After a couple of tries to assure myself that this was a legitimate concern, I changed the password (one very difficult to crack) and was able to open it.

Facebook is probably the most, or one of the most, popular programs all around the world. For this reason hackers are zeroing in on it. There is a wealth of information on many of the pages. Friends names, some with phone numbers, email addresses and other personal stuff. And we can be sure there are predators scouring Facebook with our daughters and granddaughters in mind.

I have had quite a few emails that appear to have come from Facebook "friends", but the return address is not correct. I think I answered the first one, then got wise to it. We should at least be careful to not enter info on our pages that could be used against us or someone else.

It seems that they have had some security problems all along. I believe I have read on more than one occasion that the site is now secure. Then something else comes up. The changing of passwords is becoming more important all the time as intruders find new ways to break into our personal and financial lives.

It is no longer advisable to have the same password for entering different sites. If one is cracked, the rest are vulnerable also. They should also be difficult. That is: They should be at least eight characters long; have a mixture of letters (some upper case and some lower case) and numbers. I keep a little notebook with all my user names and passwords. It is a little extra work, but that notebook can't be reached by a hacker or a virus program.

HELP!

Please help us keep the membership database current. If you changed your address, telephone numbers, e-mail address, add, or made any changes to your profile, please notify us by going to our web site, www.601st-615th-acw.org/index.html, and leaving us a message. This action will ensure that you receive all our correspondence as well as our newsletters.

Before, During, and After!

pon completion of AC&W tech school at Keesler Field in late 1958, I PCS'd to Germany. My first stop was a radar site, call sign "Joplin", located just outside of Ulm. My arrival at the Wasserkupe in 1961 occurred via two additional assignments:

Langerkopf and Giebelstadt, call signs "Logroll" and "Dora" respectively.

I was young, naive, immature, partied hard and drank my share. But I was in good company. No less than half the Airmen were first-term enlisted acquiring their first taste life outside the ZI. For most, the duty on the "Kuppe" was considered "good" with the three year assignment mostly served without a trip Stateside. As it nearly always is, there were some who found the adjustment to a foreign country as something to be endured. I fell into the former group.

The Wasserkuppe is well-known throughout Germany especially among glider enthusiasts. It is one of a hand-full of locations where naturally occurring thermals make for ideal soar-planing. Wasserkuppe can be translated as "watershed" which is appropriate as it is the headwater for the Fulda River. Located in the heart of the Rhoen Valley, "Die Wasserkuppe" is over 3000 feet above sea level with scenic views in every direction. Snowfalls were typically measured in meters which periodically cut the site off from the rest of the world for days at a

The treaty ending WWI precluded the German military from developing and operating motorized aircraft. So the Wasserkuppe became one of the pre-eminent locations adopted by the German Air Force to train future Luftwaffe pilots using gliders.

Unlike my prior postings, the "Kuppe" was less isolated from the local population. Scarcely 200 meters from the Main Gate were a string of "ethnically correct" Gasthauses one of which, "Peterchens Mondfahrt", had an excellent kitchen. "Peters", as the GI's called it, was a family run business staffed with the owner's twin daughters and son. The twins, Suzi and Ellen, enjoyed the respect of virtually everyone on the site for their work ethic, friendly demeanor and, yes, good looks. A payday filet steak with home fries, veggies and salad was a not an uncommon topic of conversation. The owner, Herr Peters, was a test pilot of some repute who flew one of the earliest jet-propelled fighter aircraft being developed by the Luftwaffe toward the close of War II. Eventually his son, Dag, assumed ownership and ran the operation until his retirement. He resides in Gersfeld with his wife "Babel".

The more casual watering hole on "the hill" frequented largely by single, first-term enlisted was the "Deutsche Flieger", aka "Skinhead's". "Skin" was an ex-Airman who had served on the Kuppe and was married to the owner. If you craved a spot to enjoy a local brew and listen to Bob (his real name) spin war stories, this was the place. Bob flew the Kuppe in 1963 leaving his wife and daughter to run the business. Fifty years on,

Ursula and her daughter, Heidi, are out of the Gasthaus business; today, a they jointly operate a gift shop a few doors down from the "Deutsche Flieger".

A few clicks down the hill was the village of Obernhausen. A rustic Gasthaus, referred to as "Karl's" was a popular stopover enroute to Gersfeld because it had a juke box with the latest R&R hits. Several years later, my bride and I would celebrate our wedding day in this very locale.

The destination of choice for a night out was the village of Gersfeld located about 15 kilometers from the Kuppe. It was here that not a few of us met our sweethearts and future brides. The hotspot for GI's in this picturesque village was "Klaus'". The "Wirtin", Frau Klaus, had a ready

smile and warm greeting for everyone entering her realm. For a few dollars you could "tank-up" then walk across the street to Frau (Taxi) Knuettel for a ride cum conversation back up the hill. Nowadays, Frau Klaus and Taxi Knuettel are long gone. Klaus' is now a cozy restaurant serving tasty lunch and dinners. Frau Knuettel passed away a few years back just short of her 100th birthday.

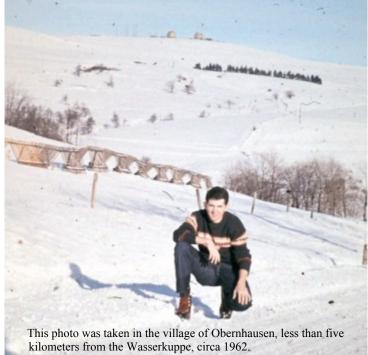
In the ensuing years, my wife, children and grandchildren have s enjoyed many summers in Gersfeld. Little has changed. The "Marktplaz" is the hub of commercial and social activity. Tourists as well as locals gather at the Italian ice cream parlor during the summer months and children play in the pedestrian friendly town center.

The Wasserkuppe has undergone considerable changes over the past several decades. The eastern slope is dotted with ski lifts, bobsled runs,

an additional restaurant, gift shops and bratwurst stands. There is now a Glider Museum at the base of the Hill. The North and West slopes are busy with RF controlled model aircraft flyers and hang gliding enthusiasts. The South slopes remain the domain of gliders and small fixed-wing airplanes. A paved runway was built years ago to accommodate motorized air traffic which not only tow gliders but provide air tours as well. Gliders are now mostly towed to their release altitude in addition to the more traditional motorized cable lift. The "Groenhoff Haus", aka the barracks, EM Club, Mess Hall, Fritz's Tomb, et al, have largely been repurposed but remain pretty much as they were back when.

The radar site itself will be recognizable to those who graced its heights, albeit overgrown and sans the radar domes save for one. The Radar Ops Quonset Hut is still standing but absent any indication of its past. It's still a lonely spot where not even the tens of thousands visitors who wander around its perimeter each year dare tread.

All that said, the Wasserkuppe still retains its innate attraction with its sweeping views of the beautiful rolling hills of the Rhoen Valley. Once experienced, the images become unforgettable.



A DREAMER AND HIS DREAM

(As suggested from an Email from Bill Hanson)

et me tell you, Jesse hated his job. And you would too, I imagine, if you had to do it. Jesse was a chicken plucker. That's right.

He stood on a line in a chicken factory and spent his days pulling the feathers off dead chickens so the rest of us wouldn't have to. It wasn't much of a job.. But at the time, Jesse didn't think he was much of a person.

His father was a brute of a man. His dad was actually thought to be mentally ill and treated Jesse rough all of his life. Jesse's older brother wasn't much better.

He was always picking on Jesse and beating him up. Yes, Jesse grew up in a very rough home in West Virginia. Life was anything but easy. And he thought life didn't hold much hope for him.

That's why he was standing in this chicken line, doing a job that darn few people wanted.

In addition to all the rough treatment at home, it seems that Jesse was always sick. Sometimes it was real physical illness, but way too often it was all in his head. He was a small child, skinny and meek. That sure didn't help the situation any.

When he started to school, he was the object of every bully on the playground. He was a hypochondriac of the first order. For Jesse, tomorrow was not always something to be looked forward to.

But, he had dreams. He wanted to be a ventriloquist. He found books on ventriloquism. He practiced with sock puppets and saved his hard earned dollars until He could get a real ventriloquist dummy.

When he got old enough, he joined the military. And even though many of his hypochondriac symptoms persisted, the military did recognize his talents and put him in the entertainment

corps. That was when his world changed. He gained confidence.

He found that he had a talent for making people laugh, And laugh so hard they often had tears in their eyes. Yes, little Jesse had found himself.

You know, folks, the history books are full of people who overcame a handicap to go on and make a success of themselves, but Jesse is one of the few I know of who didn't overcome it. Instead he used his paranoia to make a million dollars, and become one of the best-loved characters of all time in doing it!



Yes, that little paranoid hypochondriac, who transferred his nervousness into a successful career, still holds the record for the most Emmy's given in a single category.

The wonderful, gifted, talented, and nervous comedian who brought us Barney Fife was Jesse Don Knotts!

There is a street named for him and his statue is located in Morgantown, West Virginia, his place of birth.

NOW YOU KNOW, "THE REST OF THE STORY"

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